

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY

Government Strategy for Gender Equality
Toward 2021

PARITY
EMPOWERMENT
REGIONS
EQUITY
MOBILIZATION
SOCIAL JUSTICE
NO STEREOTYPES
PROSPERITY
BALANCE
DIVERSITY

TOGETHER — FOR — EQUALITY

Government Strategy for Gender Equality
Toward 2021

This publication was produced by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine with the assistance of government ministries and agencies involved in the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*.

COORDINATION AND WRITING

Secrétariat à la condition féminine

Secrétariat à la condition féminine

905 avenue Honoré-Mercier, 3rd Floor
Québec City, Québec G1R 5M6

Phone: 418-643-9052

Fax: 418-643-4991

Email: scf@scf.gouv.qc.ca

This document is available in the Publications section of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine website: www.scf.gouv.qc.ca

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■ A WORD FROM THE PREMIER

The Québec we know and love was built by great women. With pride, our female writers have told its tale. With finesse, our female actors and comedians have interpreted and parodied its story. And with flair, our female singers and musicians have celebrated it in song and melody. Much of our innovative and creative society was developed by daring female artists, scholars, and businesswomen, under the leadership of strong and determined women.

With each generation, from my grandmother's to my daughter's, we have made tremendous progress toward achieving gender equality—a cornerstone of our democratic society. Despite these accomplishments, there is still much to be done. The *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* marks the next step toward making Québec a fairer and more equal society. Its measures will benefit women and men of all ages, origins, communities, regions, and sexual orientations.

This strategy reflects our government's commitment to making equality a reality. Gender inequality is pervasive in our society—concerted efforts will be required in all areas if these new initiatives promoting gender equality are to make a difference in our everyday lives.

Let us stand together to build the Québec of tomorrow—a place where all women and men can thrive and achieve their ambitions.



Philippe Couillard



Premier of Québec

■ A WORD FROM THE MINISTER



It is with great pleasure and pride that I present to you the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*. With this strategy, the Government of Québec reasserts its firm commitment to achieving gender equality, hoping to give new impetus to one of our society's fundamental values.

It should be noted that we have made much progress toward gender equality in the last few decades. By adopting this strategy, Québec is proudly taking the next step in its journey toward gender equality, serving as a torchbearer for the cause both in Canada and on the international stage.

Given the pervasiveness of this issue, it will take a lot more than the government's commitment to achieve social justice—local partners will be vital. In light of this, we have initiated an extensive consultation process aimed at women's groups, non-governmental organizations, and anyone else who wants to live in a fairer, more equal society. Over twenty government ministries and agencies will be involved in the strategy, coordinating their efforts every step of the way.

The government wishes to develop a culture of gender equality in Québec. Men are key allies—their support is essential to reaching our goals. All communities in all regions of Québec must be mobilized so women can grow to their full potential and flourish.

With this strategy, the Government of Québec is acknowledging—as have many other states around the world—the importance of gender equality in fostering collective and individual growth.

Women represent over half our population. They are inspiring and innovative and have ambitious personal and professional goals. The Government of Québec is therefore taking concrete actions to help achieve gender equality within our society.

Lise Thériault

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lise Thériault".

Deputy Premier
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Small and Medium Enterprises,
Regulatory Streamlining and Regional Economic Development

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■ LIST OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRY AND AGENCY ACRONYMS

CCQ	Commission de la construction du Québec
CDPDJ	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
CGAP	Conseil de gestion de l'assurance parentale
CNESST	Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail
CSF	Conseil du statut de la femme
FAMILLE	Ministère de la Famille (including Secrétariat aux aînés)
FINANCES	Ministère des Finances
INSPQ	Institut national de santé publique du Québec
ISQ	Institut de la statistique du Québec
MAMOT	Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire
MAPAQ	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation
MCC	Ministère de la Culture et des Communications
MEES	Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
MESI	Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation
MIDI	Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion
MJQ	Ministère de la Justice (including Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie)
MSP	Ministère de la Sécurité publique
MSSS	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
MTESS	Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (including Emploi-Québec and Secrétariat du travail)
MTMDET	Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports
OPHQ	Office des personnes handicapées du Québec
RQ	Retraite Québec
SAJ	Secrétariat à la jeunesse
SCF	Secrétariat à la condition féminine
SCT	Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor

■ INTRODUCTION

The *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* (the Strategy) has a political component containing elements from the previous government policy on gender equality—*Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*—as well as a more operational component including strategic objectives and concrete action plans.

In 2006, the *Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait* policy was launched for a ten-year period. It followed hearings held in 2005 as part of a consultation process regarding a brief produced by the Conseil du statut de la femme: *Vers un nouveau contrat social pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*. The document stated an intention “to promote equality by taking actions consistent with past efforts, but broader in scope. The goal is to secure wider support for and commitment to the cause, with women not standing alone in their struggle for a gender-equal society”¹. [TRANSLATION] It was determined that Québec had to develop a gender equality policy and government action plans. The resulting policy and two action plans were the first steps in the process.

Since then, much progress has been made toward achieving gender equality. However, our goals have not yet been met, and progress seems to be losing steam in some areas. The Strategy therefore pays special attention to persistent inequalities, such as violence against women, gender stereotypes, low gender diversity in education and in the workplace, difficulties balancing family, work, and school, and the underrepresentation of women in decision-making. Women's health is also taken into account.

The Strategy targets society as a whole, in particular the structural failings at the root of gender inequality. This mandate will be fulfilled through core measures like framework legislation. The Strategy is consistent with the previous policy and plans. By updating the policy and defining new measures, our aim is to fast track the process of making equality a reality.

The Strategy considers intersectional issues, taking a modern perspective on the challenge of achieving equality for women in Québec. Age, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and gender expression are all potential sources of inequality that can worsen the effects of gender-based inequality. As such, not all women face the same challenges in their struggle for equality. Their experience can be exacerbated by their situation or condition. Many planned government actions will take these issues into account.

Intersectionality is “[the] simultaneous interaction of several forms of domination or discrimination that make up a system of oppression. It underscores the ties that exist between discrimination based on racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism, and ableism, among others”². [TRANSLATION]

With this Strategy, the Government of Québec is taking action to rally women and men^a of all ages, origins, communities, and regions so all can work together to make equality a reality.

a. As of 2016, women make up a slightly larger proportion of Québec's population (50.3%) than men (49.7%).

“Equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women”³.

Target objectives

Many key documents guided the development of the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*. These include the *Bilan de la mise en œuvre du Plan d’action gouvernemental pour l’égalité entre les femmes et les hommes 2011-2015*, the *Bilan du Plan d’action gouvernemental en matière d’analyse différenciée selon les sexes 2011-2015* and the *Portrait statistique sur l’évolution de l’égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*. A number of government ministries and agencies, various consultation documents, and a survey of Quebecer perceptions regarding gender equality also contributed to the Strategy’s development.

Here are the five-year Strategy’s main objectives:

- Reduce persistent and troubling inequalities;
- Take action for all women, keeping intersectional issues in mind;
- Rally women and men so they can work together to make equality a reality in all communities and regions.

■ INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Gender equality in Indigenous communities: Specific issues relating to specific needs

Gender equality issues in Indigenous communities are a government priority. Inuit and First Nations women play a leading role in the lives of their communities. They are important vectors of economic, social, and cultural development.

On September 9, 2016, Lise Thériault, Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and Geoffrey Kelley, Minister responsible for Native Affairs, invited Inuit and First Nations representatives to discuss the gender equality issues affecting their communities.

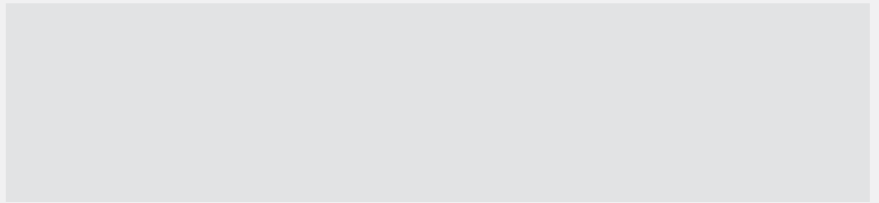
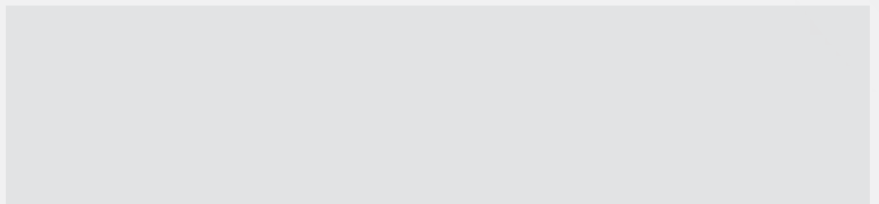
Participating organizations stressed the importance of addressing the issue of equality by considering how women and men complement each other. They raised the need to take concrete actions adapted to the realities and needs of Indigenous communities. They also indicated that Indigenous people must be included in the process of developing and implementing solutions to issues affecting them.

All actions stemming from this Strategy will benefit the entire population of Québec, including the Inuit and First Nations. That said, separate measures will also be adopted taking into account the particularities and differences specific to the Inuit and First Nations, especially those of a cultural and sociological nature.

Any actions taken vis-à-vis Indigenous populations will therefore be developed separately in a specific government action plan encompassing all measures taken by the Government of Québec to address Indigenous issues, including those relating to gender equality. These measures will be based on submissions and representations by Indigenous organizations arising from consultations held in September 2016 for the purpose of drafting this Strategy, and on January 25 and 26, 2017, for the purpose of developing the next government intervention on Indigenous social development.

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GENDER EQUALITY: A GLOBAL ISSUE



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Much like Québec, international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank Group, and the World Economic Forum as well as many western countries are implementing initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality in fact. Some of these are presented below:

The United Nations' commitment

In June 1946, the UN established the Commission on the Status of Women (the Commission), the “principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women”⁴. Fifty years later, in 1996, the United Nations Economic and Social Council expanded the Commission’s mandate to include monitoring and evaluating progress and issues encountered in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Commission conducts this monitoring and evaluation at its annual sessions. The Commission is part of the governance structure of UN Women, the United Nations body for gender equality and the empowerment of women, created in July 2010.

“The **empowerment** of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. This implies that to be empowered, women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions)”⁵.

UN Women initiated the HeForShe campaign, a solidarity movement supported by Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson. Through this campaign, UN Women is asking men around the world to sign the following pledge:

“Gender equality is not only a women’s issue. It is a human rights issue that requires my participation. I commit to take action against all forms of violence and discrimination faced by women and girls⁶.”

Many countries such as Sweden, Japan, and Finland have already rallied behind this unifying cause, and Québec also wishes to join.

DID YOU KNOW?

The UN’s international commitment to girls’ education is particularly important. In April 2017, UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric announced that Nobel prize laureate and honorary Canadian citizen Malala Yousafzai had been designated a messenger of peace, the greatest honor the UN can bestow upon a citizen. This should help bring public attention to the cause of girls’ education around the world.

In a different vein, the UN has worked with governments, civil society, and various partners to take advantage of the momentum generated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and develop an ambitious post-2015 agenda: *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Adopted in September 2015, the agenda focuses on 17 global sustainable development goals. The fifth goal reflects the importance of equality: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*⁷.

When adopting this agenda, former UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon urged world leaders “to commit to making gender equality a national priority in their respective countries, which he believes is necessary for us to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals”⁸. [TRANSLATION] He also called for everyone to step up gender equality at the opening of the Commission on the Status of Women’s 60th session, held in March 2016 on the priority theme of empowerment of women and how it ties into sustainable development.

Many countries’ decision to legislate in the realm of gender equality

In the last 40 years, many countries have adopted policies, government action plans, programs, and laws on gender equality, such as Iceland in 1976 (amended in 2008 and 2015)⁹, Norway in 1979¹⁰, Finland in 1986¹¹, Switzerland in 1995¹², the United Kingdom in 2010¹³, and more recently France in 2014¹⁴.

DID YOU KNOW?

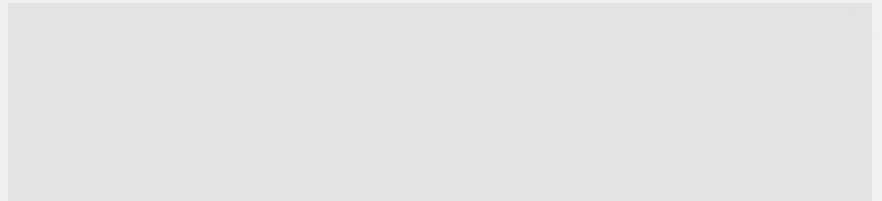
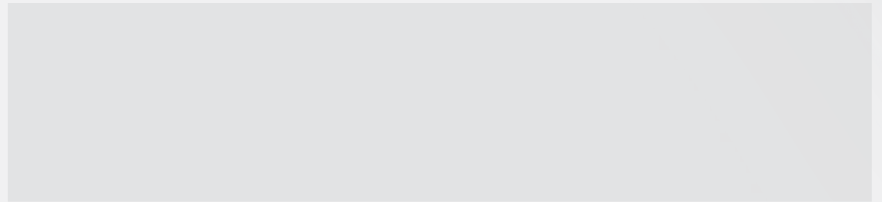
In August 2014, France adopted a law aimed at gender equality in fact. In December 2016, it also passed a law on equality and citizenship. The Haut Conseil à l’Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, established in January 2013, was enshrined in a law giving it the mission of producing an annual report on the state of sexism in France. The law also established its wide-ranging scope, independence, and pluralistic composition.

Observations in these countries have been similar to those in Québec. Much progress has been made: women have the right to vote and more and more of them are earning degrees and entering the job market. However, as in Québec, it has been found that there is still much room for improvement, in terms of education and career choices (job stereotypes still have influence), low gender diversity in the workplace, gender stereotypes and sexism, the amount of time women devote to childcare and child education, balancing family, work, and school, the lack of parity in certain decision-making venues, and continued violence against girls and women.

In short, gender equality is still an ongoing project on the world stage. International discussions will be key to identifying possible solutions.

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The *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* is based on various items and considerations that provide context for the government interventions it proposes.

■ LEGAL BASIS

With this Strategy, the Government of Québec seeks to continue taking concrete actions to support the rights of women enshrined in the Québec and Canadian charters, gender equality laws, and international commitments. The Strategy has legal basis at the international, federal, and provincial levels.

As it implements the Strategy, the Government of Québec plans to adopt framework legislation to better anchor and modernize gender equality efforts.

At the international level

The Strategy is consistent with all international commitments Québec has made in recent decades. The government's commitments are based on the principle of gender equality enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

In 1981, Québec issued an order in council binding it to the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979. This convention establishes the foundations for achieving gender equality and aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Canada periodically demonstrates its compliance in this regard to the UN committee overseeing the convention's implementation.

The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted in 1995 during the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. This event was a milestone for women around the world, serving as a permanent cooperation and engagement tool and a framework guiding government interventions in the area of gender equality. Québec played an active role in the process leading up to the event, participating in all preparatory meetings held by La Francophonie in Nouakchott, Mauritania and Dakar, Senegal and those held by the UN in Vienna, Austria and New York City, United States, in addition to sending representatives to Beijing as part of a Canadian delegation.

Québec makes sure both women and men benefit from all the rights they are entitled to under international covenants, including economic, social, and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights.

At the federal level

In its general provisions, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees equal rights to both sexes. Section 15 states that "every individual [...] has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." Section 28 stipulates that "notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons."

At the provincial level

Adopted unanimously by the Assemblée nationale on June 27, 1975, and in effect since June 28, 1976, the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* is a basic law that takes precedence over all other laws in Québec. The law enshrines gender equality and prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including gender, in addition to laying down the principle of equal pay for equal work. The charter was amended in 2008 to add Section 50.1, which states that “the rights and freedoms set forth in this Charter are guaranteed equally to women and men.”

In June 2006, the Government of Québec adopted the *Act respecting the Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine*, in which it specifies the duties of the minister responsible for the status of women. These responsibilities include respecting women’s rights, eliminating systemic discrimination, and monitoring the actual progress of gender equality.

Toward a framework bill making equality in fact a right

While remarkable progress has been made, issues relating to the economic empowerment of women, the presence of women in decision-making, gender stereotypes, and violence against women remain a concern. New impetus is required to address changes in gender equality.

For years, Québec has played a leading role in gender equality on the Canadian and international stages. The government has contributed to the aforementioned progress by passing various laws (on pay equity, public corporation governance, etc.), implementing a parental insurance plan, and carrying out action plans promoting gender equality.

During the consultation process, many non-governmental organizations related that progress on gender equality seems to have reached a ceiling. The framework bill the Government of Québec intends to adopt is in part a response to this concern. This key action seems to be the next logical step toward achieving equality in fact in Québec.

The framework bill will reaffirm gender equality as a fundamental and inherent value in Québec society. It will guide the Government of Québec and Québec society as a whole in planning and implementing concrete initiatives aimed at making gender equality a reality through government strategies. It could also address how gender-based analysis should be applied. The framework bill will update and confirm the roles of the bodies tasked with coordinating and providing guidance on government interventions relating to gender equality, i.e., the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Conseil du statut de la femme.

■ A STRATEGY BUILT ON FACTS

The statistics presented in the Strategy paint a picture of gender equality in various key areas. Added to these statistics are invisible or overlooked social realities, such as persistent stereotypical gender roles, seemingly neutral practices that exclude members of certain groups (also called systemic discrimination), and gender-related double standards. These aspects must absolutely be taken into account when implementing the Strategy as they can affect interventions and get in the way of our objective—equality in fact.

Systemic discrimination is the result of the rules, practices, cultural schema, and methods used in a given environment. While these seemingly neutral ways of doing things may not necessarily discriminate intentionally or even consciously, they penalize a social group, in this case women¹⁵.

Sex-role stereotypes or gender roles refer to “social and behavioral norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. These often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to men, women, boys, and girls. Gender-specific roles are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions. Like gender itself, gender roles can evolve over time, in particular through the empowerment of women and transformation of masculinities”¹⁶.

The sexual or gender double standard means that the way society judges a behavior will be different—even unequal—depending on sex (e.g., activity related to sexuality, sexual orientation, physical appearance, etc.). For example, a girl may be judged more negatively than a boy or vice versa in the same situation. These unequal expectations for boys and girls are troubling. They show just how much “perceptions are influenced by social norms”¹⁷. Certain principles are therefore “ideal and acceptable for one group but not for another”¹⁸. The double standard “rests on categories based on stereotypes and violates the notions of equality and impartiality”¹⁹.

■ A STRATEGY THAT PAYS ATTENTION TO PERCEPTIONS

In 2016, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine mandated CROP to carry out a survey of Quebecer perceptions regarding gender equality. The survey results are based on 1,000 online interviews conducted by a panel with 487 men and 513 women from different regions of Québec.

Despite its limitations, the survey revealed a number of things that helped shed light on gender equality perceptions.

A results analysis revealed a paradox. Most people seemed to think that equality has been achieved^b. However, when questioned about specific issues, the same people acknowledged the existence of many lingering inequalities. One explanation for this phenomenon is that people feel that the struggle for equal rights is over, but the fight for equality in fact continues. Other responses suggest a lack of knowledge of gender equality facts.

b. One of the assumptions confirmed in this survey was that despite persistent and troubling inequalities in a number of areas, most people believe equality has been achieved, which may hamper efforts to reduce or eliminate inequality altogether. This is the “myth” that gender equality has been achieved.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- 57% of respondents perceived gender equality as having already been achieved in Québec, and less than half of them (41%) thought the opposite. It should be noted that only 9% of respondents strongly agreed that equality has already been achieved.
- Almost 90% of respondents believed the fight for gender equality to be a burden that women and men should share equally²⁰.

■ GENDER EQUALITY IN FACT: A VECTOR FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, INDIVIDUAL, AND COLLECTIVE PROSPERITY IN QUÉBEC

Research has been conducted in a number of countries on the link between women's participation in the economy and gross domestic product (GDP). The research shows that getting more women active in the labor market is key to a country's economic prosperity. Moreover, the Government of Québec recognizes that, in order to address the lack of women in the workforce, it will have to focus on the types of jobs and sectors women gravitate toward.

DID YOU KNOW?

In September 2015, a **study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute** acknowledged that improving gender equality would boost GDP growth: “Even in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, where there has already been substantial progress in issues of gender equality, the upside of the full-potential scenario is 10 percent to 12 percent in 2025.” The report indicates that “gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also a critical economic challenge. If women—who account for half the world’s population—do not achieve their full economic potential, the global economy will suffer”²¹.

Having more women in the job market would not only bring us one step closer to equality, it would also help address major issues such as a rapidly aging population and labor shortages in various industries—Québec simply cannot deprive itself of its talented women. Their ideas, proposals, and inventions could have serious economic, political, and social impacts. To build an innovative and prosperous society, Québec needs more women to enter the workforce and spread their wings.

Regarding the link between prosperity and gender equality, it should be noted that many large global organizations^c have determined that gender equality is vital to prosperity. The World Bank Group “takes as its starting point that no country, community or economy can achieve its potential or meet the challenges of the 21st century without the full and equal participation of women and men, girls, and boys”²².

■ THE CONSULTATION PROCESS: A DETERMINING FACTOR

In September 2015, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine was tasked by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women to conduct a consultation process (Appendix 1). The consultation involved a wide range of women’s groups and non-governmental organizations from various communities.

In order to identify as many concerns and get as many recommendations as possible, the Government of Québec gave its citizens, women’s groups, and non-governmental and governmental organizations various ways to share their thoughts. These discussions are documented in the consultation document *Ensemble pour l’égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*. The submissions, consultation meetings, progress meetings, and other sessions aimed at drafting the Strategy all contributed to this document.

At the *Ensemble pour l’égalité entre les femmes et les hommes* sessions, the main findings and issues identified at consultation meetings were presented to non-governmental organizations for feedback. Some items that stood out were gender stereotypes and sexism—key aspects of the fight for gender equality—and the sweeping impact equality would have on the economy.

c. World Bank, World Economic Forum, United Nations

Sexism is an attitude, behavior, ideology, or discriminatory practice that devalues, excludes, under-represents, or stereotypes individuals according to gender. Based on the belief that a hierarchy exists between the sexes, sexism leads to discrimination against women and prevents people from developing their full potential. It is driven by gender stereotypes and may be expressed either individually or collectively.

Gender stereotypes arise when generalizations and simplistic views are used to describe girls and boys and men and women. They are based on a series of often unconscious beliefs and judgments that are shared by a certain number of people about the differences between girls and boys and the roles they are assigned. These stereotypes ignore individuals' unique characteristics and how diverse they really are"²³. [TRANSLATION]

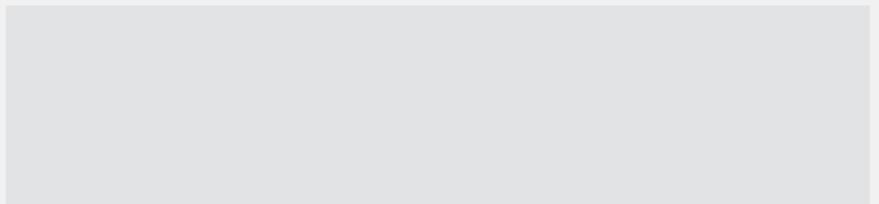
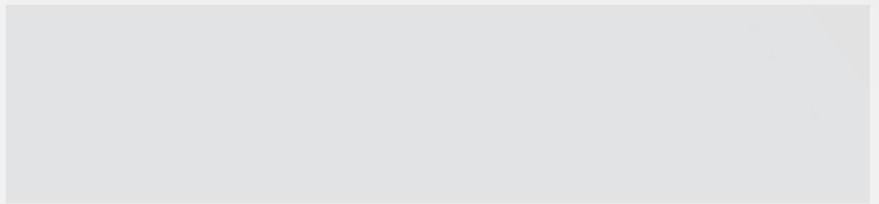
■ INTERMINISTERIAL INITIATIVES

In conjunction with the consultation process, interministerial initiatives were carried out, in particular through an interministerial working committee (Appendix 2) and bilateral meetings with government ministry and agency representatives, the primary purpose of which was to help develop new measures.

To harmonize consultation efforts and interministerial initiatives, the government ministries and agencies sitting on the committee were invited to participate in the consultation activities. The main goal was to ensure that answers would be coherent and relevant to the expressed needs.

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QUÉBEC'S INFLUENCE IN CANADA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD



SOCIAL JUSTICE
STEREOTYPES
MENT PROSPERITY
BALANCE
DIVERSITY

The Government of Québec will continue to promote Québec's knowledge and expertise while drawing inspiration from best practices in Canada and the rest of the world.

■ QUÉBEC: A CANADIAN LEADER

The Federal–Provincial/Territorial Forum

Québec will continue its close involvement in the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Forum. Every year, this body holds a meeting between the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women in Canada. The forum serves as a discussion and knowledge-sharing platform for common gender equality issues. Throughout the year, various working groups of relevant public administrations conduct activities aimed at documenting, comparing, and improving our understanding of equality issues at the provincial, territorial, and federal levels.

■ QUÉBEC OPEN TO THE WORLD

Québec and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

As part of the Canadian delegation, Québec participates in the UN Commission on the Status of Women's annual meeting, which is attended by government and civil society organizations from many countries. Participating countries present practices and initiatives regarding matters such as the role of men in promoting equality, parental leave, and the presence of women on boards of directors and in predominantly male trades and professions. Some of these practices and initiatives have inspired Québec to follow suit.

Québec and La Francophonie

The Government of Québec, as a full member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), participates in La Francophonie forums, including the Conférence des chefs d'État et de gouvernement des pays ayant le français en partage (Sommet de la Francophonie) and francophone high-level consultations such as those held during the Commission on the Status of Women's annual session in New York City.

La Francophonie summits in Dakar (Senegal, 2014) and Antananarivo (Madagascar, 2016) made the empowerment of women the focus of the OIF's agenda. Québec is actively involved in promoting the adoption of francophone resolutions and official statements contributing to the recognition of women's rights and gender equality around the world. Francophone high-level consultations, meanwhile, led to the adoption of the first *Déclaration francophone sur les violences faites aux femmes* (2010), the *Plan d'action francophone sur les violences faites aux femmes et aux filles* (2013)—driven by the principle of zero tolerance—and the *Déclaration francophone sur l'autonomisation économique des femmes* (2015).

La Francophonie provides various forums for promoting women's rights and equality, such as the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, and the Réseau francophone pour l'égalité femme-homme. Québec has direct access to these forums and has significant influence on them.

Québec and UNESCO

The SAGA Project is a good example of cooperation between Québec and UNESCO. Québec is a partner of this UNESCO-led international project, whose overall objective is to help bridge the gender gap in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics around the world, at all levels of education and in research. Gender-based data is systematically collected and analyzed to support the development and implementation of policies likely to improve gender equality in the target fields. Specifically, the SAGA Project's goal in Québec is to:

- Conduct policy reviews to shed light on why some policies cause gender imbalances in the fields of science, technology, and innovation;
- Improve and develop new indicators to support policy-making processes;
- Enhance the collection of gender equality data and produce methodological reference documents in order to collect relevant data.

This project is jointly led by the Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation and the Fonds de recherche du Québec.

Québec and its international relations

Hosting foreign delegations

Québec is recognized for its policies, strategies, action plans, government programs, and innovative and inspiring projects in a variety of fields. The Government of Québec regularly hosts foreign delegations so it can share its expertise and enrich its own reflections. Gender equality is a prime example of an area where the government is eager to share knowledge and best practices.

In recent years, the Government of Québec—through the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Conseil du statut de la femme—has hosted representatives of foreign countries, presenting them its policies, action plans, programs, and legislative tools for promoting gender equality.

Hosting high-profile international events

Québec has hosted a number of big international events. For example, in fall 2016, UNESCO and the Government of Québec jointly held the Internet and the Radicalization of Youth: Preventing, Acting, and Living Together conference, bringing together violent radicalization experts from around the world.

The Conseil du statut de la femme used the conference to present the results of an unpublished study entitled *L'engagement des femmes dans la radicalisation violente*, produced with the assistance of the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence.

Bilateral agreements

In 1985, the governments of Québec and France signed an agreement on women's rights. The agreement was renewed five years later, in 1990, and remains in effect. Its purpose is to consolidate cooperation and exchanges between Québec and France regarding projects and activities promoting gender equality in fact.

Since signing the agreement, both states have achieved major milestones in gender equality. As such, the Government of Québec will continue to work closely with France in this area.

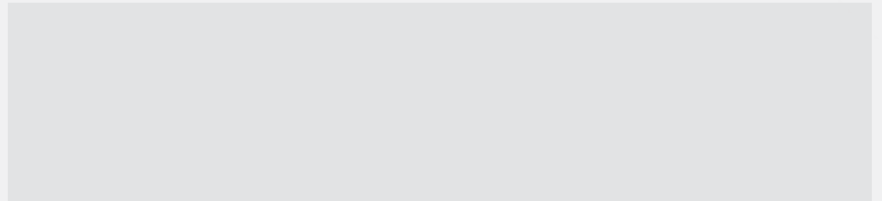
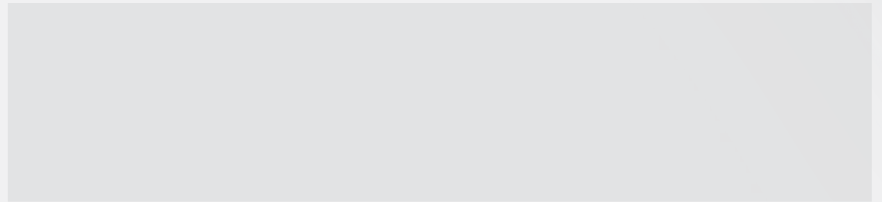
QUÉBEC IN ACTION

In April 2017, the government unveiled its new international policy—*Le Québec dans le monde: s'investir, agir, prospérer*—aimed at guiding its actions abroad.

Coordinated by the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, the policy stresses “the importance of promoting gender equality when signing international agreements with foreign governments and developing the gender equality expertise of international cooperation organizations,” stating that the economic empowerment of women and girls has a positive impact on the standard of living of their households and the prosperity of their communities”. [TRANSLATION]

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■ MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL BODIES

Minister responsible for the Status of Women

In the last 37 years, 17 ministers—16 women and 1 man—have held the position of Minister responsible for the Status of Women²⁴.

Since the *Act respecting the Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine* was adopted in 2006, the minister has had the following responsibilities:

1. Reinforce government intervention to ensure gender equality and safeguard women's rights.
2. Encourage the actual achievement of gender equality, in particular by eliminating systemic discrimination against women.
3. Inform, encourage, and support national, regional, and local authorities so they can act with full regard for gender equality and women's rights.
4. See to the actual progression of gender equality.
5. Encourage the public to take positive action toward achieving gender equality and equal rights for women.

Secrétariat à la condition féminine

Established in 1979, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine's mission is to ensure the coherence and support the development of government actions promoting gender equality. To that end, it has the following responsibilities:

1. Provide the professional expertise and administrative support required to fulfill the mandate of the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.
2. Coordinate and monitor government actions in the area of gender equality and implement certain measures.
3. Maintain ties with women's groups and the academic research community to have a good understanding of the realities, concerns, and aspirations of Québec women.
4. Advise the government to increase its influence in the area of gender equality both on the Canadian intergovernmental stage and internationally.
5. Produce analyses, find innovative solutions, and join forces with various working groups to ensure that Québec continues moving forward in this area.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine gets involved in all government actions in any way connected to gender equality or the status of women to ensure that these aspects are fully considered. Given its far-reaching area of expertise, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine's contributions are vital, in particular when it comes to developing policies, action plans, or government programs connected to gender equality issues.

Conseil du statut de la femme

In 1973, the *Act respecting the Conseil du statut de la femme* formally established the council as an independent government advisory body. As with the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, it reports to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Section 3 of the act sets out the council's mandate:

1. Advise the minister on any matter that he or she submits to it respecting matters concerning the equality and respect of the rights and status of women.
2. With the prior approval of the minister, study any matter pertaining to the field of equality and respect of the rights and status of women and do or have done any research it considers useful or necessary.
3. Receive and hear petitions and suggestions from individuals and groups on any matter contemplated in this section.
4. Furnish the public with information on any individual or collective matter concerning the equality and respect of the rights and status of women.

The Conseil du statut de la femme and the Secrétariat à la condition féminine are separate bodies with different mandates that complement each other's actions and expertise. Due to their similarities, people have been known to confuse the two organizations.

■ TOWARD GREATER SYNERGY BETWEEN THE SECRÉTARIAT À LA CONDITION FÉMININE AND THE CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME WHILE RESPECTING THEIR AUTONOMY

In recent years, the Conseil du statut de la femme and the Secrétariat à la condition féminine have gradually started working together. They share the same purpose—to further the cause of gender equality. With their different mandates and common purpose, it only makes sense that these two bodies should work more closely together in order to serve Quebecers more effectively and efficiently.

In 2012, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine joined the Conseil du statut de la femme's members' assembly as an observer. The two bodies share information to help them fulfill their respective mandates, without prejudice to the Conseil du statut de la femme's autonomy and without obstructing any government interventions initiated or coordinated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

Within the context of the Strategy, the Conseil du statut de la femme and the Secrétariat à la condition féminine worked together to define a more ongoing and fruitful relationship allowing them to harness their respective strengths. With due regard for each organization's prerogatives, the two bodies will collaborate as follows:

- Produce ad hoc status reports and overviews on matters the two organizations deem likely to help improve gender equality policies. These publications provide no recommendations, clearly distinguishing them from briefs and submissions produced by the Conseil du statut de la femme, which include recommendations to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. The Conseil du statut de la femme may use these documents to issue a brief or recommendations on a given matter.
- Share information, whether regarding the Conseil du statut de la femme's current opinions or research progress or the Secrétariat à la condition féminine's projects.
- Participate in bodies fostering cooperation between the two entities:
 - Presence of observer with no voting rights to represent the Secrétariat à la condition féminine on the members' assembly of the Conseil du statut de la femme;
 - Presence of observer to represent the Conseil du statut de la femme at meetings of the Forum des partenaires pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes^d;
 - Involvement of the Conseil du statut de la femme in the Comité de travail sur l'élaboration d'un indice québécois pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes^e, coordinated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine;
 - Contribution by the Conseil du statut de la femme at meetings of the Comité interministériel pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes^f for the purpose of sharing research findings directly related to gender equality issues;
 - Contribution by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine at members' assembly meetings of the Conseil du statut de la femme for the purpose of sharing information on government interventions relating to gender equality.

■ ACCOUNTABILITY

All actions presented in the Strategy will be subject to accountability reporting in accordance with the *Public Administration Act*, which establishes results-based management. This will be key to the comprehensive assessment process presented in detail later in this document. Accountability reporting will be coordinated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

d. See *Ongoing Interministerial and Partner Consultation* chapter for information on the Forum des partenaires pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes.

e. See *Assessment and Development* chapter for information on the Comité de travail sur l'élaboration d'un indice québécois pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes.

f. See *Ongoing Interministerial and Partner Consultation* chapter for information on the Comité interministériel pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes.

■ ONGOING INTERMINISTERIAL AND PARTNER CONSULTATION

In order to maintain an ongoing and regular dialogue with those working to promote gender equality in the field, the Government of Québec is establishing a flexible and effective consultation system. The system makes it possible to consult other ministries and local partners. By consulting both these groups, the government is ensuring that the actions it takes throughout the Strategy will be appropriate and consistent.

Comité interministériel pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will be tasked with putting together and leading an interministerial committee for gender equality. The deputy ministers and government agency presidents designated as in charge of or collaborators to the actions set out in the Strategy will appoint decision makers to sit as members of the committee.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will continue its interministerial efforts regarding other initiatives or government plans concerning gender equality issues. These efforts are key to its mission.

Forum des partenaires pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes

Social justice issues like those pertaining to gender equality require special and regular attention. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will therefore be tasked with establishing a forum of partners for gender equality.

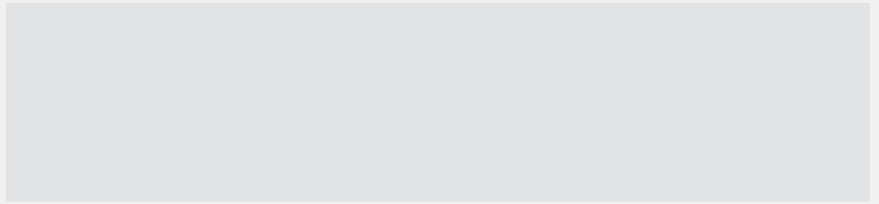
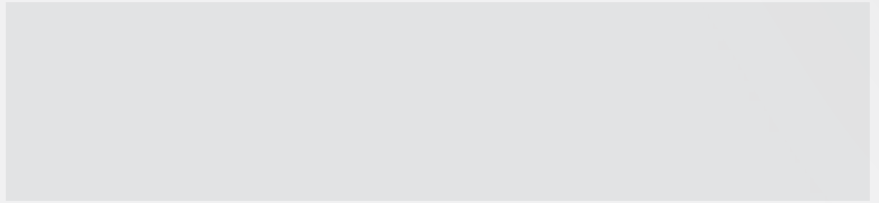
The forum will bring together national women's groups and non-governmental organizations from various sectors—including the community, union, municipal, university, business, and education sectors—as well as government ministries and agencies, as observers. By establishing this forum, the Government of Québec undertakes to listen to the concerns of these groups and organizations and take note of emerging issues and needs. Collaborations and partnerships will be established at forum meetings throughout implementation of the Strategy.

Experts will occasionally be invited to join the forum to share their insight on gender equality. The forum will play a strategic role by actively supporting discussions and consultations between partners and the Government of Québec.

These two platforms will inform discussions on gender equality challenges, avenues to explore, and actions to prioritize, while considering regional conditions and various intervention areas.

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ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT



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It became clear during the consultation process that actions taken and supported by the Government of Québec would have to be assessed. The Conseil du statut de la femme stressed this need and informed the Secrétariat à la condition féminine about the importance “of having in-depth reviews of initiatives, successes, and failures so new strategies can be recommended”. [TRANSLATION]

Toward the end of the Strategy, the evolution process for government interventions will involve assessing the actions and efforts of the government, the Forum des partenaires pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, and the Comité interministériel pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, developing an equality index, and conducting a survey on perceptions of equality. This will help measure the progress of equality, make adjustments as required, and propose new initiatives.

■ ASSESSMENT, A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Implementing the Strategy will require the participation and collaboration of 24 government ministries and agencies, each of which has contributed to the Strategy in accordance with its mission and expertise. At least one government ministry or agency is designated as in charge of each action.

The ministry or agency designated as in charge of an action will oversee its implementation, monitoring, and assessment, as required. Ministries and agencies designated as collaborators will help implement the action. Each ministry's assessment branch will be involved in the process.

■ DEVELOPMENT OF MONITORING AND PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

In accordance with the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor directives, the Strategy is accompanied by a monitoring and preliminary assessment framework. The framework includes implementation indicators for all actions and, for some actions, outcome indicators developed by government ministries and agencies.

This framework will allow us to monitor Strategy initiatives throughout the implementation process, measure their results, and track the government investments they receive. All government ministries and agencies involved in the Strategy will participate in the assessment process, which will be coordinated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

■ TOOLS TO BETTER MEASURE AND UNDERSTAND CHANGES IN GENDER EQUALITY IN QUÉBEC

Along with the assessment process, new tools will be implemented to measure the progress of gender equality and changes in Quebecer perceptions regarding gender equality.

Creation of a Québec gender equality index

Québec already has tools to assess the progress of gender equality. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine has published two statistical portraits on the progress of gender equality in the last ten years. The Conseil du statut de la femme, meanwhile, has published *Portrait des Québécoises en 8 temps*—a valuable source of information—annually since 2006. The portrait reports progress made and remaining inequalities in eight categories: demographics, education, family situation, work, income, health, free time, and participation in decision-making.

Consultation meetings held to draft the Strategy confirmed the importance of having reliable, relevant, and sustainable data (figures) on key gender equality indicators. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Conseil du statut de la femme will continue to work together to collect the required data.

To improve our knowledge of equality in Québec, a new tool will be developed: an equality index. This tool will help measure changes in gender equality in real time. It will be based on key indicators related, for instance, to income or the number of elected officials. The index will complement gender-based analysis in that it will allow us to make informed decisions based on key statistical data from reliable and sustainable sources.

INSPIRING INDICES FOR QUÉBEC FROM CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD

United Nations Gender Inequality Index

The Gender Inequality Index produced by the United Nations Development Programme shines light on the empowerment of women. It looks at gender inequality in three important aspects of human development—reproductive health, measured by the maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent birth rate; empowerment, measured by the share of seats in parliament held by women and the proportion of adult females and males age 25 and older with at least some secondary education; and economic status, expressed as labor market participation and measured by the participation rate^g of the labor force^h among female and male populations age 15 and older. In 2014, Canada ranked 25th in the world on this index out of 155 countries²⁵.

World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index

Recognizing that gender equality is as much a social issue as it is an economic one, the World Economic Forum has published the *Global Gender Gap Report* since 2006. This report presents the Global Gender Gap Index, which ranks nearly 150 countries on gender inequality in the areas of health, education, the economy, and politics. The latest report, released in 2016, ranked Canada 35th in the world out of 144 countries surveyed. When considering only the political empowerment variable, Canada drops down to 49th. The Nordic countries (Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) continue to rank among the countries with the greatest equality²⁶.

Canada ranked 19th in 2014²⁷ and 30th in 2015²⁸ on the Global Gender Gap Index. This slackening between 2014 and 2016 may be explained, in part, by decreases in economic equality (0.793 to 0.732)ⁱ and political participation (0.223 to 0.222). In 10 years, Canada slipped from 14th to 35th, a drop of 21 places. Some countries have moved forward more quickly than Canada, which has stalled somewhat.

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Index of Gender Equality in Canada's 20 Largest Metropolitan Areas

In October 2016, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released an update to *The Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada*, its provocatively titled report that includes a gender equality index for the 20 largest metropolitan areas in Canada. This study was modeled on the methodology of the World Economic Forum (*Global Gender Gap Report*). The Canadian index looked at five variables: economic security, leadership, health, personal security, and education. Four cities in Québec rank 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th. They are Québec City, Gatineau, Montréal, and Sherbrooke, respectively²⁹.

g. The **participation rate** is the percentage of working age individuals (15 and over) who have a job or are actively looking for one. The participation rate for women therefore represents the percentage of working age women who have a job or are actively looking for one.

h. According to Statistics Canada's standard definition, employed individuals are those who have a job or run a business, while unemployed individuals have no job, are available for work, and are actively looking for work. Together, employed and unemployed individuals constitute the **labor force**.

i. A result of 1.000 means the **gender gap** has been bridged in that area. The closer the result is to 0.000, the more work is needed to bridge the gap.

Monitoring changes in Quebecer perceptions regarding gender equality

In 2016, the first survey on Quebecer perceptions regarding gender equality was carried out with the following goals in mind:

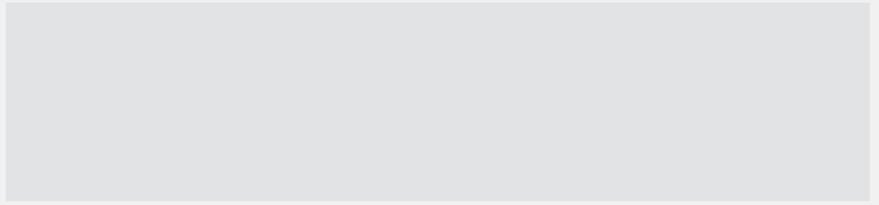
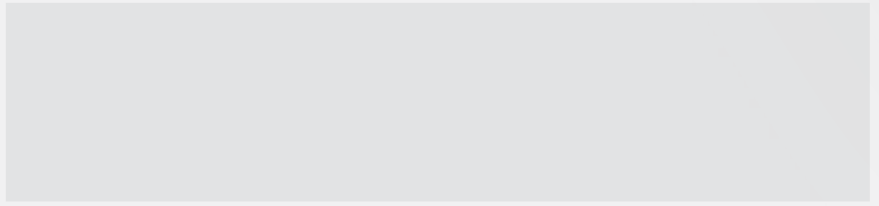
- Learn how Quebecers perceive the progress made toward achieving gender equality in 2016 (right before the Strategy was implemented);
- Document the myth that equality has already been achieved to better identify actions the Government of Québec should prioritize.

Women's groups and non-governmental and governmental organizations were very interested in the survey's results, indicating that this exercise should be continued and certain areas should be elucidated with additional, narrower surveys.

In order to monitor changes in people's perceptions regarding gender equality, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine plans on repeating the survey during and after the Strategy's implementation.

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FAVORED APPROACHES



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The previous policy—*Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*—recognized three approaches: a targeted approach, an intersectional approach, and a societal approach. These approaches continue to influence the Strategy. However, some of them, such as the intersectional approach, were expanded in scope or updated to take into account the progress of equality or related issues.

■ TARGETED APPROACH AND INTERSECTIONAL DIMENSION

The targeted approach “makes it possible to develop appropriate measures for eliminating gender discrimination, which can be exacerbated by socio-economic status, age, ethnic origin, cultural affiliation, and disabilities”³⁰. [TRANSLATION] According to this approach, interventions targeting women are effective ways to address gender inequalities. Most of the actions included in the Strategy use this approach, especially those about empowering women economically or getting more women involved in decision-making. The Strategy also takes the intersectional dimension into account. Many measures are aimed at women working in environments where intersectional discrimination is common. For this reason, the employability of immigrant women, for example, will be covered by other, more targeted initiatives. Similarly, initiatives aimed at Indigenous women will be included in a government action plan on Indigenous social issues.

■ CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH OR GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

The intersectional approach, known as gender-based analysis (GBA), involves preventing the perpetuation or creation of gender inequalities by determining how a project like a law, regulation, policy, strategy, action plan, program, measure, service, or any relevant decision might affect the public. GBA can help fight systemic discrimination arising from the most innocuous-seeming interventions. It can be used at any stage in a project, from preparation to implementation and assessment³¹.

Around the world

There have been many initiatives around the world promoting the use of GBA, whether for governance instruments, training and promotional tools, legislation, measuring gender-based outcomes, etc. It has been over twenty years since the Platform for Action was adopted at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women^j, and results on the international scene have been mixed. GBA is facing obstacles.

j. The Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 by 180 states and governments indicates that “in addressing the enjoyment of human rights, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively.” (Excerpt from *Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*)

A main conclusion of every report is the gap between policy and implementation. The policy is found to be inconsistent, ambiguous, and confusing; invisible and unclear; not implemented systematically. [...]The required institutional reforms have not taken place, there are no accountability mechanisms, there is lack of authority behind the policy, and staff has little appreciation for the policy, do not know it, or do not know how to apply it. In the mainstreaming philosophy, gender is everybody's task, but in practice, it has become nobody's responsibility. A unanimous finding concerns the weakness of documentation, monitoring, and evaluation [with respect to of gender equality]³².

A number of global trends have emerged from this state of affairs. There has been a shift toward assessing government policies and programs through gender-based analysis and developing equality indicators to better and more thoroughly document progress toward gender equality. The idea is to inform decision-makers so issues can be addressed as required.

In Canada

Canada signed the UN's *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* in 1981, and Québec declared itself bound to it by order in council the same year. In the *Fall Economic Statement 2016*, the federal government "committed to completing and publishing a gender-based analysis of budgetary measures—in Budget 2017 and all future budgets."

Chapter 5 of Budget 2017—*Equal Opportunity: Budget 2017's Gender Statement*—reveals that "there have been consistent gaps in the level of analysis applied, and the understanding of the process itself."

Gender-based analysis (GBA) is presented by the federal government as follows: "GBA identifies the ways in which public policies affect women and men differently. It does so through a systematic use of data to better tailor the design and delivery of government programs. Recently, this tool has evolved into GBA+ to include the intersecting identity factors that must be considered in public policy along with and in relation to gender (e.g., ethnicity, age, income, sexual orientation)"³³.

In Québec

The Government of Québec officially implemented GBA over 20 years ago to honor Canada's and Québec's commitment to meeting the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Over the last two decades, the Government of Québec has made numerous efforts to effectively incorporate GBA into government practices. Pilot projects, governance instruments, and two action plans have been established. These initiatives allowed us to develop tools, disseminate training, and provide support services to over 2,200 people. At the ministerial level, much has been done to promote GBA, including adopting ministerial and interministerial action plans, adding legal sections to legislation, and establishing internal committees (Appendix 3).

In light of the consultation efforts carried out to draft the Strategy and the many obstacles identified when it comes to applying GBA^k, the Government of Québec launched a discussion on the matter. Throughout 2016, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women worked to sensitize her fellow ministers regarding the importance of reassessing government efforts using an updated approach aimed at targeting areas in which key initiatives are being implemented and where persistent and troubling inequalities have been identified. The Strategy is intended to breathe new life into GBA through an adjusted approach.

Gender-based analysis: New methods

In regard to making effective use of GBA, the situation in Québec is similar to that observed in the rest of the world. Despite everything that has been accomplished, the extent to which GBA has been integrated into the government apparatus remains difficult to measure, and its impact has been limited or negligible. GBA use is poorly documented and access to data has not been systematized. Creating a Québec gender equality index would help us maintain stable and sustainable data. Moreover, it seems that gender-based analysis can be difficult to put into practice at government ministries and agencies whose area of expertise is not gender equality. Tangible results have been limited to a few cases, such as the Ministère des Finances' use of GBA for health contributions.

It bears remembering that the purpose of GBA is to help achieve gender equality. Since the Strategy shares this purpose, it makes effective use of GBA.

k. At the request of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, the École nationale d'administration publique's Centre de recherche et d'expertise en évaluation has conducted many studies assessing GBA. Limited access to gender-based data and governance issues have been identified as two of the main obstacles to making effective use of GBA.

EXAMPLE OF A SIMPLE, CONCRETE GBA INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

In implementing the Strategy, the Ministère de la Justice's Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie seeks to integrate GBA into its program to fight homophobia. This initiative involves modifying the program's normative framework to integrate GBA as an evaluation criterion for projects proposed by organizations working in the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community. The goal is to preemptively detect the distinct impacts that proposed projects could have on LGBT women and men, to inform decision-making when evaluating applications for financial assistance, and to assess the effects observed when projects are implemented.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine's approach to supporting government ministries and agencies

Gender equality is just one of many items to consider when ministries and agencies join forces on a given matter. This little detail may seem obvious, but it is an important fact to point out as it explains, to some extent, so many difficulties have been encountered in applying GBA in recent years, despite strong commitments and efforts to do so.

In order to streamline and make effective use of the approach, support will be provided to government ministries and agencies involved in developing government policies or action plans promoting gender equality.

In 2016, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine launched a tailored support initiative aimed at three ministries, with the goal of streamlining and adapting their work processes based on their respective realities. The initiative specifically targeted actions promoting gender equality. The following three bodies were involved in the initiative:

1. The Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale—for the purpose of developing the third government action plan to combat poverty and social exclusion.
2. The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur—for the purpose of developing the first *Politique de la réussite éducative*.
3. The Ministère de la Famille's Secrétariat aux aînés—for the purpose of developing the *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour contrer la maltraitance envers les personnes âgées 2017-2022*.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will provide government ministries and agencies with ongoing support consistent with efforts to draft a framework bill on gender equality.

This process will allow GBA's preventive nature to shine through and show why it is so important to take action as soon as a project gets under way. The more gender equality issues are understood, the easier it will be to implement corrective measures with a meaningful impact on gender equality.

■ SOCIETAL APPROACH

The previous policy stipulated that:

// To attain equality in fact, all social, economic, political, and cultural entities must commit to it. We are thinking of public, semipublic, and private organizations such as employers and trade unions, or community-based organizations such as human rights groups³⁴. [TRANSLATION] //

The policy already acknowledged the growing involvement of men in equality initiatives.

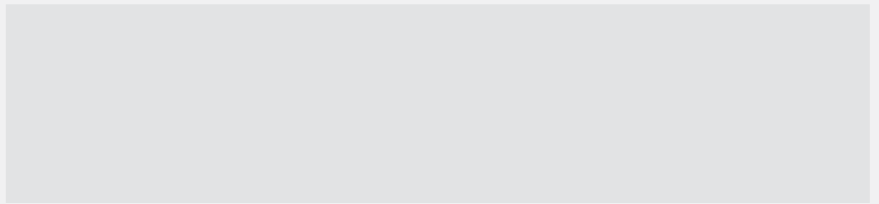
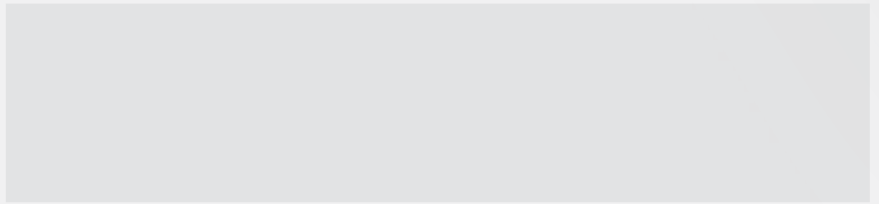
The Strategy must maintain this approach. The intent is to use and implement an approach encouraging the participation of various partners in order to take concrete action toward gender equality through innovative projects.

The expertise of women's groups will be key, providing support to new partners wishing to take an active role toward achieving equality in fact. The Partners Forum will also be a vital platform for networking and establishing partnerships.

The societal approach encourages men to contribute toward making equality a reality, whether as fathers, employers, or simply as allies. This mindset is the product of a global movement inspired in large part by UN Women's HeForShe campaign.

PARITY
EMPOWER
REGIONS
EQUITY
MOBILIZATION
NO

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



SOCIAL JUSTICE
STEREOTYPES
MENT PROSPERITY
BALANCE
DIVERSITY

■ VISION

Have women and men join forces to achieve equality in fact and greater prosperity across all segments of Québec society

Everyone must get involved to make this vision a reality. All communities are invited to do their part to achieve equality. It should be noted that equality is not just a question of social justice, it's an added value—the key to a more prosperous Québec.

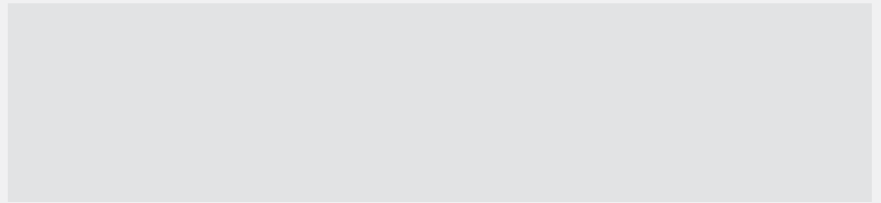
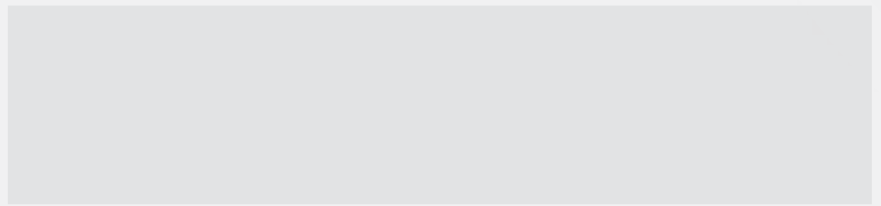
■ GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Government of Québec has identified guiding principles to support the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*:

1. Acknowledge the existence of systemic discrimination so it can be more easily addressed.
2. Recognize and strengthen the expertise of women's groups.
3. Consider regional conditions when implementing new gender equality measures.
4. Diversify partnerships involving all people and groups of all communities that can play a key role in achieving gender equality.
5. Encourage the participation of men as allies in the quest for gender equality.
6. Work together to promote gender equality and to reduce inequality among women.
7. View gender equality not only as a social justice issue, but also as a way to stimulate growth and prosperity within Québec society.

PARITY
EMPOWER NO
REGIONS EQUITY
MOBILIZATION

**GUIDELINES,
TARGETED GOALS,
AND CONCRETE
ACTIONS**



SOCIAL JUSTICE
STEREOTYPES
MENT **PROSPERITY**
BALANCE
DIVERSITY

The *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* updates the previous policy—*Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*—and provides a new action plan. It was developed through a consultation process whereby the consulted parties reached a broad consensus regarding key issues and findings in the area of gender equality.

Submissions presented as part of the consultation process confirmed the importance of maintaining the previous policy's guidelines. This Strategy's guidelines are therefore basically the same as before as they cover the same main themes. New goals have been set for each of them, to be achieved through new, concrete measures.

All initiatives presented in this document are new in the sense that they were developed specifically for this Strategy. Some of them are completely new, while others are updated versions of existing initiatives. Many initiatives were made possible due to additional investments toward implementing the Strategy. Great care was taken to avoid overlap with initiatives in other government action plans. As such, government plans pertaining to gender equality are presented as part of the Strategy. These initiatives complement those developed specifically under the Strategy, and help provide a clearer picture of the government's efforts toward achieving equality in fact.

■ CONSENSUS: INTERRELATED ISSUES AND PROGRESS TO BE CONSOLIDATED

At the meeting held on June 23, 2016, it was pointed out that all gender equality issues are interrelated or overlap. The idea that “everything overlaps” was stated repeatedly at the meeting.

Some stressed that actions promoting gender equality should not be discussed, developed, or implemented individually. Consultative bodies, such as the Comité interministériel, must be established to encourage concerted action and to ensure that government efforts in the area of gender equality are consistent and well rounded. As a place for sharing knowledge and experiences, the Forum des partenaires can serve this purpose as well.

The other consensus to emerge concerned the desire to give new impetus to gender equality in Québec. Many argued that real progress has been slow in some areas, such as the presence of women in politics and the sharing of family and domestic responsibilities.

It was determined that initiatives should focus on gender stereotypes and sexism—two key agents of inequality—if gender equality in fact is to be achieved. The economic empowerment of women was also identified as crucial to equality.

■ RURAL AREAS: VITAL TO ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

Québec stands out for the vitality and diversity of its rural areas and the skilled women and men who live there. To succeed, the Strategy must take into account issues specific to these areas. To do so, existing partnerships must be strengthened, including

those with regional women's group roundtables (the Roundtables). New partnerships could also be established with municipalities, universities, communities, and businesses. Equality will also promote prosperity in rural areas. Actions addressing local or regional concerns will therefore contribute to Québec's overall growth.

The government will push for equality by rallying rural areas around the cause with the support of key partners. Local municipalities and partners such as women's groups can greatly contribute to these efforts by helping us address specific regional and local issues.

In addition to strengthening its partnerships with the Roundtables, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine will provide financial assistance to local and regional projects through *S'engager pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*^l, a new budget envelope. This support will serve as a lever for carrying out key projects taking local and regional concerns into account.

■ INVESTMENTS

The *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* consists of new, concrete, and innovative initiatives. Over \$80 million will be invested in these initiatives, including \$32 million in new funds announced in the 2017–2018 budget. Of this \$32 million, \$1.9 million^m will be provided as a follow-up to the Rendez-vous national sur la main-d'œuvre.

DID YOU KNOW?

In October 2016, the government announced its *Stratégie gouvernementale pour prévenir et contrer les violences sexuelles 2016-2021*. The strategy calls for \$44 million in investments for the 2016–2021 period, including \$26 million in new funds.

l. Key component of the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*.

m. A sum of \$2.4 million was announced for the 2017–2018 budget to fund initiatives aimed at improving the employability of women. This investment covers the 2017–2022 period, one year more than the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*. That comes out to \$1.9 million in investments for the period covered by the Strategy.

■ GUIDELINES THAT ARE STILL RELEVANT

The *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* includes six guidelines consistent with those listed in the previous gender equality policy, *Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*. They are not identical, but they address the same issues since these issues are still relevant. In addition to the guidelines, a research component will shed light on unexplored and poorly documented issues.

■ **Guideline 1**

Together for egalitarian socialization and education, free of gender stereotypes and sexism

■ **Guideline 2**

Together for the economic empowerment of women

■ **Guideline 3**

Together for a fair distribution of family responsibilities and better balance between family, work, school, social, and political life

■ **Guideline 4**

Together for a gender-based approach to health and wellness

■ **Guideline 5**

Together for a society without violence against women

■ **Guideline 6**

Together for parity in decision-making

STRUCTURE OF THE SIX MAIN GUIDELINES

Ground covered

The status of women and gender equality have improved in each of the areas covered by the Strategy's guidelines. This section covers progress made and achievements to be maintained.

Persistent inequalities

Through its consultations and documentation efforts, the Government of Québec has identified—within each guideline—priority areas where progress has been slow. To deal with these pockets of resistance, additional measures will be required, e.g., regarding stereotypes, the diversification of career choices, gender diversity at work, the fair sharing of family responsibilities, and parity in decision-making. Persistent inequalities are the focus of our strategic goals.

Strategic goals

The strategic goals define the priority areas where the Government of Québec intends to take action and focus its work in the coming years. Government initiatives aimed at achieving these goals are described in this section.

Continued government intervention

This section lists impactful initiatives from earlier action plans relating to gender equality and the Strategy's guidelines. Over the years, government efforts in the area of gender equality have given rise to various such actions, many of which are now recurring and funded by government ministries and agencies.

The Government of Québec in action

Given the intersectional nature of gender equality, many government ministries and agencies coordinate their action plans and strategies in order to directly or indirectly promote and support the cause. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine works closely with government ministries and agencies to make sure all policies, action plans, and strategies they develop take into account and include measures supporting gender equality.

■ KEY ACTIONS

To achieve gender equality in fact, key actions in line with the aforementioned guiding principles will be implemented in the next few years. These diverse actions will serve as comprehensive intervention tools showcasing the government's vision for gender equality in Québec. Key actions are different from guidelines in that their implementation has an impact on the Strategy's vision.

Seven key actions to overcome the challenge of gender inequality in Québec

- KA 1** Introduce a framework bill aimed at gender equality in fact.
- KA 2** Create and monitor a Québec gender equality index.
- KA 3** Give sexuality education more formal recognition by adding lessons for every academic year from preschool to high school.
- KA 4** Develop campaigns targeting persistent and troubling gender inequalities.
- KA 5** Support activities aimed at encouraging men to become allies in the quest for gender equality.
- KA 6** Support concrete local, regional, and province-wide projects relating to the Strategy's main guidelines, favoring the development of diverse partnerships, and taking the intersectional dimension into account.
- KA 7** Showcase the stories of inspirational women and honor concrete actions supporting gender equality with the Prix Égalité Thérèse-Casgrain award.

KA 1 Introduce a framework bill aimed at gender equality in fact

As the Strategy is implemented, a framework bill on gender equality will be introduced. The bill will encourage government strategies featuring concrete actions aimed at achieving gender equality in fact. It will also support the implementation of gender-based analysis. Bodies whose purpose is to coordinate and inform government interventions in the area of gender equality will be modernized and new ones established in order to consolidate gender equality governance.

With this framework bill, Québec will take the next step toward achieving gender equality in fact. In so doing, it will join a limited group of societies having dared to implement such legislation—which has had a clear impact on individuals and on society as a whole.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MJQ

KA 2 Create and monitor a Québec gender equality index

With this initiative, the Government of Québec aims to create a Québec gender equality index to serve as a decision-making tool for regional and provincial authorities and as an informational tool for the public. Much like other gender equality indices, the index will measure specific variables in order to track the progress of gender equality over time, by geographic area and by category, e.g., work, income, education, and representation in decision-making. This index will help us make effective use of gender-based analysis.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: CSF, MTESS

KA 3**Give sexuality education more formal recognition by adding lessons for every academic year from preschool to high school**

In recent years, many groups have requested that sexuality education be improved. During consultations carried out in 2015 and 2016, this was requested repeatedly. Specific and comprehensive content has been developed for each academic year as part of pilot projects.

Sexuality education will be provided from preschool to the end of high school. Content will be age-appropriate and foster children's growth while limiting vulnerability to certain issues.

Coordinator: MEES

KA 4**Develop campaigns targeting persistent and troubling gender inequalities**

Surveys of Quebecer perceptions regarding gender equality have shown a lack of awareness of persistent inequalities.

Quebecers must be informed of the main inequalities that still exist in our society and rallied behind the cause. Every day, these inequalities bear heavily on women, limiting their ability to reach their full potential. And yet, so many people are unaware of them, do not understand them, or simply ignore them.

Information and awareness campaigns will be organized to help Quebecers realize that gender inequalities remain and are very real. The Government of Québec hopes these campaigns will help change perceptions and mentalities and have a positive impact on equality.

Coordinator: SCF

KA 5**Support activities aimed at encouraging men to become allies in the quest for gender equality**

Launched by UN Women, the HeForShe campaign calls on men and boys to speak up and fight against the inequalities affecting women and girls. Women should not be alone in their fight against gender stereotypes and inequalities. Men have a role to play—they can contribute by speaking up in support of gender equality, by helping break down gender stereotypes, and by working to change mentalities and behaviors. Activities will be organized to get men involved and encourage them to take a stand for social justice.

Coordinator: SCF

KA 6

Support concrete local, regional, and province-wide projects relating to the Strategy's main guidelines, focusing on the development of diverse partnerships, and taking the intersectional dimension into account

S'engager pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes is a budget envelope for supporting projects led by local, regional, and province-wide non-governmental organizations, including women's groups. It will provide considerable local financial leverage and promote key collaborative projects in line with the Strategy's main guidelines, targeted goals, and guiding principles. The budget will receive \$21.3 million in funding over the length of the Strategy, distributed between three components:

1 Taking action for gender equality

Financial support for local and regional projects

This component is intended to support local and regional projects led by local or regional organization, municipalities, or regional county municipalities. Multiyear financial support will be available via calls for projects.

Projects must be collaborative in nature and show that they address local or regional realities and needs.

2 Regional consultation component

Continued and expanded financial support for regional women's group roundtables (the Roundtables)

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine's longstanding partnerships with the Roundtables provide insight on regional issues.

Once the Strategy is in effect, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Roundtables will expand their partnership in accordance with the Strategy's guidelines and goals. This renewed partnership will allow the Roundtables to make the most of their regional expertise on gender equality. The annual budget assigned to the Roundtables will be increased by 50% to make this possible.

3 Innovation and experimentation component

Financial support for innovative and experimental projects

The purpose of this component is to support key experimental projects to be rolled out across Québec and led by local, regional, or province-wide organizations, universities, municipalities, or regional county municipalities. These partners will be able to take specific, concrete actions to propose interventions suitable for local conditions.

Coordinator: SCF

Throughout the consultation process leading up to the current Strategy, the importance of publically recognizing and honoring inspiring and in particular relatable role models was repeatedly emphasized.

To address this concern, the Prix Égalité Thérèse-Casgrain award will recognize Québec women whose lives are likely to inspire others. The award will also honor women and men having shown commitment to the cause of gender equality and taken concrete action to support it.

In collaboration with non-governmental organizations and governmental partners, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine will promote this recognition activity and ensure its coherence with other government awards.

Coordinator: SCF

■ STRATEGIC GOALS AND CONCRETE ACTIONS

As pointed out at the June 2016 meetings, gender equality issues overlap. Accordingly, the Strategy's guidelines, key actions, and strategic goals, and all associated efforts mesh together, converging toward the objective of making gender equality a reality in Québec.

Through its guidelines, the Government of Québec has set ten strategic goals largely inspired by the consultation process. To achieve these goals, new concrete actions were developed.

Each of the 59 actions included in the Strategy is briefly described. The government ministries and agencies in charge of implementing each action and those collaborating in the endeavor are all indicated.

To implement its new initiatives, the Government of Québec wants to form partnerships with organizations recognized for their knowledge and expertise in key areas.

As of 2016–2017, discussions were initiated with various partners and new partnerships were announced, including with the Union des municipalités du Québec, the Fédération des municipalités du Québec, and the Commission de la construction du Québec (in collaboration with Emploi-Québec and the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale).

That year, various partnership agreements were signed, including with Academos, Jeunes explorateurs d'un jour, Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie, and the Chaire pour les femmes en sciences et en génie au Québec. In addition, financing agreements were signed with 17 regional women's group roundtables.

As the Strategy is implemented, more partnerships will be considered, in particular once the aforementioned Forum des partenaires has been established and held.

■ GUIDELINE 1

TOGETHER FOR EGALITARIAN SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION, FREE OF GENDER STEREOTYPES AND SEXISM

Egalitarian relationships are without a doubt the cornerstone of gender equality. The consensus emerging from the consultation process was that egalitarian socialization and education is the key to fostering such relationships.

It bears remembering that one of the key actions presented earlier involves campaigns against persistent and troubling gender inequalities. These campaigns will take gender stereotypes and sexism into account and will promote egalitarian relationships.

“Socialization refers to how society shapes and molds individuals and to the conscious and unconscious processes through which people internalize social norms: family, childcare professionals, school, peers, the media, work, etc.”³⁵. [TRANSLATION]

1 GROUND COVERED

By adhering to the UN’s CEDAW, the Government of Québec showed its intention to fight against persistent discrimination in Québec. Governments signing the convention agree to take appropriate measures to change paradigms conveying the idea that either gender is superior or inferior to the other, such as socio-cultural gender behavior models based on stereotypes and prejudices.

Promoting egalitarian relationships was a new priority in the previous policy. In the last ten years, many efforts have been made to eliminate gender stereotypes and sexism in socialization and to encourage egalitarian relationships.

The Charte québécoise pour une image corporelle saine et diversifiée (CHIC) was launched in 2009 as part of an international movement within the fashion industry aimed at raising awareness of issues relating to excessive preoccupation with weight among girls and boys. A working committee was established to plan and monitor activities organized under the CHIC. This working committee includes key partners in the fashion industry, researchers, and government ministry and agency representatives. Recently, the Recreation and Sports component of the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur joined the committee. This new partnership sets the table for discussions on various issues, including declining participation in physical and sports activities among youth—in particular teenage girls—due to how they perceive their body image. So far, almost 27,000 people have signed the charter, thereby declaring their support for the principles enshrined in the CHIC and their moral and voluntary commitment to body positivity.

Efforts must be continued in this area while taking new realities into account, such as social media’s role in disseminating gender stereotypes and sexist beliefs.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2016, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine carried out an assessment of the support document *Les livres et les jouets ont-ils un sexe?* to measure the impact it has had on the educational childcare services that received it in August 2015. Three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported that they had changed their educational practices and the way they interacted with children. Focus groups were held as part of the assessment process. Participating childcare educators stressed the need for proper support and training, as eliminating stereotypes from their interactions with children was not easy. They also mentioned various tools that could help them in this regard (e.g., instructional videos and sheets on various topics, posters, training)³⁶.

In accordance with the government policy on gender equality and associated action plans, government efforts to directly or indirectly improve gender equality have promoted egalitarian socialization and education. In recent years, the government has taken steps to address certain troubling phenomena affecting our society, such as homophobia, bullying, abuse, and violent radicalization. These efforts have contributed to the progress of gender equality.

2 PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES

Key facts

- Body dissatisfaction and the desire to be skinnier can develop in children as young as 4 to 6 years old. By around 9, 45% of children of both genders are dissatisfied with their body, and a third of girls and a quarter of boys have already tried to lose weight³⁷.
- 71% of high school students are doing something about their weight, e.g., trying to control their weight (34%), lose weight (25%), or gain weight (12%)³⁸. This dissatisfaction does not end with high school: according to a study conducted in 2014–2015, 48.2% of men and 58.1% of women 18 and over had attempted to lose, maintain, or gain weight in the previous six months³⁹.
- Girls who are as good as boys at sports and physical activities see themselves as inferior to them in this regard, and this feeling of incompetence grows with age⁴⁰.
- Mental health issues are more common among girls: 15% of girls suffer from anxiety, depression, or eating disorders, versus 9% of boys (Enquête québécoise sur la santé des jeunes du secondaire)⁴¹.
- Female athletes are often underrepresented in the media—only 1% of sports news involved female athletes in 2016⁴².

Gender stereotypes, an ongoing problem

To this day, gender stereotypes continue to influence children's socialization and education, posing a systemic threat to our efforts to achieve equality in fact.

By perpetuating preconceptions and prejudices, gender stereotypes undermine the progress made toward achieving gender equality. This can have a negative impact on the lives of children and youth in particular, influencing academic success, choice of occupation or profession, feelings of inadequacy (not feeling like a "real" girl or boy),

perceptions of body image, and attitudes toward sharing family responsibilities, emotions, and love⁴³.

“The pervasiveness of stereotypes in society inhibits individual and social development and people’s ability to use their talents to the fullest and exercise their rights, regardless of gender”⁴⁴. [TRANSLATION]

In Québec society, if a person’s appearance or behavior does not conform to traditional concepts of femininity or masculinity, they can be subject to discrimination.

The key role of socialization agents

Government intervention is required in various spheres, including the home, public, school, and work environments and educational childcare services. Given the far-reaching scope of this guideline, some of these environments will be covered by specific actions in other guidelines presented later in the document.

Socialization agents (parents, educational staff, teachers, coaches, the fashion and communications industries, etc.) play a crucial role. What they say and do on a daily basis has an undeniable impact on our adults in training. To help socialization agents fulfill this rather demanding role, it is absolutely vital that appropriate and effective tools be made available to them. In regard to teachers, a brief published by the Conseil du statut de la femme in 2016—*L’égalité des sexes en milieu scolaire*—highlights this need, stating that “many teachers in Québec currently lack the tools they need to deconstruct their essentialist conceptions regarding gender differences and establish truly egalitarian education”. [TRANSLATION]

In recent years, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine has granted financial support to non-governmental organization projects aimed at providing training and developing tools to address gender stereotypes and sexism. Since 2015, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine has been working to draw attention to all the work accomplished in this area and to share its newfound knowledge with as many people as possible. During consultation sessions, it was brought to our attention that many adequate tools are already available, but largely unknown. Increasing the visibility of these tools and making them more accessible should help us deconstruct gender stereotypes and overcome sexism.

In school

In the aforementioned brief, the Conseil du statut de la femme stresses that “schools still contribute to gender inequality”. [TRANSLATION] The Conseil supérieur de l’éducation asserts that “the more boys and girls subscribe to social gender roles, the more likely they are to struggle at school. Fighting stereotypes can help girls and boys do better at school, especially in disadvantaged areas where boys are more likely to adhere to stereotypical gender roles”⁴⁵. [TRANSLATION]

Furthermore, while there are those who would claim that school is built for girls, as they are “naturally” less active than boys, many researchers seem to think that the less girls buy into the stereotypical image of the “good little girl,” the more successful they are likely to be. The same goes for boys when they distance themselves from stereotypes relating to their gender. And yet, boys subscribe to stereotypes twice as much as girls do⁴⁶.

In sports

Body image issues have a direct impact on youth involvement in sports activities. Sports are often seen as masculine activity, as evidenced by the underrepresentation of female athletes in sports media coverage. Some academics argue that the absence of female role models in this domain makes it seem like physical activities are more suited for boys—as a result, girls are less active than they should beⁿ. These findings reveal a disturbing trend that is hurting Québec’s youth and must be addressed.

Sexualization of the public sphere and the media

The sexualization of the public sphere and the media affects personal confidence, self-esteem, romantic relationships, and body wellness. It can cause negative effects such as shame, anxiety, health issues from abusing weight-loss products, and mental health issues like eating disorders, self-deprecation, and depressed mood. The sexualization of society—in particular early sexualization and overexposure to sexualized and sexist advertising—is setting harmful beauty standards for women and men. The media disseminates retouched, stereotypical, sexist, or even pornographic images perpetuating a cult of thinness and objectifying girls and women as well as boys and men. These images can create social pressure to conform, especially among youth who are particularly vulnerable to their influence.

The sexualization of the public sphere refers to when products or behaviors that are not inherently sexual are sexualized to stimulate demand, sell a product, or convey a message. Such forms of sexualization can often affect our behavior and that of our children without us realizing it. As such, the sexualization of the public sphere contributes to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes within our society⁴⁷.

Early sexualization refers to “when children develop sexual attitudes and behaviors not consistent with their stage of psychological and sexual development. Early sexualization is the result of a hypersexualized society”⁴⁸. [TRANSLATION]

n. According to *L'activité physique et sportive des adolescentes: bilan, perspectives et pistes d'action*, a document produced by Kino-Québec, only one in three teenage girls does at least seven hours of physical activity a week, whereas the ratio for teenage boys is one in two.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Over three-quarters of respondents (77%) thought that boys and girls are drawn to different games. 72% of 18–34-year-olds, 80% of men, and 74% of women believed this.
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents said that parents raise boys and girls differently. 35–54-year-olds were less likely to share this opinion (68%).
- 40% of respondents felt that ads in Québec are sexist toward women and 24% of them felt they are sexist toward men.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents thought that having more diverse role models (age, size, ethnicity) in magazines and on television had a positive influence on how Quebecers viewed their body.
- Almost half (45%) of respondents believed that male athletes get more media coverage in Québec, whereas 43% thought coverage was equal for both genders. As indicated earlier, women received only 1% of sports media coverage in 2016.

Supporting equality in a diverse society

Gender equality is one of Québec's fundamental values. In the same vein, Québec's diversity is a tremendous asset and source of pride. Democratic values must not only be taught in educational contexts, but also fostered among people who have uprooted themselves to build a new life in Québec. Some immigrants have a less consensual and egalitarian view of the relationship between women and men. To ensure that all immigrants—youth and adults—participate in Québec society equally, particular attention must be paid to both the professional and personal spheres. This approach was already included in the previous action plan and will be continued.

3 STRATEGIC GOALS

Egalitarian relationships being the cornerstone of gender equality, the Government of Québec plans to take the following steps to fulfill the objectives of this guideline:

- Fight gender stereotypes and sexism.
- Facilitate the integration of newcomers to Québec by promoting the principle of gender equality.

■ GOAL 1.1 FIGHT GENDER STEREOTYPES AND SEXISM

1.1.1.

Tool up parents, educational childcare staff, school staff, and other people who work with children and youth

SansStéréotypes is a big project meant to serve as a go-to reference for parents, educational childcare staff, school staff, and other people who work with children and youth (e.g., within the community). These people need the proper information, training, and tools to fight gender stereotypes and sexism, and this innovative project addresses this need. These tools will encourage people to adopt practices fostering egalitarian relationships and will help deconstruct gender stereotypes and sexism along seven different lines (academic success, sexualization of the public sphere, emotional and love life, girl/boy identity, body image, academic and career choices, and sharing family responsibilities).

The project has three components:

1. Develop informative content, update existing tools, and disseminate information and references that could help parents and workers prevent gender-stereotyped socialization and take action against gender stereotypes and sexism.
2. Educate socialization agents about the importance of stereotype-free socialization, namely through a newsletter promoting tools, training, and web videos.
3. Provide skill development training for workers in all sectors as part of basic and ongoing training.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MEES, MESI, MIDI, MJQ (BLCH), MSSS, SAJ

1.1.2.

Devise and implement concrete actions promoting a healthy and diverse body image in close cooperation with the image industry and government partners

New actions will be taken to raise the profile of the Charte québécoise pour une image corporelle saine et diversifiée (CHIC) with the general public and the image industry. To give CHIC new impetus, its working committee will be organizing concrete activities in the next few years. The committee includes representatives from the media; the image, advertising, and music industries; the health and education sectors; and various government ministries and agencies.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: MEES, MESI, MSSS

1.1.3. Implement actions aimed at fighting sexism in Québec advertising

This initiative is about following up on key avenues for improvement identified in *État de situation et proposition de mesures d'amélioration pour contrer le sexisme dans les publicités au Québec*, a report produced by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications with the assistance of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine as part of the *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes 2011-2015*.

The advertising industry, consumers, and Québec government bodies will be rallied in order to fight sexism in Québec advertising.

The government will support information and awareness activities aimed at consumers and the advertising industry for the purpose of fighting sexism in advertising. For example, efforts will be made to inform the public about the complaint process for sexual and sexist messages and images in the media, and to sensitize marketing, communications, and business professionals on sexism in advertising.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MCC

1.1.4. Educate the public to eliminate gender stereotypes in sports and physical activities

Égale Action^o will be given financial support to produce and publish articles on female athletes. Available on the MEES and Sportcom^p websites (www.sportcom.qc.ca), these articles will not only educate the public about gender stereotypes in sports and physical activities, they will also help fight gender stereotypes and sexism in such activities. In addition, they will provide strong female role models for young athletes. This initiative will kill two birds with one stone: it will improve public health by encouraging girls to be more active, and it will promote gender equality by increasing the female presence in stereotypically male sports.

Coordinator: MEES

1.1.5. Educate and inform the public, especially women, young people, and professionals, about healthy weight management and body image

This initiative will be carried out through various healthy weight management and body image activities, such as public campaigns, training sessions, and publications. Specifically, these activities will address weight-loss products, services, and methods, general

o. Égale Action is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide provincial leadership, to recognize, to educate, to promote, to support leaders, and to mobilize partners in order to encourage girls and women to participate in sports and physical activities and to ensure they have a positive experience.

p. Sportcom is a website that provides information on elite athletes.

health risks associated with their use, and the industry's misleading communication strategies. They will also discuss the fashion industry's and the media's influence on body image and the benefits of having a healthy lifestyle and positive body image, especially in regard to healthy weight management.

Coordinator: MSSS

■ GOAL 1.2

FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS TO QUÉBEC BY PROMOTING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY

1.2.1. Address gender equality in intercultural learning activities

As part of a broad action plan to diversify and adapt educational services to reflect student needs, in particular those of immigrants, gender equality will be specifically designated as a key item to address in intercultural learning activities. Support will be provided to primary and secondary schools to help them integrate gender equality into classroom intercultural learning activities as well as extracurricular activities, and learning material will be developed for students.

Coordinator: MEES

1.2.2. Make information on gender equality available to newcomers to Québec

This initiative is aimed at updating the guide *À parts égales, À part entière*, and in particular at making this document accessible in a more convenient and useful format on the Secrétariat à la condition féminine website.

A vignette promoting the guide and a short video will also be produced. Organizations providing francization and integration services certified by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion will be able to use these tools at information sessions. The video will be a valuable tool tailored specifically for new immigrants, covering the most fundamental aspects of gender equality using concrete, everyday examples of life in Québec.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MIDI

4 CONTINUED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur

Ensure that teaching material is approved by the minister, free of stereotypes, and promotes egalitarian relationships between women and men.

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

Continue to promote the Mosaïk project's sexuality-related prevention tools.

QUÉBEC IN ACTION

In 2017, the Ministère de la Justice's Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie (BLCH) launched the *Plan d'action gouvernemental de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie 2017-2022*. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the BLCH share a common purpose: to fight gender stereotypes and sexism, including heterosexism. This remains an important issue for sexual minorities, be they women, men, cisgender, or transgender^q.

In the 2017 *Politique de l'activité physique, du sport et du loisir Au Québec, on bouge!*, coordinated by the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, the Government of Québec recognizes the importance of targeting girls, who are less active than boys across all age groups. The government also notes that the underrepresentation of girls and women is not limited to the playing field; it also extends to committees, athlete recognition, and media coverage⁴⁹. One of the policy's measures is specifically aimed at getting girls to regularly engage in physical activity⁵⁰. The measure addresses the Strategy's objective of educating the public to eliminate gender stereotypes in sports and physical activities. Women and girls who engage in sports activities have more confidence and self-esteem and are more likely to participate in school and community life⁵¹.

In 2016, the Government of Québec revealed its *Politique québécoise de la jeunesse 2030 Ensemble pour les générations présentes et futures*. The *Stratégie d'action jeunesse 2016-2021* is the first of three successive five-year action plans stemming directly from this policy. Coordinated by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, the strategy is aimed at implementing concrete actions benefitting young Quebecers between the ages of 15 and 29 in the areas of health, education, citizenship, work, and entrepreneurship. It supports various initiatives focused on fostering harmonious and egalitarian interpersonal relationships.

In 2016, the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion published the *Politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec*, along with the *Stratégie d'action en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion 2016-2021*. The latter provides various courses of action for improving gender equality in fact for Quebecers of all origins. One notable example involves applying the same selection factors and criteria to the main applicant's spouse for the Regular Skilled Worker Program. This measure is in line with the Strategy's aim of facilitating the entry of immigrant women into the labor market. The Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion is also working to make effective use of gender-based analysis. The ministry and the Secrétariat à la condition féminine are collaborating on an action research project on the implementation of gender-based analysis within the ministry. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine designated the École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP) to lead the project.

q. The term "transgender" designates a person who sees themselves as belonging to or who identifies with the sex opposite to the one assigned to them at birth and who desires to live as such. Transgender people do not typically want sex reassignment surgery. (MJQ – BLHQ)
The term "cisgender" designates a person whose gender identity and expression are consistent with the gender assigned to them at birth. (Ministère de la Justice)

Promoting egalitarian behavior means fighting against all forms of bullying and harassment. In 2015, the Ministère de la Famille launched the *Plan d'action concerté pour contrer et prévenir l'intimidation 2015-2018 Ensemble contre l'intimidation* to address the specific needs of all Quebecers in this regard.

GUIDELINE 2

TOGETHER FOR THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The economic empowerment of women is a key aspect to consider as it affects most other major areas influencing gender equality. While access to work remains a challenge for some women, it is not the only issue to address. These days, the focus is on diversifying career choices and promoting gender diversity at work. Women are not branching out into other fields, and many professions and trades have yet to achieve a critical mass of women^r. To deal with these issues properly, the strong link between gender stereotypes and career choices and between sexism in the workplace and the lack of women in certain fields must be acknowledged. The uneven sharing of family responsibilities between women and men also has a major impact on the economic empowerment of women.

"Economic empowerment combines the concepts of empowerment and economic advancement. Approaches to economic empowerment concentrate on factors that help women succeed and advance in the marketplace. This includes increasing skills and access to productive resources, improving the enabling and institutional environments, and assisting women in their ability to make and act upon decisions in order to benefit from economic growth and development. Economic empowerment is intertwined with social and political empowerment. Taking into account the underlying social and cultural factors that limit women's ability to interact with and benefit from markets, such as unpaid and unevenly shared housework and caregiving, limited mobility, and the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, is essential if initiatives are to address the full range of constraints to women's economic empowerment"⁵².

It should be noted that all female workers are not equal—various factors can affect the opportunities available to them. In addition to discrimination against women, female workers can also face discrimination due to disability, sexual orientation, education, age, and ethnic origin. Intersectional discrimination is a burden on women—it can exacerbate issues and jeopardize their economic empowerment.

In February 2017, the Government of Québec held the Rendez-vous national sur la main-d'œuvre. At this event, commitments were made regarding the female workforce. Special attention will be given to growth industries, including those covered by sector-specific government strategies, such as the *Stratégie maritime À l'horizon 2030* and the *Stratégie numérique du Québec*, and government plans. Some of the actions listed under this guideline were established at the Rendez-vous national sur la main-d'œuvre.

r. A critical mass of 15% to 35% reduces women's exposure to workplace discrimination. (See Marie-Josée Legault's report.)

As with men, women have a key role to play in Québec's economic prosperity. The government will take steps to ensure that they can develop to their full potential.

1 GROUND COVERED

Girls' academic success: A source of great pride

Access to education is an area in which women have made tremendous progress in the last fifty years. Québec and many other Western societies can take pride in the academic success their girls and young women have had from high school to university. More and more women are going to university—that means more women in leadership positions and more economic empowerment. Education staves off poverty!

Key facts

- In 1961, only 1.6%⁵³ of Québec women 15 and over had a bachelor's or post-graduate degree, whereas 19.1%⁵⁴ of them had one in 2011. This progress was also observed among men to a lesser extent—while only 4.2%⁵⁵ of Québec men 15 and over had a bachelor's or post-graduate degree in 1961, 18%⁵⁶ of them had one in 2011.
- In 2016, women with no university degree earned 48.7% the average hourly wage of women with university degrees⁵⁷.
- The more educated women are, the smaller the gender gap. In 2016, among individuals with no university degree, women earned 78.7% the average hourly wage of men. Among university graduates, women earned 86.2% the average hourly wage of men. However, it should be noted that little progress has been made in this regard in the past 10 years⁵⁸.

Women are more active in the labor market

Women's representation in the labor market has improved with time. In 2016, 48% of employed individuals 15 and over were women. The introduction of reduced-contribution childcare services in 1997 helped a lot in this regard. Twenty years later, young families—in particular those in vulnerable situations—now have access to 293,907 childcare spaces, 232,260 of them subsidized⁵⁹.

Key facts

- From 1995 to 2005, the participation rate of Québec mothers ages 25-54 with children under 6 jumped 12.5% to 77.8%. Over the same period, the participation rate of Ontario mothers with children under 6 went up only 6.2%—half as much—to 73.7%.
- In 2016, the participation rate of Québec mothers with children under 6 reached 81.3%, whereas that of Ontario mothers with children under 6 was down to 73.6%⁶⁰.

Laws and programs promoting the economic empowerment of women

The *Pay Equity Act*, passed in 1996, stipulates that businesses of ten or more employees must conduct a pay equity audit. The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) is in charge of enforcing the law, i.e., it has been tasked with establishing and maintaining pay equity.

For its part, the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse is in charge of enforcing various provisions promoting gender equality. In September 1987, the Government of Québec decided “to implement a contractual obligation program for any businesses with over 100 employees that submit tenders for government goods and services contracts or apply for \$100,000+ in subsidies”⁶¹. [TRANSLATION]

Section 92 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* stipulates that “the Government must require its departments and agencies whose personnel is appointed in accordance with the *Public Service Act* (chapter F-3.1.1) to implement affirmative action programs within such time as it may fix”.

The *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies*, adopted in December 2000 and in effect since April 1, 2001, forces various public bodies with 100+ employees—including health and social services institutions, educational institutions, municipalities, public corporations, and the Sûreté du Québec (police forces)—to develop equal access employment programs. The law is intended to eliminate the employment and promotion obstacles encountered by women and to foster gender balance in various job classes and categories⁶².

Lastly, the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*, adopted in December 2002, is of particular importance. The law pays special attention to the economic challenges women in vulnerable situations are likely to face.

Pay equity means providing equal pay for jobs traditionally held by women and those traditionally held by men, even if the jobs are different, provided that they are of equal or comparable value to the business.

The purpose of **equal access employment programs** is to ensure that women and certain specifically designated groups—e.g., visible minorities, ethnic minorities, Indigenous people, and disabled people—are fairly represented within a business's or organization's staff.

DID YOU KNOW?

As of January 31, 2016, 150 private businesses were subject to the Contractual Obligation Program and 330 public agencies were subject to the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies*.

The public function's Programme d'accès à l'égalité de la fonction publique pour les femmes 1992-1997 is still in effect, and each ministry and agency must include a report on it in its annual management report.

2 PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES

The grave consequences of girls dropping out

The fact that many boys are dropping out of school and that they do so more often than girls is well known and a cause for concern. That said, girls are less likely to go back to school after dropping out. Their reasons for dropping out and in particular the consequences of doing so are not the same as they are for boys. When girls drop out, it can set them back economically for the rest of their lives—even more so than boys.

Young women are four times more likely than young men to say they dropped out of school for personal reasons, usually to care for a child or to deal with health or domestic issues. Young men are twice as likely as young women to say they dropped out of school because they wanted to or had to work⁶³.

These distinctions were taken into account in the preparatory work leading to the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur's *Politique de la réussite éducative*. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine contributed to developing the policy.

Key facts

- In 2013–2014, the dropout rate was 14.1% (17.4% for boys and 11.0% for girls). The gap between boys and girls is getting smaller, from 12% in 1999–2000 to 6.4% in 2013–2014⁶⁴.
- In 2016, about a fifth of Quebecers aged 15 and over had no degree, including 19.5% of women and 20.5% of men⁶⁵.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- 33% of respondents believed dropping out has a bigger impact on a girl's career (37% for those with a high school degree or less). Paradoxically, twice that amount—66%—said they thought men who dropped out of high school earned more than women who dropped out.

Persistent wage inequality

The gender pay gap is a complex phenomenon. The practices and prejudices that devalue women's work are persistent⁶⁶.

Studies seeking to identify and determine the relative importance of the various factors responsible for wage inequality have turned up a wide range of findings⁶⁷. Gender differences in education and career choices was identified as a key factor. However, nearly all studies on the matter come to the conclusion that an unexplained gap remains⁶⁸.

It appears that the pay gap is less and less the result of gender differences in education, experience, and career choices—women have been shown to earn less than men, even when their profiles are similar.

This illustrates the systemic discrimination in our society and underscores the importance of continuing to work together in various areas to promote gender equality. Gender

stereotypes and unevenly shared family and domestic responsibilities, for instance, are other factors that can explain why women continue to earn less than men.

Diversifying career choices

To this day, girls and boys still make stereotypical career choices. Most girls continue to pursue careers in the fields of health and education, reflecting their family responsibilities as mothers and caregivers. Boys, meanwhile, still gravitate toward science and technology and construction and public works. This phenomenon is known as occupational segregation.

Occupational segregation refers to the fact that women and men work in fields dominated by their gender. Françoise Coré, a writer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), notes that these days “occupation very largely determines an individual’s social and economic status. In this regard, the gender segregation of occupations brings out some marked differences that are detrimental to female-dominated occupations because they further inhibit female access to the occupations which attract the most prestige, the most power, and the highest incomes. These occupations are still by and large a male ‘preserve.’ Female-dominated occupations have lower standing in terms of income, career prospects, and social recognition”⁶⁹.

One course of action would be to create a segregation index indicating the percentage of women (or men) who would have to change occupation for us to achieve an even gender distribution in all occupations (i.e., 50/50 split across the board). According to Statistics Canada, occupational segregation is more pronounced among people with no university degree⁷⁰.

Diversifying career choices does not mean making certain types of jobs less appealing to future male or female workers. It means expanding the career options available to both girls and boys by targeting the guidance process. This process involves not only young people, but also various other actors such as parents, teachers, and especially guidance counselors. One of the problems with the guidance process is the risk of reproducing gender stereotypes. This issue must be addressed, and educating, informing, and training these socialization agents will be critical. To ensure that young people make diverse career choices, it is important to reduce the likelihood of consciously or unconsciously conveying gender stereotypes to them when they are in the process of making key decisions about their future.

The idea of using inspiring role models as part of the youth guidance process was brought up repeatedly at consultation meetings. For anyone looking into a potential future occupation, nothing is more compelling than talking to people who are passionate about the job and can provide details on the work involved.

When it comes to diversifying women’s career choices, it is important to target older women as well. Many women change career later in their life in order to improve their socio-economic situation, often choosing to work in traditionally male trades. The Commission de la construction du Québec points out that girls are currently much less likely than boys to go straight “to vocational school after high school in order to become construction workers”. [TRANSLATION] It would seem that for many women, the decision to enter the construction industry comes at a later point in life, coinciding with a career change.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Over two-thirds of respondents thought stereotypes influenced the career choices of girls and boys.
- 74% of respondents rejected the idea that men are better than women at science, with women disagreeing more than men (78% and 70% respectively).

Key facts

- In 2014–2015, over three-quarters of girls (76.4%) registered for vocational training in high school were concentrated in three sectors (administration, commerce, and computer technology; health; and beauty care), and a bit fewer than two-thirds of boys (62.2%) were concentrated in five sectors (administration, commerce, and computer technology; construction and public works; motorized equipment maintenance; electrical engineering; and metalworking)⁷¹.
- “In 2015, 56.1% of [Canadian] women were employed in teaching, nursing and related health occupations, social work, clerical or other administrative positions, or sales and services, compared with 17.1% of men. This gender distribution across occupations was little changed from 1987, when 59.2% of women and 15.7% of men were employed in traditionally-female occupations”⁷².
- In 2016, Québec women represented only 22.8% of people employed in the natural and applied sciences and related sectors, and 5.8% of people employed in trades, transportation, and the machine industry, whereas they represented 81.1% of people employed in the health industry⁷³.
- The Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec notes that its female membership is low—a mere 13.6% according to the latest figures—and is increasing slowly. Gender proportions also vary by discipline, with women representing 31% of environmental engineers (the most popular discipline among women), but only 7% of mechanical engineers and 8% of electrical engineers⁷⁴.

Working environments conducive to gender diversity

The presence of women in male-dominated trades and professions and vice versa leads to interaction (soft skills), professional development (knowledge), and skill sharing (expertise), resulting in an all-around better working environment. To ensure that all workplaces benefit from the added value gender diversity brings to the table, they must be mobilized, informed, and guided through this new approach.

Some industries are already taking action to promote gender diversity to employees. Many businesses in male-dominated industries have made hiring women a strategic priority, such as the construction industry, which has shown a strong commitment in this regard.

In 2015, the construction industry introduced its ambitious Programme d'accès à l'égalité des femmes dans l'industrie de la construction 2015-2024, coordinated by the Commission de la construction du Québec. In December 2016, the commission launched the *Mixité en Chantier* campaign. The initiative is aimed at changing mentalities regarding the role of women in the construction industry, where the workforce is mostly male. In November 2016, four new regulatory measures were adopted to encourage more women to work in construction.

Having partners like the Commission de la construction du Québec commit to improving gender diversity in the workplace is key. Equally important are the interventions made by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. As part of its 2015–2019 strategic plan, the commission aims to expand its efforts in areas where practices are straying from real equality goals. This includes developing a systemic approach in some subsectors where certain groups of people, such as women, are underrepresented.

Many workplaces have serious labor issues to address. With so many employees retiring and growing skilled labor shortages, workplaces now have to make use of all skilled workers at their disposal, including women.

The principle behind achieving gender diversity in male-dominated companies is simple—rather than forcing women to change or adapt, companies must be assisted with change management so they can accommodate their new workers. This precaution is based on unfortunate experiences involving sexist behavior and sexual harassment. It is only natural that women should be given a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment to work in.

Key facts about the construction industry in 2015

- Women represented 1.5% of the construction workforce subject to law R-20 (*Act respecting labor relations, vocational training and workforce management in the construction industry*)⁷⁵.
- A mere 7.5% of the industry's 25,705 employers hired women⁷⁶.
- A much larger proportion of women left the industry after five years than men (57% versus 36%)⁷⁷.
- Women represented 5.1% of construction graduates, a 6.6% increase over the previous year⁷⁸.
- Women still represented 4.5% of new arrivals in the industry, despite a downturn in activity⁷⁹.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- A bit over three-quarters (79%) of respondents said a change in workplace culture was required to increase the presence of women in male-dominated occupations. Respondents 55 and over strongly agreed with this statement (90%).
- 71% of respondents thought integrating men into female-dominated jobs would require similar changes.
- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) still thought some occupations were more suitable to women than men. Women were among the groups least likely to agree with this statement (59% versus 74% for men), as were young adults ages 18–34 (55%) versus 72% for people age 55 and over.
- More women (31%) than men (22%) said they had considered getting a job traditionally associated with the other gender. The reasons for not considering such a job were quite diverse, with men and women citing different motivations. Four times more women than men claimed they feared harassment (12% and 3% respectively). Women were also more likely to cite a lack of work/family-balance measures as an obstacle (8% versus 2% for men). 11% of men claimed low salaries to be an obstacle, an issue raised by only 3% of women. Men were also more likely to say they would not find a job traditionally associated with the other gender to be gratifying (8% versus 3% for women).

Access to work and quality jobs for all women

Being an immigrant, being a single parent, having a disabled child, and having to care for a spouse or elderly person are all key factors that can keep women out of the labor market. While women have better access to employment than they did before, getting a job can be harder for some than it is for others. According to the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, in 2015–2016, women were slightly less likely than men to return to work after participating in an employment activity or measure. The gap was bigger for immigrant women and single mothers.

The employment rate for immigrant women is much lower than it is for immigrant men. Immigrant women are also less active on the labor market than Québec women in general. Moreover, immigrant women are significantly more likely to be highly educated than non-immigrant women—28.8% of them have a university degree compared to only 17.3% of non-immigrant women⁸⁰.

The *Pay Equity Act* celebrated its 20th anniversary in fall 2016, providing an opportunity to take stock of the progress made in implementing the law and to highlight the importance of continuing efforts vis-à-vis non-unionized female workers.

In keeping with this commitment, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail adopted the *Plan d'action favorisant l'application de la Loi sur l'équité salariale à l'égard des travailleuses non syndiquées 2017-2019* on April 20, 2017. As part of the plan, the commission undertook to expand its efforts to inform non-unionized female workers about their rights and remedies regarding pay equity and to help them exercise these rights and remedies. The organization also committed to helping non-unionized businesses meet their obligations by providing additional support.

Of the various vulnerable situations, having a disabled child can be particularly challenging. Economic difficulties are compounded with social difficulties; hence the need to better inform families so they can make the most of the support available to them.

Key facts

- According to preliminary data, the median income^s of Québec women ages 25 to 64 was \$34,932 in 2015, 2% more than in 2014, while that of men of the same age was \$44,388, 2.2% more than in 2014⁸¹.
- From 2002 to 2015, the income gap between men and women fell from 30.3% to 21.3% in Québec⁸².
- From 2001 to 2016, the average hourly wage for women in full-time employment ages 25–54 increased by more than 55.5% (42.8% for men in full-time employment) to about \$25 in 2016. In 2016, the average hourly wage for women in full-time employment ages 25–54 was \$2.40 lower than that of their male counterparts⁸³.
- In 2016, the participation and employment rates of immigrant women ages 15 and over (60.1% and 54.1%) were lower than those of women in general (60.7% and 57%)⁸⁴.
- In 2016, the participation and employment rates of immigrant women ages 15 and over were about 11% lower than that of immigrant men. This gender gap is more pronounced for immigrants than in the general population, where the participation and employment rates of men were 7.9% and 6% higher respectively⁸⁵.
- From 1997 to 2016, the unionization rate for women barely changed, going from 38.9% to 39.3%. For men, the rate went from 43.7% to 37.9% over the same period⁸⁶.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- 72% of respondents said that men earned more money than women with the same level of education. Some groups agreed with this statement more, such as women (78% compared to 67% for men) and people 55 and over (81% compared to 68% for people ages 35–54 and 66% for people ages 18–34).
- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) believed men with no high school diploma earned more than women in the same situation. A similar proportion of women and men shared this opinion.
- 45% of respondents thought women and men with no high school diploma were equally likely to live in poverty. Nearly as many respondents (44%) thought the risk was higher for women.
- Most respondents (54%) thought entering the labor market was harder for immigrant women than for immigrant men. One in five respondents was not sure (21%).

s. The Institut de la statistique du Québec defines median income as follows: “If half the individuals in a group earn a given amount or less, that amount is the median income”. [TRANSLATION]

Women entrepreneurs: An asset worth developing

Entrepreneurs drive Québec's growth and boost its profile. In the last forty years, the proportion of female entrepreneurs in Québec has gone up considerably. That said, there is still much work to be done. If the same proportion of women went into business as men, Québec would have 33% more entrepreneurs⁸⁷. Also, some statistics seem to suggest that entrepreneurial success is transmitted from generation to generation, so establishing new generations of entrepreneurs is key.

Key facts

- Women represented 19.8% of entrepreneurs in 1976 compared to 39% in 2016⁸⁸.
- In 2016, 7.8% of Québec's adult population were business owners (8.8% of the labor force, 5.3% of women, and 10.4% of men)⁸⁹.
- The business closure rate in 2016 was 12.6% (15.6% of businesses owned by men and 9.7% of those owned by women)⁹⁰.
- Businesses owned by women are more likely to last 10 years or more (25.7% versus 20.3% for businesses owned by men)⁹¹.
- Most businesses do not survive longer than five years (57.9%), which is the general trend in Québec and the rest of the world. However, this value conceals certain differences between types of owners. For instance, the businesses of owners from families in business tend to last longer (28.6% of their businesses survive longer than ten years, compared to 17.7% for owners not from families in business)⁹².

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents said there were more male entrepreneurs than female ones in Québec. 80% of people 55 and over agreed with this statement, compared to 68% of those ages 18-34.

Thanks to Femmessor Québec's efforts in supporting female entrepreneurs, it has become clear that women and men do business differently and have different support needs. These differences, which include risk-taking, business methods, investment levels, and industry choices, contribute to the wealth and vitality of Québec entrepreneurship.

DID YOU KNOW?

In October 2013, RBC Economics Research published a report entitled *Canadian Women Grabbing the Baton*. The report states that “female majority-owned business establishments have made headway in the Canadian SME landscape with the share of firms with greater than 50% female ownership rising to 15.6% in 2011 from an estimated 14.9% in 2007 and 13.7% in 2004. [...] Over the past three decades, the increased participation of females in the labor force represented an important driver of economic growth.

We estimate that this increase in female participation resulted in a \$130 billion contribution to economic activity in 2012, equivalent to approximately 7% of GDP. Female participation rates have stabilized in recent years, however, and a demographic shift taking place in Canada raises concerns about the ability to sustain rates of comparable economic growth going forward. That being said, a further narrowing and eventual elimination of the gap between female and male participation rates over the next 20 years would result in a 4% boost to GDP in 2032”⁹³.

Réseau Femmessor was built up from 2001 to 2013, namely through the previous government action plans on gender equality. A new business model—Femmessor Québec—was introduced in 2015–2016 to provide more support to female entrepreneurs. The aim is to concentrate efforts and resources on entrepreneurial needs, to centralize administrative aspects, to increase and diversify the range of financing solutions, and to enhance the quality of support in all regions of Québec. Femmessor Québec is the primary means through which the Government of Québec promotes female entrepreneurship, providing support, financing, training, and networking services to women entrepreneurs.

DID YOU KNOW?

On September 16, 2016, the Government of Québec announced its participation in establishing the new Fonds pour les femmes entrepreneures FQ. The \$19-million fund is aimed at supporting startup, growth, and acquisition projects initiated by female entrepreneurs in all regions of Québec, granting \$20,000 to \$150,000 loans to female-owned businesses (women must hold at least 25% of shares). To ensure the success of businesses financed by the fund, Femmessor Québec will also provide training and specialized support.

In accordance with the *Plan d'action gouvernemental en entrepreneuriat* and in order to continue government efforts in this regard, the Strategy will be implemented in such a manner as to gradually achieve gender balance between Québec's entrepreneurs. All industries (agriculture, crafts, etc.) will be targeted, and entrepreneurial diversity will be taken into account. This approach reflects our desire to make effective use of gender-based analysis in the area of entrepreneurship.

3 STRATEGIC GOALS

For all the aforementioned reasons, this key guideline is aimed at lending support to women and workplaces. In keeping with their aspirations and abilities, many women wish to individually and collectively contribute to Québec's prosperity by achieving economic empowerment. Within the framework of this guideline, in order to break the vicious circle of poverty some women have had to endure, the Government of Québec intends to:

- Diversify the career choices of girls, women, and boys.
- Increase gender diversity in the workplace by providing companies with guidance and support.
- Improve the employability of women, in particular those outside the labor market, and take action to empower them economically.
- Encourage and support women in their business endeavors.

■ GOAL 2.1 DIVERSIFY THE CAREER CHOICES OF GIRLS, WOMEN, AND BOYS

2.1.1. Inform and educate school and vocational guidance counselors about job stereotypes and the importance of diversifying education and career choices

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will educate guidance counselors (including school and vocational guidance counselors, academic advisors, and counselors in academic training) by providing training as part of a pilot project on school and vocational guidance material, in particular regarding male-dominated and female-dominated occupations and the importance of presenting a wide variety of trades and professions to students without associating them with a specific gender.

Coordinator: MEES

2.1.2. Provide internships to girls in male-dominated occupations and to boys in female-dominated occupations as part of the Jeunes explorateurs d'un jour program

Having girls and boys do internships in trades and professions dominated by the opposite gender—e.g., through the Jeunes explorateurs d'un jour program—promotes the diversification of education choices and directly improves gender diversity in the workplace. The idea is to use communication activities to introduce and promote occupations typically associated with the opposite gender to girls and boys in order to spark their interest in them before they commit to a field of study. Guidance counselors will also be given tools to promote trades and professions typically associated with the opposite gender.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: MEES, MESI, MTESS, SAJ

2.1.3.

Develop e-mentoring for girls and boys considering careers in occupations dominated by the other gender

Girls and boys must have better access to mentors who have had success in occupations and industries typically associated with the opposite gender. This initiative will specifically seek to promote careers typically associated with the opposite gender to young people through Academos, a social network providing vocational guidance. Women and men will be recruited as mentors in target trades and professions. Activities will be organized to foster the diversification of education choices and diversity in the workplace.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: MEES, MESI, MTESS, SAJ

2.1.4.

Support innovative and compelling activities aimed at increasing the presence of women in science and technology

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine wants to support innovative and compelling activities aimed at increasing the presence of women in science and technology. Implemented in partnership with Québec's Chaire pour les femmes en sciences et en génie, these activities will promote gender balance in the fields of science and technology, both in education and in the workplace.

Increasing the presence of women in these sectors will directly contribute to the economic empowerment of women.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MESI

GOAL 2.2

INCREASE GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE BY PROVIDING COMPANIES WITH GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

2.2.1.

Launch initiatives aimed at increasing the presence of women in the construction industry

For the first time ever, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, and the Commission de la construction du Québec are combining their expertise to launch an initiative aimed at supporting joint efforts to reduce obstacles hampering the progress of women in the construction industry. Various initiatives will be implemented to promote the diversification of women's education and career choices by introducing them to construction trades. Other measures will target

individuals and businesses in order to support the integration of women into the industry and to keep them there.

Actions will be documented and assessed in order to identify best approaches and to support the sharing of experience and transfer of expertise. Tools will be created or adapted to inform people about the various pathways into the construction industry and about the resources available to job seekers and employers. This initiative is in line with the Programme d'accès à l'égalité des femmes dans l'industrie de la construction 2015-2024, implemented by the Commission de la construction du Québec.

Coordinator: SCF, MTESS (Emploi-Québec), CCQ

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MEES, MESI, MTESS (Secrétariat du travail), SAJ

2.2.2. Develop initiatives to increase the presence of women in growth industries and promote gender diversity in the workplace

This action is aimed at providing women in male-dominated workplaces with tailored support in order to increase the female presence. The progress of women in various industries targeted by key strategies, policies, and government action plans (Stratégie numérique, Plan Nord, Stratégie maritime, etc.) will be subject to particular scrutiny.

Targeted, concrete measures will be proposed for male-dominated workplaces. These measures will address the main obstacles—e.g., prejudices and stereotypes—hindering women. Positive actions in male-dominated workplaces will be recognized to enhance their visibility. Once a few workplaces have set the example, others will follow. Obstacles and interventions will be documented. Interventions will also be assessed to identify best practices in developing employability and supporting the sharing of experiences and transfer of expertise between target industries. A number of stakeholders will be consulted. In addition, this action will help arouse women's interest in promising jobs and identify and implement effective ways to control gender diversity in the workplace.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: MTESS (Emploi-Québec), MESI

2.2.3. Hold events promoting the employability and retention of women in male-dominated occupations in order to engage in dialogue with local stakeholders

In order to improve the employability and retention of women in male-dominated occupations, fight the systemic discrimination they are subject to, and help them make optimum use of available tools and resources, consultations must be carried out with local stakeholders. These events will bring together various governmental and non-governmental organizations, depending on the topic at hand. Ad hoc working groups could be set up at these events to dig deeper into certain matters and to establish effective ways to increase gender diversity in the workplace.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MEES, MESI, MTESS, SAJ

2.2.4.

Carry out key actions aimed at understanding gender diversity issues in fire departments

Key actions will be required to provide the Ministère de la Sécurité publique with relevant information on fire department personnel. For a more accurate picture of Québec's fire department staff, especially regarding gender diversity, data will have to be compiled nationwide. To address gender diversity concerns, the ministry wishes to objectively document the types of obstacles hindering the employability and retention of female firefighters.

Coordinator: MSP

Collaborator: ISQ

GOAL 2.3

IMPROVE THE EMPLOYABILITY OF WOMEN, IN PARTICULAR THOSE OUTSIDE THE LABOR MARKET, AND TAKE ACTION TO FURTHER THEIR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

2.3.1.

Produce and disseminate tools aimed at improving our understanding of the conditions women in the labor market are facing

The purpose of this action is to inform the public, school and vocational guidance counselors, and employability development consultants about the issues women in the labor force have to contend with. A detailed overview of these issues will be produced and disseminated, as will an awareness tool for diversifying women's career choices. The tool will include a list of male-dominated professions with good prospects for the integration and retention of women. It will be made available to guidance counselors, school staff, and employability consultants.

Coordinator: MTESS (Emploi-Québec)

2.3.2.

Take steps to reduce obstacles to the integration and retention of female workers

In order to improve government employability services aimed at limiting obstacles to the integration and retention of female workers, a variety of actions will be carried out across Québec over the next five years. These improvements will benefit women job seekers, in particular those belonging to groups having less of a presence in the labor market in relation to men of the same group and women in general, such as immigrant

women—racialized or Indigenous—women with little education or 55 and over, and single parents. The intention is to:

- Provide employment preparation services taking into account the needs of women outside the labor market in all regions of Québec;
- Update the Ma place au soleil initiative, which supports young parents so they can complete their training;
- Carry out various regional projects aimed at increasing the presence of women in vocational and technical training and in male-dominated professions with good prospects for the integration of women;
- Support businesses in male-dominated industries so they can diversify their workforce.

Coordinator: MTESS (Emploi-Québec)

2.3.3.

Support activities aimed at informing or educating immigrant women about gender equality from a socio-professional perspective

This initiative involves informing immigrant women about gender equality in Québec within the context of socio-professional integration. Activities will be held in some regions of Québec by community organizations, such as women's groups, to educate participants about Québec's gender equality laws and regulations, such as the *Pay Equity Act*. Women immigrants who are outside the labor market or looking for a job will be targeted. Their spouses could also be encouraged to participate in some activities.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: MTESS (Emploi-Québec), CNESST

2.3.4.

Provide pay equity support and information services to non-unionized female workers

This action will be carried out in two steps. First, we will evaluate the feasibility of establishing support services to help non-unionized female workers exercise their rights and remedies in regard to pay equity. Then, depending on the feasibility study's findings, suitable courses of action will be identified and executed to support female workers in non-unionized workplaces.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: CNESST

2.3.5.**Offer more lectures and provide more training on pay equity to employers in non-unionized workplaces**

In order to help employers in non-unionized workplaces fulfill their obligations and to better enforce the *Pay Equity Act* with respect to female workers in such environments, pay equity lectures will be given at employer gatherings and pay equity training provided in the classroom or via webinar.

Coordinator: CNESST

2.3.6.**Produce and distribute an information leaflet on financial support programs for disabled children and their families**

Producing and distributing an information leaflet will make it easier for parents of disabled children to find information on available services and resources such as government programs aimed at disabled children and their families.

Coordinator: OPHQ

Collaborators: FAMILLE, FINANCES, MEES, MTESS, MSSS, RQ

■ GOAL 2.4

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT WOMEN IN THEIR BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

2.4.1.**Provide tailored training to immigrant women looking to develop their entrepreneurial abilities**

This initiative, carried out in partnership with l'Effet A^t, involves providing tailored training to immigrant women looking to develop their entrepreneurial spirit by supporting their ambitions and aspirations in various regions of Québec. This training will give these women access to useful tools and advice. This action will encourage women immigrants to go into business, will strengthen their entrepreneurial values and skills, and will show them the wide range of industries out there.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MESI

t. L'Effet A ("A" for "Ambition") is an initiative encouraging women to pursue their professional aspirations by presenting inspirational female leaders taking a new approach to female entrepreneurship and by providing useful tools tailored to the new realities women now face.

2.4.2. Provide training activities on public tenders to female entrepreneurs

This action is aimed at encouraging female-owned businesses to participate in public procurement. In collaboration with the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor (SCT), activities will be organized to help inform women entrepreneurs about the public tender process and business opportunities.

At breakfast and lunch events, such as those held by women entrepreneur associations, attendees will be given access to information on public procurement, on how to use the electronic tendering system, and on the documentation available on the SCT website. The SCT will continue to update and publish standard tender documents. As part of its training and information activities, the SCT will continue to sensitize government agencies regarding the importance of taking gender equality guidelines into account and respecting contract rules.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: SCT, MESI

2.4.3. Support key projects encouraging girls to start new businesses

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine wants to support projects encouraging girls to start new businesses. To avoid strengthening stereotypes and occupational segregation, initiatives will be aimed at informing girls about the variety of industries available to them.

Various activities will be held to demystify the entrepreneurial profession and to develop innovation skills and the confidence to start a business. These activities will also help girls develop their entrepreneurial abilities.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MESI

2.4.4. Take steps to support agricultural entrepreneurship among women

Concrete measures will be taken to ensure that women receive fair and equitable pay in the agricultural industry. In order to recognize women's contributions to businesses, we will create and distribute an interactive tool for calculating the value of women's work. In addition to developing this tool, we will educate women and men on the role of female producers, such as female farmers.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MAPAQ

4 CONTINUED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur

- Continue support activities promoting the diversification of education and career choices, e.g., the *Chapeau, les filles!* contest and its *Excelle Science* component, innovative projects aimed at diversifying women's career choices, and the implementation of these projects in male-dominated trades and *Les filles et les sciences, un duo électrisant!* theme days.

Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale

- Provide employment assistance services to women looking to enter the labor market, and support employers by helping them manage the diversity of their workforce.

Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

- Recognize the place of women in male-dominated industries through art projects by annually awarding two \$2,000 grants to women. This is currently done through the *Chapeau, les filles!* contest.

QUÉBEC IN ACTION

The Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation's *Plan d'action gouvernemental en économie sociale 2015-2020* is aimed at promoting Québec's social economy, a key factor contributing to the economic empowerment of women. The social economy is subject to various targeted support measures aimed at empowering businesses, improving market access and innovation in the social economy, and encouraging the socio-professional integration of women and men in social economy businesses.

Considered a male-dominated industry where the presence of women still requires support, the maritime industry now has its own strategy, a first in Québec. The *Stratégie maritime À l'horizon 2030* presents an initial action plan for 2015–2020, coordinated by the Secrétariat aux affaires maritimes, which is intended to stimulate sustainable growth in Québec's maritime sector and to encourage job creation in all regions of Québec. It is also aimed at protecting the integrity of Québec's river and marine ecosystems while contributing to the betterment of coastal communities. One collaboration initiated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Secrétariat aux affaires maritimes is aimed at promoting gender balance in relevant industrial sectors where women are often underrepresented.

The *Plan d'action en économie numérique pour l'excellence numérique des entreprises et des organisations québécoises 2016-2021* highlights the Government of Québec's desire to position itself as a leader in an innovative industry where female contributions must be encouraged and strengthened just as much as those of men. The action plan is one of the first initiatives adopted within the framework of the *Stratégie numérique du Québec*, which targets a promising industry with real potential to provide women with paying jobs.

The Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation's *Plan d'action gouvernemental en entrepreneuriat* is aimed at developing Québec's strengths and overcoming its obstacles in the area of entrepreneurship. The action plan will support women entrepreneurs through Femmessor Québec and the Fonds pour les femmes entrepreneures FQ. It is in line with the main objectives of this Strategy, specifically addressing the economic empowerment of women with a focus on developing female entrepreneurship.

The *Stratégie d'action en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion 2016-2021, Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec* provides a specific course of action for recognizing the skills immigrants acquire abroad. This strategy was drafted based on recommendations made by the Comité interministériel sur la reconnaissance des compétences des personnes immigrantes formées à l'étranger, which brings together the main ministries and agencies involved in skill recognition processes. This targeted action strategy will allow us to address issues these actors have encountered, to inform, refer, and empower immigrants—in particular women and actors involved in skill recognition—and to ensure that training and skills are suitable for jobs.

The *Stratégie québécoise de la recherche et de l'innovation (SQRI)*, launched in 2017, highlights the importance of developing and using all available talent, especially that of women, who make strong contributions to the development of research and innovation in Québec. Coordinated by the Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation, the strategy complements various goals and initiatives contained in this Strategy. The SQRI encourages the presence of women in science and engineering. It includes a \$750,000 five-year budget for financing calls for projects promoting the presence of women in the field of science. This measure will be implemented through calls for projects conducted under the NovaScience program's various components.

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is vital to the economic empowerment of women and to achieving economic equity. Following the first plan launched in 2004 and the second in 2010, preparations are under way for a third *Plan d'action gouvernemental de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale*, coordinated by the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.

To develop Québec's northern regions, special attention must be paid to gender-based consequences affecting the men and women living and working in these areas. The *Plan Nord à l'horizon 2035, plan d'action 2015-2020*, coordinated by the Société du Plan Nord, is aimed at ethical economic development respectful of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and conscious of gender equality. The action plan promotes the participation of women in the labor market and helps prevent violence against women in the areas covered. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine is responsible for two Plan Nord measures. The first involves supporting key initiatives through agreements and gender equality projects encouraging Indigenous women to fully participate in all spheres of northern development. The second involves ensuring the integration of measures taking into account the realities of Indigenous women in future government action plans in the areas of sexual assault and exploitation, in collaboration with partner ministries and agencies.

In 2017, the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC) revealed its *Plan d'action pour atteindre la parité des genres d'ici 2020*. SODEC hopes to get the sector to open up to projects proposed and carried out by women through a three-pronged action plan involving awareness campaigns, changes to support programs, and research on training and the first years on the labor market.

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur has developed its first *Politique de la réussite éducative*. Education is seen as a powerful lever for social equity. The policy takes into account the fact that girls and boys have different reasons for dropping out and that students whose parents—mothers in particular—have a low level of education are more likely to drop out. It pays special attention to boys' success, but also that of girls. Lastly, the policy is aimed at better equipping high school students with respect to educational and vocational guidance.

■ GUIDELINE 3

TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN FAMILY, WORK, SCHOOL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

With regard to getting more women to participate in the labor market, one of the key issues highlighted and repeated at consultation meetings was striking a better balance between family, work, and school. Equality issues can be difficult to address individually—for many women, economic empowerment clearly goes hand in hand with the ability to balance family, work, and school.

On average, women spend less time doing paid work than men, and more time doing housework and caregiving. This imbalance directly associated with the “invisible” work women do often reduces their pay, makes them more likely to experience hardship in the event of a separation, and can reduce their retirement income in the long term.

Many parents have to balance their time between family and school. In 2011, student parents—mostly women—accounted for 25% of students enrolled in the Université du Québec network⁹⁴. The challenge of balancing family, work, and school is therefore very relevant in the area of postsecondary education.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a brief entitled *Pour un partage équitable du congé parental*, the Conseil du statut de la femme reports findings from studies on the involvement of fathers in domestic and family work in Sweden. According to the studies, a more balanced approach to parental leave results in greater marital equality. Two out of five fathers who went on parental leave shared childcare responsibilities evenly with their spouse after their leave had ended, compared to half that amount for fathers who did not go on parental leave (Haas and Hwang, 2008). The same researcher notes that in Norway, fathers who had spent part of the parental leave alone with their child felt very confident in their parenting abilities (Hass, 2008)⁹⁵.

1 GROUND COVERED

Key facts

- More and more fathers are going on parental leave. The percentage went from 31% in 2006 to 35% in 2014. Also, in 2013, a record 79% of fathers applied for paternal or parental benefits from the Québec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP)—10 percentage points higher than in 2006, whether it be for the birth or the adoption of a child⁹⁶.

Fathers are increasingly wishing to play a more active role in raising their children from an early age, and with reason. Not only do children clearly benefit from their father’s presence and involvement, but it also leads to a better balance in parental responsibilities. In recent years, the government has taken steps to include fathers in family-related

publications. The title of the guide *Mieux vivre avec notre enfant, de la grossesse à deux ans, guide pour les mères et les pères* was changed to include fathers.

More and more fathers are participating in prenatal classes to prepare for their child's birth—in fact, men are not far behind women in this regard. However, many men feel the content is not really addressed at them⁹⁷. Steps must therefore be taken to ensure that the classes reflect their needs and to present non-stereotyped information on the roles of each parent both during and after pregnancy. This will be accomplished by educating and training professionals who work with families or in perinatal care, and by finding new ways to reach out to fathers.

Before the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale^u was introduced, women and men had to go through employment insurance to get parental leave, and there was no leave for fathers specifically. Now, fathers get five weeks of non-transferrable paternal leave, in addition to having access to 32 weeks of parental leave, just as mothers do. Thousands of men have taken the opportunity to go on paternal leave and play a bigger, more active role in their child's early life.

Workplaces are gradually proposing and implementing work–family balance measures in order to attract and retain employees. Depending on the workplace, female employees and some male employees have various options available to them: flexible hours, banked hours, paid or unpaid family leave, telework, and reduced weekly work schedules⁹⁸.

It should be noted that the Minister of Families is in charge of all interministerial coordination and consultation with respect to balancing family, work, and school. Since 2006, through its *Politique gouvernementale pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes* and two ensuing government action plans, the Government of Québec fostered a fairer distribution of family responsibilities among Québec couples, and in so doing, greater equality between women and men.

In 2015, the Comité consultatif Famille was tasked with determining issues to prioritize in regard to balancing family and work. In 2016, it submitted a brief on the matter. In view of the various issues surrounding this personal and collective challenge, including a growing shortage of labor and caregivers, the Government of Québec has every intention to closely consider the balance of family, work, and school when setting its top priorities in the near future.

At the Rendez-vous national sur la main-d'œuvre held in February 2017, the Government of Québec announced its intention to adopt a concerted action plan on balancing family, work, and school. The action plan will build on the actions included in the Strategy.

u. The Régime québécois d'assurance parentale provides maternal benefits (15 to 18 weeks depending on the plan), paternal benefits (3 to 5 weeks), and parental benefits (25 to 32 weeks). Parental benefits are available to both fathers and mothers and can be split between them if desired.

2 PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- 59% of respondents thought women did more housework than men, while 33% believed it was evenly divided. Perceptions varied strongly by gender, with 45% of men claiming women did more and 73% of women claiming the same (28 point spread).
- Perceptions of family responsibilities also varied greatly: 52% of respondents thought they were evenly distributed between women and men, including 40% of women and 64% of men (24 point spread).

Responsibilities to share

There continues to be an imbalance in the distribution of family duties and responsibilities. While some couples do split responsibilities evenly between each other, on average, women still do 70% of housework and child rearing. While it can be difficult to measure, some authors have also brought up the concept of “mental load”^v.

Mental load refers to the feeling of responsibility and to all the work associated with planning and organizing family life, such as making doctor’s appointments, signing the kids up for extracurricular activities, planning dinners for the week, etc. This work is even more invisible and difficult to measure than other family responsibilities. And yet, it has a big impact on how women use their time, and in some cases, on their health.

Women are more likely to miss work for family reasons than men and are much more likely to work part-time for family reasons than men⁹⁹. Women continue to handle the bulk of caregiving responsibilities, whether it be caring for children, their spouse, or elderly persons.

According to the Conseil de gestion de l’assurance parentale, mothers have taken on average 16 more weeks of parental leave than fathers since 2006. The survey on perceptions of gender equality showed that most Quebecers of either gender think the ideal situation is to have fathers and mothers spend an equal amount of time on parental leave, but even today, almost two-thirds of fathers do not even take parental leave¹⁰⁰. It should be noted that both fathers and mothers can be unwilling to share parental leave, not to mention the peer pressure involved. There are many factors at play here, including economics—i.e., fathers often earn more.

Encouraging parents to discuss the possibility of sharing parental leave can be an effective approach. The decision to share parental leave can lead to better long-term balance of responsibilities between parents, and as such can impact the rest of their lives.

v. See the works of Monique Haicault and Nicole Brais.

Workplaces conducive to a better balance

Beyond what parents think and want, workplace attitudes can directly or indirectly affect their decisions. One assumption that has been put forward as to why so few men choose to share parental leave is double standards. Fathers applying for parental leave are more likely to encounter resistance of some kind¹⁰¹. For example, they may be told that it would be better for the company if they were to go on parental leave at another time—an objection mothers would be unlikely to hear. Their managers may also directly or indirectly let them know that advancement opportunities may come up during their absence. For some people, this double standard is firmly rooted, and it can have a negative effect on fathers looking to share parental leave evenly. The same goes for fathers interested in measures aimed at balancing family, work, and school—applications can be received differently depending on the person's gender.

Considering that in most families both parents are active on the labour market, balancing family and work can be quite the challenge. School holidays can be a headache for many parents. Providing accessible services to all parents and implementing balance measures can help alleviate tension and conflicts arising from situations where both mother and father have other responsibilities.

No matter how much parents want to balance their responsibilities, the response they get at work, at school, and in the social and political spheres is crucial. While great strides have been made in this area, efforts must be continued to get mentalities and practices in line with the concept of balancing family, work, and school.

Key facts

- In a CROP survey conducted for the Chambre des notaires du Québec in 2013, 46% of respondents thought that after a certain number of years of living together, common-law partners obtained married status and 50% of common-law partners were convinced that they were just as well protected as married people¹⁰².
- Women spend 5.4 hours a day doing housework and taking care of children, 1.2 hours more than men do for a difference of 29%¹⁰³. In two-parent families, they are also more likely to be the main or only parent helping the children with their homework (62.9%)¹⁰⁴.
- Regarding employed mothers and fathers with children 5 and under, mothers are more likely than fathers to frequently (*often* or *always*) experience work–family conflicts (61% compared to 41% based on their respective perceptions in 2015)¹⁰⁵.
- In 2012, women represented 57.6% of caregivers¹⁰⁶.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Most respondents (62%) thought parental leave should be shared evenly between fathers and mothers. Women and men agreed on this, with people 55 and over more likely to support an even split than those 35–54 (13-point spread).
- Three-quarters of respondents (76%) thought working women had to make themselves available to care for family members more often than working men.
- Women were four times more likely to than men to mention the lack of work–family balance measures as an obstacle to considering careers typically associated with the other gender.

Women are not the only ones finding it difficult to juggle their responsibilities—young parents elected to municipal office are faced with the same challenge. Until recently, the law made no explicit mention of parental leave applying to elected officials. New parents had to maintain their presence on the municipal council and could have their term ended after a lengthy absence, even if said absence was justified by the birth or adoption of a child. In 2016, to avoid arbitrary local decisions, the Government of Québec chose to pass legislation allowing mothers and fathers involved in municipal politics to take parental leave. This change was implemented in parallel with the Strategy development efforts.

Caregiving: A typically female undertaking

In our society, women are much more likely to care for family members than men. As such, getting a clearer picture of the caregiving situation will allow the government and other stakeholders to adopt a gender-based approach in their interventions. The aging of the population is exacerbating this issue, which must be addressed as soon as possible. As the Strategy is implemented, a research project will document the realities and needs of both female and male caregivers.

3 STRATEGIC GOALS

It appears that rebalancing family responsibilities will be pivotal in the road toward gender equality. This will require a two-pronged approach aimed at fostering a more even distribution of family responsibilities and ensuring that workplaces fulfill their responsibilities in facilitating balance between family, work, and school for both women and men. Within the framework of this guideline, the Government of Québec intends to:

- Contribute to a fair distribution of family, work, and school responsibilities.
- Make it easier to balance family, work, school, social, and political life.

■ GOAL 3.1 CONTRIBUTE TO A FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY, WORK, AND SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1.1.

Develop the paternal aspect of the guide
Mieux vivre avec notre enfant de la grossesse à deux ans: guide pratique pour les mères et les pères

This action involves implementing a process aimed at promoting fatherhood, deconstructing stereotypes about the roles of fathers and mothers, and encouraging co-parenting in the guide *Mieux vivre avec notre enfant de la grossesse à deux ans: guide pratique pour les mères et les pères*. The goal is to encourage fathers to care for their children as of the perinatal period.

Coordinator: INSPQ
Collaborator: MSSS

3.1.2.

Ensure that the fact sheets on the prenatal information portal provide non-stereotyped information on the roles of parents in order to get fathers and mothers more involved during the perinatal period

Special attention will be given to the place, experience, and role of fathers when updating the perinatal information portal's fact sheets for perinatal care workers and professionals. This update is aimed at encouraging more paternal involvement during the perinatal period and, in a more general sense, more equal contributions by parents.

Coordinator: INSPQ

Collaborator: MSSS

3.1.3.

Produce a fact sheet on the role of fathers and publish it on the perinatal information portal

A new fact sheet on the role of fathers during the perinatal period will be created and added to the Institut national de santé publique du Québec's perinatal information portal, which is intended for perinatal workers and professionals. A webinar will also be developed to disseminate the new sheet's content. Producing this sheet will make it easier to prepare perinatal information for individual follow-ups and prenatal classes aimed at helping parents get ready for the birth of their child.

Coordinator: INSPQ

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MSSS, SCF

3.1.4.

Produce a short video on sharing parental leave and make it available to future parents when they submit their application for the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale

A short video will be produced to educate future parents about sharing parental leave and encourage them to consider it. The Conseil de gestion de l'assurance parentale will work together with the Secrétariat à la condition féminine to develop and design the video. The video will be available through various platforms, including www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca to give it good visibility and make sure it reaches a wide audience.

Coordinator: CGAP, SCF

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MTESS, SAJ

3.1.5. Support projects promoting co-parenting

In order to take the presence and realities of fathers into account, projects will be supported to encourage the adaptation of services and practices in various areas such as the school, education, community, and legal environments and health and social services. This will help change mentalities and benefit families by limiting or eliminating certain gender inequalities.

Coordinator: FAMILLE

3.1.6. Inform people about their rights and obligations under current family law

To ensure that people are well informed about their rights and obligations under current family law, a targeted information strategy will be developed. This will include producing information videos to inform people about the legal framework behind each type of union. The initiative will foster spousal equality by helping people make informed decisions about the type of union they want.

Coordinator: MJQ

Collaborator: FAMILLE

GOAL 3.2 MAKE IT EASIER TO BALANCE FAMILY, WORK, SCHOOL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

3.2.1. Support childcare projects during the summer and school holidays to make it easier for working and student parents to balance family, work, and school

Financial support will be made available to projects providing practical and sustainable childcare solutions for school-age children during the summer and school holidays. Both new and existing in-home childcare services will be eligible.

Coordinator: FAMILLE

3.2.2. Support measures aimed at making it easier for working and student parents to balance family, work, and school

This initiative is intended to support measures aimed at facilitating the triple challenge of balancing family, work, and school, at changing mentalities about the need for such balance, and at educating workplaces and giving them the tools they need to change their practices while taking into account the specifics of their industry.

Coordinator: FAMILLE

3.2.3. Develop a guide on balancing family, work, and political life for elected municipal officials

A reference document will be developed and disseminated to guide municipalities through the process of defining, adopting, implementing, and assessing measures promoting a better balance between family, work, and political life for elected municipal officials. The tool will also be used to educate elected officials and ensure their support of future balance measures.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MAMOT

3.2.4. Collect and disseminate information on the eligibility of elected municipal officials for the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale

A short information document will be produced and disseminated explaining the rules that apply to elected municipal officials in Québec should they be absent due to the birth or adoption of a child.

The document will provide concrete information in plain language. It will address the fact that the *Act respecting labour standards* does not apply to elected municipal officials, go over said officials' legal rights as elected officials, and look at young parents' rights to benefits under the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale.

Coordinator: CGAP

Collaborators: MAMOT, MTESS, SCF

3.2.5. Propose legislative changes giving elected municipal officials access to parental leave

This initiative is aimed at making it easier for elected municipal officials to balance their political obligations and personal lives, specifically by adapting the municipal political environment to reflect the realities of elected officials looking to start a family. To do

this, Section 317 of the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities* was amended to grant elected municipal officials 18 weeks of parental leave^w.

Coordinator: MAMOT

3.2.6.

Conduct activities aimed at making it easier for legal representatives and members of tutorship councils for incapacitated persons to fulfill their responsibilities

With this action, the Curateur public^x intends to help tutors, curators, and tutorship council members balance their family and professional lives by making it easier for them to fulfill their duties regarding the protection of incapacitated persons^y.

This process could include legal changes recognizing family and friends as key partners in the protection of incapacitated persons. These changes would allow us to streamline procedures for replacing legal representatives, reduce legal representative obligations, and make it easier to hold meetings with parents, friends, and supporters when opening protective supervision.

The Curateur public also plans on diversifying support measures for tutors and curators. This will involve assessing currently available support measures in order to help tutors and curators fulfill their duties as legal representatives and define new measures that could allow the Curateur public to more efficiently meet their needs.

Concerted efforts will be made with partners in order to make it simpler for tutors and curators to do their part and for friends and family members to take care of incapacitated persons, because protecting these individuals is a public responsibility and many people are involved in the process.

Coordinator: Curateur public du Québec

3.2.7.

Increase student financial assistance to heads of single-parent families

In order to make it easier to balance family and school and to provide wider access to higher education, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur announced in December 2016 that heads of single-parent families—over 90% of whom are women—would be getting additional financial support for their studies.

Coordinator: MEES

w. This amendment was introduced as part of Bill 83, an *Act to amend various municipal-related legislative provisions concerning such matters as political financing*, passed on June 10, 2016.

x. The Curateur public ensures the protection of incapacitated persons, supervising tutors and curators and supporting them with their responsibilities. It also supports tutorship council members.

y. When a court declares an adult incapacitated, a representative must be appointed to protect them. Someone close to the person takes on this responsibility, serving as a tutor, curator, or mandatary. Children with large estates are also assigned a tutor to protect their property. In Québec, over 30,000 people legally represent a loved one and almost 38,000 people are members of tutorship councils. Women take on these roles more often than men.

■ GUIDELINE 4

TOGETHER FOR A GENDER-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This guideline is focused on the connection between women's health and wellness issues and gender equality issues. The physiological, socio-economic, cultural, and political realities of women evidently have an impact on their health and wellness. In light of these realities, an approach tailored to women's needs clearly must be implemented, and this gender-based analysis reveals that such an approach should also be used for men.

The life expectancy of women continues to rise, as does that of men. However, the situation is not the same for both genders. In 2016, according to provisional data, the life expectancies of women and men at birth both exceeded 80 years, with women typically living longer than men. That said, women are also more likely to live with disabilities longer.

Key facts

- In 2016, women had a life expectancy of 84.5 years and men 80.8 years¹⁰⁷.
- In 2014, 84.4% of women had seen a doctor compared to 65.1% of men. They were also more likely to be hospitalized¹⁰⁸ and to receive in-home care¹⁰⁹. Women were also more likely to take prescription drugs¹¹⁰.

Aging aside, women and men have very different experiences in terms of physiology and social roles.

In 2002, mindful of the health and wellness issues affecting women, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) announced the *Objectifs ministériels en santé et bien-être des femmes*. In order to better understand women's realities, properly consider women's issues in planning, and better meet women's needs, these health and wellness goals led to two action plans, the second of which covered the 2010–2015 period.

A number of projects promoting women's health were identified in the action plan report, including in the areas of physical health, mental health, healthy and responsible sexuality, perinatal care, domestic violence, and sexual abuse and exploitation. The action plan also targeted women whose backgrounds or situations could make them more vulnerable (Indigenous, disabled, ethnocultural minority, sexual minority, living in poverty or in social exclusion, elderly, caregiver, etc.).

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Most respondents (63%) thought women and men made equal use of healthcare services.
- Nearly half of respondents (48%) thought women and men took the same amount of drugs, while 32% thought women took more.

The MSSS continues to use gender-based analysis (GBA) in its practices. GBA helped demonstrate the need to address the living conditions and circumstances of women and men to ensure that their respective health needs could be met. The MSSS updated its GBA training program in 2010. The training was given to many ministry and health and social services staff, and GBA was applied to various ministerial programs and action plans. Detailed information on the matter is available in the *Bilan du Plan d'action gouvernemental en matière d'ADS* and the *Bilan final 2010-2015 du Plan d'action en santé et bien-être des femmes*.

The MSSS is well aware of the connection between gender and health, and in 2009 it established priority actions for men's health and wellness in order to improve our knowledge in this area and to adapt services aimed at men. The ministry's *Bilan 2009-2014 des actions régionales* addresses these priority actions.

1 NEW GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

Actions aimed at improving and adapting care and health and wellness services remain a priority benefitting women, men, families, and Québec society in general. Within the framework of this guideline, the Government of Québec intends to:

Renew the MSSS *Plan d'action en santé et bien-être des femmes*

In order to strengthen its efforts and continue to meet women's known and emerging needs in various areas of health and wellness, the MSSS will develop a third health and wellness action plan for women. The plan will be consistent with the ministry's health and wellness guidelines for women and the government's gender equality guidelines.

Since many factors influence women's health (income, education, lifestyle, physical and social environments, safety, etc.), the MSSS will continue to work with other government ministries and agencies concerned with these issues.

Furthermore, given that the MSSS is responsible for meeting everyone's needs, including men, it will continue to take actions promoting men's health and wellness.

These initiatives will help restore, maintain, and improve the health of women and men based on their respective realities. They will also have tangible, positive effects on the health of Québec families and society in general.

2 CONTINUED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

The health and social services network gives women access to various health programs and services (cancer, violence against women, lifestyle, sexual health, reproductive health, perinatal care, etc.). These recurring programs and services continue to benefit female Quebecers in general, but also those belonging to specific subgroups (Indigenous, immigrant, disabled, elderly, caregiver, sexual minority, living in poverty or social exclusion, working in health and social services, etc.). The MSSS recognizes the impact living conditions can have on the health and wellness of Quebecers and is looking to fight social health inequalities arising from the circumstances and conditions in which people live and work. Moreover, the MSSS continues to document gender-based realities and needs so they can be considered as thoroughly as possible.

The MSSS's next health and wellness action plan for women will provide an overview of these continued interventions.

QUÉBEC IN ACTION

With the *Politique gouvernementale de prévention en santé, Un projet d'envergure pour améliorer la santé et la qualité de vie de la population*, launched in October 2016, the government has adopted a key intersectional framework that will allow it to address critical health issues. The policy represents the joint commitment of 15 government ministries and agencies from various sectors to promote health more and to prevent avoidable issues through complementary, synchronized, and consistent interventions. The policy is aimed at all Quebecers, in particular vulnerable populations, and is intended to reduce social health inequalities.

The *Programme national de santé publique* presents the public health services to be rolled out by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and its network over the 2015–2025 period. It structures public health initiatives in such a manner as to maintain and improve the population's health through quality services tailored to the specific needs and realities of all Québec regions. These services target both people and communities, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups.

As more information comes to light on women's homelessness, the *Plan d'action interministériel en itinérance 2015-2020 Mobilisés et engagés pour prévenir et réduire l'itinérance*, coordinated by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, reflects how the Government of Québec and its partners are committed to taking concrete action to prevent and reduce homelessness among both women and men in Québec. These actions are consistent with the guidelines defined under each priority intervention area in the *Politique nationale de lutte à l'itinérance Ensemble, pour éviter la rue et en sortir*. One of these, which falls under the responsibility of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, involves conducting a study to document women's homelessness with a view to improving intervention methods.

Coordinated by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the *Plan d'action en santé mentale 2015-2020 Faire ensemble et autrement* steps up efforts to improve health and wellness in Québec, the aim being to mobilize the health network and its partners in order to implement mental health recovery care and services. One goal is to break down the boundaries between different services and the obstacles limiting access to mental health services.

■ GUIDELINE 5 TOGETHER FOR A SOCIETY WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This guideline focuses on women's rights to life, safety, integrity, and to flourish in freedom and equality. To ensure that women's basic rights are fully respected, society as a whole must denounce and stand up against violent and criminal behavior and take steps to fight and rectify such intolerable acts.

Violence against women is a reflection of unequal gender relations. As highlighted in the Strategy's first guideline, fostering egalitarian socialization and education free of stereotypes and sexism will be key to preventing violence against women in its various forms.

Regardless of age, disability, ethnic origin, and sexual orientation, violence against women has no place in Québec society. It is quite clear that the overwhelming majority of Quebecers consider violence against women to be completely unacceptable. In recent years, news of such crimes has elicited strong reactions from the public and prompted calls for further government action to bring the violence to an end.

Key facts

- According to the 2014 Enquête sociale générale sur la victimisation, it is estimated that only 5% of sexual assaults are denounced¹¹¹.
- 2014 police data on sexual offenses indicates that 84% of victims are female, while 96% of alleged offenders are male¹¹².
- In 2015, Québec police recorded 19,406 cases of intimate partner violence. Such offenses accounted for almost a third (30.2%) of all crimes against persons (64,205)¹¹³.

Action days to stop violence against women

Every year on December 6, Quebecers commemorate the tragic event that shook Québec to its core, delivering a crushing blow to the gender equality movement and all it had accomplished. This national day of remembrance is held in honor of the 14 young women who were murdered at the École polytechnique de Montréal in 1989, for no reason other than being women. The event serves as a reminder to younger generations that we must continue to fight for equality every day or any progress achieved could easily be lost. Every year from November 25 to December 6, Quebecers and community organizations stand together in support of the action days to stop violence against women. To denounce the violence, people have come to wear symbolic white ribbons to show their support for the cause.

Every year, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine supports awareness activities held during the action days to stop violence against women. These include, to name a few, the 2015 and 2016 editions of the Déjeuner des hommes pour l'élimination des violences envers les femmes, organized by the Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes, and the 2016 Municipalité alliée contre la violence conjugale campaign, led by the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale.

Concrete initiatives for changing behaviors

In June 2015, the president of the Assemblée nationale announced the implementation of the *Politique relative à la prévention et à la gestion des situations de harcèlement au travail*.

In Spring 2016, the president of the Conseil du statut de la femme visited various CEGEPs with rapper Koriass and independent journalist and feminist blogger Marilyse Hamelin in order to discuss love and sexual relationships, addressing topics such as egalitarian relationships, consent, and prostitution.

Also, since spring 2016, the Government of Québec has backed the province-wide Sans oui, c'est non! campaign that encourages higher education institutions and student associations to join forces to raise awareness of sexual consent within their communities and explain how everyone must do their part to fight sexual violence. By spring 2017, some 40 higher education institutions and 40 student associations had joined the campaign.

Denouncing, preventing, and overcoming violence, i.e., working toward a society that respects women's rights to life, safety, and integrity, is the foremost goal and priority the Government of Québec has set for itself for the coming years.

1 NEW GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

Given the magnitude and in particular the scope of violence against women, many ministries will have to get involved in order to address all related issues. The *Plan d'action concerté pour contrer et prévenir l'intimidation 2015-2018 Ensemble contre l'intimidation, une responsabilité partagée*, coordinated by the Ministère de la Famille, states that "The manifestations of bullying may be part of a larger and punishable offence such as abuse, negligence, discrimination, exploitation, or domestic, family, or sexual violence. [...] Bullying is often part of the cycle of domestic violence. Bullying is, on occasion, a component of abuse. Victims of sexual aggression may be bullied by their aggressor to ensure their silence"¹¹⁴.

The Ministère de la Famille; the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion; the Ministère de la Justice; the Ministère de la Sécurité publique; the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux; the Secrétariat à la condition féminine; and the Secrétariat aux aînés are taking concrete action to eradicate all forms of violence from Québec's landscape. Through various approaches laid out in government and ministry action plans, strategies, and programs, these ministries and agencies are tackling every aspect of the problem, including bullying, harassment, abuse, sexual assault and exploitation, domestic violence, and other troubling issues such as honor-based violence.

Key facts

Below are the percentages of primary school students who claim to have been victims of a particular form of aggression at least once a year:

- 10%: Humiliating online posts or false rumors (girls and boys equally affected);
- 9.1%: Email insults or threats (girls [12.2%] more affected than boys [6.6%]);
- 7.8%: Cellphone or text message insults or threats (girls [10.2%] more affected than boys [5.8%])¹¹⁵.

Implementation of the *Stratégie gouvernementale pour prévenir et contrer les violences sexuelles 2016-2021*

After extensive consultations, the Government of Québec launched the *Stratégie gouvernementale pour prévenir et contrer les violences sexuelles 2016-2021* on October 28, 2016. The actions included in the strategy are primarily based on the *Orientations gouvernementales en matière d'agression sexuelle*, previous sexual assault action plan reports (2001–2006 and 2008–2013), the *Politique gouvernementale pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*, and previous street gang action plan reports (2007–2010 and 2011–2014).

The strategy represents a new milestone in the fight against sexual violence, of which women and children are the main victims. It addresses two issues: sexual assault and sexual exploitation.

Twelve government ministries and agencies are in charge of implementing the *Stratégie gouvernementale pour prévenir et contrer les violences sexuelles 2016-2021*. In addition, a number of partner community organizations and women's groups will help carry out many of the strategy's concrete actions.

The strategy has the following goals:

1. Inform and educate the public about sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and associated myths and prejudices, rallying them behind the cause.
2. Support communities in their efforts to prevent and identify sexual assault.
3. Assist sexual assault and sexual exploitation victims in their dealings with the justice system and look into the various forms of compensation available to victims of such crimes.
4. Strengthen measures against sexual exploitation and related criminal activity.
5. Improve intervention practices through training and tool development.
6. Support the advancement of knowledge and dissemination of accurate and up-to-date information on sexual assault and sexual exploitation.
7. Encourage the sharing of information and expertise and collaboration between professionals.

Access to information and support for women regarding honor-based violence in Québec

In November 2011, in the wake of the Shafia family murders, the Government of Québec tasked the Conseil du statut de la femme with studying the phenomenon of honor-based violence, which was poorly documented. In October 2013, the Conseil du statut de la femme released a brief entitled *Les crimes d'honneur: de l'indignation à l'action*.

As part of its work in sheltering female victims of violence, the Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes (FMHF) has noted the emergence of various violence and control issues affecting immigrant women and ethnic minorities. These include forced and arranged marriages, honor-based violence, trafficking, and exploitation.

During the year 2013–2014, FMHF shelters received 651 immigrant women (21.6% of sheltered women). Many of these women are sponsored, awaiting sponsorship, or do not have immigrant status. The percentage of such immigrant women is on the rise: 13% in 2006–2007, 16% in 2008–2009, 18% in 2010–2011, and 19.5% in 2012–2013¹¹⁶.

Honor-based violence is sometimes associated with forced marriages, often involving sponsored spouses from the country of origin. Such marriages have become a reality in Québec, as in other parts of the world.

DID YOU KNOW?

In April 2017, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced the repeal of conditional permanent residence. The decision applied to all new and active permanent residence applications for spouses, common-law partners, conjugal partners, accompanying dependent children, and individuals sponsored by permanent residents who were subject to the condition. The condition no longer applies to spouses, common-law partners, conjugal partners, or any accompanying or sponsored family members having already obtained permanent resident status. IRCC just released an operational bulletin confirming that any proceedings already in progress against individuals targeted by the old provisions of the IRPR (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, SOR/2002-227) in this regard will be canceled.

In June 2016, the government passed the *Act to amend various legislative provisions to better protect persons*, which improves safeguards against issues like forced marriages. Further actions will be required to support this legislation, such as making information and support more accessible to these women.

5.1.1.

Provide support to immigrant women and girls, in particular those who are sponsored, and inform them about their rights and remedies in the event of violence, including honor-based violence

With this action, the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion will ensure that immigrant women and girls, in particular those who are sponsored, are aware of their rights and available remedies in the event of violence, including honor-based violence. This action will be carried out in partnership with community organizations with expertise regarding these women. Partner organizations will disseminate information to women whose native languages are neither French nor English, provide support, and train staff working with newly arrived immigrants. This training will allow workers to serve as multiplier agents, spreading their enhanced knowledge of the protections available to immigrant women in vulnerable situations.

Coordinator: MIDI

Collaborator: SCF

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Conseil du statut de la femme, Canada recorded a couple dozen honor crime murder victims in the two decades leading up to 2013. These murders are just the tip of the iceberg—the country is experiencing a spectrum of other forms of honor-based violence¹¹⁷.

2 CONTINUED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur

- Support schools in enforcing the *Education Act* and the *Act respecting private education*, in particular with respect to maintaining positive, caring, and safe learning environments and preventing violence.

QUÉBEC IN ACTION

In 1995, the Government of Québec announced the *Politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale: prévenir, dépister, contrer la violence conjugale*. Since implementing the policy and associated action plans, we have made much progress in the fight against domestic violence and in providing support to victims, most of whom are women and children.

The *Plan d'action gouvernemental 2012-2017 en matière de violence conjugale*, released on December 6, 2012, was an opportunity to address the needs of Indigenous people and people whose living conditions make them vulnerable to domestic violence. Domestic violence remains a top government concern, and much more work will be required to put an end to it. After producing a report on the *Plan d'action gouvernemental 2012-2017 en matière de violence conjugale* and assessing the results, the government—with the help and expertise of its parapublic, community, and research partners—will continue its efforts to prevent, detect, and stop domestic violence.

The *Plan d'action gouvernemental 2015-2018 La radicalisation au Québec: agir, prévenir, détecter et vivre ensemble*, is a key instrument in the promotion of egalitarian behavior. According to the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, the action plan is aimed at improving our understanding of violent radicalization, strengthening dialogue with various societal sectors and stakeholders to detect the warning signs of radicalization, and fostering rapid intervention to prevent escalation. During the interministerial work that led to the action plan, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, aware of the lack of data and information on the matter, introduced a research project entitled *L'engagement des femmes dans la radicalisation violente*, to be carried out with the Conseil du statut de la femme.

The vulnerability factors affecting the elderly can be differentiated along several lines, including from a sociological, cultural, and physiological perspective. The *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour contrer la maltraitance envers les personnes âgées 2010-2015*, coordinated by the Secrétariat aux aînés, was renewed until 2017 by the government policy *Politique gouvernementale Vieillir et vivre ensemble, chez soi, dans sa communauté, au Québec*. As announced in the 2017–2018 budget, the *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour contrer la maltraitance envers les personnes âgées 2017-2022* was renewed for five years. As part of the work leading to its renewal, the Secrétariat aux aînés and the Secrétariat à la condition féminine worked together to ensure that the action plan was implemented using a gender-based approach.

GUIDELINE 6

TOGETHER FOR PARITY IN DECISION-MAKING

In Québec, while the general consensus is that women should have equal say in decision-making circles, parity has not yet been achieved in this regard. There are many reasons for this, including the resilience of boys' clubs, glass ceilings, and a lack of confidence among some women.

Women are systemically underrepresented in positions of power and influence in politics, in big company management and boards of directors, and in various other areas such as the sports, cultural, and social spheres.

It should be noted that in early 2016 the Commission des relations avec les citoyens agreed to look into women's place in politics, specifically their representation in democratic bodies. In late April 2017, the Assemblée nationale unanimously adopted a motion in which it committed to making parity in all areas of society a government priority.

Decision-making circles are bodies in which strategic decisions are made in order to guide policies and determine priorities in all sectors of society, including communities, universities, companies, and the various levels of government.

Parity zone refers to the idea that, to achieve proper balance, each gender should represent 40–60% of a group's members¹¹⁸.

"Glass ceiling refers to all the visible and invisible mechanisms preventing women from getting access to high-level positions. These mechanisms can be external (socialization to organizations, uneven distribution of housework, etc.) or internal (recruitment, promotion, mobility) in nature"¹¹⁹. [TRANSLATION]

A quota "sets a minimum percentage of women for parliament members or party nominations for the purpose of balance. Quotas force parties and political elites to recruit, select, and appoint more women to political positions. There are many different types of quotas. They can be temporary and are typically subject to penalties"¹²⁰. [TRANSLATION]

DID YOU KNOW?

In April 2017, two prestigious positions were held by women for the first time in the history of their respective institutions. Danielle St-Amand was appointed board chair of the Trois-Rivières Port Authority and Sophie D'Amours became the first woman to be named rector of Université Laval after being elected in the first round of voting. It should be noted that the new rector was part of the Faculty of Science and Engineering, specifically the Department of Mechanical Engineering, a field in which women remain a minority.

Also, gender segregation works both ways, and there are sectors in which women make up a clear majority, e.g., in health and education. As such, to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes, greater diversity must be promoted in the positions of power and influence held by women in different places and fields.

1 GROUND COVERED

In Québec, women have been increasingly present in decision-making circles for many years now. Together, women and the men who supported them have cleared the way for parity in decision-making, and Québec society now reaps the fruits of their labors. Our work in this regard is well under way, but it is far from over.

On the political front, the *Act Granting to Women the Right to Vote and to be Eligible as Candidates* was passed by the Legislative Assembly on April 18, 1940—a milestone in the history of women's rights in Québec. Female Quebecers owe this victory to a group of brave, determined, and tenacious women such as Thérèse Casgrain. Granting women the right to vote gave them an equal voice to that of men.

The Strategy's term coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of Marie-Claire Kirkland-Casgrain's election in 1961, where she became the first woman to be elected to the Assemblée nationale. After winning this by-election in the riding of Jacques-Cartier, she was re-elected in the 1962 general election before becoming the first woman to be sworn in as a minister without portfolio. In 1964, she was named minister of Transport and Communication in the same cabinet. However, it would take eleven more years for another woman to be elected to the Assemblée nationale.

In 2007, Premier Jean Charest formed the first gender-balanced cabinet in Québec history. In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau followed suit at the federal level. Then, in January 2016, Premier Philippe Couillard formed another gender-balanced cabinet in Québec.

In September 2012, Pauline Marois became the first woman to be elected premier of Québec.

In 1999, the creation of the *À égalité pour décider* program made it possible to finance a range of projects promoting women's participation in local and regional decision-making. The program provided critical leverage at the local and regional levels, allowing incubators such as community organizations, women's groups, and municipalities to carry out innovative initiatives and take action to promote parity in positions of power and influence.

In 2006, the *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises and amending various legislative provisions* was passed. It stipulated that all boards of state-owned enterprises would have to be half-female and half-male within five years. To this day, the Ministère du Conseil exécutif's Secrétariat aux emplois supérieurs continues to ensure that the boards of state-owned enterprises remain gender-balanced. As evidenced by the figures below, progress in this area has been remarkable.

Key facts

- From 2006 to December 2011, the proportion of women on the boards of state-owned enterprises grew from 27.5% to 52.4%, a 90.5% increase¹²¹.
- As of March 31, 2016, the proportion of women on the boards of the 23 state-owned enterprises and organizations targeted by the *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes* was 50.2%. Gender parity on the boards of state-owned enterprises was achieved in 2012 and has been maintained since¹²².

Step by step, the concept and cause of equal representation is gaining traction. Quebecers everywhere have clearly voiced their desire for a shift toward gender parity, in particular within the context of legislation. For example, the 2009 *Act to establish a caregiver support fund* stipulates that the Société de gestion pour le soutien aux proches aidants board of directors must include "an equal number of women and men"¹²³, while the *Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network*, implemented on April 1, 2015, stipulates that boards of directors "must be composed of an equal number of women and men"¹²⁴.

The advice and engagement of various partners will be essential to achieving parity in positions of power. The Table des partenaires – Femmes et politique municipale will continue its work in this regard.

Whether in politics, academia, business, or their communities, in state-owned enterprises or listed companies, or in any other decision-making circles, outstanding and inspiring women have shown that anything is possible. They have found a way to break through the glass ceiling, and in so doing, have allowed many other women to follow in their footsteps.

2 PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES

There are still pockets of resistance in decision-making circles, from political bodies to boards of directors and management teams.

Parity in politics: A question of equality, a question of democracy

In its brief on women's involvement in politics, Conseil du statut de la femme concludes by listing priority areas in which the government should intervene. Findings support the idea "that structural changes are required in politics. In order to support women's participation in politics, reform is needed in four areas—candidate recruitment, elected officials' work–family relationships, women's political socialization, and key project financing"¹²⁵. [TRANSLATION]

Pockets of resistance exist at two levels. While it is important that women have a stronger presence in politics, it is also crucial that political circles be more open to their participation.

As is the case in many other areas, women cannot be left alone in their struggle to increase their presence in politics. Municipal, provincial, and federal authorities must be part of the solution.

Women must have their place alongside men in municipal decision-making. With so many powers delegated to municipalities and regional county municipalities, these authorities, now more than ever, need access to women with knowledge and expertise on the big new issues affecting residents.

During the 2013 general municipal elections, more than half of elected officials won with no opposition. 13,233 candidates ran for election, including 3,814 women (28.8%). These percentages show that, while the number of female candidates is on the rise, it is not growing fast enough to achieve gender parity in municipal politics any time soon. If the current rate of increase stays the same, considering that about 18% of mayoral candidates were female in 2013, we would have to wait until 2057 to reach the parity zone of 40%, i.e., eleven elections^z.

Discrimination at the ballot box is not an obstacle; the issue is the lack of female candidates. For the November 5, 2017 general municipal elections, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine prioritized projects aimed at increasing the presence of women in municipal politics under Item 2—À égalité pour décider—of the 2016–2017 call for projects. Projects will continue to receive financing under the new financing initiative, *S'engager pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*. These projects will be aimed at maintaining women's presence in all decision-making circles.

Organizations with expertise in this area, such as large municipal organizations, will play a key role in mobilizing communities and increasing the presence of women in politics. Their active and hands-on involvement will be crucial to bringing about a culture change within municipal democratic bodies. To that end, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine has entered into agreements with the Union des municipalités du Québec, the Fédération des municipalités du Québec, and the Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie.

z. This projection was calculated using data from the 2005, 2009, and 2013 elections in which women accounted for 24.7%, 26.6%, and 28.8% of candidates respectively, for an average increase of roughly two percentage points between elections.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) believed women were generally less ready to hold power, while 71% disagreed. Young people ages 18–34 disagreed more (77%) than other groups.
- 62% of respondents agreed that the weak presence of women in positions of power and influence was due to the power milieu's lack of openness. Women were more likely to agree (70%) than men (54%), and people ages 55 and up were more likely to agree (70%) than those ages 18–34 (50%).

Key facts

- On the municipal front, women held 17.3% of mayoral offices and represented 32% of councilors after the 2013 municipal elections. The number of elected women was up 8.7% compared to 2009¹²⁶.
- On the provincial front, the percentage of seats held by women in the Assemblée nationale climbed from 6.5% in 1981 to 29% in June 2017. In May 2017, women accounted for 44% of cabinet members (11 of 25 excluding the premier)¹²⁷.
- On the federal front, the percentage of women elected to the House of Commons jumped from 9.6% in 1984 to 27.2% in June 2017. On November 4, 2015, the prime minister formed the first gender-balanced cabinet in Canada's history¹²⁸.

Parity on boards of directors and in management positions:

A question of equality, a question of competitive advantage

In the *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes 2011-2015*, one of the goals under Guideline 6 was to aim for parity in positions of power. This goal is in the same vein as the previous one. It addresses the issue of vertical segregation, i.e., the glass ceiling, an obstacle women around the world have to contend with, as highlighted by the OECD in its publication *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*¹²⁹.

In 2013, while Québec was third among Canadian provinces in terms of the proportion of women on corporate boards (all company types combined), the fact remains that its ratio was a mere 19.8%¹³⁰. In other words, Québec companies still have a lot of room for improvement in this regard.

In Québec since December 31, 2014, listed companies have had to provide annual reports on their written policies and goals regarding the representation of women, indicating the number and proportion of women on their board of directors and holding senior management positions. Companies are required to comply or explain themselves. If a company does not adopt the expected mechanisms, policies, or goals, or does not consider female representation, it must provide its reasons for doing so.

Regarding this new regulatory requirement and at the Secrétariat à la condition féminine's request, the Chaire de recherche en gouvernance de sociétés carried out a study on the presence of women on the boards of directors of companies targeted by the Table

des partenaires influents^{aa}. A study report was submitted in May 2015. In its conclusion, it was recommended to conduct a follow-up on these mandatory reports on changes in female representation within boards of directors and senior management in order to see if the reports are making a difference and if the adopted policies are bearing fruit. The Strategy pays special attention to this recommendation and to projects supporting women and communities in their quest to achieve equal representation in positions of power and influence.

Key findings – 2016 Survey – Perceptions of gender equality

- Circles of power and influence are still perceived as majority male. Over three-quarters of respondents (77%) thought women had a weaker presence. Younger people seemed to be less aware of this underrepresentation: 65% of people ages 18–35 agreed, compared to 77% of those 35–54 and 85% of those 55 and over. Men were less likely to agree (72%) than women (81%).
- Over half of respondents (56%) disagreed with the idea that mandatory gender balance on boards of directors resulted in the appointment of less competent people. A bit over half of people ages 18–54 (51%) disagreed, versus two-thirds of those 55 and over (66%). Men were more likely to agree (44%) with the statement than women (29%).

3 STRATEGIC GOALS

Lack of equal representation is reducing Québec's prosperity. Women and men think, act, and see things differently. That diversity is an asset, and we must make the most of it. Within the framework of this guideline, the Government of Québec therefore intends to:

- Rally communities and increase the presence of women in politics.
- Encourage companies to achieve parity in decision-making positions.

■ GOAL 6.1 RALLY COMMUNITIES AND INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

6.1.1. Conduct a campaign encouraging women to participate in municipal elections (Opération élection municipale au féminin)

A media campaign will be carried out to recruit more female candidates for the November 2017 municipal elections. Also, a mobilization campaign targeting municipal teams and parties will be conducted to recruit more women for the 2021 municipal

aa. Creating the Table des partenaires influents was one of the 102 actions in the *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes 2011-2015*. Established in January 2012, the roundtable was tasked with developing an action strategy aimed at increasing the presence of women on the boards of private companies. To this end, it targeted 60 listed Québec companies. The roundtable ended its activities once the plan was implemented.

elections. All municipalities will be targeted under this initiative. Key circles in the area of municipal democracy will be educated about the fact that women are underrepresented on municipal councils and that municipalities cannot deprive themselves of skilled and talented women.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborator: MAMOT

6.1.2. Offer women training to encourage them to commit to politics

Training will be provided to women considering entering municipal, provincial, or federal politics, in particular the upcoming elections at each level of government. This will serve as a formative step for them, with special attention given to intersectional aspects (immigrant women, young women, elderly women).

Drawing on its expertise, the Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie will train women for electoral campaigns, developing their networking skills and knowledge of politics in order to boost the number of female candidates.

Coordinator: SCF

6.1.3. Establish a community of female candidates looking to get involved in politics

This action is aimed at creating a platform promoting the development of a community of female candidates and potential female candidates, including women having received the aforementioned training for women who are thinking of going into politics. This community will serve to promote networking, break isolation, and rally people around the cause of equal gender representation in decision-making. It will also allow us to get participants in touch with inspiring individuals such as current and former female elected officials.

Coordinator: SCF

6.1.4. Identify the support needs of newly elected female officials and take appropriate action

Newly elected female officials will be given access to support from competent, inspiring, and motivating people. Support is key to keeping women in politics over several terms, and can help women take on more political responsibilities. This support will encourage female elected officials to commit to a long-term career in politics and will include training, information sharing, networking, and mentorships.

Coordinator: SCF

6.1.5. Organize a networking event for female elected officials at all levels of government

With this action, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine seeks to give female elected officials access to a networking forum, which would also provide training, in order to support them in their duties. The event will address equality issues while empowering participants and developing their knowledge and expertise. It will help participants embrace and commit to a career in politics. It will also be a great opportunity for participants to make contacts that could help them on their political journey.

Coordinator: SCF

6.1.6. Support the Union des municipalités du Québec and the Fédération québécoise des municipalités in their gender equality efforts

Gender equality is a major issue in municipal governance. Providing financial support to the Fédération québécoise des municipalités and to the Union des municipalités du Québec will allow them to implement key actions contributing to female representation on the municipal scene and within their organizations.

Coordinator: SCF

■ GOAL 6.2 ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO ACHIEVE PARITY IN THEIR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

6.2.1. Monitor the presence of women on the boards of listed companies using the “Comply or explain” approach

Female representation in board and senior management positions will be monitored in listed Québec companies, namely those targeted by the Table des partenaires influents. This will allow us to determine whether the “Comply or explain” approach is working or whether stricter rules should be considered. It will also help us document the best governance practices to boost female representation (such as setting up leadership development committees).

Coordinator: SCF

6.2.2.

Support projects aimed at initiating a shift toward inclusive parity in decision-making in Québec companies

Over the next few years, support will be provided to key innovative projects, in particular those led by organizations recognized for their expertise on female corporate governance in Québec, in order to improve inclusive parity in those companies. These promising projects with potential for province-wide implementation will help increase female representation while encouraging diversity (immigrants, ethnocultural minorities, disabled people, people of all ages, etc.), not only on boards of directors, but also in management positions and at all levels of governance in Québec companies.

Coordinator: SCF

4 CONTINUED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire and Secrétariat à la condition féminine

- Maintain the Table des partenaires – Femmes et politique municipale and follow up on the consultation plan.

RESEARCH

During the consultation work conducted while developing the Strategy, our understanding of certain subjects was found to be lacking, and it was determined that further research, studies, and overviews would be required to focus our efforts more effectively.

Some questions in the survey on Quebecer perceptions of gender equality revealed a lack of awareness regarding many gender equality issues. These include conditions and situations that can make certain groups of women, such as immigrant and disabled women, more vulnerable. When asked whether disabled women or disabled men earned more money, 36% of respondents were unsure. This high uncertainty rate shows that in addition to conducting research, efforts will be required to inform the population of the results in an accessible way. Awareness is the first step to taking action.

The results of these studies will in many cases lead to concrete actions aimed at addressing better documented issues. For example, to improve government intervention in the area of girl-on-girl violence, pilot projects will be included in the action research presented below. Also, given Québec's demographic situation, an activity dominated by women—caregiving—is likely on the rise. Developing a better understanding of differences between female and male caregivers would allow us to give them more adequate support.

The studies and research envisioned in this section will improve the government's understanding of matters affecting gender equality. Also, as with any social issue, gender equality is changing rapidly. New phenomena must be taken into account, and investments will be required to address them effectively.

R 1 Document the realities of disabled women using existing data

This action involves producing a report aimed at documenting the realities of disabled women, including their socio-economic situation and social engagement (education, job, hobbies), using existing data.

Coordinator: OPHQ

R 2 Conduct an action research to better understand girl-on-girl violence

Girl-on-girl violence^{ab} is a new phenomenon that warrants in-depth analysis. We must identify the best courses of action to address this issue and in particular indirect bullying.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will carry out action research with the assistance of experts. Findings will be disseminated through the *SansStéréotypes* project and other relevant activities, specifically targeting school staff working with girls from primary Cycle 3 to the end of high school.

Once the research is done, pilot projects will be implemented to test which approaches are best at preventing violent behavior among girls.

Coordinator: SCF

Collaborators: FAMILLE, MEES, MJQ (BLCH), MSSS, SAJ

R 3 Draw a socio-economic portrait of elderly women in Québec

This action is aimed at developing a portrait of elderly women in Québec in order to understand their living conditions and situations. The project will cover various aspects (economic, social, and cultural) and will address issues affecting Indigenous women as well as those affecting women from other cultural backgrounds.

Coordinator: FAMILLE (SA)

R 4 Provide an overview of caregiving in Québec documenting the factors differentiating female and male caregivers

The Conseil du statut de la femme will provide an overview of the factors differentiating female and male caregivers. The Conseil du statut de la femme's expertise in gender-based analysis will be crucial to this initiative. The overview will allow us to better understand why women and men become caregivers and identify gender-based support

ab. In 2015, Jasmin Roy produced a documentary and an essay on girl-on-girl violence, both entitled *#Bitch: les filles et la violence*.

needs to help them address the difficulties they encounter, in particular balancing work and responsibilities.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will make sure to disseminate the overview through communication channels aimed at organizations specializing in this field, and in particular will ensure that the overview is used to adjust services available to caregivers in a concrete way in order to foster gender equality.

Coordinator: CSF

Collaborator: SCF

R5

Produce a statistical overview of women who file complaints with the labor standards division

This action is aimed at establishing a profile of women who submit complaints to the labor standards division at Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail. The overview will cover all complaints submitted in the last three years, whether of a financial or administrative nature or concerning prohibited practices, dismissal without just cause, or psychological harassment.

Having a better understanding of complainants will allow us to adjust labor standard interventions and client targeting based on the data provided.

Coordinator: CNESST

CONTINUED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Government ministries and agencies often produce research, overviews, and statistics. Two such cases are listed below.

Office des personnes handicapées du Québec

- Taking into account gender-based analysis, document the social engagement of disabled people as part of assessment work regarding the government policy *À part entière: pour un véritable exercice du droit à l'égalité.*

Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

- Disseminate available statistics and analyses on gender-differentiated cultural practices.

■ CONCLUSION

The result of extensive consultation with women's groups, non-governmental organizations, and the general public, and the mobilization of all government ministries and agencies, the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021* recognizes the ground covered in the last few decades and, using factual evidence, reveals areas requiring targeted intervention.

With this Strategy, the Government of Québec is committing to promoting social justice by advancing the cause of gender equality. Its main guidelines, strategic goals, key actions, and other actions reflect the government's desire to give new impetus to this fundamental value in all regions of Québec.

We will rely heavily on the expertise of our partners, such as women's groups, regarding women's issues and gender equality. New partners will also be required to maximize the impact of government measures.

The Strategy will strike a balance between individual and collective issues. Achieving gender equality will require a total team effort. Citizens and communities will each have a role to play on the road to gender equality.

For all women and men to join together to achieve equality in fact in all spheres of Québec society, a long-term vision is required. This vision rests on two main pillars—promoting egalitarian relationships between women and men and economically empowering women. These two general issues transcend all others covered in the Strategy, including those relating to the distribution of family responsibilities, balancing family, work, and school, women's health and wellness, violence against women, and representation in decision-making circles.

For Québec to remain among the world's most egalitarian societies, we must push forward with new actions having a real impact on gender equality.

Do success, skills, wellness, achievement, excellence, or commitment have a gender on a personal or collective level? Asking that question is the first step to answering it.

It is up to today's generations to build a fairer, more egalitarian, and more prosperous Québec that respects people's life choices.

By encouraging everyone join forces to achieve equality in fact, the Government of Québec is asserting its desire to rally all Quebecers of all regions, ages, and origins around this shared, and most importantly, non-negotiable value.

SUMMARY TABLE

GUIDELINES, STRATEGIC GOALS, AND ACTIONS

KEY ACTIONS

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
KA 1 – Introduce a framework bill aimed at gender equality in fact.	SCF	MJQ
KA 2 – Create and monitor a Québec gender equality index.	SCF	CSF MTESS
KA 3 – Give sexuality education more formal recognition by adding lessons for every academic year from preschool to high school.	MEES	
KA 4 – Develop campaigns targeting persistent and troubling gender inequalities.	SCF	
KA 5 – Support activities aimed at encouraging men to become allies in the quest for gender equality.	SCF	
KA 6 – Support concrete local, regional, and province-wide projects relating to the Strategy’s main guidelines, favoring the development of diverse partnerships, and taking the intersectional dimension into account.	SCF	
KA 7 – Showcase the stories of inspirational women and honor concrete actions supporting gender equality with the Prix Égalité Thérèse-Casgrain award.	SCF	

■ GUIDELINES AND GOALS

GUIDELINE 1

TOGETHER FOR EGALITARIAN SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION, FREE OF GENDER STEREOTYPES AND SEXISM

Goal 1.1

Fight gender stereotypes and sexism

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
1.1.1. Tool up parents, educational childcare staff, school staff, and other people who work with children and youth.	SCF	FAMILLE MEES MESI MIDI MJQ (BLCH) MSSS SAJ
1.1.2. Devise and implement concrete actions promoting a healthy and diverse body image in close cooperation with the image industry and government partners.	SCF	MEES MESI MSSS
1.1.3. Implement actions aimed at fighting sexism in Québec advertising.	SCF	MCC
1.1.4. Educate the public to eliminate gender stereotypes in sports and physical activities.	MEES	
1.1.5. Educate and inform the public, especially women, young people, and professionals, about healthy weight management and body image.	MSSS	

Goal 1.2

Facilitate the integration of newcomers to Québec by promoting the principle of gender equality

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
1.2.1. Address gender equality in intercultural learning activities.	MEES	
1.2.2. Make information on gender equality available to newcomers to Québec.	SCF	MIDI

GUIDELINE 2

TOGETHER FOR THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Goal 2.1

Diversify the career choices of girls, women, and boys

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
2.1.1. Inform and educate school and vocational guidance counselors about job stereotypes and the importance of diversifying education and career choices.	MEES	
2.1.2. Provide internships to girls in male-dominated occupations and to boys in female-dominated occupations as part of the Jeunes explorateurs d'un jour program.	SCF	MEES MESI MTESS SAJ
2.1.3. Develop e-mentoring for girls and boys considering careers in occupations dominated by the other gender.	SCF	MEES MESI MTESS SAJ
2.1.4. Support innovative and compelling activities aimed at increasing the presence of women in science and technology.	SCF	MESI

Goal 2.2

Increase gender diversity in the workplace by providing companies with guidance and support

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
2.2.1. Launch initiatives aimed at increasing the presence of women in the construction industry.	SCF MTESS (Emploi-Québec) CCQ	FAMILLE MEES MESI MTESS (Secrétariat du travail) SAJ
2.2.2. Develop initiatives to increase the presence of women in growth industries and promote gender diversity in the workplace.	SCF	MTESS (Emploi-Québec) MESI
2.2.3. Hold events promoting the employability and retention of women in male-dominated occupations in order to engage in dialogue with local stakeholders.	SCF	FAMILLE MEES MESI MTESS SAJ

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
2.2.4. Carry out key actions aimed at understanding gender diversity issues in fire departments.	MSP	ISQ

Goal 2.3

Improve the employability of women, in particular those outside the labor market, and take action to further their economic empowerment

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
2.3.1. Produce and disseminate tools aimed at improving our understanding of the conditions women in the labor market are facing.	MTESS (Emploi-Québec)	
2.3.2. Take steps to reduce obstacles to the integration and retention of female workers.	MTESS (Emploi-Québec)	
2.3.3. Support activities aimed at informing or educating immigrant women about gender equality from a socio-professional perspective.	SCF	MTESS (Emploi-Québec) CNESST
2.3.4. Provide pay equity support and information services to non-unionized female workers.	SCF	CNESST
2.3.5. Offer more lectures and provide more training on pay equity to employers in non-unionized workplaces.	CNESST	
2.3.6. Produce and distribute an information leaflet on financial support programs for disabled children and their families.	OPHQ	FAMILLE FINANCES MEES MTESS MSSS RQ

Goal 2.4

Encourage and support women in their business endeavors

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
2.4.1. Provide tailored training to immigrant women looking to develop their entrepreneurial abilities.	SCF	MESI
2.4.2. Provide training activities on public tenders to female entrepreneurs.	SCF	SCT MESI

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
2.4.3. Support key projects encouraging girls to start new businesses.	SCF	MESI
2.4.4. Take steps to support agricultural entrepreneurship among women.	SCF	MAPAQ

GUIDELINE 3

TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN FAMILY, WORK, SCHOOL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

Goal 3.1

Contribute to a fair distribution of family, work, and school responsibilities

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
3.1.1. Develop the paternal aspect of the guide <i>Mieux vivre avec notre enfant de la grossesse à deux ans: guide pratique pour les mères et les pères</i> .	INSPQ	MSSS
3.1.2. Ensure that the fact sheets on the prenatal information portal provide non-stereotyped information on the roles of parents in order to get fathers and mothers more involved during the perinatal period.	INSPQ	MSSS
3.1.3. Produce a fact sheet on the role of fathers and publish it on the perinatal information portal.	INSPQ	FAMILLE MSSS SCF
3.1.4. Produce a short video on sharing parental leave and make it available to future parents when they submit their application for the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale.	CGAP SCF	FAMILLE MTESS SAJ
3.1.5. Support projects promoting co-parenting.	FAMILLE	
3.1.6. Inform people about their rights and obligations under current family law.	MJQ	FAMILLE

Goal 3.2

Make it easier to balance family, work, school, social, and political life

ACTIONS	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
3.2.1. Support childcare projects during the summer and school holidays to make it easier for working and student parents to balance family, work, and school.	FAMILLE	
3.2.2. Support measures aimed at making it easier for working and student parents to balance family, work, and school.	FAMILLE	
3.2.3. Develop a guide on balancing family, work, and political life for elected municipal officials.	SCF	FAMILLE MAMOT
3.2.4. Collect and disseminate information on the eligibility of elected municipal officials for the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale.	CGAP	MAMOT MTESS SCF
3.2.5. Propose legislative changes giving elected municipal officials access to parental leave.	MAMOT	
3.2.6. Conduct activities aimed at making it easier for legal representatives and members of tutorship councils for incapacitated persons to fulfill their responsibilities.	Curateur public du Québec	
3.2.7. Increase student financial assistance to heads of single-parent families.	MEES	

GUIDELINE 4

TOGETHER FOR A GENDER-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

GUIDELINE 5

TOGETHER FOR A SOCIETY WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

ACTION	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
5.1.1. Provide support to immigrant women and girls, in particular those who are sponsored, and inform them about their rights and remedies in the event of violence, including honor-based violence.	MIDI	SCF

GUIDELINE 6

TOGETHER FOR PARITY IN DECISION-MAKING

Goal 6.1

Rally communities and increase the presence of women in politics

ACTIONS	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
6.1.1. Conduct a campaign encouraging women to participate in municipal elections (Opération élection municipale au féminin).	SCF	MAMOT
6.1.2. Offer women training to encourage them to commit to politics.	SCF	
6.1.3. Establish a community of female candidates looking to get involved in politics.	SCF	
6.1.4. Identify the support needs of newly elected female officials and take appropriate action.	SCF	
6.1.5. Organize a networking event for female elected officials at all levels of government.	SCF	
6.1.6. Support the Union des municipalités du Québec and the Fédération québécoise des municipalités in their gender equality efforts.	SCF	

Goal 6.2

Encourage companies to achieve parity in their decision-making positions

ACTIONS	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
6.2.1. Monitor the presence of women on the boards of listed companies using the "Comply or explain" approach.	SCF	
6.2.2. Support projects aimed at initiating a shift toward inclusive parity in decision-making in Québec companies.	SCF	

RESEARCH

ACTIONS	COORDINATOR(S)	COLLABORATOR(S)
R1 – Document the realities of disabled women using existing data.	OPHQ	
R2 – Conduct an action research to better understand girl-on-girl violence.	SCF	FAMILLE MEES MJQ (BLCH) MSSS SAJ
R3 – Draw a socio-economic portrait of elderly women in Québec.	FAMILLE (SA)	
R4 – Provide an overview of caregiving in Québec documenting the factors differentiating female and male caregivers.	CSF	SCF
R5 – Produce a statistical overview of women who file complaints with the labor standards division.	CNESST	

PARITY
EMPOWER NO
REGIONS EQUITY
MOBILIZATION

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Consultation process

APPENDIX 2

List of ministries and government agencies that provided input for the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*

APPENDIX 3

Ministerial and interministerial gender-based analysis initiatives

SOCIAL JUSTICE
STEREOTYPES
MENT PROSPERITY
BALANCE
DIVERSITY

■ APPENDIX 1

CONSULTATION PROCESS

A major consultation process—*Ensemble pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*—was launched in fall 2015 with a consultation workbook, a statistical portrait, and progress reports on the 2011–2015 government action plans.

Key steps in the consultation process

Consultation meetings with non-governmental organizations

Over 80 non-governmental organizations, including women's groups, were heard over the course of seven meetings between October 2015 and September 2016. Meeting with a wide range of organizations provided an opportunity to hear their concerns and recommendations on gender equality.

Two of the meetings were held for organizations with specific challenges: regional women's group Roundtables presented on regional gender equality issues at one and Indigenous organizations discussed issues specific to Indigenous women at the other.

Call for public input on the website of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine

From October 9, 2015, to January 29, 2016, input from 80 individuals and organizations was collected during the public consultation process. With their authors' consent, opinions, briefs, and other position papers were posted on the website of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

Ensemble pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes meetings

On June 23, 2016, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women invited the non-governmental organizations that had participated in the consultation days to the *Ensemble pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes* meetings. Over 40 different organizations and groups attended to discuss this important societal issue. NGOs heard about the key observations and issues that came out of the different consultation meetings and were asked to comment.

The organizations shared their concerns with the minister and other attendees and gave recommendations on new initiatives to counter them.

Meetings with government agencies

To ensure consistency of government action, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine met with government agencies that could provide input on drafting the Strategy.

These bilateral meetings between the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and government agencies were held throughout the Strategy drafting process.

Strategy progress report meetings

The last step in drafting the Strategy was to hold three meetings in February and March 2017 with the non-governmental organizations that participated in the consultation days. Then a fourth meeting was held with the Conseil du statut de la femme. The meetings provided an opportunity to present the results of the CROP survey on Quebecers' perception of gender equality and the broad strokes of the Strategy being drafted. Over 60 different organizations and groups attended the meetings, including a number of women's groups, all of which weighed in on and added to the final draft of the Strategy.

■ APPENDIX 2

LIST OF MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN DRAFTING THE STRATEGY

Members of the interministerial working committee

- Ministère de la Justice, Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie
- Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation
- Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
- Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications
- Ministère de la Famille
- Ministère de la Justice
- Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
- Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire
- Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
- Office des personnes handicapées du Québec
- Secrétariat à la jeunesse
- Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones
- Ministère de la Famille, Secrétariat aux aînés

Ministries and government agencies that met with the Secrétariat à la condition féminine

- Autorité des marchés financiers
- Commission de la construction du Québec
- Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
- Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail
- Conseil de gestion de l'assurance parentale
- Conseil du statut de la femme
- Curateur public du Québec
- Directeur général des élections du Québec
- Ministère de la Sécurité publique
- Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports

■ APPENDIX 3

MINISTERIAL AND INTERMINISTERIAL GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS INITIATIVES

Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports and its *Plan d'action ministériel en matière d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes 2017-2020*

The Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports (MTMDET) has been committed to performing gender-based analysis (GBA) since the process was implemented in Québec. MTMDET has had a ministerial committee on the status of women (CMCF) since 1997 to ensure coordination with the Secrétariat à la condition féminine (SCF). MTMDET ramped up its involvement in 2000 by participating in pilot projects to test GBA in government practices.

In 2017 the CMCF rolled out its fourth ministerial gender equality action plan. The three previous action plans helped advance gender-based knowledge and raise awareness of issues surrounding equality in transportation—not just in terms of human resources^{ac} and accident rates, but also with factors related to women's access to the job market, educational resources, health care and recreation, their community involvement, and more. The new action plan aims to improve GBA performance to incorporate gender-based observations into strategic ministerial activities. MTMDET builds on knowledge gained and lessons learned to ensure the long-term viability of its activities. The new action plan is aligned with the issues, orientations, and areas for improvement in the MTMDET strategic plan and is consistent with the major priorities of SCF's *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*.

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and its *Plan d'action en santé et bien-être des femmes*

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) made public its *Objectifs ministériels en santé et bien-être des femmes* in 2002. To better understand and respond to women's realities and needs and incorporate them into the planning process, two action plans were developed from the ministerial objectives, one for 2010–2015. At the time this document was released, the third action plan was in development^{ad}.

Implementing GBA in MSSS's practices helped demonstrate the importance of looking at the experiences of women and men separately to ensure their individual health needs are being met.

ac. Women made up 21% of the MTMDET work force in 1996. Two decades later, they represent 37% of the staff. This growth applies to all of the ministry's job categories (source: MTMDET).

ad. More detailed information in Guideline 4 of the *Stratégie ensemble pour une approche différenciée selon les sexes en santé et en bien-être*.

Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and its *Politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion*

Initiatives implemented as part of the *Stratégie d'action en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion 2016-2021* stemming from the *Politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec* undergo a gender-based analysis. The findings are used to assess the impact of actions taken by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion as they relate to gender equality and to make adjustments where needed.

Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and its *Plan d'action gouvernemental pour la solidarité et l'inclusion sociale*

Section 7 of the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*, adopted in December 2002, stipulates that "the actions taken by Québec society as a whole and the Government [...] in their conception and implementation, take into account realities specific to women and men, in particular through gender-based analysis, as well as the greater incidences of poverty in certain regions or areas and the specific needs of certain groups in society having particular difficulties, particularly because of their age, ethnic origin or an impairment or disability."

Government action plans to fight poverty and social exclusion have incorporated gender-based analysis to comply with the Act. The third action plan will continue in the same vein, in collaboration with the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

scf.gouv.qc.ca/StratEgaliteQc