

2005 2009

Strategic Plan



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LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL
DES ÉLECTIONS DU QUÉBEC

I am proud to present the 2005-2009 Strategic Plan, made possible thanks to the cooperation of the entire workforce of the Chief Electoral Officer. After examining the context and issues at stake, we were able to reassess and update our challenges and objectives and identify potential new avenues for the future.

Québec society is currently undergoing some major social, demographic and technological changes, and the institution must adapt its methods accordingly. The Chief Electoral Officer will face numerous challenges in the coming years. For example, we hope to be able to promote democratic values within the community of Québec and improve access to voting. Changes to the electoral system triggered by a reform of the Election Act will also be a major issue. The Chief Electoral Officer must be in a position to meet all these challenges and integrate the necessary changes.

A word from Québec's Chief Electoral Officer

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The 2005-2009 Strategic Plan sets out the goals and results we hope to attain during this current period, in order to achieve our mission as effectively as possible. We will strive to maintain our high level of expertise in the election field and continue to offer quality services to the citizens of Québec. Among other things, we will measure our progress on a regular basis, and will produce an annual management report describing the results achieved.

Chief Electoral Officer and
Chairman of the Commission de la représentation électorale,



Marcel Blanchet

The mission of the Chief Electoral Officer, an independent institution that reports directly to the National Assembly, is to oversee the holding of elections and referendums, to guarantee the full exercise of electoral rights, and to promote the democratic values of Québec society.



Our Mission

Areas of Responsibility

Provincial Elections and Referendums

The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the holding of provincial elections and referendums. In this capacity, he ensures the integrity and transparency of the electoral process, provides for the recruitment and training of election officers, and updates the permanent list of electors. The Chief Electoral Officer also carries out all of the steps leading to the holding of a poll.

The Chief Electoral Officer may, on his own initiative or following a request, make inquiry and institute legal

proceedings. He also oversees compliance with the rules governing the financing of political parties and election expenses, and carries out responsibilities related to providing citizens with information on electoral matters.

When carrying out his mandate, the Chief Electoral Officer calls upon the expertise of returning officers, who represent him in the electoral divisions. With their vast experience, these returning officers help to ensure that the poll unfolds smoothly.

Elections and Referendums in Municipalities and School Boards

When it comes to municipal and school elections, the Chief Electoral Officer supports the returning officers by offering them professional and technical assistance as well as training activities. He also provides tools enabling returning officers to successfully hold polls in their municipality or school board.

As is the case at the provincial level, the Chief Electoral Officer has the power to make inquiry and institute legal proceedings. He is responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules governing political party financing and has responsibilities in the field of providing citizens with information on electoral matters.

Information for Electors and Promotion of Democratic Values

Electors hold a central place in the electoral process, and the Chief Electoral Officer goes to great lengths to ensure that electors receive high-quality information. He gives information on the legislation that he is in charge of applying, prepares opinions and conducts advertising campaigns. In addition, he holds information sessions and conferences, and offers on-line services.

The Chief Electoral Officer also designs information programs and proposes educational activities in educational institutions to encourage the exercise of the right to vote and the full participation of citizens in democratic life.

In the field of international cooperation, the Chief Electoral Officer makes his expertise and know-how available to the international community. In doing so, he helps to promote democratic values, develop knowledge and strengthen electoral systems in countries moving toward democracy.

An institution that is recognized for:

its determination to contribute to the development of Québec's electoral system...

...because the Chief Electoral Officer believes resolutely that to ensure its vitality, Québec's electoral system must adapt to changes in society in order to live up to the expectations and meet the needs of citizens.

its leadership...

...because the mobilization of all stakeholders contributes to the success of an electoral event and to the strength of our democratic system.



Our Vision

its people-oriented and productive management...

...as in order to maintain his high level of expertise, the Chief Electoral Officer must rely on the development of his human resources, offer a stimulating work environment, and have an effective and efficient work organization.

Impartiality and Transparency

As the guardian and arbitrator of Québec's electoral system, the Chief Electoral Officer carries out his duties with complete impartiality. He oversees the application of the legislation that he is in charge of administering, and ensures the transparency and integrity of the electoral process.

Quality of Services

Citizens are at the heart of the Chief Electoral Officer's preoccupations. For this reason, he acts with constant concern to offer citizens high-quality services and to inform them accurately so that they can exercise their electoral rights fully.

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Our Values

Creativity and Innovation

In a constantly evolving society where information and communication technologies have become part of our daily lives, the institution must be creative and innovate in order to adapt to changes and meet the needs of the population.



To carry out his mission effectively, the Chief Electoral Officer must be aware of new trends in Québec society. They can have an impact on his organization and on the electoral system. The Chief Electoral Officer must therefore be able to assess these trends well. As the case may be, he must adapt to new realities and propose different approaches.

Context and Stakes

Decline in Elector Turnout

Like many other democratic societies, Québec has witnessed a decline in elector turnout in recent years and a certain loss of interest in politics on the part of the population. This phenomenon, which is particularly present among young people, is a major concern for the institution.

The Chief Electoral Officer must pursue his reflection concerning this matter to enable him to understand the

factors that influence participation in the electoral process. New means must be envisaged to promote and encourage greater participation in democratic life.

However, the Chief Electoral Officer cannot reverse this trend on his own. The success of such an endeavour requires the involvement of all stakeholders, including the various democratic institutions, political parties, politicians, the media, opinion leaders, and educational institutions.

Sociodemographic Context

The aging of the population represents a major challenge for many industrialized countries. Québec has not escaped this trend, and many government departments and bodies must adapt their services to meet the needs of the population.

For the Chief Electoral Officer, the aging of the population presents a challenge from the standpoint of the exercise of the right to vote. Elderly persons who are losing autonomy must have facilitated access to voting in order to be able to exercise their democratic right.

In addition, the decline in Québec's birth rate and the aging of the population inevitably entail a slowing of the growth in the number of inhabitants. To deal with this demographic change, the province of Québec wishes to increase immigration. The Chief Electoral Officer must meet the needs of this population. New Canadian citizens must be well informed so that they can familiarize themselves with the electoral process and participate in democratic life.

Finally, the greater mobility of electors who are members of certain groups, including students, workers and retirees, also constitutes a challenge for the institution. To promote access to voting, new avenues need to be explored.

Information and Communication Technologies

The use of information and communication technologies has enabled the Chief Electoral Officer to make significant progress in recent years. For example, the establishment of the permanent list of electors and the development of computer systems have helped to improve the administration of elections.

In addition, information and communication technologies are constantly evolving. The Chief Electoral Officer must therefore invest to maintain the performance of his systems. He must also develop new systems to meet the needs and expectations of electors and stakeholders in democratic life.

Cycle of Municipal and School Elections

In recent years, the changes made to the municipal electoral process and the new responsibilities entrusted to the Chief Electoral Officer within the context of school elections have had an impact on his organization of work.

Beginning in 2005, all municipalities in Québec must hold, every four years, an election on the first Sunday of November. In the case of school elections, an election must be held every four years on the third Sunday of November. This latter provision has been in effect since 2003.

During the same year, the Chief Electoral Officer must see to the training of returning officers in over 1,100 municipalities, provide them with support, and ensure the application of the law and compliance with political party financing rules. In the case of school elections, 69 school boards must be supported during an electoral event.

The organization of work and the training activities of the Chief Electoral Officer must be reviewed to enable him to exercise his responsibilities fully and to offer high-quality services to municipalities and school boards.

Finally, the Chief Electoral Officer must be able to hold more than one electoral event during the same year. For example, provincial elections and school elections could take place within a short time of one other.

Electoral Reform

A draft bill to reform the Election Act was tabled in the National Assembly in December 2004. The proposed amendments are intended, in particular, to promote the exercise of the right to vote. The government announced that these changes could be in force as of the next provincial general election, which must be announced by April 2008.

The draft bill also provides for the establishment of new voting system of the mixed-plurality proportional-representation type. According to the government, this new voting system could not apply during the next provincial general election.

The Chief Electoral Officer must be prepared to incorporate the changes proposed within the context of the reform of the Election Act. He must also assess the effects of a reform of the voting system on the entire electoral process and, as required, propose changes thereto.

Lack of Knowledge about Québec's Electoral System and the Chief Electoral Officer

Québec's population is not very familiar with the role played by the Chief Electoral Officer in our democratic system. A survey conducted in 2003 also demonstrates that the population has a very limited knowledge of the rules of Québec's electoral system, particularly those governing the financing of political parties.

Against the backdrop of a decline in elector turnout, a generalized lack of interest in politics and Court challenges of the rules governing political party financing, it appears important to better inform the population of the role of the institution, the advantages of Québec's electoral system, and the important place that citizens occupy in this system.

Succession Planning

Between now and 2009, 20% of the employees of the Chief Electoral Officer will be eligible for retirement. The institution must therefore reflect on the implementation of concrete measures to renew its personnel and ensure the transfer of knowledge to maintain the institution's level of expertise.

Moreover, the average age of election officers hired for an electoral event to work in polling stations continues to rise, and this will undoubtedly accentuate recruitment problems for future elections. The Chief Electoral Officer must therefore find and propose solutions to facilitate the recruitment of election officers.

In view of the analysis of the context and stakes as well as the mission and vision adopted, the Chief Electoral Officer has retained three major orientations that will mobilize all his personnel for the 2005-2009 Strategic Plan.

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Strategic Orientations



First orientation

Ensure leadership in the field of electoral administration

Four intervention approaches related to this strategic orientation have been determined. They ensure the attainment of the resulting objectives and will strengthen the leadership of the Chief Electoral Officer in his prime

mission, which is to ensure, with complete impartiality and transparency, the holding of elections and referendums at the provincial level and, to a certain extent, the holding of polls at the municipal and school levels.

Intervention approach

Well-planned and well-organized elections and referendums

Since the date of a provincial election is not known ahead of time, the activities of the Chief Electoral Officer must be well planned and carried out so that he is prepared to hold an election and to exercise the role that he has been entrusted with.

Within the context of the holding of a poll in municipalities and school boards, all steps must be taken to provide

support to the returning officers and ensure that the institution successfully assumes its responsibilities with regard to inquiries, providing information to electors, and overseeing the financing and control of election expenses.

Institutional Objective 1.1

Each year, carry out all the planned activities concerning the holding of an election or a referendum.

Intervention approach

An optimum permanent list of electors

Used during polls at the three electoral levels, the permanent list of electors is of high quality and is the envy of several electoral administrations. Its continuous updating is ensured through information provided

by electors and data transmitted by various public bodies. Far from taking this success for granted, the Chief Electoral Officer wishes, over the next four years, to enhance the performance of the permanent list of electors.

Institutional Objective 1.2

Implement appropriate means to improve the quality of the permanent list of electors.

Intervention approach

Constant support and on-going training of all stakeholders

The training of election officers and the various stakeholders, including returning officers, municipal treasurers, candidates, official agents, and the official representatives of political parties, is indispensable for the smooth unfolding of an electoral event.

The Chief Electoral Officer wishes to continue investing in this area to be able to offer high-quality training and information activities that meet the needs and expectations of all persons concerned.

Institutional Objective 1.3

Train and inform election officers and the various stakeholders on their role and responsibilities.

Intervention approach

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An institution that is attentive to changes

To be a leader in the field of electoral administration, the Chief Electoral Officer resolutely believes that it is necessary to invest in research in order to better

understand societal changes and to ensure that Québec's electoral system evolves on the basis of progress made in the electoral field and citizens' needs.

Institutional Objective 1.4

Be on the lookout for changes in society, continue research activities, and propose improvements to the electoral system.

Institutional Objective 1.5

Implement, as the case may be, the reform of the voting system.

Second Orientation

Promote the democratic values of Québec society and encourage the widest possible exercise of the right to vote

The Chief Electoral Officer intends to play an active role in Québec society. He wishes to promote democratic values as well as to help counter the decline in elector turnout and encourage the exercise of the right to vote.

Intervention approach

Easier access to voting

In a context where the population is aging, the reality of the working world is changing and society is in a state of transformation, the Chief Electoral Officer wishes to

continue his efforts in order to recommend and implement measures to improve access to and encourage voting.

Institutional Objective 2.1

Improve access to and encourage voting.

Intervention approach

Citizens who are well informed and aware

The Chief Electoral Officer intends to innovate, implement new projects and propose measures with a view to promote the population's participation in democratic life. The Chief Electoral Officer believes that the success of such an operation requires the mobilization of all stakeholders concerned.

The role of the institution as well as the values and rules that form the basis of the electoral system in Québec deserve to be better known by citizens and all the stakeholders taking part in the electoral process. Quebecers can be proud of their electoral system, the many benefits of which must be preserved.

Institutional Objective 2.2

Promote citizens' participation in democratic life and continue efforts to make the various clienteles more aware of democratic values.

Third Orientation

Be a productive institution via the quality of its resources, its methods and its organization of work

To ensure high-quality services, the Chief Electoral Officer must be able to rely on qualified, motivated individuals, as well as a productive organization and work tools.

These elements help to ensure that the institution successfully accomplishes the mission with which it has been entrusted.

Intervention approach

Qualified, motivated and involved personnel

In a context where several persons will soon be eligible for retirement, succession planning and knowledge transfer represent a significant challenge for the Chief Electoral Officer. Training, versatility and the mobilization of personnel

also constitute a concern for the institution, which wishes to continue its efforts toward creating a stimulating and rewarding work environment.

Institutional Objective 3.1

Implement the succession plan, offer personnel training, and acquire methods to encourage versatility.

Intervention approach

An optimal use of information and communication technologies

To improve the organization of work and optimize methods, the Chief Electoral Officer wishes to rely, for the next four years, on the development and revamping of his information systems. The systems used will thus be better adapted to the institution's needs.

Concerned about offering high-quality services to citizens, the Chief Electoral Officer also intends to continue his work to improve and increase his on-line services.

Institutional Objective 3.2

Develop more powerful information systems.

Institutional Objective 3.3

Improve and increase the on-line services offered by the institution.

Strategic Plan

2005-2009



Our Mission

The mission of the Chief Electoral Officer, an independent institution that reports directly to the National Assembly, is to oversee the holding of elections and referendums, to guarantee the full exercise of electoral rights, and to promote the democratic values of Québec society.

Our Vision

An institution that is recognized for:

- Its determination to contribute to the development of Québec's electoral system
- Its leadership
- Its people-oriented and productive management

Strategic Orientations

1 Ensure leadership in the field of electoral administration

Intervention Approaches

Well-planned and well-organized elections and referendums

An optimum permanent list of electors

Constant support and on-going training of all stakeholders

An institution that is attentive to changes

Institutional Objectives

1.1 Each year, carry out all planned activities concerning the holding of an election or a referendum

Indicator:

- Percentage of accomplishment of activities provided for in the planning

1.2 Implement appropriate means to improve the quality of the permanent list of electors

Indicators:

- The implementation of new methods
- The quality of the permanent list of electors

1.3 Train and inform election officers and the various stakeholders on their role and their responsibilities

Indicator:

- The percentage of accomplishment of the training activities provided for

1.4 Be on the lookout for changes in society, continue research activities, and propose improvements to the electoral system

Indicator:

- The accomplishment of the research activities provided for in the research plan

1.5 Implement, as the case may be, the reform of the voting system

Indicator:

- Accomplishment of preparatory activities

Our Values

- Impartiality and transparency
- Quality of services
- Creativity and innovation

 Promote the democratic values of Québec society and encourage the widest possible exercise of the right to vote

 Be a productive institution via the quality of its resources, its methods and its organization of work

Easier access to voting

Citizens who are well informed and aware

Qualified, motivated and involved personnel

Optimal use of information and communication technologies

2.1 Improve access to and encourage voting

Indicators:

- Number of recommendations made
- Implementation of the amendments provided for in the law

2.2 Promote citizens' participation in democratic life and continue efforts to make the various clienteles more aware of democratic values

Indicators:

- Implementation of three promotion and education programs
- Preparation of a public relations plan and implementation of the activities provided for

3.1 Implement the succession plan, offer personnel training, and acquire methods to encourage versatility

Indicators:

- Percentage of accomplishment of the activities provided for in the succession plan
- Percentage of employees who have participated in employment-related training activities
- Percentage of accomplishment of the methods developed to ensure the versatility of personnel

3.2 Develop more powerful information systems

Indicator:

- Development of five new systems

3.3 Improve and increase on-line services offered by the institution

Indicators:

- Implementation or improvement of three on-line services
- Clientele satisfaction rate

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