

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN ECONOMY IN QUÉBEC



RIO+20
United Nations Conference
on Sustainable Development

Québec 

Since 2004, the Government of Québec has implemented a structured sustainable development approach, in particular to establish a new management method within government ministries and agencies. This approach stresses coherent action and the commitment and accountability of government entities by encouraging them to take sustainable development principles and issues into account in decision-making processes. It creates conditions that help promote sustainable development values within Québec society and with government partners and clientele.

The June 2012 United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro is an opportunity for governments not only to share sustainable development governance practices but also to initiate discussions on how to streamline the transition to a green economy. To this end, the Government of Québec has produced a document presenting the institutional framework it currently applies and the main courses of action it takes to support the adoption of green practices in strategic sectors of its economy.



Québec Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

The Québec institutional framework for sustainable development is aligned with international sustainable development frameworks, in particular the approaches promoted by the United Nations (Rio Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Implementation Plan).

The Québec government's sustainable development approach is based on a solid legal foundation following the 2006 adoption of the Sustainable Development Act. The Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2008–2013, which stems from this legislation, is the reference framework for the government's approach. It establishes nine strategic directions for Québec, including three priorities and 29 objectives. Over 130 public organizations are involved in implementing a sustainable development action plan to help meet the Strategy's objectives. The Act also sets out 16 principles that the government must take into account to better integrate the search for sustainable development in its areas of intervention, particularly in implementing capacity-building initiatives.

Under the Act, Québec's ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) is responsible for coordinating and promoting the sustainable development approach in government. The interministerial committee on sustainable development is the institutional structure that brings together ministries and agencies and ensures the coordination and harmonization of government actions.

A three-level indicator system has been established to monitor and evaluate progress in this regard: sustainable development indicators to measure the long-term evolution of sustainable development in society (level 1), indicators to monitor performance of the Government Strategy (level 2), and indicators to monitor the actions plans developed by ministries and agencies (level 3).

Each of the entities must make public a progress report on its contribution to the Strategy in its annual management report. The Sustainable Development Commissioner also monitors the accountability and evaluation of the government's approach and each year submits to the National Assembly of Québec a report on government institutions' application of the Sustainable Development Act.

Boosting capabilities is the key of Québec's approach. An employee education and training plan has therefore been created to build practical knowledge on sustainable development. In addition, MDDEP has developed assistance and support tools that the entities can use.

To implement the Strategy, the government created reference points with Québec society by rolling out information sharing and coordination mechanisms, mainly with municipalities, private businesses, health and social services networks, and education networks.

As the approach is part of an evolving process, the Sustainable Development Act provides for a review of the Strategy every five years and an evaluation of the Act five years after its adoption. Amendments can then be made to adapt the approach to new societal issues and improve the mechanisms for implementing it.

Main courses of action and measures taken by the Government of Québec to promote the transition to a green economy

Many challenges, including protecting the environment, countering climate change, and carefully managing natural resources require us to innovate by rethinking the way our societies produce and consume. The transition to a green economy can be seen not only as an opportunity to promote development in certain key economic and employment sectors but also as an opportunity to better align the economy with the environmental and social principles of sustainable development.

Québec is currently moving toward a green economy, which is regarded as a tool for achieving sustainable development by improving human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and resource shortages.

Here are the main courses of action taken to promote the transition to a green economy:

- Establishing an institutional framework that promotes sustainable development and sets out guidelines for a green economy
- Adopting and monitoring indicators to support the measurement of sustainable development and evaluate the state of natural capital
- Strengthening and enforcing laws that promote the development of a green economy
- Establishing and implementing policies, strategies, and action plans that promote a green economy and synergy between the actions prescribed in the government's strategic documents
- Developing sectors that contribute to a green economy, in particular by supporting research and development and implementing mechanisms for cooperation between stakeholders
- Supporting public and private green investments
- Implementing information and awareness measures
- Supporting training to help ensure a better transition to green jobs
- Exchanging and sharing technologies and expertise outside Québec
- **Gradually integrating mechanisms aimed at fighting poverty and promoting social equity in green economy development measures**

The document outlines the major government measures in place to support each of these courses of action: laws, policies, strategies, and action plans. A total of 58 government measures are presented.

Examples of government measures aimed at developing a green economy in Québec

The document also contains ten factsheets that present certain government measures in more detail, including their objectives, the amounts invested, the main results achieved, and perspectives on developing a green economy. These measures include:

- The Plan Nord
- The Québec Residual Materials Management Policy – Combining the Economy and the Environment
- Development Strategy for Québec’s Environmental and Green Technology Industry – For a Green and Prosperous Québec
- 2011–2020 Action Plan for Electric Vehicles – Running on Green Power!

For more information on Québec’s institutional framework for sustainable development or on the courses of action and measures taken with regard to the green economy, see the Québec report presented as part of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on the MDDEP website at:

www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/rio20/qc_rio20-en.htm