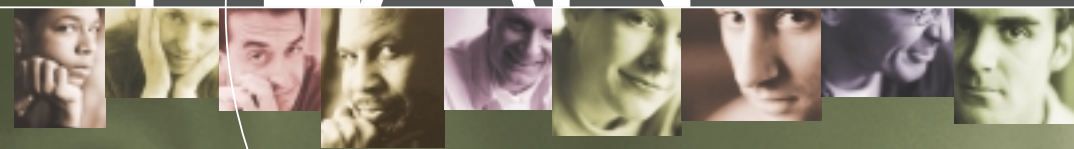


Strategic PLAN

2001 ▶ 2005

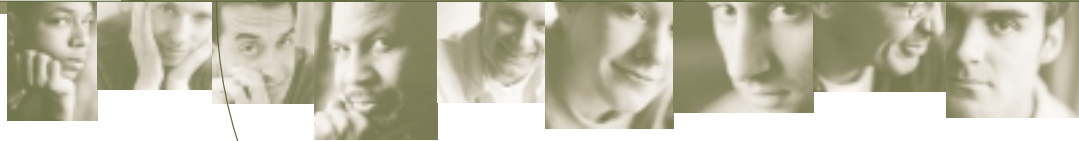


LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL
DES ÉLECTIONS DU QUÉBEC



LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL
DES ÉLECTIONS DU QUÉBEC

Strategic PLAN 2001 ▶ 2005



LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL
DES ÉLECTIONS DU QUÉBEC

Word FROM THE CHIEF

ELECTORAL OFFICER OF QUÉBEC

The preparation of this strategic plan represents the first major challenge that I was confronted with upon taking up my new duties as Chief Electoral Officer of Québec in the spring of 2000.

I quickly sensed that a current of enthusiasm had swept through our Institution in response to this challenging endeavor. I was also able to appreciate the great generosity demonstrated by my staff members through their ever-constructive reflection. What could be more stimulating for the head of an institution than to feel the full backing of an organization that shares, at every level, a common vision of its future?

This strategic plan, the first one ever prepared by the Chief Electoral Officer, is the result of an undertaking that called on the contribution of all our human resources and that channeled the best of our energies. I am proud to present the content of this plan, which is intended as the starting point for a new set of dynamics within our Institution. Citizens and democracy - the ultimate driving force behind all our actions - will be the prime beneficiaries.

Our 2001-2005 strategic plan will be implemented through the Institution's annual action plans. The combination of these annual action plans should enable us to take up the challenges that arise and to attain the objectives that have been set. Through regular accountability, achieved by way of our annual management report, we will be able to gauge our progress.



Marcel Blanchet
Chief Electoral Officer of Québec
and Chairman of the Commission
de la représentation électorale

The Chief Electoral Officer of Québec is responsible for the administration of the electoral system with a view to renewing the Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and, to some extent, the members of municipal councils by guaranteeing electors the free exercise of the right to vote.

Nature of the Institution

The "Chief Electoral Officer" designates both a person and an institution.

The Chief Electoral Officer is a person designated by the Québec National Assembly. He is in charge of the application of the Election Act, the Referendum Act and a portion of the Act respecting elections in referendums and municipalities.

Spheres of responsibility

The special status of the Chief Electoral Officer gives the Institution full autonomy vis-à-vis the Executive Branch. The fact that the Institution is not subject to the government's usual controls in administrative and budgetary matters constitutes an important intervention tool. Indeed, this situation gives the Chief Electoral Officer the leeway needed to better intervene when the situation so requires. The Chief Electoral Officer is accountable to the Québec National Assembly for his administration.

As the authority responsible for the administration of provincial elections, the Chief Electoral Officer is in charge of training election officers and of updating the information found in the permanent list of electors. He oversees the conduct of the revision, the actual poll and, where applicable, the enumeration. He also issues directives used for the application of electoral legislation.

Our MISSION

At the municipal level, the Chief Electoral Officer assumes responsibilities that are somewhat different. While he does not administer polls directly, he provides training and offers his support to municipal returning officers. He oversees financing and the control of election expenses in municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more.

In matters pertaining to the financing of political parties and the control of election expenses, the Chief Electoral Officer authorizes parties, party authorities, independent elected members and independent candidates to collect contributions and to incur election expenses, and verifies compliance with the provisions of the applicable legislation, both at the provincial and municipal levels. He offers training and provides support to municipal treasurers, official agents and official representatives of parties and candidates. He receives and examines financial reports as well as election expense returns.

In the electoral representation field, the Chief Electoral Officer provides professional and technical support to the Commission de la représentation, as the latter does not have its own staff.

In the information field, the Chief Electoral Officer provides advice and information on the legislation whose application he is responsible for. He makes available to the public the information, reports and documents pertaining to this legislation. The Chief Electoral Officer operates an information centre, organizes information sessions and symposia, and prepares all advertising that he deems necessary.

To ensure the application of the legislation for which he is responsible, the Chief Electoral Officer has powers of inquiry and prosecution. At his own initiative or at the request of a person, he may make inquiry into the application of the Election Act, the Referendum Act as well as some chapters and sections of the Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities. Moreover, under the provisions of the Election Act, the Chief Electoral Officer or a person that he authorizes may institute legal proceedings.

In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer is authorized to examine and to evaluate electoral procedures and to conduct studies on the financing of political parties. After having requested the opinion of the advisory committee, he may also carry out any other research that he deems useful in the electoral field. With the government's authorization, he can lend assistance and offer his cooperation to other countries or international organizations.

Clientele and partners

The clients of the Chief Electoral Officer vary according to his activity spheres. Depending on the services offered, clients range from electors to political parties to public or parapublic organizations.

Electors are at the heart of our electoral system. Most of the actions of the Chief Electoral Officer converge on Québec's some 5,300,000 electors. The Institution also offers services to political parties, political staff and candidates. Moreover, some activities are intended for future electors, international organizations and other countries.

To assist him in carrying out his mission, the Chief Electoral Officer calls on the cooperation of various partners, such as the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Public Curator. The Chief Electoral Officer also maintains ties with other departments, agencies, authorities and associations. They include the ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole, municipalities, the ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, school boards, the ministère de la Justice du Québec, the ministère des Relations internationales du Québec, the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration du Québec and Elections Canada. Finally, the Institution's numerous suppliers are also key partners in the performance of the various components of its mission.

This first strategic plan of the Chief Electoral Officer, which is based on a four-year time frame, relies on the assets acquired and the progress achieved in recent years in Québec in the electoral administration field.

These last few years have put the know-how, professionalism, sense of initiative and various capacities of the Institution to severe test.

After having witnessed exemplary stability in terms of its leadership for many years following its creation in 1945, the Institution would see four election administrators succeed one another between 1998 and 2000. Only an organization having a solid structure, high-quality human resources and deeply rooted partnership ties can make it through such changes without being greatly affected.

During these few years, the Institution continued to make progress in a number of fields. The Institution's responsibilities increased and its fields of jurisdiction grew. For example, the Institution oversaw the holding of school elections in 1998. This short-term mandate was entrusted to the Institution in the wake of the transformation of denominational school boards into linguistic school boards and the administrative reorganization unfolding in this activity sector at the time.

That very same year, the Chief Electoral Officer was in charge of the administration of a general election. The Institution also implemented the permanent list of electors (PLE) on a large scale.



Where
things
CURRENTLY STAND

The PLE is certainly the most striking technological innovation in the Institution's recent history. The quality of the PLE, which is the envy of several electoral administrations, is constantly improving. The accuracy of the data has increased thanks to the putting in place of a new updating mechanism, the Permanent board of revisors.

Since 1998, the Institution has assumed new responsibilities in the municipal field. In addition to providing support to returning officers during municipal polls, it has carried out inquiries and instituted legal proceedings in several cases related to electoral operations. The Institution has seen its role in the political party financing and election expense field expand to encompass municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more.

Québec's electorate

The term "electorate" designates all of the electors who meet the conditions set by the Election Act allowing these persons to exercise the right to vote at the time of an electoral event. On June 30, 2000, 5,344,431 elec-

tors were registered on the permanent list of electors. As of that date, Statistics Canada established Québec's total population at some 7,372,400 inhabitants.

The protection of personal information: at the heart of the Chief Electoral Officer's concerns

Well aware of his responsibility for ensuring the protection of the confidential information that he holds on the some 5,300,000 electors of Québec, the Chief Electoral Officer adopted an Action plan for the protection of personal information in November 1999. However, the Chief Electoral Officer's concern about protecting privacy dates back well before this date. Indeed, several steps had already been taken prior to the adoption of the plan to reinforce the security of the various information systems and databanks that may contain confidential information.

To support his action plan, several tangible measures have been taken to guarantee the confidential nature and security of personal information. In particular, the Institution has organized, on an on-going basis, information and awareness promotion activities for its employees. At all levels of the organization, employees have been informed of the Institution's expectations concerning the application of and compliance with the Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information.

"TO SUPPORT HIS ACTION PLAN, SEVERAL TANGIBLE MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO GUARANTEE THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE AND SECURITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION."

In his Service Statement to Citizens, the Chief Electoral Officer has expressed his firm commitment to restrict the consultation of personal information to authorized persons. This commitment is in keeping with the Election Act, which stipulates that the data found in the permanent list of electors may only be used for election purposes.

► Centered on his basic mission which involves being responsible for the administration of the electoral system, the Chief Electoral Officer relies on human resources that are motivated, well trained and well equipped to offer high-quality services to Quebecers.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Québec intends to channel his efforts to build, on the heritage of the past, a modern and efficient institution that serves as a model and that will be a true leader in the electoral administration field.

Excellence, impartiality, creativity and innovation will be the Institution's leitmotifs.

A mission...

...that is centered on citizen-electors:

seeking to assume the administration of the electoral system with a view to renewing the Members of the National Assembly and, to some extent, the members of municipal councils, by guaranteeing the free exercise of the right to vote of Québec's electors.

Human resources...

...on which he can rely:

- > by ensuring a high-quality up-and-coming generation of employees, versatility, the transfer of expertise and internal mobility;
- > by investing in advanced training, research and development, access to information and technologies.

An institution...

...that is modern:

- > in its management which is centered on results;
- > in its open structure which promotes a flexible organization of work;
- > in its equipment and tools which are on the cutting edge of technology.



...that is efficient:

- > thanks to the quality of life at work, the promotion of a job done well, respect for individuals, and the taking into account of their needs;
- > thanks to straightforward work processes whose efficiency is proven and operations that are evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis;
- > thanks to the quality of recruitment, on-going training and staff resourcing.

...that serves as a model:

- > a leading institution whose expertise is recognized by its counterparts, its partners and its clients.

Values...

...such as excellence, impartiality, creativity and innovation, whose promotion will ensure the progress of the Institution, the quality of its services, the integrity of the electoral process and the health of our democratic system.

Context AND STAKES

► The context in which the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec carries out his duties is constantly evolving. Indeed, the Chief Electoral Officer must continually adapt to the action of numerous dynamic forces, whether it be externally or in his internal environment.

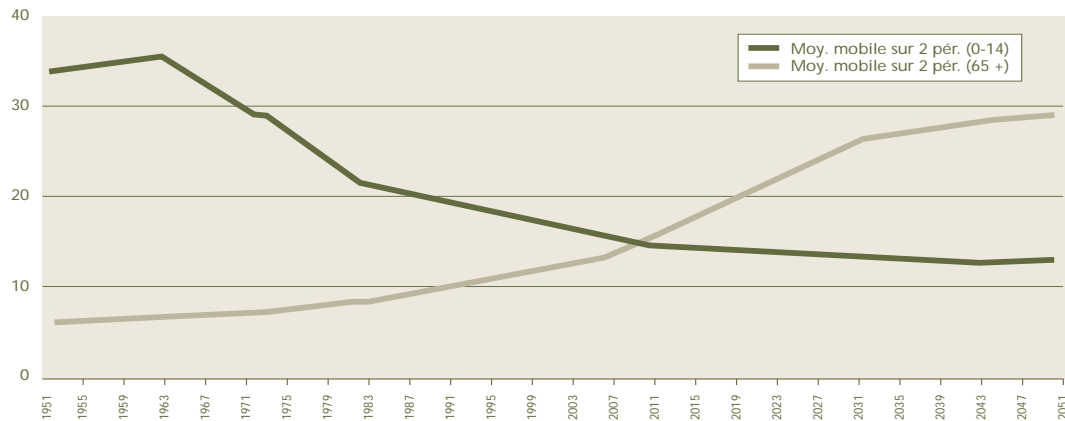
Sociodemographic trends

Among the phenomena and factors that already impact on the action of the Chief Electoral Officer and that may well have an even greater influence over the next few years, mention may be made of sociodemographic trends.

An ever-greater mobility by some electors and the aging of the population, combined with the growth in the needs of this segment of the electorate, are phenomena that call for new voting procedures that differ from those that we have known thus far. Voting by mail, mobile polling, voting by telephone, advance polling on a broader scale, electronic voting and voting over the Internet are all means which, although some are already being employed, deserve to be explored further.

The health of our democratic system remains dependent on the greatest voter turnout possible. To be able to exercise the right to vote, Quebecers must have access thereto. More and more people are traveling around the world either for their work or on vacation. More and more retired persons are spending several months of the year abroad. The lack of interest shown by young people in politics and in voting also constitutes a significant challenge. This phenomenon calls into question the information tools used to reach electors as well as traditional voting procedures.

Evolution of the population making up two age groups (0-14 and 65 and over) 1951 to 1996 and 2001-2051 forecasts, Québec



2001-2051: Projections, hypothèse moyenne. Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, www.stat.gouv.qc.ca

Québec has ever fewer young people and more and more seniors. According to demographers, this trend will only become more marked due to greater life expectancy. This reality poses major challenges for democracy. Indeed, seniors who are no longer autonomous, persons who live in private reception centres, and persons who are unable to leave their home due to surgery or illness must be able to exercise their right to vote.

Finally, like every other citizen, the homeless, whose number is on the rise in urban centres, must have real access to the exercise of the right to vote, a basic right.

Technological trends

New information and communications technologies have become an integral part of our daily life. Their applications, which are the fruit of the technical and scientific progress of recent decades, will multiply in the years to come. In the electoral field, technologies have made it possible to achieve major progress in several countries: lowering of the cost of elections, greater access to information and voting, greater voter turnout and more transparent financing.

Technologies are having a growing influence on the activities and work methods of the Chief Electoral Officer. Whether it is in management, administration, electoral operations or other activities, the Institution is relying on ever more sophisticated technologies.

For example, mention may be made of the permanent list of electors which replaced the enumerations carried out up until 1995 prior to each general election. Not only does the computerized management of the list of electors offer more precise data, it also results in substantial savings in both time and money. As a direct consequence, the election period has been shortened by two weeks, which corresponds to the amount of time that used to be devoted to the enumeration.

Mention may also be made of the information for and communications with electors and partners, which increasingly take place with the help of various technologies, in particular the Internet and e-mail.

“QUÉBEC IS ONE OF THE SOCIETIES WITH THE GREATEST NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET. THE PERCENTAGE OF WEB SURFERS STOOD AT 45% IN DECEMBER 2000.”

(Survey by CEFRIO - Léger Marketing)

Finally, mention may be made of the procedures and operations that must be revised and simplified in light of the possibilities afforded by new technologies. It is important to evaluate, for example, the advantages that electronic voting might offer. Technologies can also facilitate the management of election material. They offer numerous applications, in particular, in the publishing field. Turning to electoral cartography and the study of the territory, geomatics offers numerous interesting possibilities which we need to explore.

A concern for efficiency and the requirements associated with the sound management of public funds have made resorting to technologies a major issue. Technologies represent a prime tool, a means to help the Institution achieve its objectives and better fulfill its mission.

Political trends

The polarization that has characterized Québec society in recent years at the political level has exerted major pressure on the Institution of the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec. The Institution is coping with this reality by assuming its mandate in a neutral and impartial manner.

As the arbiter of the electoral system and the guardian of democracy, the Chief Electoral Officer applies the legislation put under his responsibility without regard for political affiliation, with the utmost respect for basic rights and freedoms.

The context of a major political polarization requires, now more than ever before, that the Institution play the role of leader in the electoral administration field, a leader whose neutrality and credibility cannot be called into question. Indeed, to some extent, the very legitimacy of elected members is at stake.

Within this context, external communications that are well targeted and geared to an accurate knowledge of the Institution and its role in the political system become imperative and represent a crucial stake. It is important that the various stakeholders in Québec's electoral system, opinion leaders, the media and the public, receive information on the nature of the Institution and the limits of its action in order to be able to understand and better appreciate its decisions.

Moreover, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec would not be able to impose his leadership in the electoral administration field without relying on research and development. This sector, which has contributed to the influence and reputation of the Chief Electoral Officer, has been affected over the last ten years by successive budget cuts.

The energies and efforts devoted to research and development will enable the Institution to consolidate its expertise, to the great benefit of the various authorities in charge of the administration of elections that the Institution supports.

Administrative trends

To take advantage of the stakes that are present in its external environment, the Institution will have to modernize its management. To this end, the Institution plans to follow an increasingly structuring trend observed in both public and private organizations, namely management by results.

Indeed, the context in which the Institution has evolved internally in recent years has been marked by a tendency to centralize decisions. Of course, this situation is not specific to the Chief Electoral Officer. Yet the very great stability that characterized the Institution at the management level for many years was followed by a period of changes during which four election administrators succeeded one another from 1998 to 2000.

The combination of these two situations did not allow the organization to bring together the conditions necessary for modernizing its management.

The current context, which lends itself more to stability, is paving the way for this updating of the management and operating methods of the Chief Electoral Officer. This updating is essential if we are to take up the challenges that are arising in our external environment.

Like the major change in direction that is under way in the public administration, the change that the Chief Electoral Officer intends to embark upon in the management field concerns the quality of his services and products. It is rooted in the on-going training and advanced training of personnel as well as in the implementation of a vigorous plan with a view to recruiting the next generation of high-quality employees.

These trends are taking the form of a number of needs to which the Institution must adapt its activities and approaches so that citizens have real and equal access to the exercise of their democratic rights.



Strategic ORIENTATIONS

Over the next four years, the personnel and managers of the Chief Electoral Officer will combine their efforts to implement the following major strategic orientations:

STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS:

1. Modern management geared to the quality of services.
2. An Institution that is centered on its prime mission: the administration of polls.
3. A well-affirmed leadership in the electoral administration field.



First ORIENTATION:

MODERN MANAGEMENT GEARED TO THE QUALITY OF SERVICES

The first orientation, "Modern management geared to the quality of services", relies on three intervention approaches:

Intervention approaches:

- > High-quality services for citizens and partners.
- > Optimal use of technologies.
- > Well-trained, versatile personnel, and a high-quality up-and-coming generation of employees.

High-quality services for citizens and partners

Management is not an end in itself. If the Institution is resolutely determined to update its management, it is first and foremost to better carry out its mission.

Senior management is convinced that "management by results", more so than traditional management methods, leaves room for the creativity of personnel and grants managers the leeway needed to attain their objectives.

This first intervention approach is clearly echoed in the Service Statement to Citizens, which the Chief Electoral Officer adopted at the same time as his strategic planning. The Statement, although it is the result of a separate initiative, targets objectives that are closely linked to those of the strategic plan. This Statement establishes very tangible commitments with respect to the quality of services and products.

To offer high-quality services to citizens and partners, the Chief Electoral Officer has set the following institutional objectives:

Institutional objectives:

1. By 2005, ensure that the 9 divisions of the Chief Electoral Officer apply the principles of management by results.
Indicator: the number of divisions.
2. By 2005, achieve a level of satisfaction of at least 80% of the external clientele referred to in the annual action plan in terms of the direct services provided by the Chief Electoral Officer.
Indicator: the level of satisfaction.
3. By 2005, improve the quality of the permanent list of electors by aiming for an accuracy rate of 96% of the entries at the time the writ of elections is issued.
Indicator: the accuracy rate.

Optimal use of technologies

In addition to relying on a different approach to directing and supervising, "modern management geared to the quality of services" must, if it is to produce the anticipated results, call as often as necessary on the technologies, both new and old, at its disposal.

To take greater advantage of the possibilities afforded by technologies, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec has established the following institutional objective:

Institutional objective:

4. By 2005, modernize the tools and systems, first by simplifying processes and operations, then by making optimal use of technologies and by improving the quality of the services offered.

Indicator: the number of tools and systems modernized.

Well-trained, versatile personnel and a high-quality up-and-coming generation of employees

"Modern management geared to the quality of services" represents a challenge that the Institution can only take up if it is able to count on a well-trained, versatile personnel and a high-quality up-and-coming generation of employees.

Indeed, the Institution must adapt its approaches, procedures and activities to an external environment characterized by constant change. Technological progress, the appearance of new social phenomena, demographic trends and the economic context are all part of the reality confronting us and demand flexibility and openness.

This reality requires skills and qualifications that are both general and specific; it calls for knowledge that is updated on a regular basis. The training and advanced training of personnel are essential prerequisites for the achievement of most of the Institution's objectives.

Moreover, like other organizations of the public sector, the Chief Electoral Officer must, at a time when tasks are becoming increasingly specialized, ensure that his personnel is as versatile as possible. Indeed, the versatility of employees is a token of the sound management of human and financial resources.

Finally, the Institution must do everything in its power to be able to count, over the next few years, on a high-quality up-and-coming generation of employees. This new generation of employees will come from both inside and outside the organization. Out of a concern for intergenerational balance and the transfer of expertise, this new generation of employees will be composed of both young employees and experienced personnel.

With a view to developing his human resources, the Chief Electoral Officer has set the following institutional objectives:

Institutional objectives:

5. By 2005, give all employees access to a minimum of 4 further training, advanced training or resourcing activities.
Indicator: the number of activities to which employees have had access.
6. By 2005, adopt and implement a three-year plan that aims to ensure the quality of the up-and-coming generation of employees and the versatility of personnel.

Indicator: the number of means developed.

Second ORIENTATION:

AN INSTITUTION CENTERED ON ITS PRIME MISSION: THE ADMINISTRATION OF POLLS

The second orientation, "An institution centered on its prime mission: the administration of polls", proposes three intervention approaches:

Intervention approaches:

- > An on-going and concerted planning of provincial polls.
- > The review and simplification of procedures and operations.
- > Responsibilities fully assumed in the municipal field.

An on-going and concerted planning of provincial polls

General elections and provincial referendums are at the heart of the mission of the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec. Indeed, the Institution has an exclusive mandate in the field of provincial polls. As a result, the Institution must be ready to hold an election or a referendum at any time. The nine administrative divisions that make up the organization must work together and ensure an on-going planning of the activities related to these electoral operations.

Consequently, the Chief Electoral officer has set the following institutional objective:

Institutional objective:

7. Ensure an on-going and concerted planning of electoral operations so that the 9 divisions are ready to hold an election or a referendum at any time.

Indicator: the state of planning in the 9 divisions.

The review and simplification of procedures and operations

To carry out his mission more efficiently, the Chief Electoral Officer must review and simplify his administrative and electoral procedures. In so doing, the Institution is acting in line with the current trend to simplify and deregulate the public administration.

The number of rules and procedures that govern the internal operation of the organization must be reduced to a minimum; those that are indispensable must be simplified. While ensuring the uniform nature of results, the procedures and directives intended for provincial returning officers as well as those that concern municipal returning officers will be simplified.

To this end, the Chief Electoral Officer has adopted the following institutional objective:

Institutional objective:

8. By 2005, proceed with the review of procedures and of the main electoral operations with a view to simplifying and improving them.

Indicator: the number of procedures and operations reviewed and simplified.

Responsibilities fully assumed in the municipal field

In recent years the responsibilities of the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec have grown in the field of municipal polls. In matters pertaining to directives, inquiries, the financing of political parties and the control of election expenses, the responsibility of the Institution now extends to all municipalities.

The Chief Electoral Officer must adopt an action strategy that will allow him to fully exercise, at the municipal level, the powers which the Act confers on him. He must have all the tools and means required to preserve the health of municipal democracy, within the limits of his responsibilities.

From this perspective, the Chief Electoral Officer has set the following institutional objective:

Institutional objective:

9. By 2005, adopt and implement a concerted action strategy seeking to strengthen the management of the various components of the municipal electoral administration that come under the responsibility of the Chief Electoral Officer, in particular, the financing of political parties, directives, inquiries and legal proceedings.

Indicator: the number of means set out in the strategy and implemented.

Third ORIENTATION :

A WELL-AFFIRMED LEADERSHIP IN THE ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION FIELD

The third and last orientation, "A well-affirmed leadership in the electoral administration field", sets four intervention approaches:

Intervention approaches:

- > The fundamental importance of the right to vote.
- > External communications geared to the knowledge and promotion of the Institution.
- > Emphasis on innovation and research.
- > Sharing of expertise.

Fundamental importance of the right to vote

Over the last few decades, Québec has had one of the highest voter turnouts among democratic societies for legislative elections. The ultimate expression of democracy, voting, through universal suffrage, is among the major assets of modern societies. We must preserve this right and the access to its exercise as the most precious of all rights.

In response to trends that are beginning to take shape and that are having an ever-greater impact on Québec's reality, and to maintain the highest voter turnout rate possible, the Chief Electoral Officer has set the following institutional objective:

“OVER THE LAST FEW DECADES, QUÉBEC HAS HAD ONE OF THE HIGHEST VOTER TURNOUTS AMONG DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES FOR LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS”

Election turnouts: 1970 - 2000

Québec	1998 78,32%	1994 81,58%	1989 74,95%	1985 75,64%	1981 82,49%	1976 85,27%	1973 80,38%	1970 84,23%		
Ontario	1999 58,3%	1995 62,9%	1990 64,4%	1987 62,7%	1985 61,5%	1981 58%	1977 65,6%	1975 67,8%	1971 73,5%	
Canada	2000 61,18%	1997 67%	1993 69,6%	1988 75,3%	1984 75,3%	1980 69,3%	1979 76%	1974 71%	1972 77%	
Germany	1998 82,20%	1994 79%	1990 77,80%	1987 87,30%	1983 88,40%	1980 88,60%	1976 90,70%	1972 91,10%		
England	1997 71,5%	1992 77,80%	1987 75,40%	1983 72,80%	1979 76%	1974 72,90%	1974 78,90%	1970 72,20%		
United States	2000 51%	1996 49%	1992 52,50%	1988 48,20%	1985 51,20%	1980 50%	1976 51,60%	1972 53,20%		
Spain	2000 61,85%	1996 78,10%	1993 77%	1989 70%	1986 70,40%	1982 79,80%	1979 68,10%	1977 77%		
France	1997 67,9%	1993 69,30%	1988 66,20%	1986 78,50%	1981 70,90%	1978 71,60%	1973 81,3%			
Japan	1998 62,45%	1996 59%	1995 44,5%	1993 67%	1990 73%	1986 64%	1983 67,90%	1980 74,60%	1979 68%	1976 73,40%

Sources: IDEA, Voter Turnout from 1945 to 1997: a Global Report - Political participation www.ifes.org/guideelecguide.htm www.stm.it/elections/elections/frances.htm

Institutional objective:

10. Promote the broadest possible exercise of the right to vote, be it within the framework of the current legislation or by recommending and supporting legislative amendments adapted to the needs of electors.

Indicator: the number of legislative amendments recommended and supported.

“DURING THE 1998 GENERAL ELECTION, CLOSE TO 97% OF POLLING STATIONS WERE ACCESSIBLE TO HANDICAPPED PERSONS, WHICH REPRESENTS A CONSIDERABLE INCREASE OVER THE 1994 ELECTION.”

IDENTIFYING ONESELF, A PREREQUISITE FOR VOTING

To exercise their right to vote, electors must establish their identity by presenting one of the following documents: health insurance card, driver's licence, Canadian passport. In the absence of one of these documents, electors must state under oath that they are indeed the person registered on the list of electors and will have to:

- > *either present at least two documents which together prove their identity;*
- > *or be accompanied by a person who can meet the aforementioned requirements and who can attest to the identity of the elector who is unable to present the documents.*

External communications geared to the knowledge and promotion of the Institution

To affirm his leadership in the electoral administration field, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec must establish efficient communications first with citizens, then with his partners, opinion leaders of our society and the media. The activities that and the Institution carries out between two polls must be known. It is important that the Institution's role in the political system and the limits of its action be clearly understood.

The polarization context at the political level, the sociocultural diversity that characterizes Québec society, and the division between urban centres and the regions, combined with the characteristics specific to our electoral system are all elements that require well-targeted communication activities. Information activities, sustained public relations, the democracy education program for young people and training intended for stakeholders of the political system will help make the Institution a true leader in the electoral administration field.

At the communications and information level, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec has set the following institutional objective:

Institutional objective:

- 11. By 2005, consolidate the image of neutrality of the Institution and ensure its notoriety and credibility by informing the various target clienteles and by making the Chief Electoral Officer better known outside the Institution.

Indicator: the number of information, public relations, advertising, education in democracy and training activities.

Emphasis on innovation and research

The Institution's leadership in the electoral field is based, in large part, on the quality of its expertise. In this sector as in the other fields of human activity, progress results from the development of knowledge.

While research and development necessitate investments in human and financial resources, they also require, and perhaps most of all, a culture, an atmosphere and an environment that are conducive to their enhancement. That is why the Institution intends to place key importance on research and to promote innovation within its organization.

QUALIFIED ELECTOR STATUS

As is the case in most modern democracies, the exercise of the right to vote in Québec is governed by the principle of universal suffrage. Québec's Election Act is flexible and inclusive. The constraints associated with the exercise of the right to vote have been reduced to a strict minimum. Every person who wishes to take part in democratic life must be a qualified elector on polling day, namely:

- > be 18 or over;
- > be a Canadian citizen;
- > have been domiciled in Québec for at least six months.

However, persons subject to curatorship and those who have been deprived of their electoral rights following certain offences under the Election Act lose their qualified elector status.

Electors who are temporarily staying outside Québec can also exercise their right to vote under certain conditions.

To ensure that innovation and research are among his priorities and that various mechanisms reinforce their strategic character, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec has established the following institutional objective:

Institutional objective:

- 12. By 2005, establish 3 research priorities and implement research activities to contribute to the Institution's progress in the electoral field.

Indicator: the number of priorities established and the number of research activities implemented.

Sharing of expertise

The Institution's leadership is also expressed in the sharing of its expertise. The various authorities in charge of the administration of elections, whether they are active in a municipal or school environment or in another activity sector, must be able to rely on the expertise of the Chief Electoral Officer to find support, advice or specialized knowledge. Citizens are the chief beneficiaries of being able to rely on a uniform quality of products and services at all electoral levels.

The 125 returning officers who represent the Chief Electoral Officer in the electoral divisions of Québec have a very tangible experience in the electoral operations field. During an election, they organize the holding of the poll and ensure that it proceeds smoothly. This "hands-on" experience is invaluable. The Institution must make the most of this experience when it is likely to serve the interests of the electoral system.

At the international level, the Institution also has a major role to play. The assets acquired in the field of democracy remain relatively fragile from a historical standpoint. These assets are dependent on several factors related to our external environment. Political and economic conditions threaten the progress achieved in several societies. With the globalization of economies and the rapid evolution of means of communication, any progress achieved or setback sustained anywhere around the globe risks affecting us sooner or later. In sharing its expertise with outside authorities or in taking full advantage of the know-how and advances made by foreign electoral administrations, the Institution is affirming its leadership.

With a view to sharing his expertise and making the most of the tangible experience of returning officers, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec has established the following institutional objectives.

Institutional objectives:

- 13. Share the expertise of the Chief Electoral Officer with various Québec authorities in charge of the administration of elections, whatever the level, to ensure a uniform quality of services for electors and promote exchanges with authorities outside Québec.

Indicator: the number of activities requiring the expertise and the support of the Chief Electoral Officer.

- 14. By 2005, take greater advantage of the expertise of returning officers, in particular between election periods.

Indicator: the number of returning officers involved and the number of files.

“WITH THE PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS (PLE), IT IS POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE, ON TWELVE HOURS’ NOTICE, THE LIST OF ELECTORS FOR A GENERAL ELECTION OR A REFERENDUM.”

PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS: QUÉBEC’S EXPERIENCE

In November 1997, Québec used its new permanent list of electors (PLE) for the very first time during a municipal poll. It subsequently used this list on a large scale for the 1998 general election. This innovation put an end to the need to carry out an enumeration in a race against the clock, every time that an election was called. It also put an end to the difficult task of recruiting enumerators, door-to-door canvassing and the long transcriptions by typewriter. Finally, it put an end to what had become seemingly never-ending election campaigns. The PLE would revolutionize the way in which a list of electors was drawn up.

One list, two registers

The permanent list of electors (PLE) contains two registers, namely a Register of Electors and a Register of Territories. The combination of these two registers makes it possible to obtain the list of electors required for the holding of any poll, be it at the provincial, municipal or school board level. It also allows officials to draw up the list of jury members.

The Register of Electors includes information on the identity of the persons who wish to be entered on the list: surname, given name, date of birth, sex, address, and date of the establishment of their domicile in a municipality. This register was created from the list of electors registered for the 1995 Referendum, the Registry of Electors outside Québec and the changes made to the list during by-elections or provincial, municipal or school polls.

Every person who is a qualified elector within the meaning of the Election Act can register on the permanent list of electors.

For its part, the Register of Territories contains the territorial information needed to manage and produce the various lists of electors, in particular, the addresses and the description of the electoral territories.

For provincial polls, the Register of Territories also includes the descriptions of the polling subdivisions of each of the 125 electoral divisions. For the municipal level, it includes the descriptions of the municipal districts or wards. The Register of Territories also comprises, for school elections, data on the 69 linguistic school boards. Finally, it contains information on the judicial districts. Pursuant to the Election Act, the Chief Electoral Officer produces lists intended for the choice of jury members.

Permanent and up-to-date...

The updating of the list of electors must take place on an on-going basis. Several sources of information are used to update the list. Thanks to the linking of data held by the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) with the data found in the Register of Electors, a matching code is assigned to each elector. This code allows the Régie to transmit to the Chief Electoral Officer any change of identity or change of address concerning an elector.

The main source of information for updating the list of electors is the RAMQ. Most changes to the files of the RAMQ come from its own beneficiaries. It also receives close to 40% of the changes of address from the Société de l’assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) and, to a lesser extent, from certain organizations such as the Régie des rentes du Québec.

The second most important mechanism concerning the number of changes made to the Register of Electors is that of the revision of the list of electors. This revision takes place following a writ of election or a referendum writ and changes made to the municipal list of electors or referendum list. The other sources for updating the register are the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Public Curator and the elector himself. Finally, the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec may recommend the holding of an enumeration or a revision to make a total or partial verification of the list.

As for the Register of Territories, its updating is done on the basis of data provided by the RAMQ, municipalities, returning officers, school boards, the Commission de toponymie and the Gazette officielle du Québec.

The elector has access to the information concerning him found in the permanent list of electors. It is up to the elector to inform the staff of the Chief Electoral Officer of any change to this information as well of his wish to be struck from the list.

To ensure that the greatest possible number of electors can exercise their right to vote, the legislator has put in place a revision mechanism to deal with special cases: the Permanent board of revisors. This mechanism, combined with the existing mechanisms, contributes to the completeness and the quality of the PLE.

The architects of the permanent list of electors wanted the simplest computer infrastructure possible. While the computer equipment represents the cornerstone of the PLE, the efficiency of the PLE does not require highly complex and highly sophisticated computer systems. All that is needed is a reliable technology adapted to the needs of the PLE.

The basic computer equipment is made up of microcomputers, with each unit being intended for a specific purpose: a production server, a development server, a computer used for technological testing, another computer for databases. As for the software used, it includes a database management program, a program for development tools, an operating system and utility programs.

Quality, speed, completeness, reliability

Among the advantages of the permanent list of electors, the most visible and most measurable are a reduction in the cost of drawing up lists of electors (more than \$17 million saved over 5 years despite the costs associated with the setting up and management of the PLE), its use by the various levels of government, namely the provincial, municipal and school board levels, and a shortening of the election period by 14 days, i.e. the duration of past enumerations. There has also been a constant improvement in the quality of the lists of electors and a better control over their preparation and updating.

The rate of changes made during the revision of the list of electors at the time of an electoral event is a quality indicator that speaks for itself: a rate of 8.5% during the 1995 referendum, as compared to 5.7% during the 1998 provincial election. The number of registered electors is another indicator that is favorable to the PLE. In all, there were 4,639,860 persons registered at the time of the 1994 enumeration, as compared to 5,254,482 for the 1998 general election. On November 30, 2000, the names of 5,363,134 electors appeared on the PLE.

A new mechanism recently put in place facilitates the registration of electors who turn 18, that of persons who obtain Canadian citizenship or that of persons who, already holding Canadian citizenship, take up residence in Québec.

Under the Election Act, this mechanism makes it possible to directly register these persons on the permanent list of electors after having obtained the information from the RAMQ. The Chief Electoral Officer of Québec contacts these persons to inform them that unless they send the Chief Electoral Officer a notice to the contrary, they will be registered on the list of electors. This provision has helped to resolve certain difficulties related to the registration of young people who turn 18. Indeed, a large proportion of these young people tended to put off returning their registration form.

The rate of applications for entry during an event has declined significantly, dropping from 6.5% in 1994 to 4.6% in 1998. At the time of the initial matching which gave rise to the first version of the PLE three years ago, 7% of the potential electors were not matched with the RAMQ file. In June 1999, this rate stood at 1.2%, falling to 0.87% in February 2000. Another significant advantage lies in the fact that the list of electors for a given poll can be produced on 12 hours' notice.

An agreement reached between the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec and Elections Canada permits the transmission of any new registration or modification concerning Québec's electors to the persons in charge of the National Register. As a result, the PLE contributes to updating the National Register for Québec electors.

For Québec's election administrators, the true test of the PLE came with the November 1998 provincial election. The results of this experience were clear. The list of electors produced for the general election was unquestionably of better quality than the lists resulting from door-to-door enumerations.

In 1999, the Chief Electoral Officer was awarded Québec's Public Administration Award of Excellence for the permanent list of electors. This Award of Excellence underscores remarkable achievements in the public sector and pays tribute to those persons responsible for such achievements. The criteria for granting this award are the impact of the achievement on the organization's clientele, its innovative character, its potential for application in other organizations and the quality of management in its implementation. Despite the difficulties that remain and that we are working to resolve, the results are conclusive. The permanent list of electors has lived up to its promises.



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