

TRANSITIONING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN QUÉBEC: CONSOLIDATION (2021 – 2025)

This report is funded in part by the *Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes*, through the Canadian Relations Support Program, and by the RRECQ.

*Secrétariat aux
relations canadiennes*
Québec 

ABOUT

Completing a decade of implementation of circularity principles, methods and strategies in the province, this report aims to explore the implementation of a circular economy in Québec between 2021 and 2025.

Geared towards decision makers in Canada, this new report builds on the 2021 report “[Transitioning to Circularity: Learning from Québec Experience](#)” and describes the interactions between players in various sectors and key value chains, the buy-in from government leadership, the showcasing of economic opportunities and impacts as well as the progressive reach towards a greater variety of publics and the interactions between circular and social economy. It also questions the next steps if the province is to truly obtain the benefit of the implementation of circularity.

Disclaimer:

Given the extent of initiatives having taken place in Québec since 2021, this report does not claim to provide the reader with an exhaustive review. It aims at featuring some of the key elements that contributed to consolidating a transition to a circular economy in the province, in particular linked to the experience of the Québec Circular Economy Research Network (*Réseau de recherche en économie circulaire du Québec* – RRECQ) and the Centre for Intersectoral Studies and Research on the circular Economy (*Centre d’études et de recherches intersectorielles en économie circulaire* – CERIEC). Some key sources that are often cited in this report are the authors’ chapter in 2025 CIRODD’s [Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition](#) collective open-source book¹ and the RRECQ [2025-2050 Roadmap for Québec Society’s Transition to a Circular Economy](#).

To inform this report, interviews were conducted with a variety of stakeholders. A complete list is included below. The interviewees represent a diversity of people – and organizations – who have helped to shape, influence, and propel the transition to a circular economy in Québec. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the authors, and the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the partner institutions.

Author and Editor:

Stéphanie Jagou, Senior Circularity Consultant

Contributors:

Emmanuel Raufflet (HEC Montréal, Co-chair RRECQ)
Daniel Normandin (CERIEC)
Marlybel Ochoa Miranda and Cathy Baptista (RRECQ)
Kiana Klassen and Paul Shorthouse (Circular Economy Leadership Canada - CELC)
Malorie Bertrand and Geoff McCarney (Smart Prosperity Institute – SPI)

October 2025

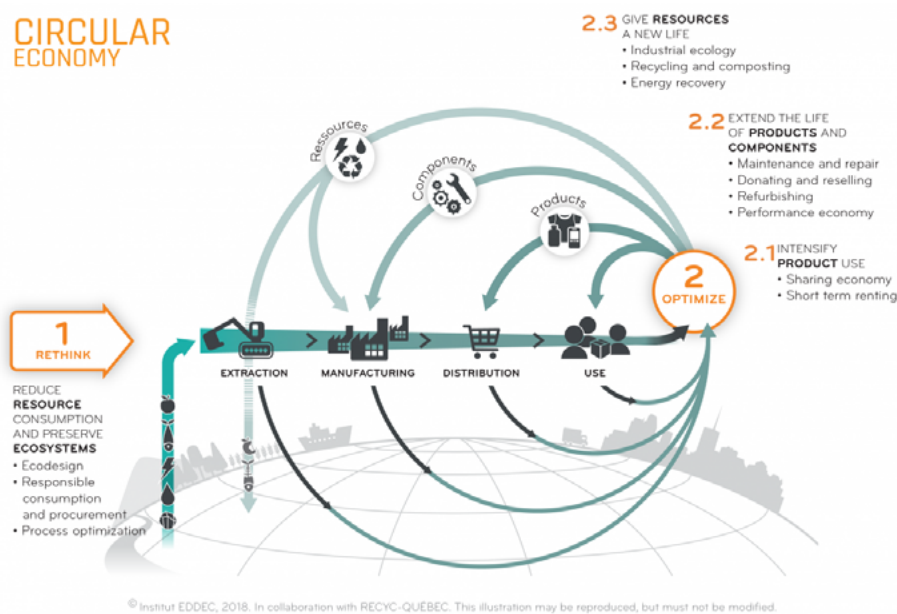
To cite this document:

Jagou, S. (2025), *Transitioning to a Circular Economy in Québec – Consolidation (2021-2025)*, QuebecCirculaire.org

¹ Jagou, S., Raufflet, E. (2025). Co-construction as Implementation: The Circular Economy Experience in Quebec – Consolidation Stage (2021–2024). In: Cheriet, M., Boucher, JF., Gondim de Almeida Guimarães, L., Frayret, JM. (eds) *Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition*. Springer, Cham.

References to the circular economy in this document are based on the definition and graphical representation adopted in the province in Québec in 2018 as presented here. The strategies as well as any terminology linked to circularity as defined in the province are detailed in the *Office québécois de la langue française* circularity vocabulary developed in 2023 (see Section 6).

CIRCULAR ECONOMY



List of interviewees for the elaboration of this report:

- Members of the *Pôle d'économie circulaire du Québec* (alphabetical order):
 - *Bureau de Coordination du Développement Durable* (BCDD), as part of the *Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs* (MELCCFP)
 - *Centre de transfert technologique en écologie industrielle* (CTTÉI)
 - *Chantier de l'économie sociale*
 - *Communauté métropolitaine de Québec* (CMQ)
 - *Éco-Entreprises Québec* (ÉEQ)
 - *Economic Development Canada* (EDC)
 - *Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec* (FCCQ)
 - *Fédération des travailleurs du Québec* (FTQ)
 - *Fond d'action québécois pour le développement durable* (FAQDD)
 - *Fondation*
 - *Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie* -(MEIE)
 - *Québec Business Council on the Environnement* (*Conseil patronal de l'environnement du Québec* -CPEQ)
 - RECYC-QUÉBEC
 - *Réseau Environnement*
 - *Ville de Montréal*
 - *Union des Municipalités du Québec* (UMQ)
- *Commission de la construction du Québec* (CCQ)
- *Fédération canadienne des municipalités* (FCM)
- *Réseau des entreprises en économie sociale et circulaire du Québec* (RÉESCQ)
- *Territoires Innovants en Économie Sociale et Solidaire* (TIESS)
- Several academic members of the RRECQ, including co-chairs Sophie Bernard (*Polytechnique Montréal*), Marc Journeault (*Université Laval*) and Mathias Glaus (*ÉTS Montréal*).

Special thanks to Kaia Arselin, Tristan Grech and Hortense Montoux for their collaboration.

Credits:

Design Gaël Dorgère

FOREWORD

As the first state government in North America to adopt a circular economy roadmap, Québec has been showing the way towards a materials-conscious, upstream-focused economy for two decades. And while a truly circular system needs to be global to reach proper scale, the initial sparks of the transition have to be rooted in local reality, feeding off a strong network of stakeholders getting out of their respective silos to set the direction.

As the present report highlights, Québec has benefited from a high degree of collaboration between its regions and cities – which no doubt played a crucial role in the viability of its local initiatives, the sheer number and variety of which turned the territory into a laboratory for circular practices, including business models. This dynamic, crucially, has been fuelled by very solid research underpinnings, both academic and private sector-led.

By aiming to make a clear link between circularity and the intertwined crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, Québec's ecosystem contributes to moving the agenda beyond the simplistic waste management dimension, to which it remains too often confined. And while it's true that cities and regions mostly deal with the 'visible' part of the circular economy – the 'stuff' that moves around, the logistics, the material hubs... these initiatives also create opportunities for better social cohesion, through sharing platforms or take-back schemes for example.



Yet some important levers are hidden, and not of municipal competence: think for example of harmonised digital products passports, that could allow buildings to become material banks at scale, enabling reuse and modularity. Following this logic, it is important to build on well-established local initiatives and pilot projects to inform the next layer of legislation & regulation, with the aim of gradually working through pervasive system change... which will include re-thinking the very costs & incentives structures of the current linear model.

Given its strong ecosystem of private sector actors, academic research and policymakers, Québec is ideally placed to have an authoritative voice in the transition towards an economic model that builds economic, environmental and social value.

Jocelyn Blériot

Executive Lead, Policy & Institutions
Ellen MacArthur Foundation (UK)



**ELLEN
MACARTHUR
FOUNDATION**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the progress of the circular transition in Québec in 2021–2025. While the previous period was driven by university-led initiatives (2014–2020), the period covered here illustrates a government-led approach in collaboration with civil society. This alignment demonstrates a growing recognition among policymakers of the need to accelerate sustainable resource management and reduce environmental impacts.

Section 1 examines the increasing commitment of the Québec government to the circular economy (CE), from a 2021 Circularity Gap Report to the 2023–2028 Québec Governmental Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) and the Circular Economy Roadmap (FREC) 2024–2028—the cornerstone circularity strategy for the government and public sector. The first provincial government in North America with such a roadmap, Québec set a target to increase the circularity rate from the 3.5% baseline to 5% by 2025. In addition, the government updated and expanded its Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies. Future challenges include optimizing circular opportunities between value chains and addressing systemic reliance on wasteful practices.

Section 2 highlights the roles played by research in CE. Between 2021 and 2025, several interdisciplinary research networks and centres were established, including the Centre for Intersectoral Studies and Research on Circular Economy (CERIEC, 2020), which focuses on action-research partnerships with the Circular Economy Acceleration Labs Ecosystem (ÉLEC), and the Québec Circular Economy Research Network (RRECQ, 2021), which gathers over 350 researchers internationally. Two trends have emerged. The first concerns the intensification of collaborations among sustainability-related research networks that aim to connect circularity with climate change and biodiversity. Second, circularity is being embraced and adapted by local regional institutions, as well as CEGEPs. Future efforts must focus on financing and strengthening existing networks, establishing more specialized infrastructures, and encouraging the dissemination of knowledge across Canada.

Section 3 documents the role played by municipalities, regional county municipalities (MRC), and regions. This section has two key findings. First, several municipalities have elaborated circular roadmaps. Second, several regions, such as Montérégie, Laurentians, and Lanaudière, among others, as well as Québec Northern Territory, are transitioning to circularity. *Ville de Montréal* is a pioneer with a structured approach and high circularity goals, aiming for 17% circularity by 2050. Second, several local governments and diverse municipalities, including Prévost, Terrebonne, and Mascouche, have implemented eco-taxes and joint bylaws to prohibit single-use plastics and fund reusable container services. This section concludes that future challenges will concern aligning provincial and municipal policies and investing substantially in inter-regional infrastructure.

Section 4 maps initiatives led and implemented by business and civil society stakeholders. These initiatives include open labs for new circular business models, industrial symbioses, and networks such as the Québec-wide *Synergie Québec* established in 2014. Case studies include regional synergies and the use of Material Flow Cost Accounting (MFCA) as a circularity tool. Initiatives are convened by different actors. First, the ELEC living lab aims to increase sector-specific circularity through co-creation. As of mid-2025, three labs have been deployed: 1) the Construction Lab (2021), 2) the Food Systems Lab (2023), and 3) the Textile Lab (2024). Second, industry-specific initiatives were undertaken, such as in advanced materials, the hospitality and performing arts sector, and plastics—in particular in the health sector. Third, three key circularity strategies are currently being tested in Québec, namely 1) performance and cooperation economies, by EFC Québec (CTTÉI), 2) public responsible procurement, with a policy target of 50% of government purchases to be responsible by 2028, and 3) maintenance and repair, as Law 21 on reparability, the first of its kind in North America, was promulgated. Fourth, the report identifies key obstacles, including limited consistent funding (especially medium-term), regional disparities in implementation, and a persistent lack of knowledge—hence implementation—of upstream strategies (like ecodesign) versus end-of-life strategies. Finally, the report highlights the need to engage with SMEs—which make up **99.7%** of the province's economic fabric.

Section 5 focuses on the contribution of the social economy (SE), especially in aligning circular strategies with positive social impacts. The SE has a long history of contribution to Québec's economy, and the convergence of the SE and the CE is actively supported by umbrella organizations, such as the *Chantier de l'Économie sociale* and the TIESS (*Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire*). Several key moments have been included in the 2025 Social Economy Summit, namely, the creation of a dedicated Social Economy Department at Investissement Québec and the launch of *Réseau des entreprises d'économie sociale et circulaire du Québec* (REÉSQC). The report underlines that it would be key for Québec to leverage the SE's scaling strategies to ensure the transition is not only circular but also fundamentally inclusive and rooted in regional communities.

The final section underlines that in the 2021–2025 period, outreach activities to professional audiences included increased media presence, success stories case studies, the CE lexicon by the *Office québécois de la langue française* (OQLF) webinars, the development of numerous tools and guides, various training initiatives both in academia and with sectoral audiences like the 2021–2022 *Tournée des 17 régions* by the Québec Federation of Chambers of Commerce (FCCQ), and networking opportunities such as the *Assises Québécoises de l'économie circulaire*—combined in 2025 with the Second Canadian Circular Economy Summit. As for the broader public, the government has organized several awareness campaigns on recycling and repair. Finally, the Green Transition Expertise Cluster led by EnviroCompétences has advanced the identification of priorities for skills development and training accessibility, both key elements in the transition to CE. The report highlights the need for pragmatic training for tradespeople and professionals across all sectors to ensure that they can actively participate in the transition.

MILESTONES

2021

- *Assises québécoises de l'économie circulaire* (2nd ed.) RECYC-QUÉBEC
- Adoption of [Bill 65](#) (Chapter 5) – An Act to amend mainly the Environment Quality Act with respect to deposits and selective collection
- Launch of *Circularity Gap Report Québec Circle Economy*, RECYC-QUÉBEC

Setting up of:

- Québec Circular Economy Research Network (RRECQ)
FRQ, HEC Montréal, Université Laval, ÉTS Montréal, Polytechnique Montréal, CERIEC
- Circular Economy Acceleration Labs Ecosystem (ELEC) & Construction Lab CERIEC, Desjardins
- Circular Cities & Regions Initiative NZWC, FCM, RECYC-QUÉBEC, RCA
- Support program on functional economy for Québec businesses EFC Québec, CTTÉI

2022

Launch of:

- Toolkit for a Regional Circular Economy Roadmap RECYC-QUÉBEC, CTTÉI
- Chapais Circular Economy Roadmap *Ville de Chapais*, CDEC
- Implementation of first municipal eco-tax measures and by-laws to reduce single-use containers *Ville de Prévost, Villes de Terrebonne et Mascouche*

2023

- *Assises québécoises de l'économie circulaire* (3rd ed.) RECYC-QUÉBEC
- Adoption of Bill 29 (programmed obsolescence)
- Creation of the Food Systems Lab (ELEC) CERIEC, Desjardins

Launch of:

- Governmental Sustainable Development Strategy 2023-2028 (GSDS)
- Circular Economy Roadmap for *Montérégie CRE Montérégie*
- *Circularity Gap Report Montréal Ville de Montréal*
- Sustainable Development Action Plan 2023-2028 MAMH

2024

Launch of:

- Government Circular Economy Roadmap 2024-2028 (FREC) MELCCFP, RECYC-QUÉBEC
- Montréal Circular Economy Roadmap 2024-2030 *Ville de Montréal*
- Spotlight Chapter Report RECYC-QUÉBEC
- Regional Strategy 2024-2029 & Circular Economy Roadmap for the Laurentian Region *Synergie Économique Laurentides*
- Metropolitan Circular Economy Strategy 2024-2035 *Communauté métropolitaine de Québec*

Setting up of:

- Textile Lab (ELEC) CERIEC, Desjardins

2025

- Canadian Circular Economy Summit in Montréal & special edition of the *Assises Québécoises de l'économie circulaire* CELC, CIC, RECYC-QUÉBEC
- Social Economy Summit *Chantier de l'économie sociale*
- The modernized collection system comes into force ÉÉQ, RECYC-QUÉBEC

Launch of:

- Implementation plan for the FREC 2025-2028 (PMO) MELCCFP
- Travel Better Thanks to Circular Economy Campaign RECYC-QUÉBEC, *Ministère du Tourisme*
- Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025-2050 RRECQ
- Montréal Circular Economy Action Plan *Ville de Montréal*

Setting up of:

- *Réseau des entreprises d'économie sociale et circulaire du Québec* (REÉSCQ)

INTRODUCTION

The [2021 Turning Point report](#) by the Expert Panel on the Circular Economy in Canada, appointed by the Council of Canadian Academies, found that Canada's consumption rates of materials, energy and water are currently among the highest in the world, and 73% of waste ends up in landfills or is incinerated.¹ While the country is actively contributing to fighting plastic pollution and to the development of laws and plans to combat climate change, Canada is still lacking any concrete circular plans.

Québec has, however, been spearheading the transition to a more circular economy. Since 2014, the province has arguably become a leader in circularity in Canada and North America.

While Québec's early path to circularity relied on inter- and transdisciplinary research initiatives, in the 2021–2025 period of consolidation, Québec has increasingly been an open laboratory for the emergence of cocreation and new business models, as well as for the development of multipartner initiatives between the research worlds. Québec is stepping up its exchange of best practices—drawing inspiration from more advanced initiatives, especially from French-speaking Europe. A shift is slowly happening from the imbedding of strategies aimed at remediating the linear economic impacts (recycling, composting, energy recovery) to exploring upstream strategies (procurement, eco-design and mutualization).

Although challenges remain, Québec's collective approach to circularity stands out: Québec has built a regulatory framework, governmental roadmap, common vocabulary and societal approach, all of which are accelerating the adoption of this economic model.

The *Transitioning to a Circular Economy in Québec: Consolidation (2021–2025)* report documents major steps and initiatives in the highlighted period. This report has six sections. The first section details the incremental governmental commitment to circularity. The second focuses on the research evolution in the transition to this new economic model, while the third highlights how cities and regions have begun working towards circular economy goals. The fourth highlights how various projects in key industrial sectors—including construction, food systems, textile, plastics, advanced materials and tourism—unveil their circular potential, with initiatives often led by civil society, and offers a focus on strategies (such as performance economy, procurement, maintenance and repair). The following section evidences the key role of the social economy in Québec society and its contribution to circularity. The last section focuses on the significant evolution in circular training and education development, while outreach tools complete this portrait.

¹ Note: The circularity index assessment does not use the same methodology as Circle Economy; therefore, it cannot be compared to the international or Québec province circularity indexes mentioned in this report.

Three Major Circular Economy Challenges for Québec

Production relies on virgin resources and generates waste

- Dependence on noncircular resources and a high ecological footprint
- Procurement issues and globalization (dependence)
- Weak market development for recovered materials
- Challenges to integrating circularity in business models
- Limited understanding of material flows
- Limited general awareness and training

Unsustainable consumption exacerbates the ecological crisis

- Social identity influenced by consumption-related behaviours
- Commercial practices accelerating product obsolescence
- Circular economy being narrowly perceived as waste management and recycling
- Cultural and generational resistance to responsible consumption
- Erosion of trust towards science and posttruth challenges

Resource governance is fragmented, and the regulatory framework is often ill-suited to a circular transition

- Fragmented policy and legislative framework and a lack of regulatory standardization
- Limited development of incentives and constraints
- The lack of a common vision for stakeholders
- The lack of data and methodologies to manage circularity (traceability and indicators)
- Investment from economic and governmental stakeholders focused on a limited range of circular solutions, centred on waste management

The challenge is great but matches our collective ambition: Together, we have the ability to build a society based on circular, regenerative, sustainable, and resilient production; on mindful and circular consumption, rooted in a deep respect for nature; and on inclusive, transparent, and equitable resource governance that ensures the protection of ecosystems—[RRECQ's Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#) (Translated by the author).

Source: RRECQ's [Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#)

ACRONYMS

- **ACFAS:** French Canadian Association for the Advancement of Science (*Association Canadienne-Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences*)
- **BCDD:** Office of Sustainable Development Coordination (*Bureau de coordination du développement durable* –A unit of the MELCCFP)
- **CCA:** Council of Canadian Academies
- **CCRI:** Canadian Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)
- **CE:** Circular Economy
- **CEGEP:** College of General and Professional Teaching (*Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*)
- **CELC:** Circular Economy Leadership Canada
- **CER:** Circular Economy Roadmap
- **CerCeDD:** Centre for Research in Accounting and Sustainable Development (*Centre de recherche en comptabilité et développement durable*)
- **CERIEC:** Center for Intersectoral Studies and Research on the Circular Economy (*Centre d'études et de recherches intersectorielles en économie circulaire*)
- **CIRAIG:** International Reference Center for Life Cycle of Products, Services and Systems (*Centre international de référence sur le cycle de vie des produits, procédés et services*)
- **CIRANO:** Interuniversity Centre for Research in Organization Analysis (*Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations*)
- **CIRODD:** Interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Operationalization of Sustainable Development (*Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche en opérationnalisation du développement durable*)
- **CMQ** *Communauté métropolitaine de Québec* (CMQ)
- **CPEQ:** Québec Business Council on the Environment (*Conseil patronal de l'environnement du Québec*)
- **CPQ:** Québec Employers Council (*Conseil du patronat du Québec*)
- **CREDDO:** Regional Council on the Environment and the Development of the Outaouais (*Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable de l'Outaouais*)
- **CREIT:** Research Chair on Industrial and Territorial Ecology (*Chaire de recherche sur l'écologie industrielle et territoriale*)
- **CTMP:** Center for Mineral Technology and Plastics Processing (*Centre de technologie minérale et de plasturgie*)
- **CTTÉI:** Centre for the Transfer of Technologies in Industrial Ecology (*Centre de transfert technologique en écologie industrielle*)
- **EDDEC:** Institute on Environment, Sustainable Development and the Circular Economy (*Institut de l'Environnement, du Développement Durable et de l'Économie Circulaire*)
- **ÉEQ:** *Éco Entreprises Québec*
- **ÉLEC:** Circular Economy Acceleration Labs Ecosystem (*Écosystème de laboratoires d'accélération en économie circulaire*)
- **EPR:** Extended Producer Responsibility (Responsabilité Élargie du Producteur (REP))
- **ESG-UQAM:** UQAM's School of Management (*École des sciences de la gestion de l'UQAM*)
- **ETS-Montréal:** *École de Technologie supérieure-Montréal*
- **FAQDD:** Quebec Action Fund for Sustainable Development (*Fonds d'Action Québécois pour le Développement Durable*)
- **FCCQ:** Quebec Federation of Chambers of Commerce (*Fédération des Chambres de Commerce du Québec*)
- **FCM:** Federation of Canadian Municipalities (*Fédération canadienne des municipalités*)
- **FQM :** Québec Municipalities Federation (*Fédération québécoise des municipalités*)
- **FREQ :** Québec government circular economy roadmap (*Feuille de route gouvernementale en économie circulaire*)
- **FRQNT:** Quebec Research Fund - Nature and Technology (*Fonds de Recherche du Québec - Nature et Technologies*)
- **GAPC:** Circular Plastics Taskforce (*Groupe action plastiques circulaires*)
- **GHG:** Greenhouse gases (GES: *Gaz à effet de serre*)
- **GIEC:** Collaborative Economy Working Group (*Groupe interministériel en économie circulaire*)
- **GSDS :** Governmental Sustainable Development Strategy (*Stratégie gouvernementale*)

de développement durable)

- **ICI:** Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector
- **LCA:** Life Cycle Assessment
- **MAMH :** Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (*Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation*)
- **MAPAQ :** Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (*Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation*)
- **MELCCFP:** Ministry of Environment, Fight Against Climate Change, Fauna and Parks (*Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs*)
- **MEI:** Québec Ministry of Economy and Innovation (*Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation*)
- **MFA:** Material Flow Analysis
- **MOOC:** Massive Online Open Course
- **MRNF:** Québec Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (*Ministère des Ressources Naturelles et des Forêts*)
- **MRC:** Regional County Municipalities (*Municipalité régionale de comté*)
- **MSSS:** Department of Health and Social Services (*Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*)
- **PMO:** Implementation plan for the FREC 2025-2028 (*Plan de mise en œuvre*)
- **PGMR:** Residual Materials Management Plan (*Plan de gestion des matières résiduelles*)
- **QFL:** Quebec Federation of Labour (*Fédération*

des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ))

- **RCC:** Retail Council of Canada
- **RÉESCQ:** Social and circular economy enterprises network of Québec (*Réseau des entreprises en économie sociale et circulaire du Québec*)
- **RRECQ:** Québec Circular Economy Research Network (*Réseau de recherche en environnement du Québec*)
- **SEEs:** social economy enterprises
- **SÉL:** *Synergie économique Laurentides*
- **SME:** Small and Medium Enterprise (*Petites et moyennes entreprises (PME)*)
- **SPI:** Smart Prosperity Institute
- **TEQ:** *Technologies environnementales du Québec*
- **TIESS:** Innovative territories in social and solidarity economy (*Territoires Innovants en Économie Sociale et Solidaire*)
- **UMQ:** *Union des municipalités du Québec*
- **UQAM:** *Université du Québec à Montréal*
- **WCEF:** World Circular Economy Forum

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

ABOUT	2	SECTION 4 - CIVIL SOCIETY STAKEHOLDERS ARE STILL LEADING CIRCULARITY EFFORTS	52
FOREWORD	4	1 - INDUSTRIAL SYMBIOSIS OFTEN PAVES THE WAY	54
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5	2 - SHOWCASING BY INDUSTRY	57
MILESTONES	7	2.1 ELEC	57
INTRODUCTION	8	2.2 VARIOUS SECTORAL INITIATIVES	64
ACRONYMS	10	3 - SHOWCASING BY STRATEGY	69
		3.1 PERFORMANCE AND COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIES	69
		3.2 RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT	70
		3.3 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR	71
		4 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	72
SECTION 1 - GOVERNMENTAL COMMITMENT TO CIRCULARITY IS SHAPPING UP	13	SECTION 5 - THE SOCIAL ECONOMY: IMPLEMENTING CIRCULARITY	75
1 - ESTABLISHING A BASELINE: THE CIRCULARITY GAP REPORT	14	1 - INTERLINKING THE SOCIAL AND CIRCULAR ECONOMIES	77
2 - PROVIDING A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK	16	2 - KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	79
3 - ADOPTING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY ROADMAP	17	3 - A STRENGTHENING ECOSYSTEM	80
4 - RESPECTING PLANETARY BOUNDARIES	18	3.1 THE 2025 SOCIAL ECONOMY SUMMIT: AN HISTORIC EVENT	80
5 - DEVISING AN EVOLUTIVE ACTION PLAN	19	3.2 SCALING UP	81
6 - IMPLEMENTING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY POLICIES	22	3.3 INITIATIVES ARE BLOOMING	83
7 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	25	4 - FIRST NATIONS IN THE SOCIAL AND CIRCULAR ECONOMIES	87
		5 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	88
SECTION 2 - RESEARCH: A DRIVING FORCE	26	SECTION 6 - ENHANCED AWARENESS	90
1 - A STRENGTHENED RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE	27	1 - STRUCTURING A COMMON LANGUAGE	91
2 - INTERCONNECTIVITY, REGIONAL FOCUS AND PERMEABILITY	33	2 - REACHING OUT TO CIVIL SOCIETY	92
3 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	35	2.1 GROWING INTERNET PRESENCE	92
		2.2 INCREASING NETWORK OPPORTUNITIES	92
SECTION 3 - A TRANSITION LED BY MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS	36	2.3 ADVERTISING AND ECOLABELLING	93
1 - LOCAL TRANSITION IN CANADA: CONTEXT	38	2.4 GREATER MEDIA EXPOSURE	95
1.1 ONBOARDING THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION	38	2.5 A WIDENING TOOLSET	97
1.2 IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES	39	3 - EDUCATING AND TRAINING	98
1.3 MEASURING CIRCULARITY	41	3.1 ACADEMIC COURSES	98
2 - GOVERNING CIRCULARITY LOCALLY	42	3.2 CURRICULUM IS DEVELOPING IN CEGEPS	98
2.1 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT	42	3.3 SUMMER SCHOOLS ARE IN DEMAND	99
2.2 ONBOARDING	43	3.4 TRAINING DECISION-MAKERS	100
2.3 A STRUCTURING ECOSYSTEM: ROADMAPS	46	4 - DEFINING CIRCULAR SKILLS SETS	101
2.4 NORTHERN QUÉBEC TERRITORY	49	5 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	104
3 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	50		



A Solution Space by
Generate Canada

HEC MONTRÉAL



This report is funded in part by the *Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes*, through the Canadian Relations Support Program, and by the RRECQ.

Secrétariat aux
relations canadiennes
Québec





SECTION 1

GOVERNMENTAL COMMITMENT TO CIRCULARITY IS SHAPPING UP

While in the 2014-2020 period, Québec's circular economy transition was largely initiated by a university-based organization,¹ in the 2021–2025 period, governmental efforts have aligned with civil society initiatives to accelerate the transition.

Several regulatory and legislative tools have been developed to facilitate the transition at various levels. These tools have been informed by key reports and briefs generated by research, industry and civil society stakeholders. This section focuses on the policies and orientations, regulations and actions promoted by the Government of Québec in relation to the circular economy in the 2021–2025 period.

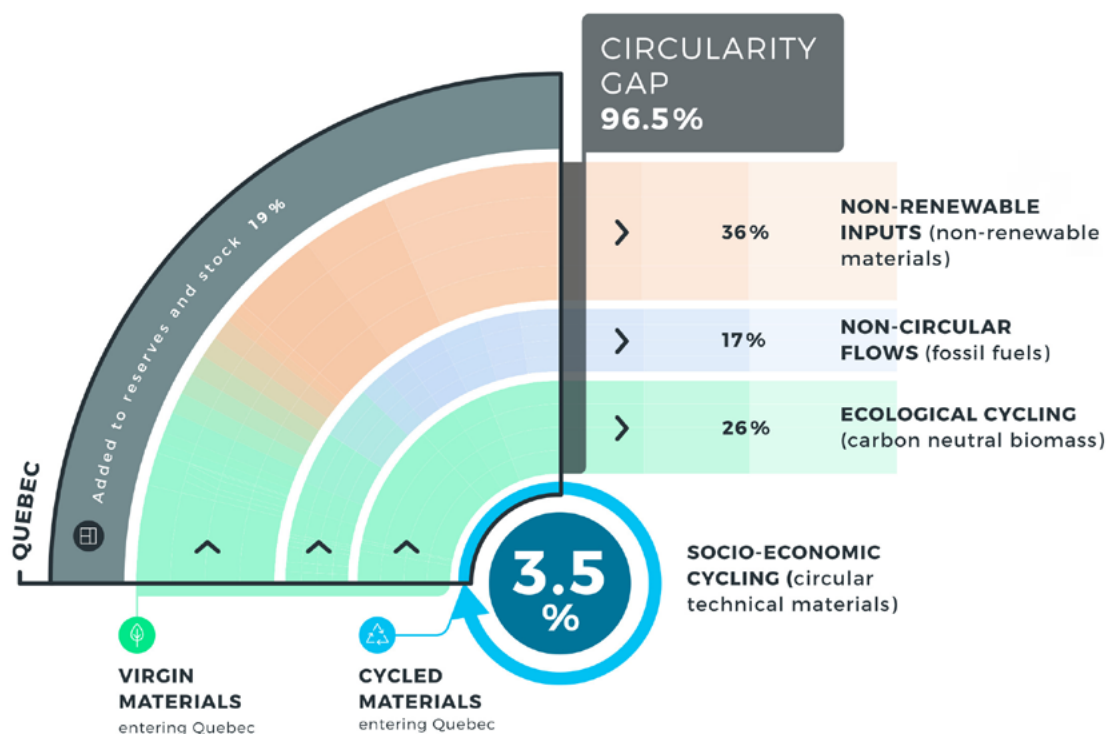
¹ In supporting a systemic approach to transitioning to a circular economy, the EDDEC Institute on *Université de Montréal Campus* created boundaries and structure as a safe space where researchers and practitioners could cocreate knowledge. The EDDEC Institute's communication and outreach efforts resulted in increased understanding of the circular economy framework, as well as a wider dissemination of the model to diverse audiences.

1- ESTABLISHING A BASELINE: THE CIRCULARITY GAP REPORT

In May 2021, the [first Circularity Gap Report Québec](#) was released during the *Assises québécoises de l'économie circulaire*. This research was led by RECYC-QUÉBEC and conducted by Circle Economy with the support of several local partners and academics. The report applies to the Québec economy indicators developed by Circle Economy, which have already been used to measure the circularity of the economies of countries such as Austria, the Netherlands and Norway. This reference base provides a starting point while enabling Québec to benchmark itself. To produce this analysis, an advisory committee and a scientific committee made up of Québec experts from academia, business, civil society organizations and government departments collaborated to ensure that the process was as representative of Québec's reality as possible.²

The key findings of the report include (1) the circularity index of the Québec economy being 3.5% and (2) the identification of key levers and systemic obstacles for a circular transition in Québec. The report also highlighted that the province's natural resources are abundant, yet rather inexpensive to dispose of.

In view of these findings, the Circle Economy Gap Report identified six time-unspecific scenarios that serve to explore a potential path forward and sketch which types of interventions and levers have more potential in terms of steering the circularity metric, as well as reducing the amount of resources used to fulfill societal needs and wants: the material footprint.



Circular and non-circular materials that make up Québec's Circularity Gap.

Source: Circularity Gap Report Québec, 2021

2 Translated by the author (<https://www.recyq-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/communiqués-de-presse/2021-le-quebec-se-dote-d-un-indice-de-circularite-de-son-economie/>)



These scenarios are presented in the following table.

1. Design circularity into stocks	Use less, cycle more; Champion natural and lightweight materials; Use less residential energy
2. Prioritize conscious consumption and consumables	Shift to bio-based consumables; Rewire current modes or consumption; Ramp-up recycling
3. Strive for circular agriculture	Use waste as a resource; Shift towards plant-based diets; Consume less; Valorize organic waste
4. Leverage government procurement	Narrow and slow flows; Design for the future; Use waste as a resource; Extend and preserve what is already made
5. Make manufacturing circular	Prioritize regenerative resources; Use waste as a resource
6. Make mobility clean	Car share and shift to public transport; Travel less; Design for the future; Cycle better and extract fewer raw materials; Make mobility emissions-free

Source: 2021 Circularity Gap Report Québec

The Circularity Gap Report concluded that if cross-intervention synergies are harnessed, Québec could triple its circularity index to reach 9.8%, and the material footprint of consumption could be cut by almost half (48.2%).

This research contributed to inform the governmental implementation plan released in 2025, in relation with the planetary boundaries' framework (See Chapter 5).

2 - PROVIDING A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

The 2023–2028 Québec [Governmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#) (GSDS) was published in June 2023.³ This framework guides government action as it is meant to incorporate sustainable development (SD) into all spheres, i.e., laws, public policies and programs for accelerating the transition to a more prosperous, green and responsible Québec.⁴ The GSDS constitutes the Québec government’s response to the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also aligned with the principles of the Paris Climate Agreement and the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Accord, to which Québec is contributing.

A comprehensive consultation process by the *Bureau de coordination du développement durable* (A unit of the *Ministère de l’Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs* [MELCCFP]) was initiated as early as 2020.

Snapshot of the 2023-2028 GSDS

5 policy guidelines	5 workstream projects, one of which is “establish a circularity roadmap”
20 strategic objectives	A monitoring framework
40 secondary objectives	A performance index

[More than 110 ministries and agencies, with each producing a sustainable development action plan](#)

Source: [Québec government website](#)

While the concepts at the basis of circularity are embedded in all five orientations of the GSDS, the first orientation—*Make Québec a center of innovation and excellence in the green and responsible economy*—strongly relies on the implementation of a circular economy. Circular strategies and principles are considered the means to attain sustainability.

Additionally, the first of the five mainstream projects designed in the GSDS targets the adoption of a government roadmap to accelerate the transition to a circular economy (See Chapter 3).

The GSDS is both the foundation on which the government’s strategy for the transition to circularity is built as well as its implementation framework.

3 This strategy is regulated by the Québec Sustainable Development Act (2006)—which established the legislative framework for integrating sustainable development principles into all government policies, programs and actions in Québec, making the province one of the first jurisdictions in the world to adopt such legislation specifically targeting sustainable development.

4 <https://www.quebec.ca/en/government/policies-orientations/sustainable-development/government-strategy>

3 - ADOPTING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY ROADMAP

The long-awaited [Québec government's Circular Economy Roadmap](#) (*Feuille de route gouvernementale en économie circulaire 2024–2028* [FREC]) was published in April 2024. Elaborated by the MELCCFP in collaboration with RECYC-QUÉBEC, it meets Objective 1.1.2 of the GSDS: “Accelerate the development of the circular economy.”

Representatives of 40 ministries and agencies, as well as 63 external organizations (nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, the research community, the private sector and citizens), participated in a comprehensive consultation process.

This roadmap calls on 24 ministries and agencies to act, prioritizes five economic sectors and defines 22 objectives and 50 measures. The government states that its implementation is “a way of preserving the ecosystems that generate resources and preserve biodiversity, and a means of combating and adapting to climate change.”⁵ This reflects circularity as a meta-concept, bridging borders with key environmental and societal issues.

The overall target of the FREC is to increase the circularity rate from 3.5% (the 2018 baseline) to 5% by 2025.⁶ The objectives to reach this target are as follows:

1. Incorporate a circular approach, through cross-sectional and sectoral measures, into the industries prioritized by the government.
2. Set government levers into action for this purpose and ensure that public policies are strongly and explicitly aligned while creating new areas of action that address the challenges of the circular economy.
3. Provide the public, relevant stakeholders and decision-makers with an overview of national priorities while facilitating coordination and complementarity of interventions.

Five key economic sectors for the province were prioritized according to their potential to reduce waste and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:

- Biofood
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Energy

Québec is the first provincial government in North America with a circular roadmap.

5 *Mot du ministre*— « C'est une façon de préserver les écosystèmes qui (les) génèrent et la biodiversité, et un moyen de lutter contre les changements climatiques et de s'y adapter » (Translated by the author)

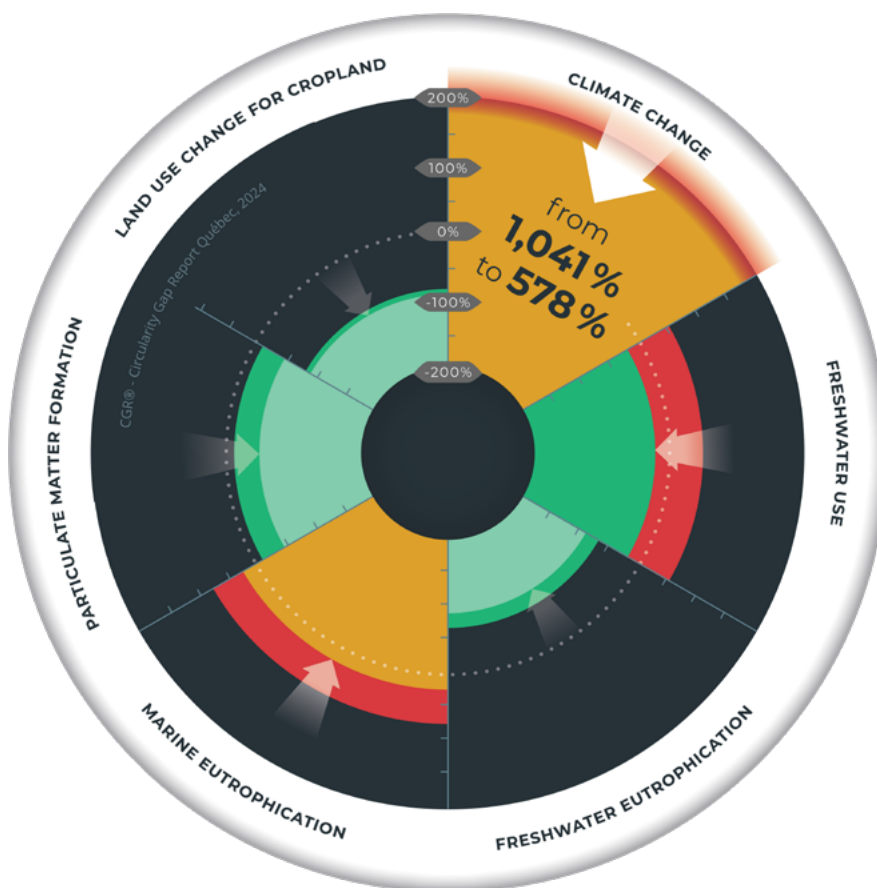
6 Publication of the result is scheduled before the end of 2025. On this basis, the target will be updated.

4 - RESPECTING PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

Building on the circularity index baseline established in 2021, [the Spotlight Chapter report](#) launched by RECYC-QUÉBEC in September 2024 provides actionable guidance using the planetary boundaries framework. The combined impact of the six scenarios identified in 2021 in the Circularity Gap Report (See Chapter 1) was measured in relation to six environmental impacts—namely, 1) climate change, 2) freshwater use, 3) land use change for cropland, 4) freshwater eutrophication, 5) marine eutrophication and 6) particulate matter formation.⁷

The reports found that Québec is currently over three of the six explored environmental impacts.⁸ The application of the six circular scenarios could lead to reducing the impacts on the boundaries, as shown below:

- **Climate change:** an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 45%
- **Marine eutrophication:** from 83% above the boundary to just 24% above it
- **Freshwater use:** from 52% above the boundary to 29% below



RECYC-QUÉBEC's [2022-2025 Strategic Plan](#) target is to increase the circularity index of the Québec economy from 3.5% in 2018, the reference year, to 5% by 2024–2025. The government agency plans to publish an update on the province's circularity rate in 2025.

The Spotlight Chapter report is meant to serve as a guide for a range of stakeholders involved in the circular transition. In particular, the report states that *policymakers can draw on the results to inform targets and specific goal setting across various impact categories, framing the circular economy as a “means to many ends” and shedding light on its efficacy beyond waste reduction.* It has been a key source of information for devising the FREC implementation plan.

⁷ These impacts draw from and adapt the planetary boundaries framework—which considers the Earth system as a whole and is not designed to be downscaled to a regional level—to tailor the analysis to Québec. Source: Executive summary of the report.

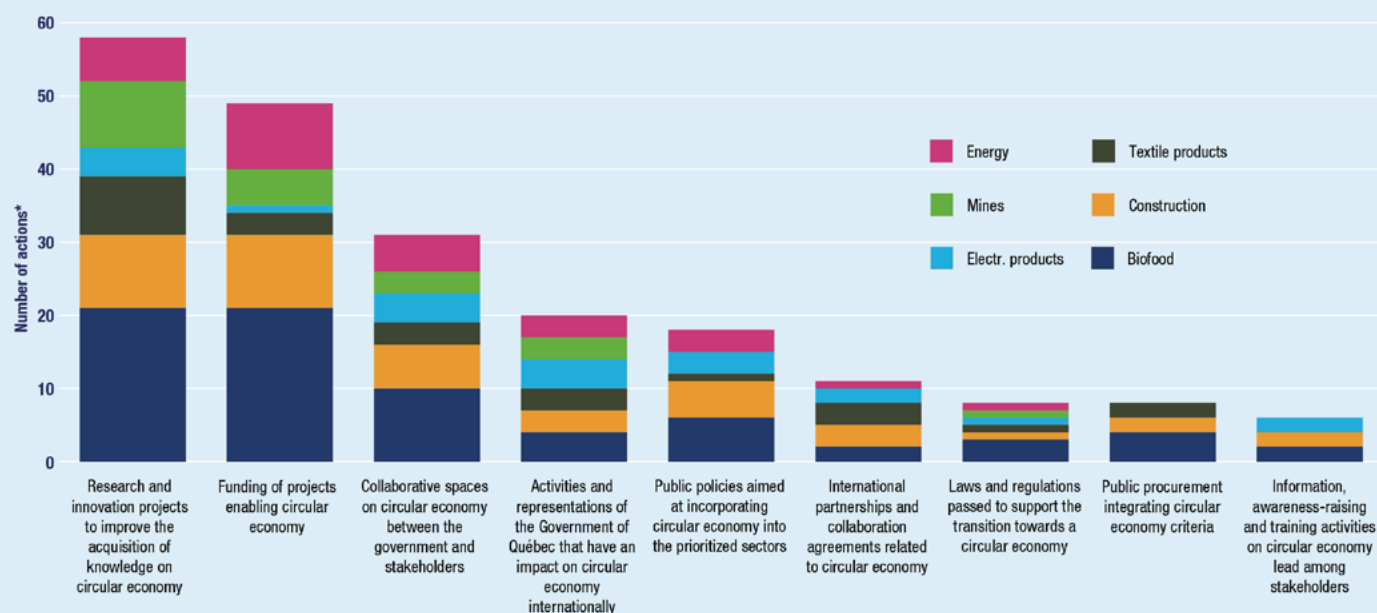
⁸ Although there are nine planetary limits identified, six have been retained and adapted for the purposes of this report, based on the best available studies and data, given that some of them do not apply to the regional context of Québec.

5 - DEVISING AN EVOLUTIVE ACTION PLAN

The FREC is to be deployed in a dynamic and evolving way through an implementation plan (*Plan de mise en oeuvre [PMO]*). The 2025–2028 Implementation Plan was released in April 2025 at the [Canadian Summit on Circular Economy](#) in Montréal. It will be monitored and coordinated by the MELCCFP and revised annually to take account of emerging issues and be based on newly available resources. Ministries and agencies will be invited to register new actions to help Québec achieve its targets. This adaptive approach is designed to provide predictability for external stakeholders as well as flexibility for government departments and agencies in this process. The MELCCFP establishes the direction and the implementation of the PMO through the mobilization of 6 sectorial tables regrouping all the 24 ministries and organizations engaged in the roadmap.

Actions are prioritized according to the key provincial economic sectors selected in the initial FREC design. In particular, the PMO includes a government procurement policy supportive of reused, repaired, reconditioned or recycled goods and materials.

ACTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVER AND PRIORITIZED SECTOR



* An action can contribute to more than one sector and lever.

Source: Summary of the Government Circular Economy Roadmap 2024–2028 and its Implementation Plan 2025–2028. Government of Québec (2025)

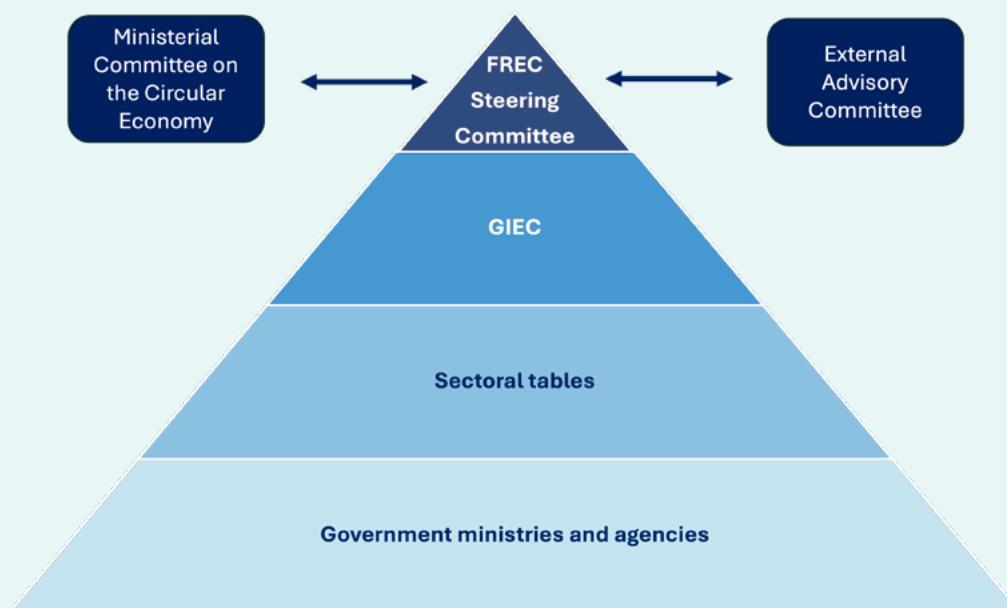
A comprehensive governmental collaborative process

Since the adoption of the FREC in 2024, activities were organized by the MELCCFP that helped shape the **first consolidated portrait of Québec's commitments** as well as an **initial financial portrait of all investments promoting the circular economy in Québec**:

- 35 bilateral workshops were held with each of the 24 ministries and organizations involved.
- Sectoral tables were organized for each economic sector, bringing together all the ministries and agencies that had identified actions. These meetings identified 571 synergies between the 21 ministries and agencies responsible for 132 sectoral or cross-sectoral actions.

Shared governance

- A steering committee composed of the MELCCFP and RECYC-QUÉBEC ensures the coordination and mobilization of ministries and organizations, as well as the monitoring of the FREC.
- The *Groupe interministériel en économie circulaire* (GIEC),⁹ cochaired by the MELCCFP and RECYC-QUÉBEC, is a lever for deploying circularity strategies as part of public policy. The GIEC is made up of professionals from some 40 ministries and agencies, including the committee's founders, ministries and organizations identified as FREC players and those that have set circular economy objectives in their sustainable development action plan. Depending on the nature of the work to be performed, the GIEC may invite managers to certain meetings for training purposes or to make decisions on strategic issues.
- The ministries and agencies concerned take part in sectoral tables associated with the economic sectors prioritized. These tables provide a forum for sharing, consultation and coordination, adapted to enhance government action in these sectors. The sector tables are responsible for monitoring and updating the FREC implementation plan.
- The 24 ministries and agencies that have made commitments under FREC have voluntarily included their actions in the implementation plan. They are invited to act in complementarity, coherence and synergy with other FREC partner ministries and organizations.



Source: Bureau du développement durable, MDDELCC, 2025 - Translated by the author

⁹ In 2017, under the leadership of the *Ministère de l'économie et de l'innovation* (MEI, formerly MESI) and RECYC-QUÉBEC, a group of representatives from 13 Government of Québec's ministries and state agencies was set up. Called the *Groupe interministériel en économie circulaire* (GIEC), the role of this group is to coordinate the efforts of the different departments of the Québec government for a more efficient implementation of the circular economy. The group's mandate is to enhance the efficiency and coherence of government initiatives, ensuring that policies and investments align with Québec's circular economy objectives.

The PMO specifies actions selected by ministries and agencies, the financial resources related to them (where applicable), external and governmental stakeholder groups and years targeted, the circular economy strategies used, the government levers mobilized and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to which the actions contribute. Monitoring and indicators are mostly defined in the framework already set forward by the GSDS and, later, the FREQ, and sectoral tables are crucial to the monitoring of the planned actions. Doing so, this first PMO educates and raises awareness on circular economy among government stakeholders.

Sustainable development officers identified in each of the 110 and more government departments and agencies under the Sustainable Development Act, as well as the GIEC members, have been instrumental in the PMO design. Although each ministry or agency may have its own internal culture, consultations have proven that once understood, the concept of circularity has the potential to be easily adopted by governmental decision-makers, as implementing a circular economy stands as a rallying point.

The portrait of the financial potential of government plans, investment tools and financial support programs aims to provide both external and governmental stakeholders with a clear vision of the tools available to support their initiatives. In this sense, the PMO 2025–2028 presents a financial potential of \$758 million to accelerate the deployment of the circular economy in Québec.¹⁰

A financial potential of
CAD \$758 million

Initially, the PMO focuses on existing circularity programs, actions and budgets to facilitate the onboarding of ministries and governmental agencies and seeks to gradually integrate circularity-related criteria into programs under development or new initiatives. The BCDD is presenting the PMO to ministries and governmental agencies to emulate further engagement and is already preparing the 2026–2028 PMO.

10 The *Plan de mise en oeuvre* (PMO) benefits from the financial commitment of the ministries and agencies within their respective envelopes. Financial support programs have been identified—some targeting the implementation of applied projects, others focusing more on research and knowledge acquisition. In both cases, sums directly or indirectly linked to the circular economy were counted as potential financial leverage. Thus, some actions are aimed exclusively at supporting circular economy projects, while others may support initiatives that contribute in a general way to one of the *Feuille de route gouvernementale en économie circulaire 2024–2028* measures, without the circular economy being specified per se. PMO 2025–2028, page 13, translated by the author.

6 - IMPLEMENTING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY POLICIES

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach in which a producer's responsibility, physical and/or financial, for a product is extended to the postconsumer stage of the product's life cycle. EPR shifts responsibility upstream in the product life cycle to the producer (i.e., brand owners, first importers or manufacturers) and away from municipalities and general taxpayers.¹¹ EPR allows for a management-by-results approach that helps promote source reduction and the ecodesign of products. The EPR approach also enables better management of the value chain and the establishment of partnerships with the stakeholders concerned.

The [2019–2024 Action Plan of Québec's Residual Materials Management Policy](#)¹² highlights the need for an EPR approach. The action plan underlines that too many residual materials are still being disposed of or simply have no specific recovery or recycling channel. The plan argues that complementary actions, targeting product design right through to end-of-life management, are therefore desirable, notably through the EPR approach. The plan embeds several circular strategies, including responsible procurement and ecodesign, and highlights the key roles of sorting centres as links in value chains and that innovative processes and modern facilities are essential to meeting industry standards and developing new markets, thereby contributing to a high-value circular economy.

Other [EPR approaches](#) have also taken place in the fields of agricultural and pharmaceutical products, among others. Efforts have focused on the selective collection and construction, renovation and demolition (CRD) waste sectors. The objective of the [plan's](#) Action 3 is to *develop new markets and diversify outlets for recovered and sorted materials by encouraging innovation and the circular economy as much as possible*,¹³ while Action 13 focuses on the consolidation of territorial symbioses.



Waste Management and Circular Economy in Québec

Since 1990, RECYC-QUÉBEC has strived to make Québec a model for innovative and sustainable waste management. Its mission is to lead Québec to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover residual materials to promote a circular economy and fight against climate change. The government corporation encourages the transition to a circular economy to preserve resources and reduce waste, providing tools, funding and expertise to municipalities, businesses and citizens.

As cochair of the GIEC, RECYC-QUÉBEC plays a prominent role in integrating government actions on circularity. Under the lead of the MELCCFP and together with other stakeholders, RECYC-QUÉBEC is also instrumental in deploying the Government Roadmap for the Circular Economy 2024–2028.

RECYC-QUÉBEC's objectives are to mobilize public and private actors, support regional and municipal circular initiatives and help position the circular economy as a key driver of Québec's sustainable development strategy. In its [2025–2028 Strategic Plan](#), RECYC-QUÉBEC vows to encourage reduction at source with the financing of a yearly total of 20 projects by 2027–2028 and to support or fund 15 research projects.

Sources: RECYC-QUÉBEC website, 2022–2025 Strategic Plan, 2025–2028 Strategic Plan

11 Environment and Climate Change Canada definition

12 *Politique Québécoise de gestion des matières résiduelles. Plan d'action 2019–2024*

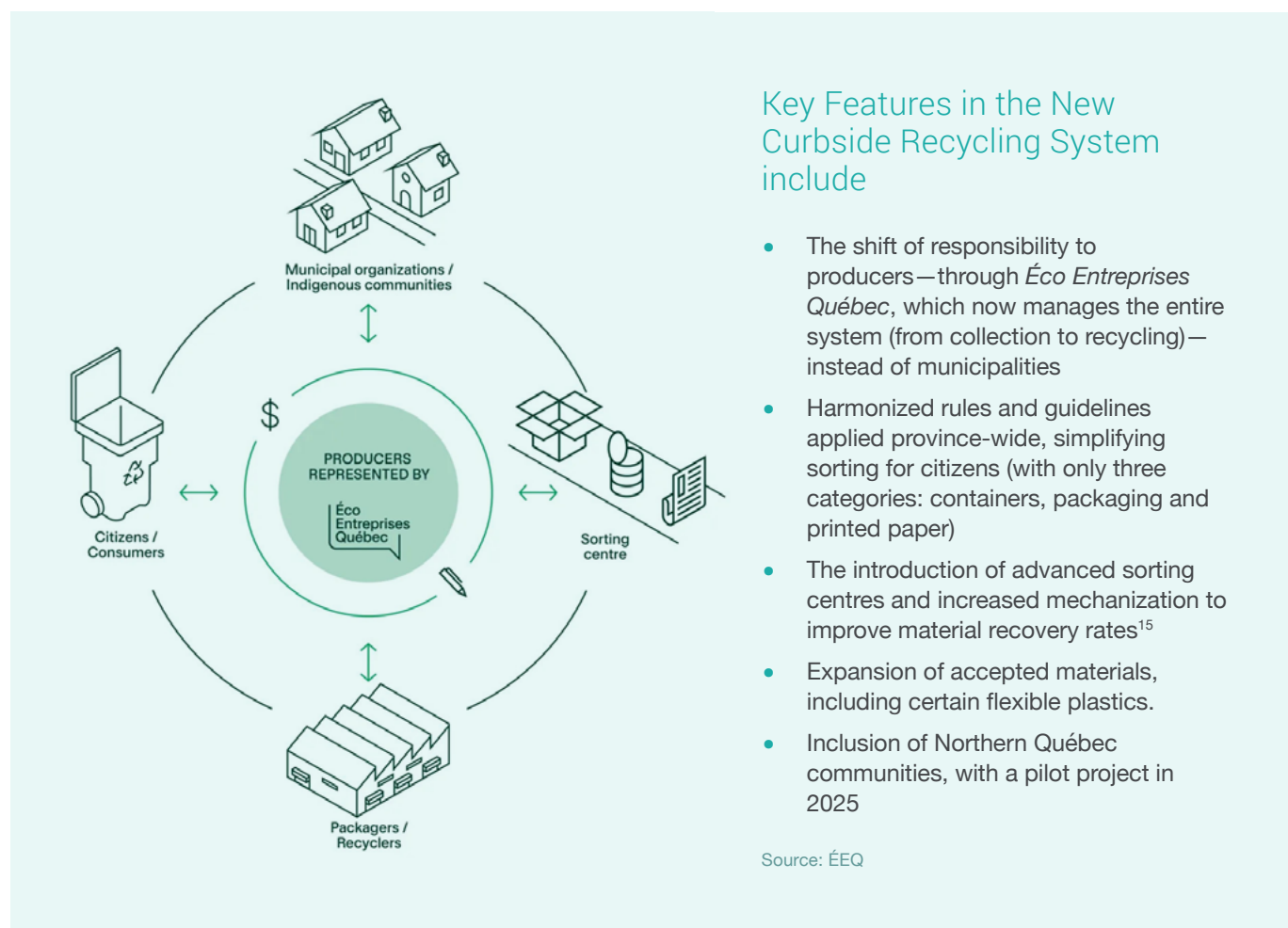
13 Translated by the author.

Modernized Curbside Recycling



A key milestone in the evolution of residual materials management in the province is the adoption of [Bill 65](#) (March 11, 2021), which defines the modalities of the new selective collection system for listed residual materials on July 7, 2022.¹⁴ *Éco Entreprises Québec* (ÉEQ) was identified as the new [producer responsibility organization for curbside recycling](#) (*organisme de gestion désigné*) for selective collection for five years.

The [modernized system](#) has been in force since January 1, 2025. It is driven by the need to improve recycling performance, reduce material contamination and harmonize collection practices across the province. One of the main objectives is to shift responsibility from municipalities to producers. This transition aims to optimize resource recovery, encourage ecodesign and meet public expectations for a more transparent and efficient recycling system.



¹⁴ [Règlement portant sur la collecte sélective de certaines matières résiduelles](#)

¹⁵ For example, Matrec-GFL's new 120,000 sq. ft. sorting centre in Montreal's East end is the most highly automated centre in the province and one of the most efficient in North America. It is designed to process 15%–20% of the province's total tonnage from curbside collection. In 2025 alone, more than 800,000 tonnes of recyclables will be recovered in Québec through curbside recycling (<https://www.eeq.ca/en/press-release/montreal-east-end-inaugurates-new-sorting-facility>). A call for proposals has been launched to build a new one in the Eastern Townships by 2027.



The government sends a strong financial signal to companies, whose contribution to financing the curbside recycling system is determined by the weight of the packaging they generate: for example, they are to pay double the rates for polyvinyl chloride and polylactic acid.

To accompany its stakeholders, ÉEQ has implemented [several tools](#), including an ecodesign guidelines handbook covering strategies and their benefits and presenting a step-by-step process for fully integrating ecodesign into projects. A recyclability guidelines

handbook has also been produced, detailing the key elements for effective packaging recyclability and optimal curbside recycling. It presents the real impact of design choices on processing and recycling equipment and technologies and offers specific guidelines for various materials (plastics, paper/cardboard, metals and glass). These tools are aligned with the Golden Design Rules of the [Canada Plastics Pact](#) (See Section 4) and various international guides, including the APR Design® Guide from the [Association of Plastic Recyclers](#). In parallel, the [deposit-refund-system](#) has also been modernized.



7 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Several milestones and great strides in the transition to circularity have been achieved in 2021–2025 in Québec at the governmental level—in particular, the FREC and its PMO, first of their kind in Canada. The policy framework includes, among others:

- The Plan for a Green Economy ([Plan pour une économie verte 2030](#)) and the [2025–2030 implementation plan](#)
- [Law 21](#), a law to protect consumers against programmed obsolescence and promote durability, reparability and maintenance of goods
- The [2022–2027 Climate Action Mobilization Strategy](#) and the Action-Climat Québec program
- The organic matter recovery strategy ([Stratégie de valorisation des matières organiques 2030](#)) as well as Bill 697 to combat food waste ([Projet de loi 697 visant à lutter contre le gaspillage alimentaire](#))

“ The government should [...] adopt a national strategic approach to the circular economy, accompanied by a legal and financial framework, which would obviously mark a break with the traditional growth economy, but which would have the advantage of helping to achieve several of its sustainable development objectives.”

L'état des lieux et la gestion des résidus ultimes, January 2022, Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement¹⁶

In terms of end-of-cycle circular strategies, the recently released 15th review of residual materials management in Québec ([Bilan de la gestion des matières résiduelles au Québec](#)) seems to indicate that the application of the 2019–2024 Action [Plan of Québec's Residual Materials Management Policy](#) brought about positive results. The report¹⁷ highlights a reduction in the amount of waste disposed of per capita in the province in 2023.

However, the current approach does not address the systemic reliance on waste and the necessary move towards more sustainable circular economic models.

- Value chains in material-intensive industries have been prioritized in many governmental and funding programs, but circular opportunities between value chains remain to be optimized.
- While prioritizing sectors engages the onboarding of many players, as the approach is incremental, quick and gains-focused, improving efficiency alone may be insufficient if the broader economic system continues to be based on wasteful practices.
- The modernized curbside recycling system is still in its infancy, and significant investment in upgrading material recovery facilities is required, ensuring all regions can meet performance targets. Clarifying which materials are accepted or excluded is also paramount for the success of the endeavour (e.g., some plastics and hazardous items remain nonrecyclable). Additionally, the transition period may be marked by adaptation challenges for businesses and citizens (costs, equipment rollout, training), as well as risks of public confusion (new bins, new instructions) that may lead to skepticism and negatively impact recovery rates.
- Decision-makers seem reluctant to promote strategies that would question the premises of the economic system in a more systematic and holistic approach.

Reconciling different time scales to implement the transition to circularity for society as a whole remains both essential and challenging: While remedying the impacts of the model that has predominated for decades is key and involves repair, reuse and recycling, it is no less vital to activate, in parallel, strategies that aim to optimize resource use and reduce waste at source, such as ecodesign and responsible sourcing. This process requires, among other things, an appropriate regulatory framework and dedicated funding.

¹⁶ Since 1978, the *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement*, an impartial government agency, has informed and consulted citizens, investigated and then advised the minister responsible for the environment on the files entrusted to it to inform government decision-making.

¹⁷ The report compiles voluntary data collected between January and December 2023 from over 900 Québec facilities involved in the waste management value chain. It also includes data from the characterization study of residual materials sent for disposal conducted in the same year.



SECTION 2

RESEARCH: A DRIVING FORCE

In the 2020–2024 period, the province’s strategy has shifted from mostly academic research and consultation to implementation. The simultaneous joint efforts to build research capacity and outreach have resulted in an increasing visibility for circular economy for organizations across sectors and regions.¹

Several collaborative initiatives have emerged, some of which are spearheaded by an open-lab research approach as well as interlinked research networks and action-research partnerships.

¹ A full chapter of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Operationalization of Sustainable Development collective book published in the spring of 2025 defines more comprehensively how the research sector contributes to the transition to circularity in the Province of Québec (<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-82896-6#toc>).

1 - A STRENGTHENED RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

Research initiatives centred on circularity accelerated in 2021. Such initiatives were largely related to the establishment of a research infrastructure in the form of key research networks and centres where inter- and transdisciplinarity are paramount.

Several new strategic research units and networks that emerged in the period are hosted at *École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS) Montréal*:



Centre for Intersectoral Studies and Research on the Circular Economy

After the EDDEC Institute's five-year financing and mandate ended in 2019,² another university-based organization took on the challenge to pursue the transition to a circular economy in Québec: the Centre for Intersectoral Studies and Research on Circular Economy (*Centre d'études et de recherches intersectorielles en économie circulaire*—CERIEC). Established in 2020 at *ÉTS Montréal*, CERIEC relies on action-research partnerships and interdisciplinarity.

CERIEC is committed to facilitating the shaping and implementation of a circular economy that maximizes the benefits for economic stakeholders, governments and civil society. Its objectives are to

- Contribute to the advancement of knowledge and increase the capacity for interdisciplinary research and innovation in solutions, business models and technologies, thus contributing to a sustainable circular economy.
- Train a highly qualified workforce capable of supporting the transition to a circular economy, both in terms of academic and external training.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with civil society stakeholders to focus research and training on their needs, in addition to guiding public policies.

Following the idea of a sector-specific living labs approach proposed by the EDDEC Institute in 2019, CERIEC built the **Circular Economy Labs Ecosystem (*Ecosystème de laboratoires d'accélération sectoriels en économie circulaire*—ELEC)** in 2021 with the financial support of Desjardins, a cooperative financial group. ELEC's aim is to increase the circularity of key industries by providing an open-ended experimentation area. ELEC has the ambition to ultimately comprise eight or nine interconnected living labs focused on key circularity sectors—for example, construction, agri-food, mines, plastics and specific strategies, such as the product-service system or the social/solidarity-based economy. (See Section 4 for past and current projects.)

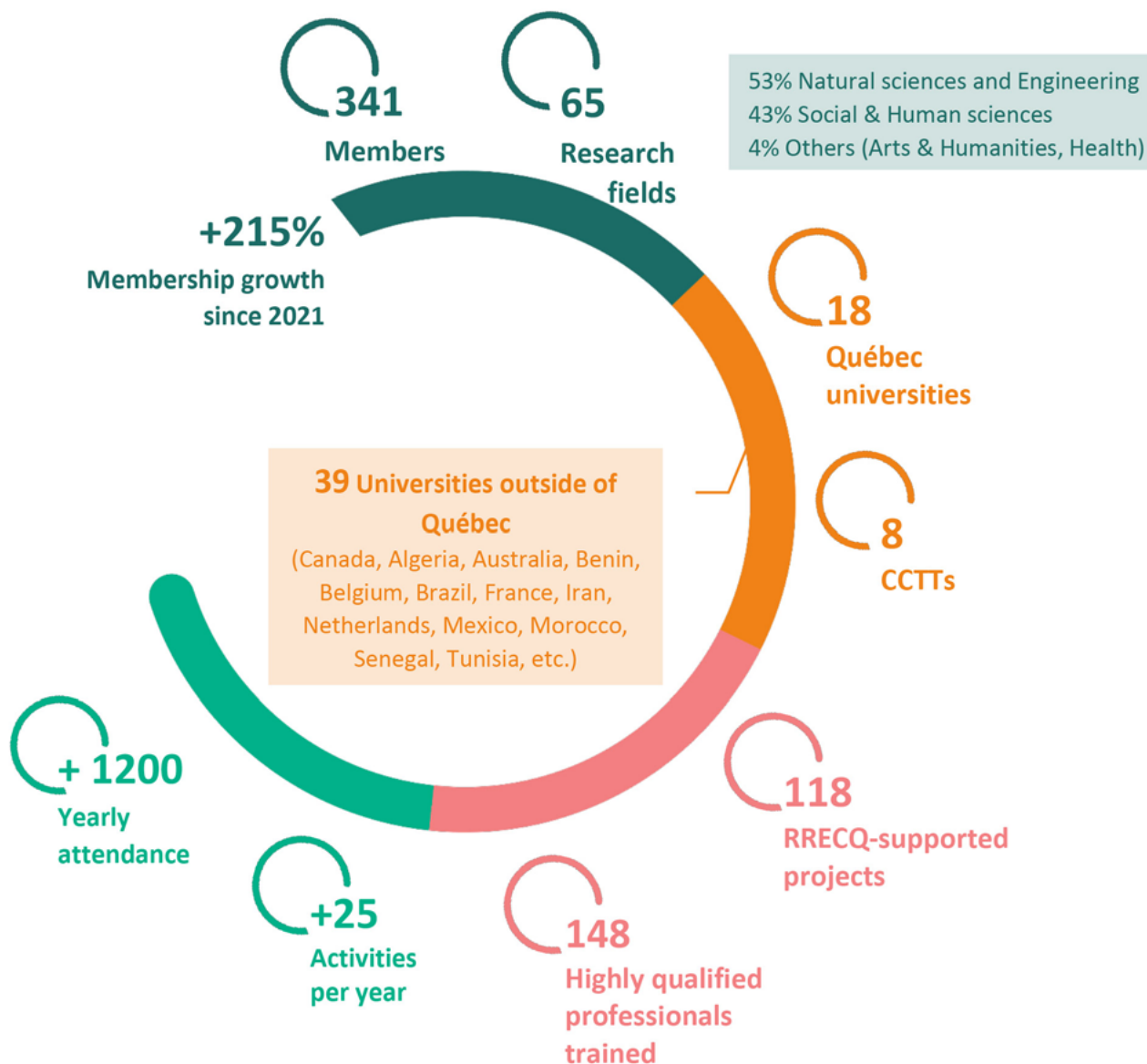
² The EDDEC Institute was created on the *Université de Montréal Campus* in 2014. This university-based organization has had a pioneering role in the deployment of a circular economy in Québec, as it helped establish a common definition and fostered interdisciplinary research that contributed to defining better the boundaries as well as the opportunities created by transitioning away from linear business models and policies.



Réseau de recherche
en économie circulaire
du Québec

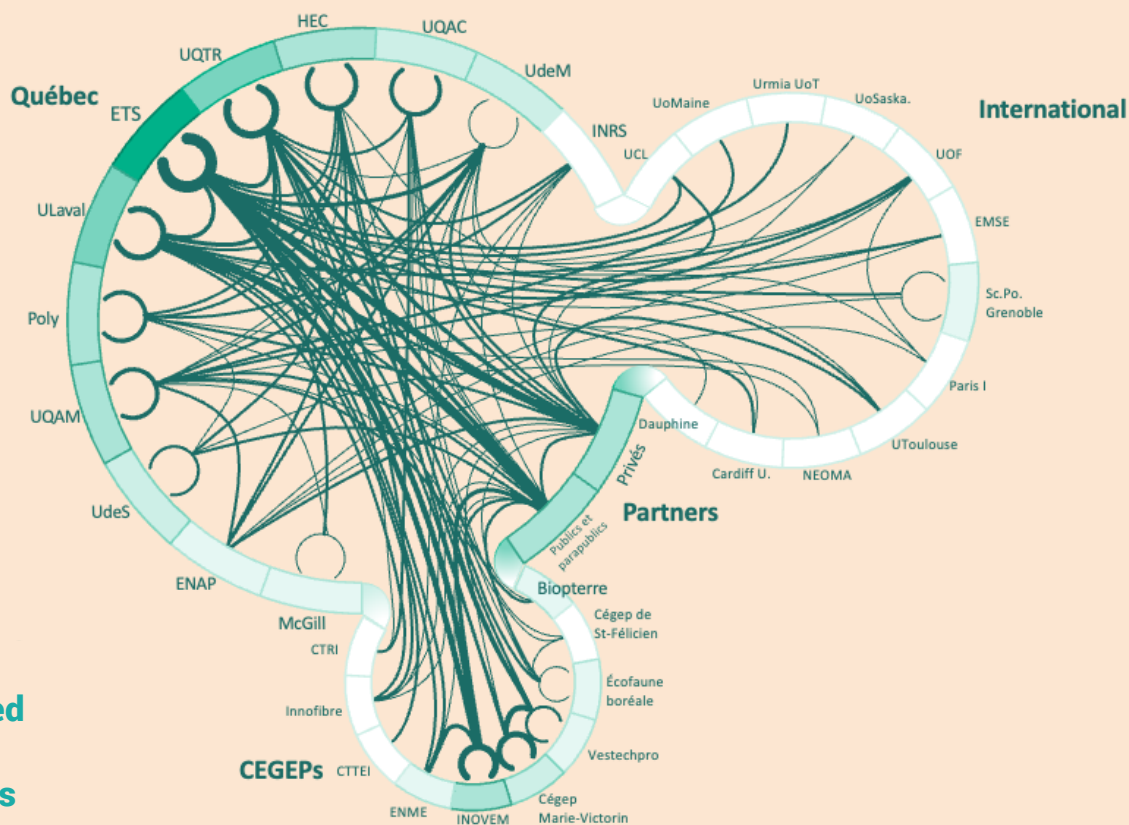
Québec Circular Economy Research Network

The Québec Circular Economy Research Network (*Réseau de recherche en économie circulaire du Québec—RRECQ*) was established in 2021 as a research network led by HEC Montréal, *ÉTS Montréal*, *Université Laval* and *Polytechnique Montréal*. Coordinated by CERIEC, the RRECQ is a network of researchers that aims to strengthen the capacity to deploy circularity strategies at the industrial and territorial levels, supported by coherent public policies, to further a sustainable societal transition.





RRECQ-funded Research Collaborations



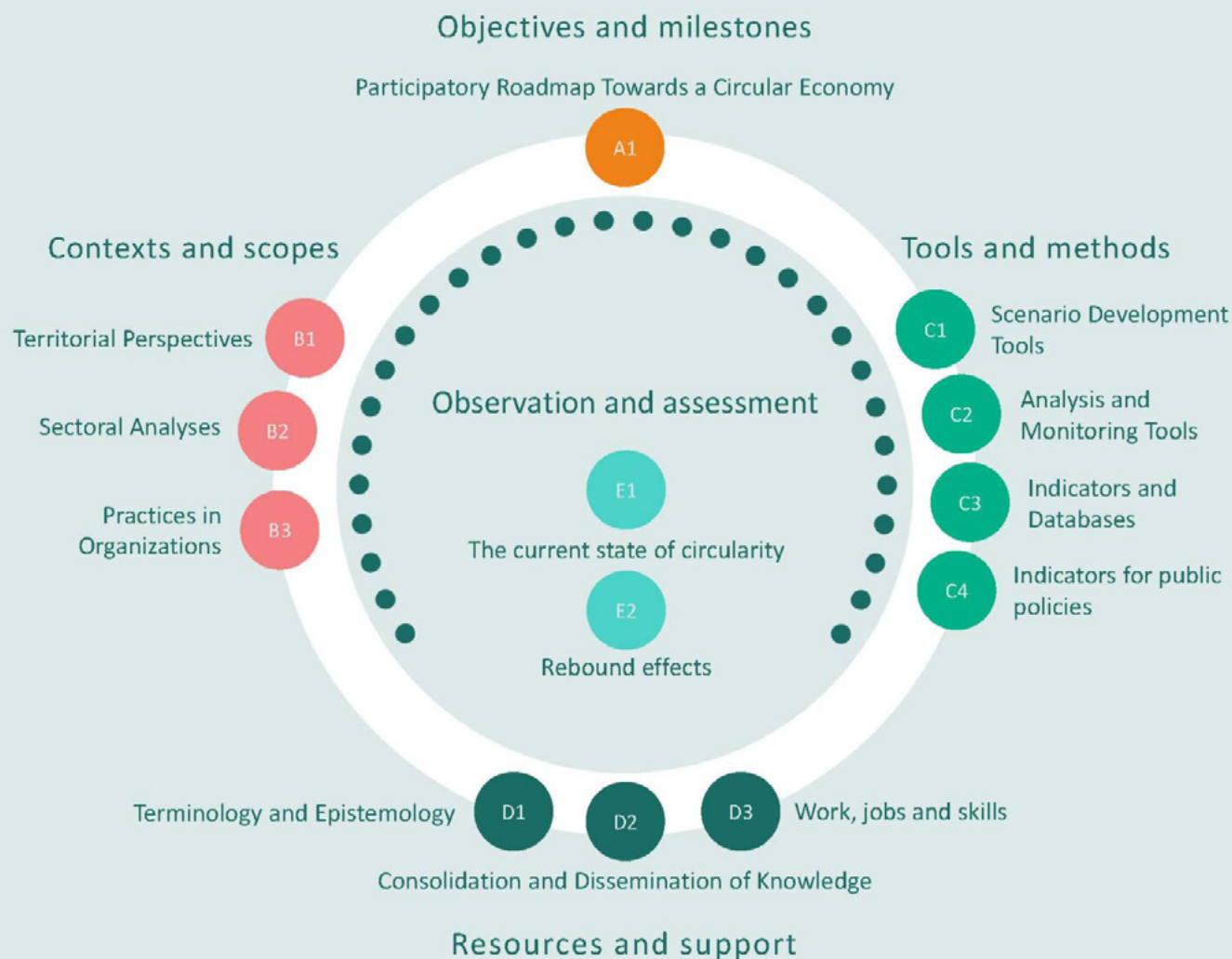
Unique to Canada and arguably the first of its kind in the world,³ the RRECQ convenes over 365 researchers (as of Fall 2025) from 32 Québec universities and CEGEPs, as well as over 40 other Canadian and international universities, from over 65 research fields. Inter- and transdisciplinarity are central to the RRECQ.

The network crystallizes the rising need for more integrated research and better-meshed initiatives and networks. The RRECQ brings together and supports interdisciplinary projects organized around four axes, each chaired and co-led by two different Québec universities:

1. **Change and transition management,**
2. **Planning optimization,**
3. **Resource and product maximization, and**
4. **Policy levers.**

3 According to the Ellen McArthur Foundation (2021)

RRECQ's Flagship Projects and Themes



Organized into five poles, 13 [flagship projects and themes](#) (*thématiques et projets structurants*—TPSs), focus on implementation in industrial sectors, territories and organizations; tools and methods to develop circularity, monitor and measure it; resources and support, which address impacts on work, employment and knowledge transfer; and the observation and evaluation of circularity, itself, and its potential rebound effects. The cross-cutting TPSs aim to offer a holistic vision of the issues at stake.

One of the key TPSs has led to the design of a participatory [Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#). Offering an integrated and long-term perspective, it acknowledges that profound societal transformations will require at least a generation. Further details are provided in Section 3 of this report.



With the mission to develop innovative solutions for the design, construction and operation of circular climate-resilient infrastructures, this new institute was created in 2022. It draws on a multidisciplinary team of hundreds of researchers from engineering, management, health, humanities, and social science fields from universities across Canada as well as collaborations with several private, public and nonprofit organizations.

**municipalités
en action**
recherche et innovation
pour des infrastructures
résilientes



AdaptT's research work is of great value for municipalities in their fight against climate change, and the institute works closely with the *Union des municipalités du Québec* (UMQ) to perform awareness-raising activities, such as the conference « *Municipalités en action: recherche et innovation pour des infrastructures résilientes*. held in October 2024.⁴

At the end of this conference, research priorities were established based on the sharing of best practices and the latest innovations, and notable positive outcomes are highlighted below:

- **The creation of a research chair—AdaptT-UMQ**, with funding over five years by ÉTS Montréal, ESG and *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM). It will be headed at UQAM by Prof. Juste Rajaonsson, also an RRECQ member
- **The funding of six projects in collaboration with several municipalities and ministries** (e.g., ÉTS Montréal, UQAM and *Polytechnique Montréal*)
- **The potential development of nine projects with municipalities and regions** (inc. Longueuil, Blainville, Pointe-Claire, Dorval and MRC de La Rivière-du-Nord)
- **The development of partnerships** with CSS Mille-Îles, CSS Trois-Lacs and the *Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal*

⁴ <https://www.newswire.ca/fr/news-releases/l-institut-adapt-sonne-l-alarme-il-est-urgent-d-adapter-les-infrastructures-municipales-aux-changements-climatiques-811286890.html>

Other research initiatives related to circular economy (CE) created in the province in the 2021–2025 period include the following:

[Chemins de Transition](#), a knowledge mobilization and transfer project launched in 2020 by the *Université de Montréal* and *Espace pour la Vie*, has developed a participatory foresight method to meet the major challenges of the socioecological transition in Québec. A circular economy emerged as an early key element common to all the trajectories drawn up for Chemin de Transition’ digital, food and territorial challenges. Circularity is also one of the major economic transformations identified in the vision and path developed to meet the challenge of living in a more sober and resilient way in the Province of Québec.

[The Mouvement Entreprises Vertes Québec \(MEVQ\)](#) is coordinated by the *Institut en environnement, développement et société* (IEDS), hosted at *Université Laval*. This mobilization and action project is based on the realities and needs of business companies based in Québec City’s industrial parks, using innovation to integrate and accelerate the business transition—in models and practices—in light of the energy transition and shift to a green economy.⁵ The MEVQ is supported by the *Ministère de l’Économie, de l’Innovation et de l’Énergie* (MEIE) and Québec City.

The MEVQ and its partners, including *Québec Net Positif*, published *Business Transition Barometer – Québec City’s Industrial Parks*⁶ in May 2025—which provides a detailed portrait of local organizations’ commitment to the energy transition and climate action and illustrates trends in terms of procurement and waste management, both key circular strategies. The report reveals that Québec City industrial parks have a stronger understanding of circularity (49%) than those located in the rest of the province.

[International Research Consortium on Life Cycle Assessment and Sustainable Transition](#): Life cycle assessments (LCAs) and measuring tools are at the core of the transition to a more circular economy. Established in 2022, the research consortium aims to guide the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. It was initiated by the International Reference Center for Life Cycle Assessment and Sustainable Transition (CIRAIG) and four universities (*Polytechnique Montréal*, UQAM, *École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne* and HES–SO Valais–Wallis of Switzerland). In all, it convenes 11 industrial and governmental partners. It performs operational and strategic research via continuous improvement and development of robust life cycle and sustainability metrics (for instance, integration of plastic emissions in LCAs) and the integration of these metrics into complex modelling frameworks to identify strategies and pathways for a sustainable transition to net zero (for instance, integrating LCAs in energy system models).

[The Critical and Strategic Minerals Scientific Network \(Réseau MCS\)](#), coordinated by the Consortium for Research and Innovation in Metal Transformation (*Consortium de recherche et d’innovation en transformation métallique – CRITM*)⁷ was launched in 2023. The creation of a scientific research network focused on critical and strategic minerals was a goal set in Objective 1.2.1 of the 2020–2025 Québec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (*Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts – MNRF*) and the MEIE leveraged their partnership with CRITM, utilizing its expertise to establish and implement this specialized research network. Of the five thematic areas identified by MCS Network professionals and specialists, circular economy is among the first.

In all, the 2021–2025 period has been a phase to consolidate the research infrastructure in and around circularity in Québec on two levels: deepening and widening research scopes. While, for example, the historically industrial ecology-centred *Centre de Transfert technologique en Écologie industrielle* (CTTÉI) has thematically expanded towards the functional economy, new research infrastructures have been established with a sector-wide or circularity tools focus. Furthermore, these new infrastructures have collaborated with existing sustainability-centred ones on common themes such as climate change and biodiversity protection.

5 As per its *Cadre conceptuel et indicateurs pour la mesure de l’économie verte (2020)*, the *Institut de la statistique du Québec* has clearly identified the implementation of circular strategies to develop a green economy.

6 Québec Net Positif (2025). *Baromètre de la transition des entreprises – Parcs industriels de Québec, pour l’Institut EDS (Université Laval), dans le cadre du Mouvement Entreprises Vertes Québec (MEVQ)*, a study by Léger.

7 Winner of a 2011 competition launched by the Québec government for the creation of new sector clusters, *Le Consortium de recherche et d’innovation en transformation métallique* (CRITM) is a sectoral industrial research group that provides strategic support and financial assistance to help businesses and research institutions launch collaborative research and development projects. CRITM has introduced a funding program—*Soutien aux innovations industrielles pour la transition vers une Économie Circulaire*, which aims to promote industrial symbiosis and support the transition to a circular economy in Québec by improving companies’ environmental performance (Translated by the author).



2 - INTERCONNECTIVITY, REGIONAL FOCUS AND PERMEABILITY

Circularity is a narrative related to the economic transition to sustainability. Echoing two founding elements of circularity—cooperation and systemic approach—the collaboration between sustainability-related research networks has drastically expanded over the studied period. In line with this, research initiatives have focused on cross-cutting themes such as socioecological transition, sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity protection and a green economy. These interconnexions contribute to the development of a more holistic socioecological transition in Québec. Finally, while historically, the *Ville de Montréal* concentrated a significant part of its research capacity on a circular economy, this theme has gradually taken root in the regions and has been embraced by both universities and CEGEP⁸ institutions locally.

In line with this, the RRECQ has partnered with several Québec-established scientific networks, such as the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Operationalization of Sustainable Development (CIRODD),⁹ IEDS (Université Laval), the Group for Research in Decision Analysis (GERAD)¹⁰ and the Québec Centre for Biodiversity Science (QCBS),¹¹ as well as internationally with Circulades–AIFREC.¹²

Another illustration of increased interconnectivity in research is the funding of 11 applied circularity-related research projects in the 2021–2025 period by the *ÉTS Montréal*–based CIRODD. This academic network, which represents 18 postsecondary institutions in Québec, focuses on the operationalization of sustainable development. Its mission is to accelerate the societal transformation to support the socioecological transition through sustainable innovation and transdisciplinarity. In spring 2025, CIRODD published, with Springer, a collaborative open-access book—[Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition](#),¹⁴ which explores the key principles and challenges linked to sustainable development (with a particular focus on Québec) and highlights some circularity approaches and strategies.

Additionally, the design of the Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050 showcases yet another successful academic partnership, between Chemins de Transition and the RRECQ, over a two-year period (see Section 3).

Stronger Territorial Roots

CEGEPs are general and vocational colleges established in all regions of the province. They are public institutions and represent the first level of higher education, dubbed postsecondary education, in Québec.

While the CTTÉI, based at CEGEP Sorel-Tracy (*Montérégie*), pioneered industrial ecology for over 25 years, in the 2021–2025 period, other CEGEPs and CEGEP-based technology transfer centres (*Centre de transfert technologique*) have also added circularity as a research theme, accelerating on-boarding by adapting to local needs.

For example, Gaspésie-based CIRADD¹³ (*CEGEP de la Gaspésie et des Îles*) has developed projects with the RRECQ, and the CEGEP of Victoriaville (*Centre-du-Québec*), with its new [Technology Access Center](#), promotes research in organic agriculture as well as the woodworking and furniture industries. Also based in Victoriaville, the [Cité de l'innovation circulaire](#) illustrates how the concepts and strategies have found ground in the region and how scientific research can also be pursued in local CEGEPs and cities.

8 CEGEP is a French acronym that stands for *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*.

9 CIRODD, *École de technologie supérieure Montréal*

10 *Groupe d'études et de recherche en analyse des décisions*, GERAD

11 Québec Centre for Biodiversity Science (QCBS) - *Centre de la science de la biodiversité du Québec* (CSBQ)

12 *Association Interdisciplinaire Française pour la Recherche en Économie Circulaire* (France) AIFREC

13 The *Centre d'initiation à la recherche et d'aide au développement durable* (CIRADD) is a specialized research center for sustainable development affiliated with the *Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles*. It is part of the [Synchronex](#) network.

14 *Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition: Strategies and Innovations for Sustainable Development*. In: Cheriet, M., Boucher, J. F., Gondim de Almeida Guimarães, L., Frayret, J. M. (eds) *Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition*. Springer, Cham



Connecting Circularity with Climate Change and Biodiversity

International organizations and reports, such as those from the United Nations, the World Resources Institute, and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, emphasize the significant potential of a circular economy to address climate change by potentially reducing global GHG emissions by up to 39%.¹⁵ In Québec, this vision is gaining traction—with initiatives such as [Québec ZÉN's 2019 roadmap to carbon neutrality](#) and government-backed research, such as RECYC-QUÉBEC's studies, which advocate for the adoption of circularity indicators and strategies in policy and industry. These efforts highlight a growing recognition of the connection between circular practices and effective climate change mitigation and adaptation. RECYC-QUÉBEC, in partnership with the RRECQ, is currently funding a research project to assess the potential of CE for reducing GHG emissions in Québec.

The circular economy is also increasingly recognized for its potential to address biodiversity loss, as highlighted during the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference COP15 in Montréal. Sessions at the conference underscored that over 90% of biodiversity loss stems from resource extraction and processing, making circular transition crucial for conservation and restoration. In line with this, partnerships such as the one between the RRECQ and QCBS aim to develop frameworks that integrate circular economy principles with biodiversity conservation, hopefully signalling an increase in research and investment in this area in the future.

The impact of the circular economy on biodiversity: Towards an integrated approach to support decision-making¹⁶

Objective:

The collaborative research project aims to formalize the links between CE strategies and biodiversity preservation issues.

Partners:

The RRECQ, [QCBS](#), [Société pour la nature et les parcs](#) (SNAP Québec) and [Biodiversité Québec](#), with the support of the MELCCFP.

Duration:

3 years (2024–2027)

Summary:

The research is organized around four main strands:

1. Perform a literature review on the relationship between CE strategies and biodiversity.
2. Develop a conceptual framework aimed at identifying the main levers of action for the CE to reduce pressures on biodiversity.
3. Conduct case studies on sectors identified for their high impact on biodiversity and their potential for improvement through circular practices.
4. Develop decision-making tools to guide circular policies and practices that enhance biodiversity protection.

As of June 2025, the conceptual framework, developed based on the partners' work, is currently in the consolidation stage. This process is initially based on the results of the literature review, currently being finalized. The case studies will be used to validate the conceptual framework and strengthen the decision-making process, in particular by identifying the issues involved in accessing sectoral data.

¹⁵ Circle Economy's Circularity Gap Report 2021, "Circular economy strategies have the potential to slash global greenhouse gas emissions by 39%."

¹⁶ [L'impact de l'économie circulaire sur la préservation de la biodiversité: Vers une approche intégrée pour soutenir la prise de décisions](#)



3 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Overall, Québec's efforts in circular economy research and implementation are progressively driving systemic change towards sustainability at industrial and societal levels.

The period 2021–2025 has been a stage for consolidation of the research infrastructure centred on circularity in the province. While new research infrastructures have been established, they have collaborated with existing sustainability-centred ones on common themes, contributing to the mobilization around the umbrella concept of a “circular economy” that contributes to the socioecological transition towards a sustainable development and enables climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as biodiversity protection. The interconnection between research networks and institutions, and the numerous bridges established with field stakeholders, in municipalities and varied organizations alike compose the glue that makes it all stick.

As this manifest transition requires profound, systemic and inclusive transformations, it would be crucial to finance and strengthen existing networks and foster the research-action focus while considering the establishment of more specialized research infrastructures to meet challenges, innovate, anticipate impacts and propose solutions more adapted to local needs and realities. Implementing [intervention research](#)¹⁷ approaches as a complement to sector-wide initiatives may present opportunities for local on-boarding, as it has in the *Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean* region with efforts spearheaded by the *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi*. This may help ensure that future transformations are based on sound science and a deep understanding of local needs.

While the networks' collaborative work increasingly aims to bridge science and application, the research community should also reflect on and discuss circularity as opposed to other transition perspectives, such as degrowth and sobriety. The community should also critically reflect on the accomplishments, the limitations, and the road ahead for what a sustainable Québec would be like.

The circularity research ecosystem in Québec has a duty to propagate its learnings with colleagues and organizations in other Canadian provinces and territories, as well as learn from them. Circularity cannot be achieved in autarky in Québec; it must be achieved in cooperation with the rest of the country. The construction sector is an example of how Québec-developed knowledge percolates into other provinces (see Section 4). Among other things, to encourage transition by stakeholders in the field, researchers must contribute to the harmonization of policies and regulations to promote the circular economy and circulate resources.

Some researchers have underlined the necessity of recognizing and valuing research in all its diversity. While applied research is essential, it may be misleading to focus solely on coconstruction, as researchers also need to build fundamental, methodological and conceptual research before they can coconstruct. Research must continue to question development paradigms to better serve to operationalize interventions, stimulate innovation and support stakeholders.

17 In Abstract. Intervention research “implies active and prior involvement of research teams in transition initiatives, with the explicit intention of social transformation. It entails the diversification of roles for researchers toward facilitation, management, and mobilization.” Riffon, O., Tremblay, S. (2025). Intervention-Research as a Social-Ecological Transition Belt, Steering Wheel, and Engine. In: Cheriet, M., Boucher, J. F., Gondim de Almeida Guimarães, L., Frayret, J. M. (eds) Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition. Springer, Cham.



SECTION 3

A TRANSITION LED BY MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS

“By 2050, the global population is estimated to reach 9 billion people, 55% of which will be living in cities. The pressure on natural resources will increase, while new infrastructure, services and housing will be needed. Already, cities represent almost two-thirds of global energy demand, produce up to 50% of solid waste and are responsible for 70% of greenhouse gas emissions. It is estimated that globally by 2050, the levels of municipal solid waste will double”

—Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#))

Circularity aims to create the shortest possible loops to optimize gains—this rationale supports the implementation of initiatives at the local level. As cities, *municipalités régionales de comté* (MRCs) and regions are responsible for local public services (such as transport, solid waste, water and energy) that affect citizens’ well-being, economic growth and environmental quality, their role is paramount in the transition to circularity.



Source: OECD.¹ The governance of the circular economy in cities and regions: A checklist for action.

In its 2020 report¹, the OECD suggests cities and regions act simultaneously as *promoters*, *facilitators* and *enablers* of the circular economy in a shared responsibility with national governments and stakeholders. While the OECD proposes a graphical representation of the often overlapping roles and responsibilities of local actors, it has also developed a [checklist for action](#).

In Québec, as in the rest of Canada, several cities and territories are actively involved in the transition to a more circular economy (CE)—as evidenced by the growing number of initiatives, the main ones of which are presented in this section.

¹ OECD (2020). *The Circular Economy in Cities and Regions: Synthesis Report*, OECD Urban Studies. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/10ac6ae4-en>



1 - LOCAL TRANSITION IN CANADA: CONTEXT

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), with its [Green Municipal Fund](#), initially played a key role in funding local initiatives towards sustainable development. While distinctive initiatives may have sprung locally beforehand, *local authorities' adoption of a Circular Economy Roadmap (CER) dates back 2018, when the Recycling Council of Alberta launched an innovative initiative involving the cities of Banff, Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge as well as Strathcona County.*²

Created in 2021, the [Canadian Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) (CCRI) built upon this pioneering program. A collaboration between the [National Zero Waste Council](#), the FCM, the [Recycling Council of Alberta](#), and [RECYC-QUÉBEC](#), it aims to strengthen circular economy knowledge and capacity within Canada's local government sector and assist municipalities in formulating their CERs. The CCRI hosts a national webinar series on innovative strategies and provides direct support, expert guidance and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning to help communities advance their circular economy efforts. While the inaugural cohort of this program included 15 diverse cities and regions, the CCRI has led a nationwide conversation on best practices and driven measurable progress in 25 local governments with a wide variety of contexts.

Worldwide, while initially, CERs often adopted approaches that targeted a restricted number of sectors and industry-specific challenges, the “growing recognition and public policy adoption of CE principles” led more recently to a more systemic approach with a broader scope.²

A 2024 Québec researcher-led [study](#)²—“Exploring Circular Economy Transition Pathways: A Roadmap Analysis of 15 Canadian Local Governments”—highlights how the 15 Canadian local governments of various sizes and contexts that formed the first CCRI cohort are transitioning to a circular economy by analyzing their roadmap currently in development.²

1.1 Onboarding the Circular Transition

Change is often spearheaded by motivated individuals. That 2024² study emphasizes, “While local physical and socioeconomic attributes typically shape the roadmaps by determining likely activities, their actual trajectory varies based on the roadmap instigators and the broader institutional contexts in which they operate.”

Instigators are central to CERs' pathways and ambitions, ensuring the roadmap is rooted in the specific context of each locality and fostering collaborations across traditional boundaries. Change agents, also increasingly called institutional entrepreneurs, are the individual actors or organizations that drive change. While their vision, influence and actions are crucial in making theoretical aspects of sustainability more tangible and impactful, their efforts ensure that transition pathways extend beyond mere roadmap elaboration, engaging with other local and national policies to address emerging sustainability challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, they are challenging existing silos that are often seen between a municipality's divisions and creating new pathways for implementing CE practices.²

² Rajaonson, J. & Chembessi, C. Exploring circular economy transition pathways: A roadmap analysis of 15 Canadian local governments. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/rsae015>. The research was supported by RRECQ and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (430-2022-01038) as part of the project on Circular Cities and the Differentiated Potential of Cities in Circular Economy.



Exploring Circular Economy Transition Pathways: Some Key Take-Aways

The 2024 study² underlines that in Canada, instigators' unique expertise, networks, resources and motivations greatly impact the focus and ambition of CERs as well as their scope beyond local resources, boundaries or economic activities:

1. Strategically expanding CERs beyond local physical attributes can foster diversified economic activities for greater sustainability, as it may unlock new opportunities for effectively addressing both local and broader circularity challenges.
2. Supporting instigators is essential—especially in municipal organizations with limited sustainability expertise, as their roles include education, CE promotion and network building. Support plays a key role in shaping how ambitious and effective the roadmap will be.
3. Aligning CERs with broader provincial or national objectives can be advantageous for securing governmental support, although it may involve an initial focus on either environmental or economic goals.

Within local governments and municipalities, CERs are often piloted by the economic development, environmental/waste management departments or central municipal services. The support programs to which localities have access may inform the path taken initially (e.g., zero-waste program, regional development program, GHG (Green House Gases) reduction program).²

A clear focus of the [Feuille de route gouvernementale en économie circulaire 2024-2028](#), public procurement as a circular strategy is also gaining traction among local governments. As defined by the European Commission, circular procurement is “the process by which public authorities purchase works, goods or services that seek to contribute to closed energy and material loops within supply chains, whilst minimizing, and in the best case avoiding, negative environmental impacts and waste creation across their whole life cycle.” In its 2017 [Public Procurement for a Circular Economy brochure](#), the European Commission proposes circular procurement models at three levels: system, supplier or product.

The more recent focus on local government is illustrated, for example, with the 2023 Ellen MacArthur Foundation's [overarching framework for cities and a public procurement guide](#) to adapt to their local context. The organization shares its lessons learned and provides snapshots through case studies.

1.2 Implementation Challenges

The ambition and scope of CERs—and, in general, onboarding circular initiatives, whatever form they may take—are highly variable, as they strongly depend on the following:

- The level of circular or sustainability knowledge of elected officials and staff
- The size of the teams and available budgets
- The proximity of elected officials with their economic ecosystem
- The local challenges and realities that shape the priorities in plans
- Existing infrastructures and access to material resources
- The diversity and dynamism of the local economic ecosystem and its sometimes-diverging motivations



In the implementation of local CERs, enablers (catalysts), promoters and facilitators face four main circular economy challenges—*feasibility*, *profitability*, *desirability* and *governance*—that could unintentionally hinder circular goals while potentially exacerbating existing issues or creating new problems.³

Lessons Learned

Regarding CER implementation, while identifying the *strategic traps* for each challenge and actor, the 2024 [Québec researcher-led study](#),³ analyzing both Canadian and international data, concludes that stakeholders should, among other things:

- Recognize unique local specificities, as each municipality has its own interdependent social, economic and environmental dynamics.
- Value the CE in a balanced manner for different groups and encourage diverse circular economy solutions, avoiding a too-narrow focus on specific sectors and resisting pressures from industrial interests.
- Diversify the sources of funding and facilitate access to funds for various actors, including those outside the priority sectors and industries.
- Be prepared to abandon projects that do not yield the expected results.
- Adopt a data-driven approach while avoiding information overload.
- Communicate effectively and transparently, avoiding excessive politicization.
- Consider planning from a regional perspective that extends beyond the jurisdictional and administrative boundaries, thus fostering the necessary yet measured cooperation and knowledge sharing with other local governments and communities to avoid duplication and unnecessary competition.

Concertation and Collaboration Are Key to Successful Implementation

Collaboration between regions and cities in Québec appears to be a crucial factor in the long-term success and viability of local initiatives. The importance of being grounded in the needs of the field to ensure that initiatives respond to local challenges needs no longer be proved: Collaboration, cocreation and systemic approaches are key principles in the implementation of circularity. Québécois have a long history and culture of collaboration, and this is reflected in the recent effervescence, as many projects initiated in the province over the 2021-2025 period increasingly featured multistakeholder dialogue and endeavours.

However, interconnectivity between the province's regions could be improved to avoid working in silos and enable local initiatives to benefit from knowledge sharing. There also seems to be a growing need locally for consultative bodies. Historically, the Regional Concertation and Development Bodies (*Conseils régionaux de concertation et de développement*)—nonprofit organizations set up in the 1970s—have helped promote cooperation and development in Québec's regions, bringing together local authorities, unions and employers with ministry representatives. The organizations were replaced in 2004 by the Municipalities-Led Consultation Bodies (*Conférences régionales des élus*), which has now been abolished. While bottom-up initiatives such as the *Table sur le développement local et régional de la FQM*⁴ and other local forums are useful, the current absence of established regional consultation bodies that bring together all local stakeholders' representatives may undermine the ability of players to develop economic strategies adjusted to the implementation of circularity. As the 2025–2029 Government Land-Use Strategy (*Stratégie gouvernementale pour assurer l'occupation et la vitalité des territoires*) considers local needs and climate change, sustainability and circularity intentions identified by all local governmental bodies' representatives, a step may be taken in that direction.

3 Lacombe, V., & Rajaonson, J. (2024). "Understanding and avoiding strategic traps in circular economy transition for cities." In *Regions, Cities and the Circular Economy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035316410_00015

4 This is a forum for consultation and the sharing of expertise created by the FQM in collaboration with the *Association des directeurs généraux des MRC du Québec*. Its aim is to put MRC development services at the heart of local development initiatives.



1.3 Measuring Circularity

The need for frameworks that allow policy-makers, as well as *promoters*, *facilitators* and *enablers*, to measure the implementation and impacts of the transition to circularity is paramount. Having clear multidimensional measurements—incorporating social, economic and environmental aspects—is key to not only raising awareness and showcasing circularity to foster action among decision-makers but also monitoring performance and evaluating results. Evidence of return on efforts and investments is necessary to motivate organizations and companies to join in the field.

Over the last decade, several initiatives have developed sets of indicators. The [OECD Inventory of Circular Economy Indicators](#) collected 474 CE indicators in the 2018–2020 period in the fields of economy and business, environment, governance, jobs, and infrastructure and technology. Unsurprisingly, environmental indicators prevail (39%).

In these still relatively early stages of the transition, local initiatives aimed at measuring circularity efforts may need to draw on existing recognized methods, such as the [Circle Economy methodology](#). Over time, governments, regions and municipalities may adapt their own indicators to interpret data while avoiding the multiplication of indicators, certifications and labels that cannot be compared. The recent ISO 59000:2024 standards series could also inform these efforts at both the provincial and federal levels, particularly with regard to its future extensions on measurement and evaluation, in an effort to increase coherence both nationally and internationally.



2 - GOVERNING CIRCULARITY LOCALLY

Regions and municipalities in Québec have proven to be a fertile ground for circularity advances. Circularity has become a territorial matter, a logical evolution to encourage shorter circular loops. Concrete action on the ground has now become a fundamental necessity.

2.1 Provincial Government

Several ministries and government agencies devise how local development can be handled and financed. Among them, the MEIE, MELCCFP and *Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation* (MAMH) play key roles.

The first action in the MAMH [2023–2028 Sustainable Development Action Plan](#) is to *participate in the development of the circular economy*. The MAMH's main objective is to provide the normative frameworks of its financial assistance programs with criteria and rules that will contribute to CE development. The integration of criteria, some of which relate to the pooling of equipment, services or infrastructure; the sharing economy; or the economy of functionality, will be used to analyze and recommend project funding or to propose different possible modulations of, for example, municipal construction sites and water resources in the province of Québec.

At the time of writing its Sustainable Development Action Plan, no measurable circular economy initiative had been identified in the rules and standards of MAMH financial assistance programs. Program revisions are envisioned, and criteria should be considered when developing new programs.

Among the important financing programs for regions and local governments, the [Fonds régions et ruralité](#) fosters the implementation of circularity, particularly in its Component 1—Support for Regional Outreach. The fund boasts CAD \$44 million annually to promote regional occupancy and vitality by supporting development initiatives with a regional reach and a focus on innovation through sectoral development agreements.

In its 25 years of existence, [FCM's Green Municipal Fund](#) has largely contributed to integrating sustainable development and circularity in municipalities of various sizes in Québec, with the most recent project being led by smaller rural local governments (e.g., in Saint-Valérien [Bas Saint-Laurent region] and Adstock [Chaudière-Appalaches region]).

Other financial opportunities available to municipalities for the socioecological transition can be searched online in the [Agora](#) database.

2.2 Onboarding

Among the tools available to local governments to regulate economic sectors by reducing their environmental footprint are eco-fiscal measures and regulatory levers, with varying degrees of coercion.

Ruling Out Waste

In the Lanaudière region, the municipalities of Prévost, Terrebonne and Mascouche have implemented regulatory and financial levers to reduce the number of containers, shopping bags and single-use items distributed in their territories.

Prévost

Circular strategies: Waste reduction at the source, reuse, recovery and reclaiming

Tools and levers

- **Eco-tax on single-use containers:** Introduced in 2022 and applicable to single-use containers (water bottles, windshield washer fluid jugs, paper cups, etc.). Ranging from \$0.10 to \$0.50, depending on the product, it is designed to encourage citizens [to reduce their consumption of these disposable items](#).⁵
- **Responsible Consumption Fund:** Financed by the eco-tax. It aims to promote and finance programs that encourage waste reduction at source, as well as the reuse, recovery and reclamation of residual materials. It also covers a portion of municipal waste management expenses.
- **Reusable container service:** Introduced in October 2024 and entirely financed by the Responsible Consumption Fund. Prévost is the first town in the province of Québec to offer a reusable container service in participating businesses and restaurants, in partnership with [BO Reusable Packaging](#). This system aims to reduce waste production by [replacing single-use containers with reusable dishes](#). Customers pay a CAD\$2 deposit, which is refunded when the containers are returned to drop-off points.⁶

Terrebonne and Mascouche

Circular strategies: Waste reduction at the source and reuse

Tools and levers

- **Joint bylaw:** Adopted in the fall of 2022 and applied since the spring of 2023, the [Règlement 868](#) in Terrebonne and [Règlement 1308](#) in Mascouche both prohibit the distribution of several single-use plastic items, including shopping bags, disposable tableware (inc. compostable and Styrofoam plastics), packaging bags, utensils, straws, stir sticks, food containers and plastic food sheets. It also requires the mandatory use of reusable tableware for on-site consumption and forces businesses to accept reusable containers brought in by customers. Finally, in food stores, it promotes the availability of reusable packaging bags in fruit and vegetable sections while limiting the distribution of single-use packaging bags to checkouts and meat sections only.
- **Financial levers:** Financial support is available to businesses for their transition to sustainable practices that comply with the bylaw and can serve for the purchase, installation or repair of equipment or items to reduce or replace single-use items (e.g., reusable dishes, dishwashers, reusable containers). Fines up to CAD \$1,000 are levied on offenders, and an [eco-tax](#) is added to the cost of some single-used products in Terrebonne.
- **Communication and awareness-raising:** The nonprofit [Jour de la Terre Canada](#) was mandated to support nearly 400 businesses in their ecological transition by raising awareness of the impact of single-use items and guiding them towards sustainable alternatives prior to the implementation of the bylaw.

The two municipalities, Terrebonne and Mascouche, have also developed an information website, [non-merci.ca](#), that presents the bylaw, statistics and alternative solutions to encourage citizens to change their consumption habits. A [communication toolkit](#), including a guide, has also been developed to support merchants for point-of-sale or social media postings and made available on the municipality website of Terrebonne.

⁵ <https://www.Québeccirculaire.org/initiative/h/projet-de-plats-reutilisables-et-consignes-dans-les-commerces-alimentaires-prevostois.html>

⁶ <https://www.journalaccés.ca/actualite/prevost-implante-une-redevance-sur-les-contenants-a-usage-unique/>. Translated by the author



With over 1,100 municipalities in the province of Québec—as compared to 444 only in Ontario for example—and some MRCs representing each (as few as two up to as many as 24 municipalities⁷)—steep differences in budget availability exist, explaining in part how onboarding to the circular transition may greatly vary between regions and between municipalities.

Strategies such as mutualization and local sourcing are popular among the smaller municipalities with lower financial means. Efforts should be directed towards mapping local services and producers and making them better known so as to facilitate, for example, joint procurement. With that in mind, and with over 360 member municipalities, the nonprofit association [Union des municipalités du Québec](#) (UMQ) closely monitors the collective local needs to expand its offering to its members to possibly include a grouped procurement consultation service. Some municipalities, such as the [Communauté métropolitaine de Québec](#) (CMQ), have noted a stronger interest since 2024, with a move towards more federated long-term work rather than ad hoc initiatives as well as the development of large-scale projects, such as the pooling of space and transport. The CMQ has also experienced somewhat of a shift of focus from end-of-cycle strategies to those aimed more at reduction.

In its [2020 report](#) synthesizing the conclusions of a three-day workshop on circular economy and sustainable development options for Québec Governmental Sustainable Development Strategy, the [Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations](#) (CIRANO) recommends that public authorities, including municipal authorities, review their political and legal frameworks to ensure that they modify regulations, policies and legislation that hinder the circular economy or favour the linear economy (e.g., procurement policies that favour the lowest bidder). Regulatory measures should establish the standards to be met and attach penalties for noncompliance.

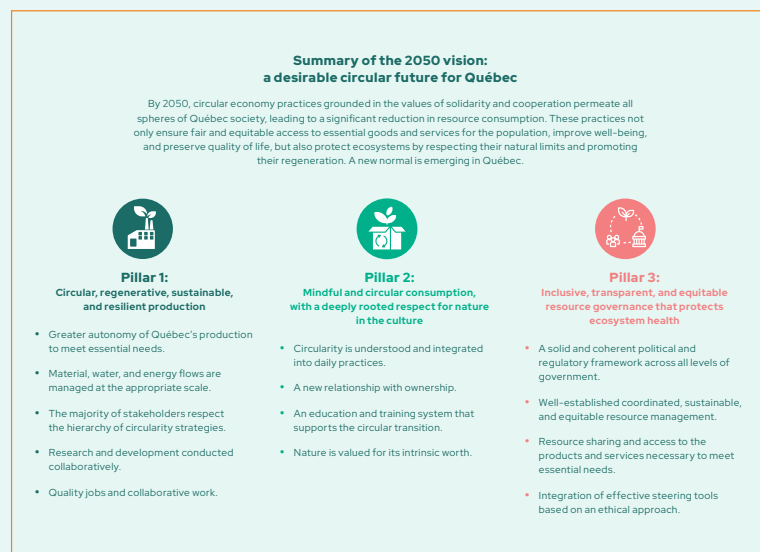
“The relationship between the MRCs and the cities and towns in Québec is unique in the Canadian context. While other regions and municipalities work together across Canada, there is a much deeper and more frequently found connection between the regional governments and local governments, and that fosters a more holistic approach to circularity in the province.”

Corey Pembleton, Advisor, Capacity Development | Green Municipal Fund

⁷ L'organisation municipale au Québec en 2024. Portrait des MRC (2022).
https://www.cmq.gouv.qc.ca/contentFiles/files/Verif/A14389_CMQ_Portrait-des-MRC_EPF-Acc.pdf

RRECQ's 2050 Roadmap for the Province of Québec

The [Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#) proposed by the RRECQ offers [a long-term vision for Québec](#)—looking ahead to 2050, by which time the province would have successfully transitioned to a circular economy. This vision provides the starting point for mapping out the trajectory of transformations to be executed step by step across the entire socioeconomic system.



This [roadmap](#) serves as a key tool for steering deep transformations that can adapt to evolving contexts and standards (e.g., the ISO 59000 series) on circularity. While there is no single possible path, successful implementation will highly depend on organized and collaborative efforts between the government and public bodies, as well as stakeholders from various sectors: finance and insurance, business and labour, education and research, community and civil society, and territorial organizations.

Source: [RRECQ. Roadmap for Québec Society's Transition to a Circular Economy \(2025–2050\)](#)

As the bearer of the Government Circular Economy Roadmap (FREC) 2024–2028, the MELCCFP's Sustainable Development Coordination Office saw its participation as an opportunity to coordinate government work with the research ecosystem and stakeholders in the field. It was essential for us to take part in this enriching co-constructive process to plan an ambitious long-term trajectory that will accelerate the circularity of our economy. It is by working together that we have the power to change things—Sabrina Cholette, Circular Economy Advisor, BCDD (MELCCFP)

A forward-looking (prospective) diagnosis and four narratives of possible future scenarios have fuelled the reflection on a desirable circular future. The development process, supported by the foresight methodology of *Chemins de Transition (Université de Montréal)*, involved more than 330 individuals from various sectors and regions of Québec.

A total of 67 milestones have been identified to connect the current situation to the desired future, of which 10 play a strategic role in initiating this transition:

1. Adoption of circularity strategies
2. Cutting-edge research infrastructure in the circular economy
3. Tools for monitoring resource flows and the capacity of ecosystems
4. Provincial dashboard of indicators
5. Collective prioritization of resources
6. Circular public procurement
7. Transparency requirement for environmental impact and circularity
8. Legislative and regulatory strengthening
9. Safety nets for access to essential goods and services
10. Harmonized territorial circular economy plans

2.3 A Structuring Ecosystem: Roadmaps

“Regions are leading change agents for the circular transition. As hotspots of consumption and innovation, they are key creators of sustainable solutions.”

Circle Economy, 2021
Québec Circularity Gap Report

Over the past decade, CERs have proliferated around the world and at different scales. In Québec, they support stakeholders by proposing concrete solutions adapted to local realities and applicable in the short term. They promote collective mobilization, encourage territorial or sectoral collaboration and consider the economic and environmental dynamics specific to each environment. These initiatives, whether provincial, regional, municipal or sectoral, help to structure the circular transition by aligning efforts and pooling resources.

While industrial symbioses have been preeminent for over a decade in the province (see Section 4), bridging business initiatives and innovation with local implementation of circularity, CERs have taken the frontstage in Québec in the last five years. Often the logical ecosystemic continuation of preexisting symbiosis, and supported by the release, in 2022, of [RECYC-QUÉBEC's Toolkit for Developing and Implementing a Regional Circular Economy Roadmap](#), an ever-growing number of regions and municipalities have voluntarily embarked on the circularity journey.

Many CERs have been or are being created, among which are the cities of Sherbrooke and *Ville de Montréal*, communities such as Chapais and the [CMQ](#) and the regions of Montérégie, Outaouais and Laurentian. Here is a snapshot of some of them.

Laurentian Region



The [Regional Circular Economy Strategy](#) for the Laurentians (2023–2028) was launched in January 2024,⁸ when a sectoral circular economy development agreement was signed by the Government of Québec with the [Conseil des préfets et des élus de la région des Laurentides](#), [Synergie économique Laurentides](#) (SÉL), the City of Mirabel and the regional county municipalities of Laurentians, Pays-d'en-Haut, Argenteuil and Thérèse-De Blainville. The three-year agreement benefits from subventions from the MEIE and MAMH.

It is articulated in two major steps:

- March 2024: The [Portrait régional en économie circulaire des Laurentides](#) established the baseline and provides a comprehensive overview of the current progress in the region's shift towards a circular economy in the entire Laurentian ecosystem. An online survey reaching over 200 participants helped inform the study. Four main sectors have been identified as priorities: manufacturing, construction, tourism and transportation. The *Portrait* emphasizes the need to concentrate on strategic areas such as strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the reuse ecosystem, the plastics sector, and active involvement of MRCs and municipalities.
- June 2024: The [2024–2029 Regional Strategy and CER](#) was launched by SÉL. It includes nine projects to be completed by December 2025, comprising cocreation workshops involving businesses, institutions, social enterprises and nonprofits.

8 <https://www.Québec.ca/nouvelles/actualites/details/developpement-de-leconomie-circulaire-dans-les-laurentides-une-entente-sectorielle-pour-la-mise-en-oeuvre-de-projets-mobilisateurs-53129>

Gatineau

The [City of Gatineau](#) joined the CCCIR's Peer Network in 2021, which helped launch a structured reflection on circularity at the municipal level.

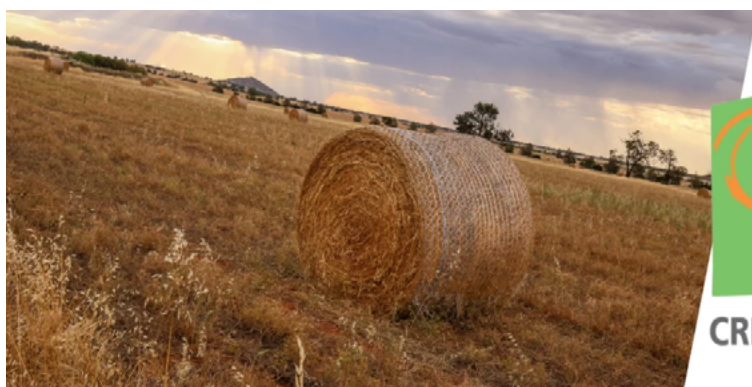
Public consultations and preparatory studies were conducted throughout 2024, with the city's circular economy strategy scheduled for release in 2025. This strategy builds on Gatineau's [2023–2029 Residual Materials Management Plan \(PGMR\)](#), which already includes measures to develop and implement a roadmap for the circular economy.

One of the first focus areas has been the [textile sector](#), where a study launched in summer 2024 identified both challenges (high volumes of discarded textiles, lack of local processing capacity) and opportunities (reuse, innovative circular design, local job creation). These findings were confirmed through a consultation workshop with sector stakeholders.

Since 2016, the CREDDO (Regional Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development of Outaouais) has acted as a key facilitator through [Synergie Outaouais](#), building networks between businesses, municipalities, and organizations to advance circular initiatives. Among the notable projects is [Horizons Partagés](#), a rural car-sharing service that exemplifies the sharing economy as a circular economy strategy. By maximizing the use of shared vehicles, reducing the need for individual car ownership, and cutting GHG emissions, [Horizons Partagés](#) demonstrates how service-based models can reinforce circularity while addressing mobility challenges in the region.

Montérégie Region

Montérégie's CER was financed CAD \$1.5 million in the spring of 2024 via the [Fonds régions et ruralité](#). Produced by [Conseil régional de l'environnement de la Montérégie](#), the CER includes 11 objectives and proposes 49 concrete actions.





Montréal: A Leading Metropolitan Area



Montréal, the second largest city in Canada and Québec's largest city, aims to have zero waste by 2030 and become carbon neutral and 17% circular by 2050.⁹

In the 2020–2025 period, city officials and teams were very active, from setting up a baseline to implementing a roadmap.

2020: Integration of circularity into the city's major strategic planning exercises

[Plan stratégique Montréal 2030](#), [Plan climat 2020–2030](#), [Plan directeur de gestion des matières résiduelles de l'agglomération de Montréal 2020–2025 \(PMGMR\)](#) and [Plan de relance économique – Une impulsion pour la métropole: Agir maintenant](#).

2021–2022: Vers une stratégie d'économie circulaire à Montréal (OECD)

The outcome of a collaboration between the OECD, *Ville de Montréal* and *Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec*, this document presents the results of the first application in the *Ville de Montréal* of the OECD's Scorecard on the governance of the circular economy in cities and regions. The findings of this self-assessment formed the basis of the city's CER.

2021–2022: Participation in the Canadian Circular Cities initiative

This led to the writing of the document [Vers une feuille de route montréalaise en économie circulaire](#)

2022: Circular City Scan (Circle Economy)—Baseline assessment

Montréal's baseline assessment explored four areas: the food system, built environment, textiles and mobility. A collaborative multistakeholder process identified eight areas for effective and impactful action. The report provides an extensive review for each selected sector (stakeholders, impact reduction and socioeconomic potentials, technical feasibility, existing initiatives) and specifies indicators within a measurement framework.

2023: Mapping of circular economy initiatives in the agglomeration

Updating the 2017 mapping performed by I-EDDEC, the [mapping](#)¹⁰ highlighted that 1,150 businesses were committed to circularity, among which were 54% focusing on strategies aimed at prolonging the life of products (repair, maintenance) and 37% aiming to use them more frequently (donation, resale). The mapping unveiled a threefold increase in initiatives—reaching 764 initiatives, many based in central boroughs.

2023: Extensive public consultation on the Montréal Circular Economy Roadmap project

This consultation, led by the city's Commission on Economic and Urban Development and Housing (*Commission sur le développement économique et urbain et l'habitation*), saw a high level of participation in the thematic meetings and round tables organized and collected 73 briefs from businesses, organizations and citizen initiatives.

2023: Circularity Gap Report (Circle Economy)

This study revealed that *Ville de Montréal's* current circularity index is 3%. Five prospective scenarios have been proposed—which, if all proposed measures are implemented, could lower Montréal's material footprint by 38%, while the carbon footprint could decrease by 46%. The scenarios focus on the built environment, food systems, manufacturing, lifestyle and mobility.

2024: Circular Economy Roadmap, Data Explorer Report and Waste Management Plan

- [Several municipal levers are implemented in the CER](#): Procurement, regulation and frameworks, financial tools and incentives, exemplarity, power of influence, information and support for the business ecosystem.
- The CER is articulated around five key orientations and designed to be complementary to existing municipal plans and programs (focused on climate change, sustainable procurement, waste management, transportation, etc.).
- The [Data Explorer](#) report, a circular employment analysis, revealed that approximately 7.6% of jobs (79K of 1M jobs) contribute to the circular economy, either directly or indirectly. The report offers recommendations for how to leverage Montréal's workforce to achieve its circularity ambitions.
- [Waste Management Plan](#) (*Plan métropolitain de gestion des matières résiduelles 2024–2030*)

The CMQ has made the circular economy a central theme of its PMGMR, which applies to 84 municipalities representing almost half of the province's population.

2025–2027: First Montréal Circular Economy Action Plan

Unsurprisingly, the five sectoral value chains that have been prioritized in *Ville de Montréal's* initial action plan are coherent with those of the government roadmap: biofood, construction, renovation and demolition, textiles, plastics, and mobility and logistics. With more than CAD\$7 million invested and a leverage effect on more than CAD\$100 million in funds for 20 transformative actions, this action plan should cascade significant socioeconomic effects in the city and its vicinity. The three-year span of the action plan will allow for the new administration, to be elected in 2026, to propose modifications adapted to their priorities for a second action plan that could be even more ambitious.

The circular economy has also been integrated into the 2050 Urban Planning and Mobility Plan ([Plan d'urbanisme et de mobilité 2050](#)), the 2025–2030 Cultural Development Policy ([Politique de développement culturel 2025–2030](#)) and the soon-to-be-adopted 2025–2030 Residual Materials Management Master Plan for the Greater Montreal Area.

⁹ <https://www.circularity-gap.world/montréal>

¹⁰ The mapping is the result of a collaboration between the *Ville de Montréal*, *Concertation Montréal* and a research team from the *Université du Québec à Montréal* responsible for analyzing the results.



2.4 Northern Québec Territory

While not always labelled as “circular economy,” Indigenous stewardship and traditional practices—such as sharing, repairing and sustainable resource management—have [long embodied circular principles](#). These approaches are increasingly recognized and integrated into contemporary circular economy frameworks in Québec and beyond.

The First Nations in Québec are actively engaging in several sustainable development and circular economy initiatives. [Inclusive economic development](#) is paramount as a founding basis for the [Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous Peoples and Québec](#), launched in 2021.

In the matter of [renewable energy](#), the [First Nations of Québec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute](#) hosted, in 2024, a three-day strategic workshop on renewable energy, bringing together 20+ First Nations and focusing on energy needs, financing and legal frameworks for circular projects.

First Nations also conduct [critical mineral](#) recycling in collaboration with the provincial government and its Québec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals, which promotes Indigenous participation in circular mining practices.

In summer 2021, RECYC-QUÉBEC commissioned Englobe to perform [a material flow analysis \(MFA\)](#) to develop an action plan promoting circular economy in northern communities and in a mining company, in partnership with *Société du Plan Nord* and *Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts*.

Following a selection process, the participants of the MFA project from a circular economy perspective on the northern territory, north of the 49th parallel, were Chapais, Chevery, Fermont, Inukjuak, Longue-Pointe-de-Mingan and Mistissini. The participating mining company was ArcelorMittal Mont-Wright, which is linked to the city of Fermont.

Published in 2023, this MFA aimed at identifying circular economy actions for those six northern communities and the mining company—in particular, for energy, water, extracted materials and consumer products. The action plan developed for each community presents circular economy strategies and opportunities it can implement. These actions focus more on residual materials management: About half of the actions suggested are part of the recycling and composting, recovery, and donating and reselling strategies.



3 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The potential of the circular economy to support sustainable cities, regions and countries still needs to be unlocked. Achieving this (...) requires a holistic and systemic approach that cuts across sectoral policies, and a functional approach going beyond the administrative boundaries of cities and linking them to their hinterland and rural areas to close, narrow and slow loops at the right scale

—OECD

The territorialization of CE deployment represents a major step towards circularity for the whole of Québec. Although some regions are more advanced in terms of circularity than others, the entire province is making progress. A more regional, cooperative vision involving municipalities and MRCs is one of the key ways to enable initiatives to take root more widely and sustainably.

Large cities such as Montréal enjoy a dynamic and diverse ecosystem, including academia, that potentiates circular innovation. Realities might be more challenging among some smaller municipalities. As change is all too often spearheaded by some motivated individuals and representatives at the local government level, and with no clear legislative or regulatory frameworks at the provincial level so far, sharp differences remain between regions. Bolstering awareness-raising initiatives within the membership of the province's main associations ([UMQ](#) and [FQM](#)), as well as within the [CCRI](#) project, potentially represents an avenue to spark change. Empowering local decision-makers with increased circularity knowledge and understanding, as well as risk management via training and hands-on coaching, seems to be the way forward in the coming years. This would lower the remaining pushback from elected officials at the local and MRC levels and help them better articulate the value brought by circularity to their constituents, hence allowing for the convergence of bottom-up and top-down initiatives.

Québec stands out as a province where interconnectivity between municipalities and various local government levels is key to the successful implementation of a circular transition. A higher degree of collaboration between regions and cities in Québec appears to be a crucial factor in the long-term success and viability of local initiatives, setting it apart from other provinces in Canada.

The progress in Québec is also attracting international attention, as demonstrated by the [International Urban and Regional Cooperation \(IURC\)](#) mission visiting circularity initiatives in the province at the occasion of the Second Canadian Circular Economy Summit, held in Montréal in April 2025. In collaboration with local partners in the *Ville de Montréal* and the FCM, this second [IURC-NA Thematic Networking Event](#) brought together 20 urban leaders and experts from across North America and Europe to explore innovative solutions in waste management and the circular economy, with a special focus on food waste and construction and demolition waste.

Although [several circular economy initiatives](#) have emerged in Québec, progress to date has been limited, and it is too early to assess the effects of the implementation of recently established roadmaps and programs. It is crucial to intensify efforts and take concrete action to ensure widespread adoption of the circular economy. However, several obstacles remain.

The first limitation relates to **the lack of alignment between provincial, regional and municipal policies**. At the municipal level, a circular economy seems to add a complexity layer to preexisting sustainability plans, strategies and policies, which leads to overlapping programs. This juxtaposition may fuel the frequent perception of a “complex multilayer sandwich” from which it is tricky for elected officials and local government staff alike to take the first bite! For greater coherence and synergy across Canada, CE action plans or roadmaps should be interlinked, from the federal to the provincial to the municipal levels, in much the same way as the European Action Plan is implemented across member countries.



Second, **initiatives have often proven to be primarily bottom-up**, with limited political support. This is exemplified by, for example, synergies, which may constitute a challenge regarding scaling-up. Municipalities currently play a mainly facilitating role in trying to steer private-sector interventions in CE. In some instances, their lack of knowledge of municipal instruments and competencies that can be used to stimulate CE limits the breadth of their interventions.

The third barrier to implementation is **related to unpredictable financial resources**, limiting uniform, structured CE deployment. Local governments are struggling with expanded jurisdiction and municipal taxes that no longer suffice to maintain basic municipal services, such as infrastructure and housing. The role of municipalities in the socioecological transition would benefit from being more clearly defined. In such a context, it may prove difficult for many municipalities to understand the need for—and prioritize—circular initiatives or implement coercive measures. In the near future, under the aegis of the UMQ, [a project on the future of municipal finances and taxation](#) will be piloted by Monique Jérôme-Forget and Nicolas Marceau (both former provincial finance ministers), with conclusions expected in the spring of 2026.

Fourth, **circularity is difficult to confine within a given municipal jurisdiction**. The intermunicipal and inter-regional perspective is becoming almost inevitable.

Fifth, **circular economy development should begin with transformations in cities and regions**, as the structure of a territory can influence the circulation of resources and goods, decisions regarding industrial locations and infrastructural capacity to support circular practices. Substantial investment may be required in the coming years to update infrastructure, facilities and public services at subnational levels. To create an environment conducive to a value-generating interprovincial economy, large-scale intermunicipal infrastructures (e.g., recovery, reuse and bioenergy centres) should be developed, strategically designed and located according to the specificities of each sector so that recirculating materials becomes more economical rather than disposing of them.

The principles of circularity, currently often confined to industrial zones and eco-parks, should become the norm for the entire territory at the municipal level. Strategic initiatives such as the colocation of grocery stores and food banks, restaurants and unsold food redistribution platforms, or repair shops and appliance retailers may also be considered. At the neighbourhood level, targeted tax incentives and zoning changes could help businesses focused on repair, rental, donation and resale be located in high-density areas that are difficult for them to access due to high real estate costs or zoning-related regulatory constraints.

Looking forward, research remains essential with regard to understanding circularity at the local level and empowering stakeholders to act. Urban experimentation within defined areas is necessary to test circular solutions, using research by design approaches. Applied research players and laboratory-type initiatives on a municipal scale (similar to the ELEC at the provincial level) need to be funded and implemented. Led by the Department of Urban Studies and Tourism of the *Université du Québec à Montréal*, an interuniversity team affiliated with the RRECQ is embarking on a new transatlantic collaboration that aims to develop concrete tools to help cities make the circular economy a lever for transforming their planning practices. Entitled “Articulating Urban Planning and the Circular Economy: Diagnostic Tools, Urban Planning criteria and Specialized Public Policy Instruments,” the project will involve case studies in Europe, field visits and practical exchanges between Canadian and European cities.



SECTION 4

CIVIL SOCIETY STAKEHOLDERS ARE STILL LEADING CIRCULARITY EFFORTS

Between 2021 and 2025, Québec became a laboratory for new circular business models in diverse industries and regions.¹

While industrial ecology initially fuelled transition efforts toward more circularity, several action-research partnerships have expanded in the last five years, such as CERIEC's ELEC.

¹ The period saw a sharp increase in initiatives, too many to be listed.

The Pôle: Promoting an Inclusive, Coherent and Structured Transition

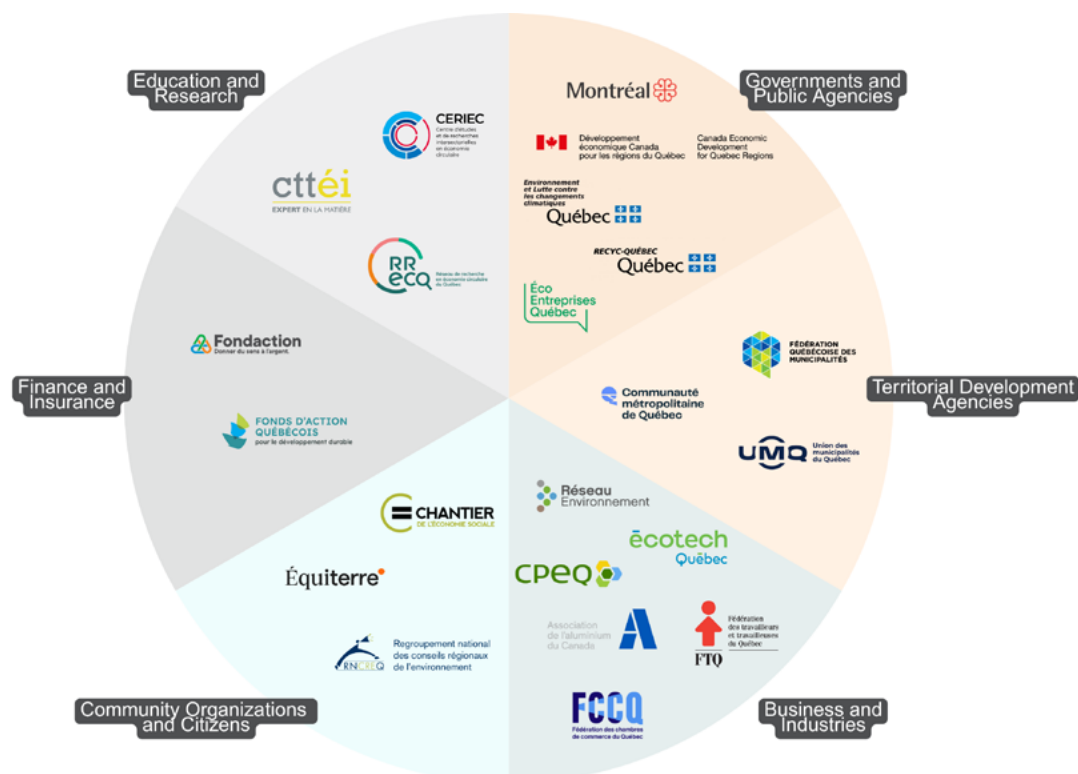
Since its inception in 2015 by the IEDDEC institute (*Université de Montréal* campus),² the *Pôle de concertation québécois en économie circulaire (Pôle)* has brought together a wide range of decision-makers from domains such as research, finance, business, unions, the social economy, environmental management, municipalities and governments. Over the years, it has enabled the implementation of concrete initiatives, contributed to the development of a definition of the Québec circular economy (CE) and supported governments in their reflections and strategic orientations.

Pôle members wish to reinforce the scope of the actions undertaken and, more than ever, position the province as a North American leader that is both open and influential on the international scene. In that respect, they have identified a number of priority milestones in the [Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#) (RRECQ) that directly challenge the mission and current or future actions of their member organizations.

Among the strategic drivers they wish to activate are the following:

- investing in education, training and research
- strengthening stakeholder networks throughout the territory
- introducing resource traceability tools
- improving legislative and regulatory frameworks
- promoting responsible procurement and integrating eco-conditionality criteria into public procurement processes

A proposal will be created to guide efforts to activate the strategic drivers toward 2030, providing a unified framework for collective action, contributing to the prioritization of initiatives and strengthening collaboration among members to accelerate the transition to a CE in Québec.



2 See Section 3 of Transitioning to Circular Economy (2014–2020) – Learning from the Québec Experience.

1 - INDUSTRIAL SYMBIOSIS OFTEN PAVES THE WAY

An industrial symbiosis is a network of organizations and communities engaged in the dynamic exchange of residual materials and resources inspired by the functioning of ecosystems.³ Symbioses establish a network of businesses that can move toward sustainable practices by forging connections.

A circular economy (CE) leader in Québec, the Centre for the Transfer of Technologies in Industrial Ecology (CTTÉI) has provided innovative and practical industrial ecology solutions to organizations for over 25 years. CTTÉI uses applied research to increase the performance of businesses and enliven communities.

SYNERGIE Québec

Since 2014, the CTTÉI has fostered a network of industrial symbiosis in the province called [Synergie Québec](#),⁴ which encompasses 20 symbioses in 15 regions of Québec.

Thousands of organizations have been brought together, allowing for the documentation of over 6,500 material flows.

In 2024, RECYC-QUÉBEC signed a two-year CAD\$750,000 agreement with Synergie Québec to energize and expand the actions of the industrial and territorial symbiosis community and to support key actions across the province.

Celebrating its 25 years of existence in 2024, Claude Maheux Picard, CTTÉI's General Manager, stated that the organization's "efforts to raise awareness among businesses, organizations and government bodies have paid off, and today we can say without hesitation that we have helped position Québec as a leader in the circular economy in Canada."

Tools for the Transition

The methods and tools developed by CTTÉI are essential in establishing the necessary baseline to make organizations realize where the potential of circularity lies for them. In the case of Material Flow Cost Accounting (MFCA),⁵ in early 2025, the Laval Chamber of Commerce-powered [Symbiose Laval produced a case study](#) highlighting how, in Laval's manufacturing context, on average, companies account for only 4.5% of their actual costs in waste management. Collectively, because these costs are traditionally hidden in the cost price, while organizations see CAD\$300,000 on their books, in reality, they spend more than CAD\$6 million. **On average, the waste management cost is 20 times higher than initially thought by those organizations.**



3 *Office québécois de la langue française*, translated by the author.

4 For more details on the history of this initiative, please see Case study 1: *Synergie Québec – Building a community of practice around industrial symbioses* (pages 125–142), *Transitioning to a Circular Economy 2014–2020, Learning from the Québec Experience report (2021)*, <https://synergieQuebec.ca/>.

5 In 2019, the CTTÉI obtained an NSERC Industrial Research Chair on industrial and territorial ecology, the CREIT, which developed the MFCA, a tool meant to enable an organization to account for the direct and indirect costs linked to the management of residual materials. This methodology is an analysis method governed by the ISO 14051 standard, which precisely measures all the materials and resources that enter, circulate and leave a company.



Examples of successful synergies proliferate in the province, in cities and in regions alike.

For example, since its inception, the [CRE Capitale-Nationale's Symbiose Québec+](#) (Québec City) program has recorded 421 offers from 112 organizations, facilitating industrial linkups. In all, 57 synergies have been created and the emission of an estimated 441,700 kg of CO₂_{eq} has been avoided. Nearly 31,000 tons of materials have been offered on their exchange platform since the initiative was launched.

Another example is *Synergie Montréal*. Since its launch in 2016, it has supported over 2,600 companies, fostering more than 460 symbiotic relationships that have diverted upwards of 5,300 tons of waste from landfills. These efforts have also resulted in approximately 6,000 tons of CO₂_{eq} avoided and generated more than CAD\$12 million in combined revenue and cost savings. Additionally, in 2025, *Ville de Montréal*, via its Circular Economy 2025-2030 Action Plan, is offering increased financial support for *Synergie Montréal* for a total of CAD\$900,000 (CAD\$300,000 per year) for the 2025–2027 period. In the same vein, the municipality also supports the establishment of structuring projects dedicated to accelerating the CE, such as the [Campus d'innovation Espace circulaire](#) (CAD\$600,000 for the 2025–2027 period), spearheaded by *PME MTL Est-de-l'Île* and supported by several partners in Montréal's less economically developed eastern boroughs.

For its part, in *Synergie Lanaudière's* first five years alone (2009–2013), the established material flows saved more than 130,000 tons of industrial waste. As of 2020, 285 synergies within 158 participating businesses had been identified. Prior to the initiative's suspension,⁶ it counted on some 300 participating organizations and had produced, among other things, 18 case studies as well as a best practices guide.

Synergie Lanaudière benefited from RECYC-QUÉBEC's first edition of a call for proposals for a transition to a CE (APTEC, 2016) as well as its second call. With a total budget of CAD\$2.3 million, this first edition of APTEC enabled 14 industrial symbiosis projects to be set up in several regions of Québec. In its most recent call for proposals, [15 projects](#) were supported in 13 regions for a total of nearly CAD\$3.3 million in subsidies.

Since industrial symbioses have emerged and thrived in the province for over a decade, virtually all regions now have CE advisers to help set up industrial networks. Investments may benefit from increased local concertation; however, work undertaken by *Synergie Québec's* strategic circularity counsellors occasionally overlaps with the work of Ecoleader Funds' ([Fonds Écoleader](#))⁷ agents.

A more recent trend concerns circular strategies related to resources and the preservation of ecosystems. There is a rise in interest—and competency—among organizations to implement ecodesign or functional economy.

"We need to refocus our relationship to the economy and break the deadlock of always having to rush more to achieve more and necessarily produce more to be profitable. Our natural resources are finite but not our human potential."

Melissa Stoia, Director of Sustainable Development and Circular Economy,
PME MTL Est-de-l'Île (2019–2024)

⁶ The initiative was suspended due to a lack of financing as stated on its [website](#) and dedicated [results page](#) – consulted July 2025.

⁷ Ecoleader Funds was created as part of the Québec government's [Plan d'action pour la croissance et les technologies propres in 2019](#). It is coordinated by the *Fonds d'action québécois pour le développement durable* (FAQDD) in collaboration with the *Centre québécois de développement durable* (CQDD) and Écotech Québec. It is designed to encourage Québec companies to adopt eco-responsible business practices and clean technologies through an integrated and developmental approach. The current project submission period ends on September 30, 2026.



La Serre+: Combining Industrial Waste Management and Sustainable Agriculture

- **Context:** In June 2025, Victoriaville's *Cité de l'innovation circulaire et durable* inaugurated the newly built space for [La Serre+](#), a technological showcase initiative that won the "Coup de cœur" award at the *Prix initiatives circulaires* promoted by *Québec Circulaire*.
- **Objective:** This initiative aims to transform industrial waste (water, CO₂ and heat) into food for algae consortia. These organisms purify water and serve as biomaterials for compostable containers. The water comes out clean, with an efficiency of over 90% in the first cycle, according to external analyses. The water is then integrated into a hydroponic plant circuit aiming for better food security on a regional scale. Residues from food and solvents industries—*Fromagerie Victoria* for cheese process waste, Wood Wyant and Sani Marc for green chemical residues and mineralized waste, Valothanol for bioethanol refinery waste, mainly CO₂ and wasted vapour's thermal capacity, etc. —are collected in a sustainable circuit and then conducted to the greenhouse where they are purified by the microalgae consortia and then become plant fertilizer solutions.

La Serre+ is a multi-themed living laboratory that aims to pool material and energy flows for territorial synergies by

- designing new ecomaterials from local waste
- conducting energy efficiency studies and carbon capture
- adapting the microorganisms to waste ingredients found in established and future local factories to pool material and energy flows for other territorial synergies

Some key features:

- More than 15 industrial partners share their resources and expertise in terms of circularity and material flows to enable better system design.
- Co-creation workshops led to the design of a highly efficient greenhouse, mainly with reused equipment, that is home to a Québec start-up specializing in vanilla, microgreens and mushroom production.
- New solutions, such as mycomaterials to replace plastics in agriculture and the valorization of gaseous and thermal waste (CO₂ and heat from biorefinery captured and concentrated for better plant growth) have been pilot tested.
- An 80% reduction in pollutant load has been achieved in a single water treatment cycle using microalgae.
- Outreach includes visits to industrial firms, events for the general public, and workshops for agricultural and thermoforming students.

The project is directed by *Cité de l'innovation circulaire et durable* and is the fruit of 14 years of research at the Innovations Institute in Ecomaterials, Ecoproducts and Ecoenergies biomass-based ([I2E3-Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières](#)) and a close collaboration with Innofibre [Centre d'innovation des produits cellulosiques](#) (Cégep de *Trois-Rivières*), the city of Victoriaville, Sani Marc group and several local businesses such as *Fromagerie Victoria*, Valothanol, Sotek Clauger, Re-Plast and others.

Source: [Québec Circulaire](#), [Victoriaville](#), [Cité de l'innovation circulaire et durable](#).



2 - SHOWCASING BY INDUSTRY

This section focuses on several projects fuelled by open research.

2.1 Circular Economy Acceleration Labs Ecosystem (ELEC)

ELEC—the living lab approach spearheaded by CERIEC with financial support from Desjardins, a cooperative financial group—has led to the implementation of several projects to advance knowledge and identify changes needed in the regulatory framework. ELEC’s objective is to increase the circularity of key industrial sectors by providing an open-ended experimentation area. This network has the ambition to ultimately comprise eight or nine interconnected laboratories focusing on key economic sectors, such as construction, agri-food, textiles, critical minerals, plastics and territorial deployment.

ELEC’s holistic approach is guided by co-creation and field experimentation. Through workshops, the labs engage key stakeholders in research as well as public, private, and civil society, representing the value chain of a given industry or sector, from resource extraction to the end of the product life cycle. The process unfolds in the following key steps:

- co-imagining a vision of the circular industry or sector in question
- co-identifying barriers related to resource circularity and finding solutions
- co-creating possible ways to remove the identified barriers
- co-developing experimental projects to test these solutions in the field
- engaging in knowledge transfer

The process includes three co-creation stages. First, a variety of sector players and researchers across a given value chain develop a vision of a desirable circular future and identify obstacles to achieving this vision of circularity. Second, solutions to overcome these obstacles are co-created and tested via experimental projects. Third, the ensuing projects aim to develop and test solutions so they can ultimately become mainstream, by demonstrating that certain circular economy strategies are relevant, workable, and profitable. Alongside these three stages, the production of detailed documentation facilitates the replication and scaling up of projects.

Tested solutions are discussed either via an intra-lab approach (between solutions) or an inter-lab approach (across sectors). ELEC aims to mesh the scientific approaches and field results of all its labs to cross-pollinate knowledge and emulate the necessary systemic approach that characterizes the transition to circularity.

Knowledge transfer completes those three stages, as one of the key ingredients of ELEC labs is the free sharing of resources and findings from the labs’ projects.

With the support of the ELEC steering committee, the creation of laboratories is prioritized according to the importance of the issues at stake in the Province of Québec, circularity potential, government priorities and potential financial support. Each lab is designed as a catalyzer with a limited lifespan of two to three years.

As of the summer of 2025, three laboratories have been deployed: the Construction Lab (labCo) in the construction sector, launched in 2021; the Food Systems Lab (labSA), launched in the summer of 2023; and the Textile Lab (labTex), launched in 2024. The living lab approach spearheaded by ELEC has also been used to advance projects in the health industry with four micro-labs.

2.1.1 The Construction Lab (labCo)

Lab construction

- Preliminary data:** A 2019 Québec study⁸ on benefits linked to the implementation of a CE with regard to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction potential in the industrial sector underscored, among the four solutions then identified, the potential of the use and reuse of cement, steel and aluminum in the construction sector. Its high circularity potential in Québec was also identified in a 2018 economic study.⁹
- Objective:** To increase circularity in the construction industry, which accounts for [more than 40% of global GHG emissions](#).
- Duration:** First phase: 2021–2024. A second phase is deemed to start in 2025. Its aim will be to broaden the lab’s scope to include infrastructure (i.e., not only buildings) and climate change adaptation (i.e., not only circularity) and to deepen its exploration of some topics (e.g., circular logistics for reuse or traceability) as well as explore new ones (e.g., material design) and increase knowledge transfer.
- Financing:** 80% MEIE, 20% Desjardins.
- Leadership:** CERIEC.
- Process:** The Construction Lab has convened over 40 co-creation workshops that have contributed to establishing a shared vision and set of priorities, identifying key obstacles for a more circular construction industry and developing projects. An [online collaborative platform](#) was developed to centralize data and lab-related resources.
- Results:** Nineteen pilot projects were devised to overcome the identified obstacles.
- Knowledge transfer:** Given that the objective is to achieve shared benefits for Québec and beyond, the projects are presented in detail in an [online booklet](#) (in English) that highlights the potential and feasibility of circular practices in the construction sector based on the results of testing the various circular strategies. All project descriptions and resources, as well as a series of eight webinars that present key projects and learnings and extra resources, can be found on the dedicated website [constructioncirculaire.com](#). Published by CERIEC in the summer of 2025, an open-access book—[Circularity in Construction in Québec](#)—takes stock of two years of experimentation by the Construction Lab and offers its recommendations to public and private decision-makers, professional orders and sector organizations.
- Illustration:** [Five projects](#) from the Construction Lab have been featured on the FCM website under the title “Accelerating the transition to a circular economy: Material reuse for a net-zero future”. Among the experimentations that focused on early circular strategies, the deconstruction project in Gaspésie illustrates how stakeholders came together on a time-defined, large-scale deconstruction project that resulted in added economic and social value locally.



SHOWCASING DECONSTRUCTION IN GASPÉSIE

A case study that was conducted as part of this research can be found [here](#).

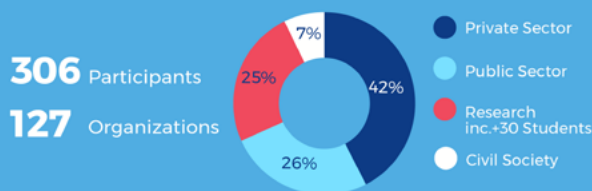
© 2022, RITMRG/Lucile Parry-Canet

⁸ [Portrait et pistes de réduction des émissions de GES industrielles au Québec](#)

⁹ [Circular Economy in Québec- Economic opportunities and impacts](#)

Achievements of the Construction Lab (2021–2024)

A great variety of participants



An ambitious framework

19 Pilot Projets **75** Pilot Project Leaders **12** Types of Deliverables

Varied, concrete deliverables

8 Scientific Articles* **11** Case Studies **1** Board Game **13** Research Reports
11 Decision Support Tools or Operational Guides **40+** Presentations at Conferences & Events

An Efficient Framework

78 % Have implemented one or more circular economy initiatives or are planning to do so*

98 % State that the lab brings them value:

- Relations (82 %)
- Practical Knowledge (57 %)
- Theoretical Knowledge (54 %)

69 % Feel that their participation in the lab has improved their ability to take action in the circular economy

81 % Average satisfaction rate with communication, co-creation approach, tools, content

Results from the end-of-lab survey, December 2023-January 2024
100 complete responses *Since 2021

"The transition to a circular economy requires political will, but above all the mobilization of an entire ecosystem in Québec. The Construction Lab shows that it's possible to take action, here and now."

Hortense Montoux, Project Coordinator, CERIEC

This open lab approach is percolating across Canada, as CELC is in the process of funding and establishing its own Canada-wide initiative, the [Circular Construction Innovation Hub](#). The Hub is a national industry-focused, multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to accelerating the transition to a resource-efficient built environment through the development and implementation of CE strategies across the value chain.

"Building a resource-efficient, low-carbon and financially resilient Canada requires an accelerated shift to circular construction. By collaborating with CERIEC's ELEC, we are able to leverage the invaluable insights from their Construction Lab to drive systems-level change through our Circular Construction Innovation Hub. This powerful partnership is a critical step in scaling the solutions needed to transform our built environment."

Paul Shorthouse, Managing Director, CELC

2.1.2 The Food Systems Lab (labSA)

Lab systèmes alimentaires

- **Preliminary data:** According to [RECYC-QUÉBEC](#) (2022), food waste in Québec generates 3.6 million tons of GHG emissions every year. It is estimated that 41% of the food produced is lost or thrown away. The Québec government is aiming for a 37.5% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared with 1990 levels ([MELCCFP](#), 2022). A preliminary graphic representation of circularity in the food industry was elaborated with RECYC-QUÉBEC in 2018.
- **Objectives:** To reduce food waste, the environmental footprint and the use of new resources and to improve supply chain resilience across Québec.
- **Duration:** 2023–2026.
- **Financing:** As of the summer of 2025, the Food Systems Lab is funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Investment Readiness Program (IPP) and by the *Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation* (MAPAQ). The research portion of some projects is funded by the *Pôle Bioalimentaire*, powered by the Institute for Nutrition and Functional Foods (INAF) and financed by the *Fond de Recherche du Québec* (FRQ).
- **Leadership:** Co-directed by ELEC (CERIEC) and *La Transformerie*, a Montréal-based NPO dedicated to eliminating food waste.
- **Process:** As of the summer of 2025, the Food Systems Lab convenes over 300 participants from 174 organizations, most of whom have participated in at least one of the co-creation workshops facilitated by the ELEC team.
- **Results:** As of the summer of 2025, 11 projects will be explored and deployed over the next two years, of which the following **seven are underway**:
 - **Circular Food certification:** Preliminary work toward the creation of a reserved designation defining the criteria for a “circular” product to recognize the efforts of committed organizations
Research partners: *Université de Sherbrooke* and CIRODD
Industry partners: [Still Good](#), [Neo Chips](#), [Ellipse Conservation](#) and several technical partners
 - **Tertiary packaging:** Evaluating alternatives to plastic film and proposing end-of-life circularization scenarios
Research partners: *Carrefour d’innovation en technologie écologique* ([CITÉ](#) – *Université de Sherbrooke*) and the Québec Centre for Advanced Materials ([QCAM](#))
Industry partners: Centre Eco-Innov and [Carrousel](#)
 - **Valorization and mutualization platforms:** Development of an evaluation of mutualization platforms and of a decision-making tool to facilitate networking and mutualization opportunities between value chain stakeholders
Research partners: CTTÉI and the Centre for Applied Research on Polymers and Composites ([CREPEC](#) – *Polytechnique Montréal*)
 - **Mutualization of spaces and equipment:** Creation and distribution of tools to simplify the mutualization of equipment and infrastructure within organizations
Research partners: *Centre d’Innovation Sociale en Agriculture* ([CISA](#) – *Cégep de Victoriaville*) and the Institute of Nutrition and Functional Food ([INAF](#) – *Université Laval*).
Industry partners: [Stratégie bioalimentaire Montérégie](#) and several technical partners
 - **Circular fisheries and aquaculture:** Development of a conceptual CE framework adapted to fisheries for communication purposes and outreach tools
Research partners: CIRADD, INAF, [École des Pêches et de l’Aquaculture du Québec](#) (*Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles*) and *Ressources Aquatiques Québec* (RAQ – *Université du Québec à Rimouski*).
Industry partners: [Merinov](#) and several technical partners.



- **Solidarity-based circular food production in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region:**
Study of the characteristics, governance models and conditions necessary for the sustaining of solidarity-based food production in Québec's regional contexts
Research partners: *Villes Régions Monde (VRM – UQÀM)*, *Université de Montréal*
Industry partners: [Borée](#) and several technical partners
- **Direct purchase of local food:**
Models analysis
Research partners: McGill University, INAF and *Centre d'expertise, de formation et de recherche en agriculture et alimentation durable (CEFRAAD)*
Industry partners: [Association des marchés publics du Québec](#) and several technical partners
- **Knowledge transfer:** A strategy for knowledge transfer will be developed with partners across food systems to ensure that resources reach as many as possible. Among the contents developed will be seminars and an online platform with all the tools created in the Food Systems Lab.

"The launch of these projects marks a new stage in the Food Systems Lab approach. The potential is immense thanks to both the structuring and systemic scope of the projects and the alliance of players in the field with the research community. We can't wait to see them in action!"

Eléonore Nouel, Project Coordinator, CERIEC



SHOWCASING BOOMERANG

A case study that was conducted as part of this research [can be found here](#).



Circularity in Food

In the food sector, Montréal-based upcycler [Still Good Foods](#) won a grand prize of CAD\$1.5 million as part of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's [Food Waste Reduction Challenge](#). Selected from over 340 companies, Still Good stands out for its innovative solutions that transform food residues into nutritious products, thus contributing to a sustainable future. Created in 2018, the company doubled the size of its facilities, increasing its recovery capacity to 5,000 tons a year by the end of 2024, and is now exporting its products to the United States.

2.1.3 The Textile Lab (labTex)

Lab textiles

- **Preliminary data:** The textile industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. From design to distribution, the textile industry entails a high consumption of resources and energy, leading to the degradation of ecosystems and pollution. Québec consumes around 343,000 tons of new textiles every year, equivalent to 40 kg per capita. Studies on the textile industry in Québec were initiated in 2019.
Preliminary findings of a study led by MUTREC¹⁰ found that out of all textiles used in the province:
 - 30% were exported
 - 48% were sent to landfills
 - 8% dissipated into the environment (wear and tear, degradation)
 - 8% were used in other products (furniture)
 - 6% were recycled
 - <1% were incinerated
- **Duration:** 2024–2027.
- **Financing:** The Textile Lab was established thanks to financial support from the MELCCFP for the first year of co-creation and the MEIE for the project scoping and start-up phase.
- **Leadership:** CERIEC.
- **Process:** As of July 2025, over 151 people from 119 organizations across the Québec textile value chain have been mobilized—including designers, recyclers, manufacturers, retailers, public institutions and research units covering all soft materials (footwear, bedding, curtains, upholstered furniture, geotextiles, knitwear, foams, leathers, etc.). It is a systemic approach that meets the ambitions of the [2024–2028 Québec government’s Circular Economy Roadmap \(FREC\)](#).
- **Results:** As of July 2025, 20 potential project pathways have emerged, structured around six major themes: tax and regulatory incentives, measure and standardization tools, infrastructure improvement for circularizing textiles, implementation of new practices within organizations, capacity building and knowledge transfer, and structuration of Québec’s textiles ecosystem.
- **Knowledge transfer:** The objective is to document the experiments so that they can be replicated and deployed on a larger scale. The Textile Lab team participated in the textiles track of sessions at the 2025 Canadian Circular Economy Summit. Webinars, presentations and other tools will be developed throughout the project.

“Textile Lab projects will enable us to test—in the field—concrete circularity strategies for our textile industry. Ecodesign, sustainable sourcing, resale, repair, redesign or recycling—we intend to move from theory to action.”

Marianne-Coquelicot Mercier, Project Coordinator, CERIEC.

¹⁰ In the spring of 2018, an open-innovation collective named MUTREC was formed after being granted funding following an application to the call for projects launched by RECYC-QUÉBEC. The objective of this collective was to gather together experts who are able to understand material flows in Québec in order to define means to valorize textile and fiber waste in the province. The study published in 2021 is available [here](#).

¹¹ Jagou, S., Raufflet, E. (2025). Co-construction as Implementation: The Circular Economy Experience in Québec – Consolidation Stage (2021–2024). In: Cherié, M., Boucher, J.F., Gondim de Almeida Guimarães, L., Frayret, J.M. (eds) Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition. Springer, Cham.

The Current State of Textile Reuse in Québec



In the spring of 2025, *Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire* (TIESS), an organization that supports the driving forces of the social economy in their innovative practices through knowledge transfer, distributed new tools that feature the solidarity-based reuse system to help identify the issues that hinder the development of a CE in the textile industry. It also highlights the best practices to be implemented.

A [report](#) (in French) features how Québec's solidarity-based reuse system works with textiles from collection and sorting to resale, while a two-page brochure presents [the main social economy stakeholders' characteristics](#) (in French) in this sector. Key findings for Québec include the following:

- 21% of textiles are diverted from disposal sites by Québec-based social purpose organizations (SPOs).
- TIESS estimates that there are over 420 SPOs operating in the province.

These tools are published as part of the Québec government *Programme de soutien à l'économie sociale (PSES) – Gestion des matières résiduelles* (See Chapter 3 of this Section), in collaboration with [Chantier de l'économie sociale](#).

Source: TIESS (2025). *Le réemploi solidaire au Québec. État des lieux de la filière textile*.



SHOWCASING RECYCLO-CENTRE

The organization won the 2025 Circular Initiatives Awards in the Nonprofit, Cooperative or Association category for its initiative to recycle textile surpluses by conditioning fabrics and transforming them into two promising outlets: quilts and insulating panels.

A case study that was conducted as part of this research can be found [here](#).

2.2 Various Sectoral Initiatives

Several issue-specific initiatives have emerged to address certain sectors; however, these efforts are not currently regarded as short-term priorities compared to the industries highlighted in the [Québec government's Circular Economy Roadmap 2024-2028](#) (FREC). The following is a selection of initiatives in plastics, advanced materials, tourism and the performing arts.

2.2.1 Plastics

Context

Global plastic production has increased from [1.5 million tons in 1950](#) to [460 million tons in 2019](#). Plastic has become a staple in everyday life, especially in packaging, construction, textiles, transportation and electronics. Consequently, plastic waste has also surged, more than doubling between 2000 and 2019, while [only 9% of plastic waste is recycled worldwide](#) (OECD).

Governmental Framework

In 2023, the Québec government launched a public consultation on plastic management. The resulting 2024–2029 Plastics Reduction and Stewardship Strategy ([Stratégie de réduction et de gestion responsable des plastiques](#)) focuses on a range of priority actions, targeting both single-use plastic products and more sustainable products with a plastic component. The approach advocated for the implementation of the strategy's actions lies in the use of three determining criteria:

- the product
- the type of plastic: resin, manufacturing process, addition of additives such as colourants, emulsifiers, flame retardants, etc., or the multi-layer or multi-material composition of the product
- the use: common or particular uses (e.g., food packaging or medical products) as well as various types of use (domestic, industrial, institutional or agricultural) that may give rise to different approaches to targeted actions and measures

Industry-Led Initiative

The [Circular Plastics Taskforce \(CPT\)](#) was created in 2020 through a collaboration between Québec and pan-Canadian industry leaders. The nonprofit organization is led by Cascades, Circular Materials, Danone Canada, Éco Entreprises Québec (ÉEQ), Keurig Dr Pepper Canada, ProAmpac Canada, Recycle BC and the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada (CIAC). Their mission is to “foster a better alignment between market needs and recycling outputs through optimization solutions and research projects to create a circular economy for post-consumer plastics in Canada.” In the first phase of their work, the CPT conducted foundational

research that led to the release of a [White paper](#) titled “Rethinking plastic packaging recycling – Solutions towards increased circularity in Québec and Canada”.

The CPT is now in the midst of the second phase of its journey, which consists in implementing and testing best practices and equipment in a real environment across the value chain in Québec and Canada. The group focuses on resins and formats that are considered more challenging to recycle, such as polystyrene, flexible plastics and food-grade recycled polypropylene, to name a few. With the three main Canadian producer responsibility organizations now onboard, the CPT contributes to the implementation of high-performing recycling systems as part of the expansion of extended producer responsibility (EPR) across Canada.

As a founding member of the CPT, ÉEQ collaborates on a number of pilot projects implemented in the Province of Québec. The organization is regularly called upon by international stakeholders, the majority originating from the United States of America, visiting to gather key findings that could help them implement an EPR program for plastics.

Research Initiatives

Back in 2019, the EDDEC Institute had already envisioned the plastics sector as a theme for a potential open lab to stimulate a more circular sector and led discussions among government, industry and academic stakeholders. As the Province of Québec is one of the two Canadian provinces most active in plastic processing, it seemed relevant to develop a CE approach to this sector to anchor it at a local level while fostering collaboration with other Canadian entities. This initiative failed to gain traction as the five-year initial financing of the EDDEC Institute was coming to an end, and further financing had yet to be found. As part of ELEC, the CERIEC has planned to create a Plastics lab focusing on single-use plastics in the health sector that has yet to be financed. Nonetheless, progress has already taken place with a project led by *Université Laval* in a Québec hospital.

Although the project is not limited to plastics, it includes plastics and is in part inspired by the ELEC approach.

Taking Stock of Materials Consumed and Discarded in a Québec Hospital: Applying the Open Lab Approach

Context: Worldwide, the healthcare sector generates around 5.9 million tons of waste per year, with North America being the main contributor, averaging up to 4.42 kg/bed/day (Campion et al., 2015; Mol et al., 2022). In Québec, some initiatives have been undertaken by individual hospitals and facilities; however, they are not coordinated, and their key findings have not been shared.

Challenge: How can the flow of materials consumed and discarded in a hospital be mapped? How can material use and recycling be optimized to reduce costs and environmental impacts?

Objective: From the spring of 2023 to the spring of 2026, this research project aims to identify issues related to the supply, logistics, consumption and management of hospital residual materials and their causes. The results of this pilot project will form the knowledge base for possible solutions to help make healthcare more sustainable and circular in Québec's hospital system.

Who: Researchers, the Centre for Research in Accounting and Sustainable Development ([*Centre de recherche en comptabilité et développement durable, CerCeDD – Université Laval*](#)), the *Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP)* and the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS)*.

Collaboration is at the heart of this applied research project, which comprises two parts:

Part 1: Material flow analysis adapted to a pilot hospital environment (end June 2025)

In the first phase, procedures in an operating theatre and a surgical unit were exhaustively analyzed, and in the second phase, the analysis was extended hospital-wide but focused only on a few selected medical supplies.

- A systemic and comprehensive quantitative assessment of the consumption and management of materials led to the following:
 - a complete characterization of inputs, specifically the identification of the composition and weight of purchased items and their various packaging layers
 - a rigorous and detailed characterization of outputs
- Observation and interviews conducted with health professionals (nurses, doctors, orderlies, logistics, hygiene, sanitation, procurement, managers, etc.) to obtain a qualitative understanding of processes. The multi- and interdisciplinary approach mobilized different disciplines in a collaborative manner (e.g., accounting, healthcare management, clinical staff, healthcare facility managers, ministry employees, sustainable development and CE consultants, etc.).
- **Results:** The items identified as most problematic were gloves, sterility drape, disposable gowns, solute bags, tubing, paper and envelopes.

Part 2: A collaborative approach to identify challenges, opportunities and solutions: The creation of four Micro-Labs (fall 2024 to spring 2026)

Mimicking the approach put forward by ELEC with its open labs, four Micro-Labs emerged from the first part of the project. They aim to review the types of consumables identified in the first part of the research and their use in two distinct perimeters:

- **Québec public hospital centres as a whole:** Some 40 participants from over 20 organizations representing the whole value chain are participating in the two following micro-labs:
 - Micro-Lab 1: gowns and sterility drape
 - Micro-Lab 2: solute bags and tubing
- **The other two micro-labs focus on the perimeter of the pilot hospital:**
 - Micro-Lab 3: material recovery and recycling (to be launched in the summer of 2025), with medical and nursing staff as well as some key external stakeholders as participants
 - Micro-Lab 4: material management in the operating room, with the medical and nursing staff of a typical operating room as participants

These new data will enable the team, the hospital management and the entire healthcare network to identify promising and structure-related actions that prioritize the reduction and reuse of materials and, ultimately, their recycling.

Sources: CerCeDD; ELEC.

2.2.2 Advanced Materials

[PRIMA Québec](#) is a Sectoral Industrial Research Group (SIRG) created by the Québec government in 2014 “to stimulate the advanced materials ecosystem and to promote collaborative research between public research centres and companies while offering various economic sectors a set of innovative, high-performance and environmentally friendly solutions that generate benefits for society as a whole.”¹² It functions as a catalyst between the industrial and research communities.

What is the Significance of Advanced Materials Sector in Québec?

Advanced materials are new or improved materials that offer greater performance than previous materials. Advanced materials can, for example, withstand unprecedented temperature variations, recreate skin and replace polluting materials. They can be superconductive, ultralight, invisible, etc.

An [updated portrait of the ecosystem](#) in Québec was published by PRIMA in 2024. Key findings include the following:

- 574 companies are actively developing, producing and integrating advanced materials, or developing and producing equipment associated with advanced materials.
- These companies account for more than 49,000 jobs linked to advanced materials in Québec, with an estimated revenue of CAD\$15 billion.
- Of the 574 listed companies, 72% are very small (1–9 employees) and small (10–99 employees) companies with a strong culture of research and innovation.
- More than 80% of companies surveyed are actively involved in the sustainable transition. There is, however, greater inaction among small and very small companies.
- Access to financing and capital represents an issue for companies with fewer than 100 employees.
- Transportation, construction, housing and energy are the main end markets for advanced materials produced by Québec companies.
- 211 innovative projects were made possible through PRIMA Québec’s involvement during the 2015–2025 period, for a combined value of CAD\$196.5 million.
- These projects have brought together more than 310 industrial partners and 34 academic institutions with an approach based on collaborative research.
- Starting in September 2025, projects submitted under PRIMA’s general calls for proposals will have to specify how they fit into the 12 CE strategies.

Source: [PRIMA’ 2024 update](#); Information from PRIMA’s staff.

PRIMA’s [2035 Roadmap](#)¹³ for advanced materials and associated processes was launched in 2024. It is the first of its kind in Canada. Its objective is to help resolve major societal challenges linked to the energy transition, the decarbonization of the industry, increasing productivity with digitalization and securing strategic supply chains.

¹² PRIMA’s 2024 ecosystem portrait update [report](#).

¹³ [2035 Roadmap](#) – Decarbonizing the economy through advanced materials and associated processes.

Among the seven guidelines put forward, for [Guideline 1 – Increasing the circularity of advanced materials within supply chains](#) – the three main objectives are related to the promotion of ecodesign, traceability within supply chains and recycling, and increased advanced materials & reuse within the four application sectors. Partners include RECYC-QUÉBEC with the Circular Innovation Challenge, FAQDD for raising awareness within the Ecoleader program, CTTÉI to encourage companies to assess their own degree of material circularity, CERIEC to potentially launch a CE accelerator laboratory for advanced materials and *Synergie Québec* for the support to initiatives in its local symbioses. Guidelines 3 and 4, in particular, deal with the emergence of start-ups and the growth of SMEs.

“Every day, the fascinating world of advanced materials propels Québec toward a greener, more sustainable future. Like critical and strategic minerals, advanced materials provide an essential pillar for a decarbonized energy transition while promoting the ever-expanding role of a circular economy in our society.”

Marie-Pierre Ippersiel, PhD, President and CEO, PRIMA Québec ([2035 Roadmap](#))

2.2.3 Tourism

Circularity represents a strategic approach that could enable the tourism sector to reduce its environmental impacts via waste, pollution and CO₂ emissions. Internationally, the UN Tourism [Global Tourism Plastics Initiative](#) and the [Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector](#) are providing frameworks for action.

“The extensive and transversal value chain of tourism offers numerous opportunities to think how can we make longer, better, more circular use of the materials and products that we utilize to deliver our service, creating value and partnerships, and bringing landfill waste as close to zero as possible. Successfully transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient tourism model through the application of circular economy principles will depend on active public–private collaboration and partnerships, inter-governmental cooperation, effective policies and policy instruments and financing.”

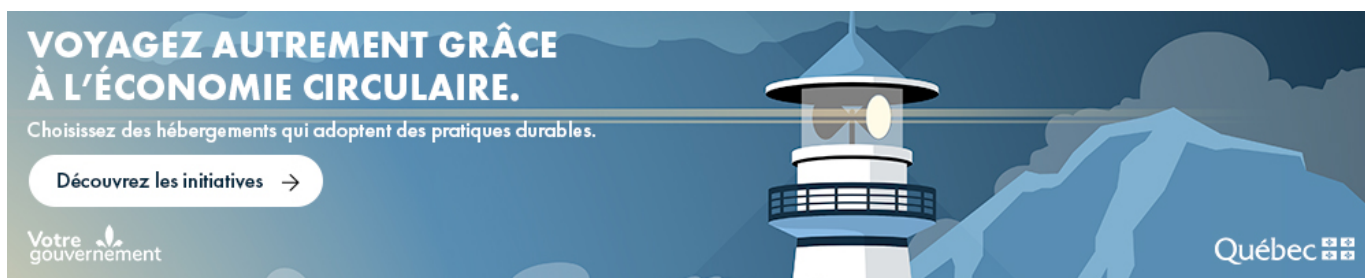
[UN Tourism](#)

In its report titled [Sustainable Development – Training Needs Analysis](#), the *Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en tourisme* (CQRHT)¹⁴ aims to “present an analysis of training needs for the tourism industry’s workforce in order to help accelerate the green transition in a context as uncertain as it is unpredictable under the effects of climate change”.

The comments shared by some experts emphasize the importance of the CE and the growing interest in it. What emerges from the analysis is that it is crucial to raise the level of understanding of concepts such as the CE and to integrate sustainable development into corporate strategy, particularly to make progress in waste and resource management.

14 The *Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en tourisme* is recognized by the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* (CPMT) as a sector committee for the tourism workforce.

The *Québec Circulaire* platform lists several circular initiatives in the tourism and accommodation sector in the province. Among these, in 2022—as a result of a partnership between RECYC-QUÉBEC and the Québec Ministry of Tourism (*Ministère du tourisme*)—an ambitious CAD\$1.8 million project led by RECYC-QUÉBEC was launched to set up showcases for CE initiatives in the hospitality industry: The Travel Better Thanks to Circular Economy (*Voyagez autrement grâce à l'économie circulaire*) campaign.



This project had the following objectives in the hospitality industry:

- identify, test and disseminate CE best practices
- demonstrate the benefits of innovative CE approaches
- raise awareness and mobilize tourism businesses, customers of participating accommodations and citizens to adopt CE best practices
- promote and encourage the planning and wider adoption of CE practices by Québec accommodation businesses

Between 2023 and 2025, 13 establishments received [specialized training and support](#) to reduce waste and use resources more efficiently, with expert guidance from Stratzer and the CTTÉI, and outreach facilitated by the [Association Hôtellerie du Québec](#).

Initiatives such as the banning of single-use products, urban agriculture to supply restaurant kitchens, furniture reconditioning, recycling of used textiles and rainwater recovery are just some of the concrete actions implemented. The Travel Better Thanks to Circular Economy series of [video clips](#) present case studies. A [guide](#) (in French) has also been developed to present best practices to organizations that provide accommodation service, and a CE toolkit for Québec tourist accommodations will be released in the fall of 2025 and translated into English.



ÉCO SCÉNO: Embracing Circularity in Cultural Industries

A case study that was conducted as part of this research can be found [here](#).

3 - SHOWCASING BY STRATEGY

Some circularity strategies are well known, while others need more recognition.

3.1 Performance and Collaborative Economies

The performance economy, also known as the functional or product-as-a-service economy, is a business model based on selling the performance of a material good or service rather than the sale of the good or service itself.¹⁵ The collaborative economy (cooperation economy) is an economic model based on the circulation of resources between individuals, with or without an intermediary, through various collaborative practices.¹⁵

With a consortium of six locally based organizations, in 2021, CTTÉI spearheaded the [EFC Québec](#) initiative with the objective of experimenting with two circular strategies: the performance economy and the cooperation economy. Pilot projects were led over three years with 20 organizations to address climate change and increase business competitiveness.



EFC QUÉBEC: Key Data

- 20 organizations in 6 member regions
- 11 days of collective training with an expert and 4 days of workshops
- 1,269 hours of coaching, four days of workshops and 4 conferences in 4 additional regions in April and May 2023
- Novae Award in 2022

A methodological kit to raise awareness about the transition to performance and cooperation economies will be made available free of charge. It will include:

- an implementation guide
- 20 case studies
- a dozen tools
- video clips

Source: [EFC Québec website](#). Translated by the author

Building on this success, as of the summer of 2025, [Synergie Économique Laurentides](#) and [Symbiose Laval](#), powered by the Laval Chamber of Commerce and Industry, are launching a three-year project to accelerate the adoption of the performance and cooperation economy in businesses in the Laurentians and the city of Laval. This joint project receives CAD\$379,381 in funding from the Québec government as part of the Action-Climat Québec program, which is coordinated by the FAQDD and in line with the objectives of the 2030 [Plan for a Green Economy](#). The project offers a structured pathway, including training and support, to facilitate the integration of this approach. It also enables both regions to train experts in the performance and cooperation economy, strengthening their ability to sustain this transition in the long term.

¹⁵ Office québécois de la langue française, translated by the author.

“This project is a unique opportunity to integrate the performance and collaboration economy into Laval’s economic fabric. By helping companies rethink their business model around use rather than possession, we are encouraging the emergence of solutions that are both sustainable and profitable. It’s a strategic transformation that strengthens not only environmental resilience but also the long-term competitiveness of our regional economy.”

Jean-Sébastien Trudel

Laval Chamber of Commerce and Industry Director of Sustainable Development, *Symbiose Laval*¹⁶

3.2 Responsible Procurement

Responsible procurement is a method that takes into account environmental, social and economic considerations in procurement processes to support sustainable development.¹⁷ As major contractors, governments worldwide are expected to lead by example, and Québec is no exception. Integrating circularity criteria into its procurement policies is an important driver for the transition.

In the Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2023–2028 (GSDS), the government has committed to adopting a policy on responsible procurement by March 31, 2025. In addition, a government target for responsible purchasing is set out in the GSDS. It applies to departments and organizations subject to the [Sustainable Development Act](#) and aims to achieve 50% responsible purchasing (i.e., one in two purchases being responsible) by 2028.

The Government Procurement Centre (GPC – [Centre d’acquisitions gouvernementales](#)) uses a [sustainable development procurement policy](#), which offers purchasing groupings and makes available a number of guides, documents and links to inform its users and the public about the best practices in responsible purchasing and enables them to make more ecological and responsible choices. The GPC publishes the annual Government Procurement Plan; the 2025–2026 plan is [available online](#) (in French).

Bridging procurement efforts with the management of plastics, the 2024–2029 Strategy for the Reduction and Responsible Management of Plastics in Québec ([Stratégie de réduction et de gestion responsable des plastiques au Québec 2024–2029](#)) underlines the importance of the GPC’s role in this area.

In 2022, the Québec government also adopted the Government Procurement Strategy ([Stratégie gouvernementale des marchés publics](#)), through which all 29 public administrations were given a responsible purchasing target. Several ministries and government agencies have recently published guides and policies on this subject. The government has also set up the [Espace d’innovation des marchés publics](#), a regulatory space in which to test new approaches—needs assessment tools and contract award methods—with the aim of developing contractual rules related to the environment and the fight against climate change. It enables the [Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor](#), in collaboration with public organizations, to test various innovative measures, such as the use of preferential margins to favour certain businesses, notably those that comply with more stringent environmental standards, aboriginal businesses and social economy enterprises. It also enables the testing of new analysis tools in calls for tender, notably those based on a life cycle or CE approach to the acquisition of goods, services or construction work.

The implementation of these policies and strategies is expected to result in changes to the products and services provided by companies working with the government and may influence the broader provincial economy.

¹⁶ [EFC press release](#), translated by the author.

¹⁷ [Office québécois de la langue française](#), translated by the author.

3.3 Maintenance and Repair

Whereas maintenance refers to maintaining a product, installation or premises in good working order, repair refers to restoring a product or installation to good working order. Both strategies can extend a product's lifespan.¹⁸

The result of a concerted effort between academics and civil society organizations, the long-standing environmental nonprofit Équiterre has contributed to the inclusion of many key principles in Québec's Bill 29,¹⁹ which aims "to protect consumers against planned obsolescence and to promote the durability, repairability, and maintenance of goods."²⁰ **Bill 29, now referred to as Law 21, is the first law in North America to regulate planned obsolescence.** The sale of products designed to become obsolete is prohibited under this law, reinforcing Québécois' rights to access more durable and repairable goods. It also aims to improve consumers' right to repair, as it demands a guarantee of good working condition on various new appliances (stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, tablets and televisions).

Several of the recommendations of the brief For a Robust and Accessible Right to Repair Throughout Québec (*Pour un droit à la réparation robuste et accessible partout au Québec*), which nonprofit Équiterre submitted to the parliamentary commission in September 2023, were taken into account by the Ministry of Justice.

This 2023 brief was based on the findings of a [study](#) published earlier in 2022, the first-ever Canada-wide study on the barriers and incentives to repairing household appliances and electronics. The work was the fruit of a collaboration with academic partners, the repair community and environmental specialists, including RECYC-QUÉBEC, which produced an overview of the Québec context. It was co-authored with the Responsible Consumption Observatory (*Observatoire de la consommation responsable*) from ESG UQÀM.

Improved Access to Information



Following the adoption of Bill 29 (now Law 21),¹⁹ several tools have been put into place to better inform consumers about their right to repair, including the following:

- an [interactive map of repairers in Québec](#) (electronics and household appliances, air conditioners, and electric bicycles) resulting from a partnership between RECYC-QUÉBEC and *Protégez-Vous* magazine for product maintenance and repair
- the awareness campaign *Fais durer tes appareils*

Two ensuing regulations are set to be enforced in [2025](#) and [2026](#). However, the creation of a sustainability rating in the performance evaluation of a number of consumer products has not been included in the new law.

Other programs bridging industry and government-led initiatives have also been initiated, such as a partnership between the Retail Council of Québec (CQCD) and RECYC-QUÉBEC for the launch of the [Rebond Platform](#) pilot project, a B2B platform designed to facilitate surplus inventory in the retail sector. It aims to help companies reduce the environmental impact associated with unsold items and product returns.

¹⁸ [Office québécois de la langue française](#), translated by the author.

¹⁹ Act to protect consumers from planned obsolescence and to promote the durability, repairability and maintenance of goods (*Loi protégeant les consommateurs contre l'obsolescence programmée et favorisant la durabilité, la réparabilité et l'entretien des biens* (2023), https://www.publicationsduQuébec.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/gazette/pdf_encrypte/lois_reglements/2025F/84834.pdf).

²⁰ During consultation sessions before the Economic and Labor Committee, in the fall of 2023, in an effort by the Ministry of Justice to update the Consumer Protection Act.

4 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Both private and public economic actors in cities and regions alike have been actively seeking to implement circularity at the organizational or regional levels since 2014. This trend has strengthened over the past five years with the launch of more co-creation labs and the development of industrial synergies, which have sometimes been the first step toward the creation of CERs, such as those in the Laurentides region.

Many projects initiated over the period increasingly featured multi-stakeholder dialogue and endeavours. Given that collaboration, co-creation and systemic approaches are key principles in the implementation of circularity, experts have been consulted to inform the creation and development of circularity projects.

The following are just some initiatives that have been or are being supported by dedicated funding and investment programs:

- the Ecoleader Fund (*Fonds Écoleader*), created by the Québec government in 2018 and coordinated by the FAQDD
- the Circular Economy Fund (*Fonds économie circulaire*), a partnership between Fondation, RECYC-QUÉBEC and *Ville de Montréal* with a budget of CAD\$33 million that supports SMEs in the development of the CE
- the Less is More + Fund (*Fonds Moins c'est +*), a partnership between RECYC-QUÉBEC and La Ruche aimed at promoting innovative projects that support waste management (reduction at source, reuse and waste prevention) and have a multiplier effect
- a partnership between RECYC-QUÉBEC and *L'Esplanade* for the deployment of innovative entrepreneurial solutions that contribute to the major challenges of socio-environmental transition across Québec
- *Écoemballage+*, a program funded by MAPAQ and administered by FAQDD, offering bio-food companies subsidies for the ecodesign of recyclable food packaging and containers
- several programs in Québec City, including the Ecological Transition Accelerator (*l'Accélérateur de la transition écologique*), coordinated by FAQDD

However, a few obstacles are noteworthy:

- **Systemic reliance on waste and persisting siloed approaches.** The current approach does not address the necessary move toward more sustainable circular economic models.
 - Value chains in material-intensive industries such as agri-food, energy, construction, manufacturing and metal products have been prioritized in many governmental and funding programs.
 - While it engages the onboarding of many players, as the approach is incremental, quick and gains-focused, improving efficiency alone may be insufficient if the broader economic system continues to be based on wasteful practices.
 - There is little evidence of efforts being made to consider circular opportunities between value chains.
 - Intersectoral approaches seem to be in their early stages, perhaps mirroring the relatively promising collaborative framework advocated by the GIEC at the governmental level.
 - Decision-makers seem reluctant to promote strategies that would question the premises of the economic system in a more systematic and holistic approach.
- **The lack of funding**, especially recurring or medium-term funding, remains a definite obstacle to the transition to circularity.
- **Regional disparities.** While key actors at the local and provincial levels—such as the Québec Federation of Chambers of Commerce (*Fédération des Chambres de Commerce du Québec – FCCQ*)—act to create a ‘butterfly effect’ between the 120 local chambers of commerce and the 1,000 corporate players they represent province-wide—they have noticed variability in the implementation of circular strategies between the regions they service.



- **A lack of knowledge or understanding of circular concepts and strategies** also appears to be an obstacle to the adoption of new practices. According to the RRECQ's [Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#), a lack of experience, expertise and knowledge of the potential benefits are among the main obstacles to the expansion of the CE model. This could partly explain the recurring choice to implement end-of-life strategies, as highlighted in the September 2025 publication of the first bulletin *The Circular Economy in Québec Businesses (L'économie circulaire chez les entreprises au Québec)* by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec*: “The rarest circular economy business practices are generally those found at the beginning of the product life cycle, such as ecodesign, the collaborative economy, the functional economy, and industrial symbiosis.”²¹
- **Difficulty engaging SMEs:**
 - SMEs play a vital role in the supply chains of large companies as suppliers, distributors or partners. They stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship. However, several factors make it challenging for circularity initiatives to gain traction among them.
 - Their vast number,²² combined with their dispersal across all 17 regions of the province, small size and already busy schedules, entail significant obstacles to the effectiveness of outreach programs aiming to reach and engage with SMEs other than with dedicated hands-on coaching.
 - Dedicated financing, a skilled workforce, technical support and coaching are often difficult to come by; overlapping, contradicting or simply obsolete laws or regulations can represent obstacles at times too complex to overcome.
 - SMEs are currently predominantly active in the service sector rather than the manufacturing sector, in which many circular strategies can be implemented.
 - A shift may prove necessary.

Canada Economic Development for Québec Regions ([CED-Q](#)) is collaborating with the Conference Board of Canada and other partners on a research project focusing on the sustainability transitions of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The study addresses critical issues confronting Canadian SMEs' sustainable growth, competitiveness and longevity, and their posture in regional and international value chains, as well as their preparedness to meet the needs of large-order buyers (results are expected in 2026).

Source: Canada Economic Development for Québec Regions (CED-Q).

21 *Faits saillants, L'économie circulaire chez les entreprises au Québec (2025)*.

22 The economical fabric of the province of Québec is composed of 95% of businesses with fewer than 50 employees, and 53% of the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) have fewer than five employees. <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/fr/medias/bilan-des-pme-en-2024-levons-notre-chapeau-nos-entrepreneurs-ingenieurs-et-resilients-qui-sortent-dune-annee-difficile>

Moving Forward

In connection with SMEs, the last decade has seen a surge in interest in the creation of new, innovative businesses. A wide range of programs aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship have been launched. However, business succession is a topic that is attracting increasing attention in various forums. A June 2025 study conducted by *Repreunariat Québec*²³ confirms the resilience and robustness of transferred businesses relative to start-ups in Québec. In this context, it may be appropriate for new financial vehicles and subsidy programs to focus on this provincial situation and encourage business takeovers geared toward the integration of circularity strategies. Coaching may also target a more experienced audience, as the proportion of business buyers aged 55 and over reached 34.9% in 2022.

The survival rate of businesses in the 2015 cohort that were transferred is 98% after one year, 89% after three years and 80% after five years. By contrast, the survival rate of start-up SMEs in the same cohort is 89% after one year, 68% after three years and 57% after five years.²³

Repreunariat Québec - Étude nationale du repreunariat et des transferts d'entreprise au Québec, 2015-2022 – Le rapport détaillé, 2e édition.

“In reality, we see that there is still a clear divide between economic development and sustainable development in people’s minds, but also in the forms of support and assistance available to businesses. This divide in the way development is conceived slows down the progress of businesses and regions in many ways in achieving sustainability and circularity objectives that would otherwise strengthen Québec’s economy and position it favourably in foreign markets.”

*Synergie Québec, February 2025
Investir dans la transition vers l'économie circulaire²⁴*

In the current economic context, the forward-looking approach advocated by research seems to be more grounded in the realities of global resources and the consequences of climate change. As highlighted in [RRECQ’s Roadmap for the Transition to a Circular Economy in Québec Society 2025–2050](#), to date, the circular transformation has stalled in three main areas: 1) operational and business models; 2) system-wide partnerships among industrial sectors, regions and value chain stakeholders (e.g., competitors, suppliers and customers); 3) policy and regulation.

Perhaps the increasing adoption of the new series of ISO standards on circularity and the implementation of the digital product passport in Europe (currently scheduled for early 2027 and considered in these markets to be the lever for the CE) will mobilize the various actors in civil society to work more coherently, both within the province and across Canada—faced with the obligation to comply in order to continue exports, and thus become the Canadian catalyst for circularity in the markets.

Québec already offers a great showcase of what is possible when people work collaboratively.

²³ *Étude nationale du repreunariat et des transferts d'entreprise au Québec, 2015-2022 – Le rapport détaillé, 2e édition.*

²⁴ See the Introduction (page 3) of *Mémoire présenté dans le cadre des consultations prébudgétaires en vue du budget 2025–2026*, Synergie Québec, 2025, translated by the author.



SECTION 5

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY: IMPLEMENTING CIRCULARITY

As early as 2016, the article “Old and New Circular Economies” (*Anciennes et nouvelles économies circulaires*), from the collective work *L'Économie circulaire: Une transition incontournable*,¹ stressed that it is impossible to reduce the circular economy to a strictly economic dimension. The article also notes that “it is essential to consider that the various circular economy projects are highly heterogeneous. They can be led by individuals, groups, companies or associations. They may be driven by varied objectives: the fight against poverty, the reduction of expenses, the preservation of the environment or the pursuit of profit. The types of collectives, their organization, their vision and their objectives reflect a great diversity, and they carry within them multiple projects for tomorrow’s society.”

The social economy (SE) stakeholders in Québec implement various initiatives that widen the scope of projects employing circular strategies while generating a positive social impact. The SE ecosystem has been developing for over 35 years in Québec and has now reach new milestones in its structurization.

1 Translated by the author. Collective work initiated and published by the EDDEC Institute. The PDF and ePub formats of this book can be downloaded free of charge from www.pum.umontreal.ca/catalogue/economie_circulaire



Social Economy: A Québec Definition

“Social economy” means all the economic activities with a social purpose performed by enterprises whose operations consist, in particular, of the sale or exchange of goods or services and which are operated in accordance with the following principles:

1. *The purpose of the enterprise is to meet the needs of its members or the community.*
2. *The enterprise is not under the decision-making authority of one or more public bodies within the meaning of the Act², respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information (Chapter A-2.1).*
3. *The rules applicable to the enterprise provide for democratic governance by its members.*
4. *The enterprise aspires to economic viability.*
5. *The rules applicable to the enterprise prohibit the distribution of surplus earnings generated by its activities or provide that surplus earnings be distributed among its members in proportion to the transactions each of the members has performed with the enterprise.*
6. *The rules applicable to a legal person operating the enterprise provide that in the event of its dissolution, the enterprise’s remaining assets must devolve to another legal person sharing similar objectives.*

For the purposes of the first paragraph, a social purpose is a purpose that is not centred on monetary profit but on service to members or the community and is characterized, in particular, by an enterprise’s contribution to the well-being of its members or the community and to the creation of sustainable high-quality jobs.

A social economy enterprise is an enterprise whose activities consist, in particular, of the sale or exchange of goods or services and which is operated, in accordance with the principles set out in the first paragraph, by a cooperative, a mutual society or an association endowed with legal personality (2013, c. 22, p. 3).

Sources: [Chantier de l’économie sociale](#), legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca

“The ‘balance’ in our economy is that of a more plural economy in Québec than in the rest of North America, the result of the province’s economic socio-history. Québec’s economy is made up of not only multinational companies but also many family SMEs and a cooperative sector, and it is characterized by significant government intervention in the economy, a very active social economy sector and greater unionization than in the rest of North America. This effectively implies a balance between permitted accumulation, distribution in the form of wages and social redistribution, notably by the state in Québec’s economy.”³

Guidance from the EDDEC Institute (*Une approche socioéconomique de l’économie collaborative au Québec – Recommandations*) to the Government of Québec’s appointed working group on collaborative economy (GTEC), April 2018

² [Chapter E-1.1.1 Social Economy Act](#)

³ In 2018, researchers from the EDDEC Institute Collaborative and Performance Economy Laboratory (Lab) collaborated on the production of recommendations presented to the Government of Québec’s appointed *Groupe de travail sur l’économie collaborative* (GTEC) and participated in consultations. Several of the recommendations are referred to in the GTEC report.



1 - INTERLINKING THE SOCIAL AND CIRCULAR ECONOMIES

A detailed analysis of the evolution of the SE in Québec is presented in a book published in 2019: *Trente ans d'économie sociale au Québec – Un mouvement en chantier*.⁴ Written by Nancy Neamtan, a key figure in the development and deployment of the SE in Québec, this account traces the key milestones—from the birth of the movement with the historic *Sommet sur l'économie et l'emploi* in 1996 to the adoption in 2013 of the Social Economy Framework Act (*Loi-cadre sur l'économie sociale*) and the creation of major bodies in this ecosystem, including the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* (*Chantier*) in 1999 as well as *Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire* (TIESS) in 2013.

The *Chantier* is a nonprofit organization with the mission to promote the SE as an integral part of Québec's plural economy, and in so doing, it contributes to the democratization of the economy and emergence of this development model that is based on the values of solidarity, equity and transparency. The *Chantier* plays an essential role in the building of a plural economy that produces returns for the community and protects the common good as it relates directly to communities' needs and aspirations.

The SE ecosystem is key in the economy of the province of Québec. The *Chantier*, which collaborates with 22 *Pôles d'Économie Sociale* in all the regions of the province, states, “**Québec's social economy comprises over 11,200 collective enterprises with overall sales exceeding CAD\$47.8 billion, or more than the construction, aeronautic, and mining industries combined.**” Over 220,000 people work in the SE every day in all sectors of activity, from retail to emerging technologies. In April 2025, the *Chantier* launched the akcel.ca online platform, a province-wide directory of social economy enterprises (SEEs). As of summer 2025, this new site enables Quebecers to discover over 4,300 local SEEs organized into 23 categories and promotes local purchasing.

The SEEs are, by nature, agile and have considerable innovative power, as they can explore sectors that may initially seem less promising in economic terms but are beneficial in social terms.

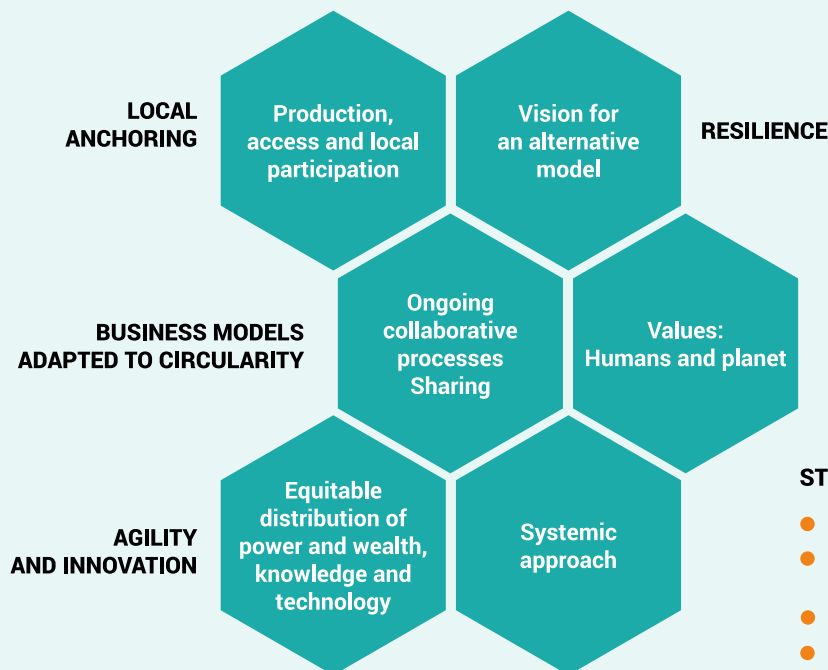
The fundamental role of the SE movement in the face of the ecological challenge is to propose and implement another economic logic, another model of development that puts the planet and people at the heart of development and not at the service of profit. SSEs can and must ensure a greater presence in the green economy, whether in the production of renewable energies or in other sectors linked to environmental protection or through a circular economy approach

—Nancy Neamtan (2019)⁵

4 Published by Groupe Fides. Nancy Neamtan was president and CEO of *Chantier de l'économie sociale* from 1996 to 2013. She is recognized in Québec and internationally for her role and expertise in the growth of community economic development, the social economy, social finance and social innovation in Québec.

5 Translated by the author. Neamtan, N. *Épilogue – Le défi écologique*, pages 231–232.

Bridges Between the Social and Circular Economies



The social economy corresponds with and complements several characteristics of the circular economy.

Social economy enterprises focus not solely on material flows but also on social impacts and inequalities.

Source: Summary by the author of several studies

Key Facts

- There are over 100 SEEs in Québec whose business model is based, in whole or in part, on the circular economy.
- SEEs can be found in all regions, in both urban and rural areas.
- SEEs operate in a wide variety of fields, from textiles and electronics to mobility and food.
- Québec has a historic concentration of SSEs specializing in the resale of used clothing and household goods: *ressourceries*.
- In recent years, new SEEs have emerged in the circular economy, often driven by groups of citizens seeking to reduce the waste of resources or looking for lifestyles based on sharing.

As an illustration, Desjardins is one of Québec's first SEEs. Founded 125 years ago, the cooperative has left its mark on the history of collective economic development. It has, over the 2021–2025 period, strongly invested in the development of circular economy initiatives, such as CERIEC's ELEC.

Social economy enterprises are a vital and powerful link in the transition to a circular economy throughout Québec and in various priority sectors, such as construction, textiles, plastics, and bio-food.

White paper (Mémoire présenté dans le cadre des consultations prébudgétaires en vue du budget 2025-2026). Synergie Québec, 2025⁶

6 [L'économie sociale, un maillon fort de la transition](#), page 4. Translated by the author.



2 - KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY



The nonprofit **TIESS** is a social innovation organization that supports the SE driving forces in Québec in their innovative practices through knowledge transfer in order to contribute to the socioecological transition.

In 2023, it published [Introduction to the Social and Circular Economy](#) (*Une introduction à l'économie sociale et circulaire*), in which it underlines that the development of the circular economy deserves to be considered in conjunction with the SE ecosystem, not only because SEEs have a positive impact on communities but also because they are a real asset in amplifying the shift towards a resource-efficient economy.⁷ This introductory report further enhances that the primary mission of SEEs (cooperatives, nonprofit organizations or mutuals) is to serve the common good and enhance the well-being of individuals and communities.

[Several complementary tools](#) have emerged from TIESS's work that aim at understanding how SEEs working in circularity operate, identify their challenges and find solutions to strengthen their projects. An online toolbox includes the identification of business models; summary sheets presenting strengths, weaknesses and drivers of change; resource lists, and strategies to make the agrifood and construction sectors more circular. Videos produced in the context of the massive open online course (MOOC) on circular economy proposed by the RRECQ explains in more detail [the links between SE and CE](#) (in French) and [the new business models and opportunities](#) (in French).

Resource Bounty for Cooperatives

Research plays an important role in the comprehension of the interlinkage between the social and circular economies. Several studies have been released over the 2021–2025 period, and a good number of Quebecer, Canadian and international resources can be found on the [Institut international des coopératives Alphonse-et-Dorimène-Desjardins-HEC\) PortailCoop](#), arguably the world's largest digital library on cooperatives and mutuals.

A Social Economy International Event Held in Montréal

As part of the United Nations' International Year of Cooperatives, the [ICA CCR Global Research Conference 2025](#) was held in Montréal under the theme "Intercooperation for our Common Futures." The circular economy was one of the research themes addressed, illustrating the growing interest in the convergence between the cooperative economy, the social economy and circularity issues.



ICA CCR
2025 Global
Research Conference

Several sessions highlighted this articulation, including Circular Economy and Complexity: Modelling Strategies for a More Just, Co-operative and Circular World; Advancing Circular Economy; Governance of Circular Economy; and Circular Social Economy and Cooperativism. These contributions recognized the transformative potential of the circular economy to advance social justice, environmental sustainability and shared prosperity, in close connection with the values and practices of the cooperative movement.

7 Translated by the author

3 - A STRENGTHENING ECOSYSTEM

3.1 The 2025 Social Economy Summit: An Historic Event



[The 2025 Social Economy Summit](#) was initiated by the Chantier. Preliminary work and meetings with strategic partners across the province occurred over several months in the run-up to the two-day event, with the aim of building a collective vision and complementary objectives on various themes: food, the elderly, the environment, collective real estate, equity and the workplace, local governance, the next generation of entrepreneurs, and culture. Diverse perspectives and social and environmental shift were the cross-cutting themes of discussions during the event.

The socioecological transition was one of the two cross-cutting themes of discussions during the 2025 Social Economy Summit.

Such an event, bringing together in one place nearly 1,500 Québec players in the SE, had not happened for some 20 years: the last (and first) summit of this kind was held in 1996 in Québec City (*Sommet de l'économie et de l'emploi*). With that in mind, **multiple declarations and key announcements were made during the event by several stakeholders**, including the following:

- Investissement Québec announced the appointment of a [Social Economy Department](#), whose role will be exclusively to support SE companies in their financing efforts. This measure is designed to better respond to the realities of the collective model and facilitate access to economic levers, although it did not bring new financing at this stage.
- A new fund to develop community housing capacity was also launched, funded by the [Community Housing Transformation Centre](#) (*Centre de transformation du logement Communautaire*—CAD\$3 million) and the [Desjardins Caisse d'économie solidaire](#) (CAD\$1 million). The fund aims to strengthen the community's expertise to achieve the ambitious goal of 20% nonprofit housing by 2050.
- An official [declaration](#) was issued at the end of the event, putting forward the 2050 vision of the *Chantier* and SE stakeholders of the province.

Together we invite changemakers, social groups and political parties to take up the cause and build a truly inclusive, democratic, transformative and environmentally friendly economy. This kind of economy already exists – we just need to take it to the next level. Collectively, we are committed to the vision of an economy that works for us.

[Our Vision Towards 2050: An economy That Works for Us](#)
Chantier



- In a [landmark manifesto](#), the youth wing of the *Chantier* ([Aile jeunesse](#)) proposed five guidelines to steer a systemic transformation: repoliticize the SE, adopt decolonial and antioppressive practices, act on a territorial scale, break with the commodification of essential services and restore meaning to work. This positioning calls on Québec society to go beyond neoliberalism. By presenting the SE as a fully-fledged political project, it offers an invitation to rethink the current economic model in order to set the movement on a transformative political path.

The consistency of the movement does not come from the similarity between our legal structures but from the conviction that essential needs must be demerchandized. What binds us together is the political project we are pursuing together. The target of 20% off-market housing is not an end in itself. It's a stance that says it's absurd to have to go into debt to have the right to housing, food, heating and healthcare; and even more absurd that people should get rich off it. Our political project is the demarketing of life.

Excerpt, Closing speech, Lylou Sehili,
Copresident *Aile Jeunesse*,
*Chantier*⁸

In the fall of 2025, the *Chantier* will publish the report *Proceedings of the Summit – An Economy That Works for Us*. This central document will bring together the summit's major discussions: plenary sessions, thematic sessions, commitments, declarations and more. Meanwhile, 16 [session summaries](#), eight [thematic notebooks](#) and [statements](#) made at the 2025 Social Economy Summit are available for consultation on the open-source knowledge-sharing platform [Praxis](#)⁹ (French only).

3.2 Scaling Up

The **resilience of SEEs** makes the SE an interesting avenue in uncertain economic times. [A report on the SE in Québec](#) by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (2013) indicates that **cooperatives have nearly double the survival rate of private businesses** at various time frames, which underlies the resilience of the SE:

- After 3 years: cooperatives 75%, private businesses 48%
- After 5 years: cooperatives 62%, private businesses 35%
- After 10 years: cooperatives 44%, private businesses 20%

Nonetheless, there is a risk that innovative circularity initiatives implemented by SEEs—in their mission to meet local needs, often in sectors that initially represent no obvious economic outlet—will be taken over by traditional capitalist economic players, thereby withdrawing resources from these SEEs as well as any social benefits derived from their innovation when scaled up.

8 Translated by the author

9 Praxis is a platform for discovery and sharing of knowledge for a more collaborative and open society.

3.2.1 Collaboration Is a Key Characteristic of Both Circular and Social Economies

In her book, Nancy Neamtan¹⁰ highlights that *one of the key factors in the growth of SE in Québec has been the establishment of an ecosystem made up of local and regional development structures, industry networks, financing tools, training, research, marketing, public policies and national and international organizations. She adds that it is all these components, linked by concertation and collaboration spaces, that have been essential and have contributed to development.*¹¹



With that in mind, the newly created network *Réseau des entreprises d'économie sociale et circulaire du Québec* (REÉSQ) aims to help organizations join forces and gain representativity at the government level to strengthen the circularity of the province's economy by focusing on resource management.

The rationale behind this collaborative initiative is to contribute to maximizing the benefits of the circular economy for Québec society as the cofounders ponder that *at present, economic incentives do not favour economic circularity, and the results of emerging public policies are expected to make Québec dependent on global markets and therefore vulnerable to geopolitical upheavals.*¹² The REÉSQ is now an active member of the *Pôle en économie circulaire du Québec* (see Section 4).

3.2.2 Major Cities Build on the Social Economy Forces

Historically, SE stakeholders' actions to explore new avenues have been initiated in response to the real on-site needs and aspirations of communities. Keeping on with this spirit, in the spring of 2025, eight major Québec cities—*Ville de Montréal*, Gatineau, Laval, Lévis, Longueuil, *Ville de Québec*, Sherbrooke and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu—[have joined forces](#) to strengthen the resilience of their economies by building on the distinctive strengths of the SE. The culmination of this consultation process, which began in 2024 at the initiative of *Ville de Montréal* and the *Chantier*, has made it easier for municipalities to procure from SEEs, thanks to the sharing of tools and practices.

The birth of the REÉSQ over the past year is a sign that the ecosystem is taking shape. It also highlights the needs—and intentions—of SEEs to scale up their activities. In this regard, the TIESS recently published a [Scaling support kit](#), offering tools for SEEs to plan their growth for greater impact.

History shows that when the social economy reaches a certain scale, the impact of the organizations that are part of it is not limited to improving the lives of their customers but also contributes to the well-being of the whole of the province of Québec. The future will resemble what we make of it, and with this declaration we affirm that we will exercise our leadership so that, by 2050, we can, with the help of new tools that we will equip ourselves with, contribute to changing the economic logic to the benefit of the aspirations of all communities in all regions.

*Vision 2050: Towards an economy That Works for Us*¹³
Declaration at the Sommet de l'économie sociale, 2025

10 *Trente ans d'économie sociale au Québec – Un mouvement en chantier.*

11 *Ça prend un écosystème pour construire une économie sociale*, page 215, and *Épilogue*, page 227. Translated by the author.

12 [Press release](#) (in French), translated by the author

13 Translated by the author

3.3 Initiatives Are Blooming

Many projects have been developed over the studied period of this report. Below is a rapid overview of initiatives in the residual management, electronics and textile sectors.

3.3.1 Residual Management

SEEs play an important role in implementing reuse and repair strategies for consumer goods.



Led by the Chantier de l'économie sociale as part of the Social Economy Support Program ([Programme de soutien à l'économie sociale](#))¹⁴ funded by the MEIE and the MELCCFP, 14 projects have, since 2023, successfully opened new opportunities in the residual materials management sector, highlighting the essential role they can play in the transition to circularity. This has facilitated clearing the way for SEEs to develop new offers, increase their self-sufficiency and develop new means of self-financing.

A [full report](#) highlighting the many positive learnings and impacts of this endeavour has been published in the fall of 2025. Although this is still in the development stage, SEEs also contribute to the **recovery of strategic and critical minerals** essential for the energy transition.

3.3.2 Electronics

INSERTECH

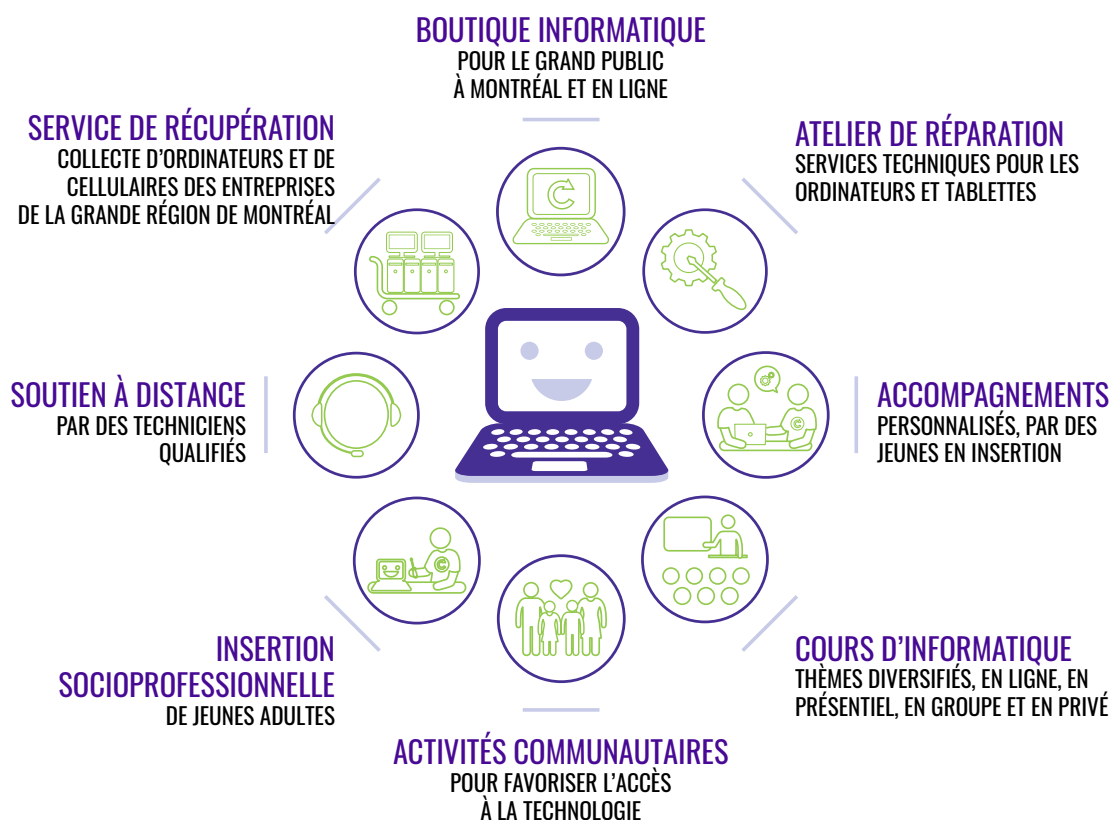
In the electronics sector, Insertech has adapted its business model to serve a wider geographical area while responding specifically to local needs.¹⁵ Insertech is a nonprofit social integration organization created in 1997 whose mission is to train unemployed young adults to refurbish IT equipment collected from other organizations and give a second life to unused materials such as computers, cellphones and tablets.¹⁶

Circular economy strategies: Reconditioning, responsible procurement and consumption, rental and maintenance and repair.

14 Volet 2A : Projets des secteurs stratégiques en économie sociale, Projet : Développer des solutions visant la diminution des matières enfouies ou incinérées au Québec

15 Source: Communication with Insertech, June 2025

16 A complete case study about Insertech can be found in the Transitioning to a circular economy 2014-2020 – Learning from the Québec experience [report](#)



Starting in 2020, with the arrival of Marie-France Bellemare as executive director, Insertech began a strategic thinking exercise centred around the question: “How can the organization increase the societal contribution it has been generating over 25 years of existence?” Various scenarios for scaling up, each with a range of potential impacts, were examined, aiming at helping to structure refurbishment, repair and resale activities across the province of Québec while maintaining the organization’s social impact mission. The decision was made to broaden the geographic scope of the organization’s activities by supporting the development of regional ecosystems that align with Insertech’s mission of democratizing technology and promoting workforce integration, all while leveraging its expertise.

In 2022, Insertech received CAD\$200,000 in funding from the federal Investment Readiness Program of Employment and Social Development Canada, administered by the Chantier, in order to strategically structure the scaling up of its activities.

Supported by various experts, the work was divided into four components between 2022 and 2024:

1. Conduct an overview of the reuse and repair of IT equipment across Québec.
2. Analyze cost structures and develop a financial feasibility study for replicating and scaling Insertech’s business model.
3. Document—and improve—processes.
4. Register the Insertech trademark and develop templates for cooperation agreements.

A strategic plan based on the recommendations and results of this work was unanimously accepted during Insertech annual retreat in 2022, which brought together all teams and members of its board of directors.



A pilot project started in 2023 with the Montréal-Nord Hub to serve its community and should result in the opening of an Insertech satellite in the Montréal-Nord neighbourhood in 2026. This satellite aims to offer local opportunities for professional integration for young adults and provide the community with refurbished computers and affordable technical services, as well as activities related to digital footprint awareness. Funding from the *Ville de Montréal* of CAD\$ 200,000 (2024) made it possible to prepare the implementation, mobilize the community, conduct a market study and search for an office location.

With three-year funding from the Québec Climate Action Program ([Action climat Québec](#)), Insertech began a project in the spring of 2025 in three regions—Laval, Montérégie, and Bas-St-Laurent, where activities to raise awareness about responsible digital practices will be performed. Work with local stakeholders on the circularity of the IT sector in their region will be done in collaboration with the CTTÉI to establish a situational overview and define the existence and treatment of resource deposits.

Insertech's environmental and economic impact ([2023–2024 annual report](#)) is highlighted below:

- +100% in online sales
 - +25%: Appliances reconditioned and sold to a new user from the previous year
 - 76%: Average reuse rate for equipment recovered from partner companies
 - 174,530 tonnes of GHG emissions avoided through reuse and recycling
 - 13,459 units of equipment reconditioned, almost double from 2020
 - CAD\$2.6 million in revenue
-

3.3.3 Textile



The textile industry offers great potential for the implementation of circularity (see Section 4), and Montréal-headquartered Renaissance plays a major role in its development.

Since 2024, Renaissance has collaborated with several partners to create the *Centre d'impact Maurice Duplessis*, [unveiled in 2025](#). Representing an investment of CAD\$ 45 million, the 160,000 sq. ft. space will host secondhand clothes shops (*Espace Fripe*, *Kilo*) and the Renaissance Employment assistance centre (*Centre d'Aide à l'Emploi Renaissance*), which is expected to welcome nearly 200 participants in the organization's professional insertion program.

The Maurice Duplessis Impact Center will help achieve the combined goal of diverting 30,000 tonnes of goods from landfill by 2030. The centre is planned to house a facility dedicated to research and development activities, with a particular focus on textile recycling. As part of its program [Défis Innovation](#), aiming at reducing textile waste and financially supported by *Ville de Montréal*, Renaissance is working in collaboration with Vestechpro, an [apparel research and innovation center](#) at *Cégep Marie-Victorin* (Montréal), to equip itself with a line to transform textiles for recycling.

This line will consist of a semi-automated sorting process to boost reuse, based on the specific needs of buyers, and a sorting process by material and colour for unsold items. Following these two sorting stages, the line would be equipped with a defibration unit to transform the inputs into fibre, a recycled material that can then be resold for new outlets. With this project, Renaissance intends to offer a concrete solution for the treatment of unsold textiles at the end of their life cycle and thus minimize textile landfill locally and abroad.



3.4 Unique Financing Model

=fiducie du Chantier de l'économie sociale

Created in 2007 and dedicated solely to collective enterprises, the *Chantier de l'économie sociale Trust* (Chantier Trust) is the first patient trust dedicated to SE financing.

Its primary mission has been to foster the expansion and development of SEEs by increasing their access to financing and enhancing their capitalization. For 18 years, the *Chantier Trust* has [invested](#) over CAD\$224 million to support 383 collective projects through its patient capital loans and specialized funds. The creation of these distinctive financial products was made possible by the trust of its 15 investment partners.

The [Réseau d'investissement social du Québec](#) is yet another financing tool of the *Chantier*. Established in 1997, this venture capital fund fosters the creation, growth and long-term stability of SEEs by supporting innovative initiatives that drive social progress and development in communities throughout Québec.

In summer of 2024, the *Fonds de solidarité FTQ*, *Fondaction* and the *Gouvernement du Québec* (through *Investissement Québec*) invested for the third time in the *Chantier Trust* with CAD\$55 million. This capitalization offers an additional vector towards a scale shift in the SE, particularly as the maximum investment for [real estate projects](#) has been increased from CAD\$1.5 million to CAD\$2.5 million, and from CAD\$250,000 to CAD\$400,000 for operations optimization.



4 - FIRST NATIONS IN THE SOCIAL AND CIRCULAR ECONOMIES

Results of a [research project led by RRECQ members](#) regarding different ways of defining cooperation in Québec and Canada, including a summary of the research project [Cooperatives, Commons and Indigenous Perspectives: Three Approaches to Circularity](#), published in 2023, are available on [RRECQ's website](#). The article introduces an Atkimekw perspective to circularity put forward by Karine Awashish, a PhD student in sociology at *Université Laval* and cofounder of the Coop Nitaskinan. This article presents a reflection on the circular economy from an Indigenous perspective. Drawing on the cycle of the seasons and the teachings of nature, it reminds us that Indigenous peoples perceive the economy as a living, circular and relational system based on reciprocity, cooperation and sustainability. While dominant approaches to the circular economy are often limited to production and consumption mechanisms, the Indigenous perspective integrates the social and cultural dimensions of economic dynamics.

The Atikamekw concept of *pimatisiwin*, like *Buen Vivir* (living well or good living) in Latin America, embodies a way of being in harmony with the living, the land and future generations. The Coop Nitaskinan, an Indigenous collective enterprise cited as an example in the article, embodies this vision. The cooperative integrates principles of self-determination, circularity and territorial cooperation into its operations. This cooperative dynamic is based on circles of dialogue (democracy), economic circularity (relationships) and the circulation of resources and knowledge (redistribution). The economy is conceived of as a network of reciprocal, interdependent exchanges, generator of meaning and collective well-being. This approach, both ancestral and innovative, invites us to rethink our economic models in depth.

First Nations Cooperative Movement is Structuring

During the [Fifth ICA CCR Global Research Conference](#) (Montréal, July 2025), a [workshop](#) was scheduled to develop an International Network for Indigenous Co-operatives. It was organized by the Winnipeg- and Nunavut-based [Arctic Co-operatives Ltd.](#)—a service federation owned and controlled by over 30 community-based cooperative businesses across the Canadian Arctic—and [La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec](#). Participants were invited to share their experiences, discuss Indigenous cooperatives and identify actions needed to support an effective global network. A report will be issued in the fall of 2025, and follow-up discussions will ensue in the same year.



5 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The 2025 Summit on Social Economy was a key event for the province of Québec. [The Québec National Assembly adopted a motion](#) recognizing the importance of the SE sector and affirming the intention to be inspired by the Summit's results for building a resilient, inclusive and sustainable Québec for 2050.

The work of the Summit in developing public policy is reflected in the Fourth Government Action Plan for the Social Economy ([Plan d'action gouvernemental en économie sociale 2025-2030](#)) unveiled in July 2025 by the MEIE. The report states that *by their very nature, SEEs act for the common good and play a central role in responding to societal challenges. Whether it is the development of the circular economy, access to affordable, quality housing, food autonomy and security, or home care for seniors, the contribution of these enterprises is essential. Thanks to tailored, profitable, and efficient business models, they actively contribute to the development and vitality of communities.*¹⁷ The proposed program emphasizes that the SE represents a particularly significant lever for the development of the circular economy in the province.

The SE is dear to the heart of Québec society. The results of a survey conducted in 2023 by the *Chantier* and the 22 [Pôles d'économie sociale](#) reveals that more than three-quarters of Quebeckers have a high level of confidence in nonprofit organizations (79%) and cooperatives (75%). Conversely, only 40% have confidence in multinationals and large corporations.

However, links between SE and regions need to be strengthened to implement locally the strategies that will lead to more circularity and increasingly sustainable communities.

Nancy Neamtan mentions in her 2019 book *Trente ans d'économie sociale au Québec*, “More than ever, we need to put down roots in local communities, ensure the active participation of as many people as possible, make room for a diversity of strategies and actors, and fight a constant battle to ensure that democracy in our companies and organizations is more than just a concept but a daily reality.” She also underscores, “We must continue to build and strengthen an increasingly robust ecosystem (...). We must be able to scale up while strengthening our regional roots, ensuring the presence of regional ecosystems capable of supporting emerging initiatives and bringing them to a level where they can scale up as needed.”¹⁸

Collective enterprises do not seek to maximize profit but rather to manage collective wealth: This way of rethinking economic logic clearly appeals to Quebecers

— Béatrice Alain, General Manager, Chantier¹⁹

¹⁷ *Des retombées au service de la société et des communautés*, page 30, Axe 4. Translated by the author.

¹⁸ Neamtan. *Trente ans d'économie sociale au Québec*, pages 236 and 256. Translated by the author.

¹⁹ « *Les entreprises collectives ne cherchent pas à maximiser le profit, mais bien à gérer une richesse collective: Cette façon de repenser la logique économique plaît clairement aux Québécois* ». Adapted from [the publication of the 2023 survey](#). Translated by the author.



However, the links between the SE and the circular economy would benefit from being forged more closely. Indeed, a common critique of the SE is that mainstream circular economy models are overly technocratic and focus primarily on technological or material resource flows—neglecting key social issues such as equity or community well-being, which are central to the SSE approach. For instance, in their research paper, [Ziegler et al. \(2023\)](#) argue that many circular economy frameworks lack deep consideration for societal allocation and justice, devolving redistribution and governance to market mechanisms rather than fostering democratic participation and solidarity. “The role and potential of the social economy in the creation of a just and sustainable circular economy are rendered invisible by a conception of the circular economy that is focused only on the environment–economy relationship.”²⁰

Whereas the six scenarios put forward in the 2021 Québec Circular Gap Report seem to have somewhat overlooked incorporating the SE into the pursuit of a higher circularity rate for the province, in its [2022 policy brief](#),²¹ the OECD attempts to clarify the active role that the SE can play in the transition to a circular economy. Among other key messages, the brief states, “Social economy organisations can contribute to circular business models based on proximity and collaboration, two elements that are critical to organis[ing] circular activities and value chains at the level of a given territory through partnerships among local actors and to further community engagement.”

In the coming years, as suggested by the OECD, Québec would benefit from harnessing the scaling strategies developed by SE actors to accelerate the transition towards a circular and inclusive economy.

20 Rafael Ziegler, Thomas Bauwens, Michael J. Roy, Simon Teasdale, Ambre Fourier, Emmanuel Raufflet.

[Embedding circularity: Theorizing the social economy, its potential, and its challenges](#). Ecological Economics, Volume 214, 2023, Article 107970.

21 OECD/European Commission (2022), *Policy brief on making the most of the social economy's contribution to the circular economy*, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development Paper No. 2022/01. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/e9eaa313-en>



SECTION 6

ENHANCED AWARENESS

Over the 2021–2025 period, the outreach of success stories in circular economy (CE) have increased and reached wide audiences through, for example, the [QuébecCirculaire.org](https://www.quebeccirculaire.org) hub and its yearly [Circular Initiatives Contest](#). Training initiatives such as summer schools, college and university programs, professional development, continuing education, and online courses have played a key role in connecting knowledge with practice.

1 - STRUCTURING A COMMON LANGUAGE

Researchers and practitioners identified the need to “speak the same language” very early on as a condition to co-construct a path to circularity.¹ The initial Québec definition and chart of a circular economy were co-constructed as early as 2016 by several key stakeholders from diverse economic sectors in the *Pôle de concertation en économie circulaire du Québec* (see Section 4).



In 2022–2023, the RRECQ and HEC Montréal’s *Chaire de gestion du secteur de l’énergie* contributed to defining 120 circularity-related concepts as part of the [lexicon](#) led by the *Office québécois de la langue française* (OQLF)². In its first year of publication, this lexicon ranked as the fifth most consulted lexicon of the linguistic office (out of 60).

This lexicon has two main goals: to set a solid scientific foundation for key circularity-related concepts and to foster its diffusion and use by stakeholders and the public alike.

¹ Refer to Section 4 of the *Transitioning to a Circular Economy (2014–2020)* – Learning from the Québec Experience report.

² Alongside specialists from RECYC-QUÉBEC, Éco Entreprises Québec and the *Ministère de l’Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs*

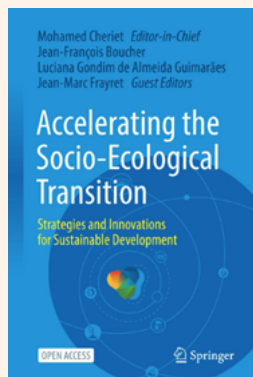


2 - REACHING OUT TO CIVIL SOCIETY

The 2021–2025 period witnessed the intensification of communication on and around circularity to wider audiences in several forms and formats. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to changing public perceptions concerning the need for a transition to a circular economy and to developing swift and cost-effective ways to reach a diversity of audiences.

2.1 Growing Internet Presence

Webinars and online conferences about circularity by various stakeholders have blossomed.³ For 2023–2024 alone, the RRECQ hosted 42 circular economy webinars, reaching a total of over 1,700 participants. Along the same lines, the ELEC Construction Lab organized a series of [eight webinars](#) (in French) in spring 2024 to transfer the results and knowledge from its 19 projects.



The book *Accelerating the Socio-Ecological Transition*, written by researchers at the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Operationalization of Sustainable Development (*Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche en opérationnalisation du développement durable - CIRODD*), summarizes more than 10 years of interdisciplinary research on socioecological transition in Québec. It proposes concrete strategies, operational tools and innovations to address the major challenges of sustainable development. Among the many issues explored, one chapter is devoted to the circular economy.

The book can be consulted [online](#) free of charge.

2.2 Increasing Network Opportunities

Researchers and practitioners have networked in diverse arenas, including [ACFAS's](#)⁴ annual congress, [Entretiens Jacques Cartier](#), [AMERICANA](#) and [Salon des teq](#). Among the regular, ever-increasing number of conferences, workshops and events on or about circularity, the [Assises Québécoises de l'économie circulaire](#) (Assises⁵) has developed from 400 participants in 2018 and on-line in 2021, to 600 in-person participants in 2023. While the representation from the nonprofit sector or municipalities remained similar between the 2021 and 2023 editions, the number of private companies increased from 14% to 26%.⁶

In 2025, the Assises were combined with the [Second Canadian Circular Economy Summit](#) (CCES 2025). The combined events reached a total registration of 970 Canadian and international delegates “to share best practices, discuss cutting edge solutions, and build new partnerships to drive Canada towards a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future.”⁷

3 Too many to list

4 French Canadian Association for the Advancement of Science (*Association Canadienne-Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences*)

5 Organized by RECYC-QUÉBEC

6 Source: Communications with RECYC-QUÉBEC

7 https://www.circulareconomysummit.ca/files/ugd/1e0592_9febfa40fd474b638ddc46d222e69921.pdf



In Montréal: CCES 2025

The second biannual CCES was held in April 2025 in the Province of Québec.

Co-construction: The CCES 2025 was a collaborative effort between cohosts CELC and the Circular Innovation Council ([CIC](#)), as well as *Ville de Montréal*, CERIEC, the RRECQ and RECYC-QUÉBEC. A Planning Committee made up of 12 organizations provided diverse perspectives.

Attendance: There were 970 registrants representing 589 organizations from diverse sectors and industries, alongside the public sector. This represents a significant increase from the first edition (2023, Toronto) which gathered 465 delegates from 262 organizations.

Program: Over 180 speakers presented in 57 sessions. Notes can be consulted via Appendix C of the [Event Summary Report](#), and sessions can be viewed on the dedicated [YouTube channel](#).

Assises québécoises de l'économie circulaire:

Guided by the theme “Experience the Circular Economy Through Your Five Senses,” RECYC-QUÉBEC invited delegates to explore impactful circular initiatives. Participants embarked on a journey where they could witness the circular economy firsthand, hear insightful stories from visionary partners, taste and smell circular foods and products and physically interact with innovative solutions and their tangible results.

Circular Initiatives Awards: For its fifth edition, *Québec Circulaire* celebrated [six groundbreaking Québec-based initiatives](#) across various sectors, industries and issue areas. It was announced that a new category dedicated to Montréal-specific initiatives will be in place in 2026.

Source: [CCES 2025 Event Summary Report](#), CELC

Conferences and symposia alike have widened their target publics, both geographically and by target public. Several regions of the province spearheaded outreach efforts to accelerate the transition to circularity on their territories—including the *Lanaudière* region, which launched its Regional Circular Economy Summit ([Sommet régional en économie circulaire Lanaudière](#); since 2022), and Victoriaville with its symposium “Circularity, a Competitive Advantage for Manufacturers” ([La circularité, un avantage compétitif pour les industriels](#)) in 2023.

Locally, activities promoting circular science literacy have also been targeted especially to student communities by the RRECQ in collaboration with [BistroBrain](#) in Montréal. Globally, an increasing number of civil society stakeholders as well as academics are also actively participating in international conferences, such as the [World Circular Economy Forum](#).

2.3 Advertising and Ecolabelling

Environmental labelling—which has been widely used in Europe, particularly in France, for many years—helps to better inform the public about purchasing options, as well as sorting practices. It helps limit the impact of products on the environment by facilitating their delivery to the appropriate postconsumer management channels. The MELCCFP has produced a [directory](#) that includes the vast majority of ecolabels currently on the market.

In its consultation document *2024–2029 Strategy for the Reduction and Responsible Management of Plastics in Québec* ([Stratégie de réduction et de gestion responsable des plastiques au Québec – 2024-2029](#)),⁸ the government intends to require ecolabelling for certain products made of plastic or containing plastic components in order to facilitate civic action and improve recovery and recycling rates for postconsumer plastics.

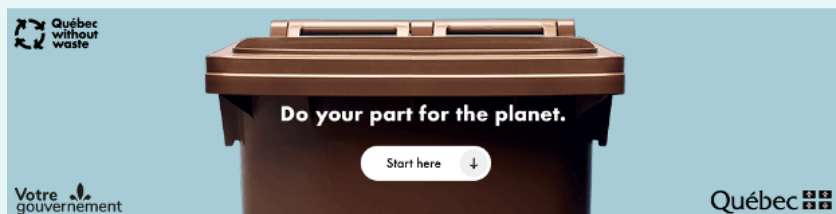
8 In “Action 3.1.2: Informer et sensibiliser les consommateurs, en exigeant l'écoétiquetage de certains produits,” p. 20.



The positive impact of these ecolabelling measures would probably be enhanced if measures are also developed to promote stricter advertising rules in terms of environmental messages. Again, France has been proactive for years in this regard, and advertising rules are strictly controlled. The long-standing nonprofit Equiterre questioned the power of advertising on consumption in its [report](#) published in 2025.

Compelling Advertising Campaigns

Other awareness-raising online or TV campaigns have been designed, targeting specific circular strategies, such as recycling (*Éco Entreprises Québec*) or repair (RECYC-QUÉBEC). Trade or association publications have also started creating or structuring content related to circularity.



2.4 Greater Media Exposure

The media coverage following the launch in 2021 of the first [Circularity Gap Report Québec](#), combined with numerous presentations of the report, gave traction to circularity with various audiences.



The [Circular Economy Month](#)

A 2024 Canada-wide public awareness campaign led by the [Circular Innovation Council](#) established the Circular Economy Month in October every year. This initiative invites Canadians to learn about the circular economy, celebrate individual and collective efforts, embrace circular solutions and encourage others to act. It contributes to showcasing local initiatives at the provincial level, provides public resources and proposes daily themes, such as Construction Mondays or Plastics Thursdays.

This initiative is gaining traction in Québec.

Press articles or editorials in the main francophone media ([La Presse](#), [Le Devoir](#), [Les Affaires](#), [Le Journal de Montréal](#) and [Le Journal de Québec](#)) regularly refer to circularity, and newspapers regularly feature opinions and open letters.



Key industry press outlets and websites have also extensively covered circularity-related topics, such as the magazine [3RVe](#). In 2024 alone, CERIEC's work was featured in around 60 articles and interviews in specialized and general media outlets.

Traditional mass media coverage includes participation and programs on the internet-based [Savoir.media](#),⁹ radio programs with regular chronicles (such as on Radio-Canada) and participation of Daniel Normandin, Director of the CERIEC, in Télé-Québec's acclaimed show [Y'a du monde à la messe!](#) in 2023.¹⁰

The same year, Annie Levasseur, Scientific Director of the AdaptT Institute, also took part in the [Feu Vert](#) program on Radio-Canada with guest Jocelyn Blériot of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

⁹ *La société du travail. Repenser le modèle économique en pensant aux limites de la planète* (2023) with the participation of HEC Montréal

¹⁰ *Y'a du monde à la messe* is a weekly Télé-Québec talk show where public figures from diverse backgrounds gather to discuss profound contemporary social topics, all punctuated by musical performances.

Deconstruction and Reuse Take Centre Stage

In the construction sector in particular, two outreach initiatives stand out in the 2021–2025 period:



- The result of a collaboration between [Architecture Sans Frontières Québec](#), [Dark Matter Labs](#) and [Les Interstices](#), the [futuristic documentary](#) presented by [Les matérialistes](#) is a pilot project on participatory futurism focusing on the circular economy of construction materials in Québec. This 12-minute creative video also aims to transform the public's perspective on the true value of materials and the potential of an economy that fully recognizes it.
- The deconstruction project in Gaspésie led by the [Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie](#) has been extensively covered, with a [short documentary](#) in partnership with RECYC-QUÉBEC and a [dedicated fact sheet](#) by the Green Municipalities Fund of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. It is the winner of Québec Circulaire 2023's [Prix initiatives circulaires](#) in the category Municipalities, Institutions and Governments. It is also featured as [a case study](#) as part of this report.

In addition, established annual awards presented by industry associations or municipalities increasingly feature categories related to sustainable development, climate change or circularity.

New Pan-Canadian Outreach Tool: At **CCES 2025**, the inaugural issue of a new publication was released: [The Circular Economy Magazine](#). Several Québec stakeholders and initiatives were featured in this issue: CERIEC, ELEC and RRECQ, as well as [Ville de Montréal](#) and [Fondaction](#).



2.5 A Widening Toolset

Toolkits and guides aim to provide structured frameworks, proven methodologies and practical resources that facilitate a smooth transition, ensure consistency in implementation and increase the likelihood of successful adoption in organizations. Numerous circularity implementation tools have been published since 2020—including various guides,¹¹ some of which are presented in the respective sections of this report.

Among these, several tools have been produced by provincial economic stakeholders and government agencies:

- Published in 2022, the decarbonization guide for businesses ([Guide de decarbonation pour les entreprises](#)) by the Québec Chamber of Commerce Federation (FCCQ) illustrates the potential contribution of CE to climate change.
- The [Convergence toolbox](#) from the Montreal Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce mentions in [Fact Sheet 5](#)—Adopting a circular economy strategy tailored to your SME: *The circular economy and decarbonization initiatives are perfectly complementary and reinforce each other. Indeed, many circular economy strategies contribute to reducing both resource consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.*¹² It also emphasizes the circularity of services and not just products, including human resources.
- The Retail Council of Québec's [Circular Economy Toolbox for Retailers](#) is meant to help businesses improve resource management and waste reduction.
- The [Regional Circular Economy Roadmap Toolkit](#) is a comprehensive methodology guide and adaptable set of tools, developed by RECYC-QUÉBEC, CTTEI and their partners, for regional planning and implementation (see Section 3).
- ÉEQ's [Bin Impact Toolkit](#) is a set of digital tools, guidelines and messaging templates mainly geared towards municipalities for public education and improved recycling practices.
- With its 2024–2029 Strategy for the Reduction and Responsible Management of Plastics in Québec, the government is considering the creation of best practices guide¹³ for the ecodesign of plastic products, in addition to additional financial measures.

Others resources may be more industry or sector-specific, such as the toolbox and dedicated [website](#) produced by the Construction Lab (see Section 4); the Circular Design Toolkit adapted to the Canadian market produced by [Fashion Takes Action](#) and [WRAP](#), in collaboration with ELEC labTex; the [Ecodesign guide for performing arts](#) launched in 2025 by EcoSceno; and the TIESS's [resources](#) (see Section 5).

11 Too many to list

12 *Le rôle des entreprises*, p. 5. Available only in French.

13 "Action 2.1.1: Soutenir les entreprises qui recourent à l'écoconception des produits en plastique," p. 11.



3 - EDUCATING AND TRAINING

Several training programs were developed during the 2014–2020 period. Now an increasing number of options, whether courses or full programs, are being offered in diverse colleges, undergraduate and postsecondary education institutions across the province in order to deliver effective training to personnel at every level in industries with high circularity potential.

3.1 Academic Courses

Between 2014 and 2020, the EDDEC Institute led the way in academic education on circularity. *Polytechnique Montréal* launched dedicated programs, while HEC Montréal and *Université de Montréal* gradually incorporated more circular economy courses into their curricula. Other universities, such as *Université de Sherbrooke* and *Université Laval*, have also made important contributions over the last five years.

While several other initiatives have been implemented in universities,¹⁴ both francophone and anglophone in varied sectors, [engineering schools](#) seem to be particularly eager to offer circularity-related content to their students. While *Polytechnique Montréal* has enriched its circular curricula with several courses in different departments and is offering graduate classes and dedicated programs, *Université de Sherbrooke* expanded its offering of both mandatory and electives into all its engineering programs, and McGill University proposes courses such as Resource Recovery, Circular Use, Life Cycle Assessment, and the Circular Economy.

At ÉTS Montréal, a sustainable engineering project (*Ingénierie durable* ÉTS-IDÉTS) was launched in

summer 2023 to integrate the principles of sustainable engineering into the compulsory courses of the bachelor's degree program in electrical engineering. This has led to creating a reference framework of nine key competencies in sustainable engineering as well as recommendations for the program. Funded by the Academic Development Fund of the *Université du Québec* Network, the project has been extended in 2025 for another two years. This second phase aims to expand the initiative to all bachelor's degree programs in engineering at ÉTS and will focus on developing two key skills: life cycle thinking and sustainable innovation.

Online Education

While no course is dedicated to circular economy in Université TÉLUQ's curriculum, focusing on social and environmental justice, the Responsible Economy ([Économie responsable \[ECO 2021\]](#)) course presents circularity concepts. The potential development of a course dedicated to circularity is currently under analysis.¹⁵

3.2 Curriculum Is Developing in CEGEPs

CEGEPs¹⁶ have also adapted their curricula. A particularity of Québec, the Technology Transfer Centres (*Centres de transfert technologique*), which are CEGEP-based applied research centres, have often led the way, as illustrated with the CEGEP Sorel Tracy-based CTTEI.

While many CEGEPs include sustainability-related subjects in their curriculum, the Federation of CEGEPs now lists several courses that relate more directly to circularity:

- CEGEP of Victoriaville's course leading to a [certification in circular economy](#)
- CEGEP of Thetford's course on [additive manufacturing](#)
- CEGEP André-Laurendeau's course on [electronic trade](#)
- CEGEP Rivière-du-Loup focuses on end-of-life circular strategies, as it proposes an [Attestation of College Studies in Biomethanization, Composting, and Waste Management](#)

¹⁴ Listing the complete offering in courses on or about circularity in educational institutions province-wide was not the aim of this research.

¹⁵ Personal communication

¹⁶ College of general and professional teaching (*collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*)

Professional training is also under development, and CERIEC, together with other stakeholders, has been consulted on the continuing education course developed by the CTTEI and promoted by *EnviroCompétences*.¹⁷

3.3 Summer Schools are in Demand

Professional summer schools offer an intensive, immersive learning environment with smaller class sizes and personalized instruction, providing participants with advanced knowledge, diverse teaching styles, valuable networking opportunities and practical skills that accelerate professional development and enhance career prospects.

- The Circular Economy summer school, initiated in 2017 by the EDDEC Institute and the Montreal Centre for International Studies (*Centre d'études et de recherches internationales* - CERIUUM) has been hosted at ÉTS with CERIEC since 2023. Over the last 10 years, this summer school has trained over 250 participants, both students and professionals from various fields and experiences, and welcomed over a dozen local and international speakers annually.
- A new international summer school was held in 2023 in Victoriaville: *École internationale d'été sur l'innovation circulaire*¹⁸ was organized with the *Réseau Vertech*.¹⁹ Over 10 days, students from various countries were asked to propose a circular innovation entrepreneurship project (takeover) linked to the host city or region.

Regarding the broader socioecological transition, two summer schools also create links with circularity concepts and strategies:

- [Chemins de transition Summer School](#), offered since 2021, reaches over 30 participants every year.
- [CIRODD's Summer School on Societal Transformation](#), which was offered from [2021](#) to 2024.

MOOC *Économie circulaire: Une transition incontournable*



Now a central element in Québec's circularity education landscape, the francophone massive open online course (MOOC) *Économie circulaire: Une transition incontournable* underwent significant updates in 2022, thanks to the RRECQ in collaboration with CERIEC.

It resulted in an enriched version of the MOOC initially presented between 2018 and 2020 by the EDDEC in collaboration with RECYC-QUÉBEC. The new version is now available.

Since its launch in 2019, over 8,400 participants have completed the comprehensive 35-hour course (inc. videos, readings, podcasts, quizzes).

Both the summer schools and the MOOC are open to students, academics and professionals alike.

¹⁷ <https://www.envirocompetences.org/formations/economie-circulaire-des-outils-pour-transformer-votre-modele-d-affaires/>

¹⁸ https://www.vertechcity.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/EIE2023_Article-resume.pdf

¹⁹ A network of cities in France, Belgium and Québec recognized for their original sustainable development initiatives (Lafayette, Namur, Poitiers, and Victoriaville)

3.4 Training Decision-Makers

Several academic organizations and professional associations have developed training programs targeted to decision-makers over the 2021–2025 period, including

- At the request of the Ministry of International Relations and Francophonie (*Ministère des relations internationales et de la francophonie*), CERIEC developed, in 2022–2023, a training session dedicated to the staff of Québec’s 11 general delegations abroad. Several tools and fact sheets were developed to help them present the concepts and initiatives per key economic sectors of the province and were later made freely available on the Quebeccirculaire.org online platform.²⁰
- Focusing on one specific circular strategy—[responsible procurement](#)—the network of organizations for responsible procurement (*Réseau d’organisations pour l’approvisionnement responsable*—ECPAR) promotes annually a varied [curriculum](#) to its members as well as non-members and proposes thematic workshops geared towards municipalities or those focusing, for example, on GHG management.

Stemming from its participation in the labCo, the nonprofit Québec Professional Association of Interior Designers (*Association professionnelle des designers d’intérieur du Québec*) enriched its training catalogue in 2025 with a class on circularity for its members.

Circularity Tour



- The FCCQ, CERIEC, and the CTTEI co-organized [Accélérer le passage du Québec à l'économie circulaire, Tournée des 17 régions](#) in 2021–2022.
- The FCCQ’s objective for this tour of all 17 regions of the province was to upgrade the skills of the members of its network of 120 chambers of commerce. Designed primarily to meet the needs of businesses, the program was also open to local economic organizations acting as program and service relays or as circular economy coaches.
- The program included an introduction to the circular economy model, strategies and decision-making tools, as well as a free coaching clinic.
- In addition, an electronic toolkit was made available.
- Out of the approximately 700 participants, 80% of those surveyed confirmed they had been inspired to act by implementing one or more initiatives within their organization.
- Over the 2021 and 2022 cohorts, 400 organizations and 300 economic players were represented. A total of 43 coaching clinics were organized through the FCCQ.

20 <https://www.quebeccirculaire.org/articles/h/le-quebec-leader-de-l-economie-circulaire-a-l-echelle-canadienne.html>



4 - DEFINING CIRCULAR SKILLS SETS

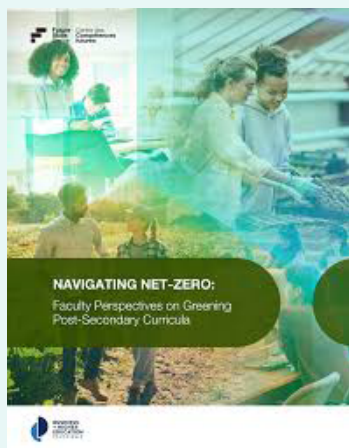
Industry and professional associations have analyzed the likely implications related to workforce development of a circular transition.

The *Ville de Montréal Data Explorer*²¹ report highlights that around 7.6% of jobs (79K of 1M jobs) contribute directly or indirectly to the circular economy in Montréal. About 4.5% of jobs are considered directly circular, as they operate directly in the circular economy, and 3.1% are indirectly circular jobs, providing services to direct circular sectors. Over 90% of the workforce still contribute to the linear economy and the persistence of the take-make-waste paradigm.

The Québec environmental labour committee (*comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre* [CSMO]) [EnviroCompétences](#) collaborates with other sectoral labour committees to initiate strategies that promote green transition and provide support tailored to the multiple realities of the job market in the context of climate change. In 2023, EnviroCompétences created a Green Transition Expertise Cluster (*Pôle d'expertise en transition verte*) with the support of the Labor Market Partners Commission (*Commission des partenaires du marché du travail*) to guide the green transition in the labour market by facilitating knowledge sharing among Québec's CSMOs. [A new work phase](#) started in 2025, focusing on providing concrete support and tailored solutions to CSMOs in order to support the adoption of sustainable practices in the workplace. As the first step in this planning process, EnviroCompétences published the Great Green Diagnosis ([Le Grand Diagnostic Vert](#)).

The aims of this 500-page diagnosis are to 1) understand how companies are anticipating the changes associated with this transition and 2) identify the priorities for action needed to develop skills and training in the areas of green transition and the workforce. This assessment underscored the need to improve the accessibility of green transition training, particularly in the most remote regions, and the need for targeted training programs tailored to specific sectors.

Skills Gaps and Talent Shortages



To successfully transition to a net-zero economy, Canada will require workers with the skills and knowledge needed to fill green jobs, however sectors connected to the green economy face skill gaps and talent shortages worldwide. Green skills include technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to develop and support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the community. In Canada, the need ranges from basic climate literacy for entry-level employees to advanced competencies for technically specific roles.

Canada's postsecondary institutions have a critical role to play in ensuring new grads and mature workers have the in-demand skills and knowledge required for the transition to a net-zero economy. However, the responses of such institutions to climate change have focused more on campus operations and research activities versus aligning educational practices with the needs of an emerging green economy.

Source: *Future Skills Centre Navigating Net-Zero: Faculty Perspectives on Greening Post-Secondary Curricula*



Beyond these observations and the work carried out on training needs as such, some labour unions note that the urgent message regarding the implementation of circularity in their professions is going unheard in many industries—with the possible exception of the energy and the construction industry, the latter having adopted a transition plan that has helped raise awareness among workers.

The Future of Jobs: Selection of Key Points



Source: World Economic Forum,
[The Future of Jobs Report 2025](https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/in-full/3-skills-outlook/#3-skills-outlook)

- On average, workers can expect that two-fifths (39%) of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated over the 2025–2030 period.
- Skill gaps are categorically considered the biggest barrier to business transformation by Future of Jobs Survey respondents, with 63% of employers identifying them as a major barrier over the 2025–2030 period.
- Environmental stewardship has entered the Future of Jobs Report’s list of top 10 fastest growing skills for the first time, while 20% of employers consider this skill to be core for their workforce.²²

²² <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/in-full/3-skills-outlook/#3-skills-outlook>



The quality of circular employment: between social innovation and structural issues.

The transition of the economic model towards circularity raises questions about the nature and quality of the jobs it generates. The Québec context is conducive to this analysis: In 2023, [over 84,000 jobs](#) were linked to the environment and clean technologies. However, this growth raises qualitative issues: some jobs, particularly in sorting and collection, remain precarious, low-paying or physically demanding, calling for greater vigilance with regard to working conditions.

Beyond the creation of new positions, the conditions under which work is organized must be analyzed according to four central criteria:

- Job stability, stable income and good working conditions;
- Expressiveness in terms of recognition and personal development;
- Autonomy, including control over one's activity; and
- Participation in decision-making (Murray et al., 2000).

The Example of Coderr



Launched in the spring of 2025, an 18-month research project on job quality and training challenges, supported by the RRECCQ, is part of a drive to gain a better understanding of occupational dynamics in Québec's CE sector.

This research, based on qualitative interviews, aims to bring out a fine-grained understanding of the realities of working in CE and in particular

1. Analyze job quality through in-depth case studies, exploring career paths and working conditions;
2. Identify levers for improving working conditions (governance practices of managers, unions, sectoral committees and training players); and
3. Propose indicators to support sustainable and inclusive employment.

Coderr, a nonprofit social economy organization in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean created in the late 70s, is participating in the study. Interviews are being conducted with its employees to gather data on their work experience. The report resulting from this research will help Coderr to evaluate its internal practices and promote its integration and management model to its partners.

Preliminary research conclusions:

- The CE can be a real lever for socioprofessional integration. The example of Coderr illustrates this dynamic in particular: Employees express a strong sense of pride and enjoy stable working conditions.
- Ongoing training, both for people undergoing integration and for regular employees, appears to be a central success factor, fostering both individual and organizational development.
- The active participation of workers through weekly meetings reinforces their sense of autonomy and their commitment to the company.

Coderr employs 170 people, including 60 in socioprofessional integration. The group's mission is to protect the environment by recovering residual materials and to promote social integration through programs such as the *Programme d'aide et d'accompagnement social*, which aims to help participants develop their social and professional skills, and the PPIS (*projets de préparation à l'emploi*), which provides wage subsidies for work integration projects. Employees receive individualized support from a team of nine facilitators. Coderr focuses on training, psychosocial support and life-course stabilization. In addition to its environmental activities, the organization is developing a 60-unit social housing project to secure the living conditions of its participants.

Source: Groupe Coderr; Kaia Arselin, HEC Montréal



5 - LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Circularity is a meta-concept that bridges borders between academia, industries, businesses and civil society, as it connects key environmental and societal issues. However, understanding circularity remains a challenge for several stakeholders.

Limited training and awareness among stakeholders regarding the principles and benefits of the circular economy remains a major obstacle. Although interest in this model is growing, only 24% of Québec's population has in-depth knowledge of the principles of the circular economy, which limits the commitment of the population and businesses.

The lack of experience, equipment, and know-how, as well as a lack of awareness of the potential benefits, are obstacles to the adoption of the circular economy. This issue is all the more relevant because this lack of knowledge and training is also recognized as a cross-cutting issue for accelerating the development of the circular economy in Québec in the Government Roadmap for the Circular Economy 2024-2028.

[RRECQ's Roadmap 2025-2050: A Systemic Approach to the Transition to a Circular Economy for Quebec Society, p.20](#)

There is a growing need for more applied training, particularly among professional associations and professionals in the sectors targeted by the government's roadmap. To be active participants in the transition to a circular economy, skilled tradespeople, professionals and technical, administrative and managerial staff alike must be trained in their daily tasks. To fulfill this need, circularity expert trainers and coaches are needed, now more than ever. This is evidenced in [Montréal's Data Explorer](#): "To ensure people have the right skills, education institutions, teachers and trainers must also have knowledge of circularity. This is not only important in the long-term. Skills pipelines are needed now to ensure Montréal can deliver on its circular economy roadmap."

In addition, *the Navigating Net-Zero: Faculty Perspectives on Greening Post-Secondary Curricula report* published in April 2024 by the Future Skills Centre notes that "many educators lack the foundational climate literacy and green skills to teach to others" and concludes that increased professional development is necessary. It further highlights that "most post-secondary graduates are not receiving an education that helps them understand the connection between their areas of study and climate sustainability" and that "partnering with businesses and community groups to create green work-integrated learning opportunities" represents solutions to these challenges.



Although the 2021–2025 period has witnessed significant progress with the emergence of numerous and successful initiatives across various value chains and sectors, it also evidences:

- The need to strengthen existing cross-sectoral arenas (or conversations) beyond sector-specific agendas.
- As underscored in the **RRECQ's Roadmap 2025-2050: A Systemic Approach to the Transition to a Circular Economy for Quebec Society**, “the lack of information, traceability, and transparency of data (on stakeholders, materials, volumes of inputs/outputs of virgin materials, etc.), as well as their documentation and dissemination, limit the deployment of CE, resulting in an inability to make projections and decisions, for example on investments, that would benefit CE.”
- A rather nascent reflection on how digital intelligence can contribute to the circular transition.

A limited unified vision has delayed the delivery of coordinated messages necessary for the government and society to engage in a complete circular transition. Key decision-makers in Québec's civil society have yet to agree on which messages and actions to prioritize for the circular economy transition.

A study conducted in 2024 by [Environics Research](#)²³ highlights a stagnation, or even a decline, in environmental concerns among the Canadian population. It also points out that, at the same time, confidence in governments to take effective climate action is eroding.

Inspiring, quantified and convincing examples of the added value of implementing circularity strategies are, more than ever, needed to engage companies to intensify efforts.

Despite significant progress, in the context of ongoing economic and political uncertainty in North America since early 2025, Québec and Canada face a pivotal opportunity to embrace a structured, adequately funded framework for transitioning to circularity.

23 Environics Research. 2024. Report Preview 2024, Canadian Environmental Barometer, 16 p.



A Solution Space by
Generate Canada

HEC MONTRÉAL



The writing of this report was made possible thanks to the financial support of the *Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes*, through the Canadian Relations Support Program, and by the RRECQ.

