



LE CLIMAT L'ÉTAT ET NOUS

Rethinking public action on the environment

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English version

THE STATUS REPORT IN BRIEF

The vast majority of Quebecers recognize the necessity of protecting the environment and of working on limiting global warming as a matter of urgency. This necessity is accepted by all political parties that support sustainable development goals (SDGs) and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set by the government over the past 15 years.

Despite the good intentions of its governments and its efforts in recent decades, however, **Québec is not on track to meet its sustainable-development and climate goals.**

The complexity of environmental issues demands global planning and action for the duration, well beyond electoral cycles.

The current model of governance lacks coherence and consistency and comes up against **a number of barriers** :

Poorly equipped municipalities

Front-line actors affected by climate change, municipalities suffer from an archaic mode of funding that deprives them of the resources they need to adapt to new realities.

Québec's inability to achieve its goals

Between 2012 and 2014, Québec failed to reduce its GHG emissions, which stagnated at 8% below the 1990 level, far from the goal of 20% by 2020. What is more, subsidies of just over \$1.2 billion from the *Fonds vert* have resulted in a mere 0.7% reduction in Québec's annual GHG emissions.

Incompatible plans and strategies

The various plans and strategies are sometimes contradictory. For example, even if faultlessly implemented, the *Energy Policy 2030* would not achieve the GHG reduction targets set by the same government that adopted the policy.

A shortage of data, analyses, and forecasts

Programs and strategies are not backed up by reliable data and analyses. Reduction targets are often set with no precise schedule, and no contextualization of the contribution to overall goals.

Inconsistent initiatives

The absence of any structures seeking to unify decisions taken on sustainable development leads to investment decisions taken by the government without any cost-benefit assessment of the economic, social, and environmental effects.

Limited accountability

The objectives of sustainable-development plans and strategies are poorly defined, being neither quantifiable nor measurable. These shortcomings make it practically impossible to gauge progress and assess the effectiveness of measures taken.

These failures cost the Québec government dearly, by damaging its economy's competitiveness. In addition, they reduce the quality of life of all Quebecers and have serious negative effects on the environment.

Québec cannot go on repeatedly failing to reach its targets and cannot content itself with reacting to the changes and catastrophes that are occurring with increasing frequency.

We consider it essential that the government put in place a structure capable of ensuring consistency and the tracking of all its objectives and environmental obligations in order to maximize the economic, environmental, and social benefits of our efforts. These structures should also be given the financial means and the necessary competences to accomplish their work, and accountability should be clearly determined when a government objective is set.



BRIEF TIMELINE OF QUÉBEC'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

1972	Québec becomes the first Canadian province to adopt a law on the quality of the environment.	2006	Adoption of the Sustainable Development Act (2006), to which all the government's actions are in principle subject. This act also created the position of Sustainable Development Commissioner, and the <i>Fonds vert</i> .
1978	Creation of the BAPE (<i>Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement</i>).	2009	The government affirms the collective nature of water resources in a law designed to strengthen the protection of the province's water resources.
1979	Creation of the Ministère de l'Environnement.	2013	Implementation of the Québec Cap and Trade System for Greenhouse Gas Emissions Allowances (SPEDE)
1994	Agreement between Québec and Canada under the St. Lawrence Vision 2000 Action Plan.	2015	Adoption of a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 37.5% over 1990 levels by 2030.
1996	Act respecting the Preservation of Agricultural Land.	2017	Creation of Energy Transition Québec (TEQ) to manage this transition, which will affect most government departments and agencies.
2002	Adoption of the Québec Water Policy, entrusting water management to watershed organizations.		
2002	Creation of the OURANOS consortium, with the setting up of an original research organization bringing together universities, government departments, and Hydro-Québec to participate in advancing regional climatology and anticipating the effects of climate change on its population and its economy.		

SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

- Report of the Sustainable Development Commissioner, Office of the Auditor General of Québec. http://www.vgq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/fr_publications/fr_rapport-annuel/fr_2016-2017-CDD/fr_Rapport2016-2017-CDD.pdf
- Sustainable development goals: 17 goals to transform our world, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>
- A Guide to SDG interactions: from science to implementation, <https://www.icsu.org/publications/a-guide-to-sdg-interactions-from-science-to-implementation>
- Natural Hazards, Unnatural Disasters: The Economics of Effective Prevention <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2010/11/15/natural-hazards-unnatural-disasters-the-economics-of-effective-prevention>
- Natural Disasters: a Canadian Economic Perspective, <https://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/NaturalCatastrophes.pdf>
- The Clean Growth Strategy — An ambitious blueprint for Britain's low carbon future <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>

About this document. *This report was produced as part of a voluntary initiative by a score of academic experts; it presents a revised environmental governance framework for Québec. This initiative was launched in summer 2017 and is supported by Institut de l'énergie Trottier, the Chief Scientist of Québec, and Institut du Nouveau Monde. This proposal is intended to contribute to starting a debate aimed at engaging Québec society within a few months of the next provincial election. It has been developed by academics, and does not claim to represent everybody's position, nor to be the final word on the matter.*

