

# ***POLICIES & POSITIONS***

## **Presentation to the ministre des Finances et ministre responsable des Relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise in the context of the Quebec Government's 2025-2026 pre-budget consultations**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC) thanks the Minister for the opportunity to present its views on the ongoing and future contribution of the Official Language Minority Community in Quebec to the development and growth of Quebec's economy. We do so in the context of a changing global geo-political context, increasing trading tensions around the world and in Canada, and subdued economic growth. In particular, CEDEC is extremely concerned about the potential economic impacts in Quebec and across Canada which could result from the realignment of our political and trading relationship with the United States, Canada's most important economic partner.

### **THE CONTEXT – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

In its 2024-2026 **Overview of Quebec's Economic Landscape (OQEL)**, CEDEC outlined the challenging economic context Quebecers are currently facing, characterized by moderating economic growth; a continuing battle to rein in inflation; less maneuverability as a result of mounting government debt, and continuing risks of labour shortages, including the challenge to match talent to labour demand in Quebec's labour market. This context is also characterized by shifting demographics, including an aging population, low fertility rates, and a need for ongoing immigration.

In this context, CEDEC believes “an all-hands-on deck approach” is essential to ensure a thriving provincial economy that can maintain and enhance the wellbeing of all Quebecers, including the Official Language Minority Community in Quebec (OLMCQ). All Quebecers have a responsibility to continue to contribute to a productive economy and all Quebecers have a right to expect to benefit equitably from their participation in the development of the economy we share as Quebecers.

## **WHAT WE THINK THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO DO**

In addition to the obvious and necessary requirements of (a) continuing to stimulate growth in strategic areas of the province's economy, (b) stabilizing inflation, (c) reducing fiscal pressures, (d) enhancing immigration, and (e) realigning our commercial trading relationships, both with our neighbours to the south and the other provinces and territories in Canada, CEDEC believes the Government of Quebec should focus on the following priorities, and align its financial investments with these.

- Continue to collaborate with stakeholders to align and incentivize a better balance between labour demand and supply.
  - This will help to address the issues created by labour market outflows exceeding labour market inflows.
  - It will also avoid or minimize labour shortages in specific industries, e.g., construction, information technology, health care, education services, architecture, and engineering.
  
- Get behind workforce development strategies, especially the alignment of life-long education, with current and anticipated labour demand.
  - Actively support microcredentialing as a targeted and efficient way for newcomers to acquire specific in-demand skills that align with sought-after qualifications in different industries in the province.
  - Leverage Quebec's aging population as an economic development lever, incentivizing older populations to remain in or rejoin the labour force.

- Strengthen immigration programs to take full advantage of the enterprising spirit and global business relationships of newcomers, as well as better aligning the talent of immigrants with Quebec's labour demand.
- Strengthen the adoption of AI and digital technologies, especially the adoption of e-commerce practices, not only in traditional industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, construction, tourism, etc., but in all aspects of the Quebec economy, including education, health, labour market development and management, and the care economy.
- Enhance entrepreneurial and community capacity to actively participate in the greening of Quebec's economy, especially in terms of creating thriving and dynamic economic development ecosystems that generate innovative ideas and initiatives supportive of this critical economic transition.

## WHAT THE OLMCQ HOPES TO CONTRIBUTE TO GROWING QUEBEC'S ECONOMY

With the support of its public, private, and civil society partners, CEDEC worked collaboratively to develop a bold OLMCQ Ten-Year Economic Development Plan focused on identifying and taking advantage of promising opportunities to:

- Increase the OLMCQ's participation in, and contribution to, the growth of Quebec's economy.
- Leverage its contribution to growing Quebec's economy to address issues of economic disparity within the community.

The achievement of the ambitious 2023-2033 OLMCQ economic development goals and targets can only be achieved if the community leverages the forces driving the development of Quebec's economy, i.e.:

- The adoption of **digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI)** technology.
- The transition to a **greener, more sustainable economy**.
- Taking full advantage of the economic development opportunities offered by a **shifting demographic landscape**.

To ensure that the OLMCQ, working in partnership with the Francophone majority of Quebec, achieves these targets, CEDEC is currently conducting a series of nine qualitative research sessions across the province to identify practical and actionable Collaborative Economic Development opportunities which take full advantage of these trends. These sessions are seeking out economic development opportunities in areas such as (a) leveraging AI and

digital technology to enhance productivity and profits in agriculture and tourism, (b) developing the care economy, (c) helping farmers and building owners and managers adopt green technologies, and the creation of new green products and services to respond to consumer preferences, (d) creating innovative and affordable housing in the OLMCQ, and more.

## 2033 OLMCQ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

- Create or expand 250 businesses or social enterprises.
- Create or fill 1000 jobs.
- Attract \$5M in investment.
- Reduce by 50% the economic disparities experienced by the OLMCQ.
- Expand the number of communities across Quebec benefitting from Collaborative Economic Development.

## WHAT CEDEC RECOMMENDS THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC SHOULD DO TO HELP MAXIMIZE THE OLMCQ CONTRIBUTION TO GROWING QUEBEC'S ECONOMY

- 1** Get behind and actively promote unprecedented collaboration across the OLMCQ, and between the OLMCQ and the Government of Quebec in the area of economic development.
  - This will help to optimize the community's capacity to take full advantage of all of its assets across the province, maximizing its contribution to growing Quebec's economy.
  - In this regard, CEDEC wholeheartedly endorses the Quebec Community Groups Network's recommendations to (a) use the OLMCQ Community Development Plan as a frame of reference for future investments on the growth and development of the community, and (b) create an Advisory Committee to help guide the Secretariat responsible for Government of Quebec relations with English-speaking Quebecers.
- 2** Actively support the **Workforce Development Strategy for English-speakers**, which seeks to ensure a **well-prepared and highly participative OLMCQ workforce possessing the necessary knowledge, know-how, and language skills essential to contributing to and growing Quebec's economy.**
  - **Especially important in this regard is getting behind the development of (a) a coherent approach to OLMCQ talent supply management and (b) strengthening a full continuum of**

## **employment assistance services across the province, aided by the adoption and leveraging of AI and digital technologies.**

**3**

Encourage the development of a provincial placement capacity across the OLMCQ, enabling the community to create strong relationships with employers across Quebec to link OLMCQ talent with them, especially in areas of strategic labour shortages.

**4**

Take full advantage of the bilingualism and national and international networks of the OLMCQ to assist the Government in its efforts and realign Quebec's commercial trading relationships, with our neighbors to the south, and with other provinces and territories in Canada.

- Such advantageous Quebec assets and resources can help the Government of Quebec enhance its trade relationships with these partners.
- It can help to attract needed talent and investment to Quebec and facilitate Quebec investments in the US and other parts of Canada.
- It can help to alleviate irritants and strained relationships between Quebec and its closest trading partners.
- It can also help to attract needed migration and immigration to Quebec.

Once again, CEDEC thanks the Minister for the opportunity to present its views on the ongoing and future contribution of the Official Language Minority Community in Quebec to the development and growth of Quebec's economy. **CEDEC stands ready to assist the Government in actioning all four of the recommendations outlined above.**