
Québec Immigration Planning for the 2017–2019 Period

Consultation Booklet


This document was created by the *Direction de la planification, de la recherche et des statistiques, Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion*

This and all other documents pertaining to the public consultation are available on the National Assembly website at <http://www.assnat.qc.ca>.

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The French version is available under the title *La planification de l'immigration au Québec pour la période 2017-2019 – Cahier de consultation*.

The complete version of this document is available online at <http://www.midi.gouv.qc.ca>.

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June 2016

ISBN: Electronic version: 978-2-550-75954-6

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Message from the Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness

Pluri-annual immigration planning in Québec is a democratic exercise where stakeholders and the public are consulted and asked for input on proposed actions and policy orientations.



This exercise takes on new meaning this year because it is a reflection of the government's commitment to thoroughly review immigration, participation, and inclusion methods and practices. Work to date has resulted in a new Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion, *Together, We Are Québec*, and its 2016-2021 action strategy, which were announced on March 7, 2016, and the adoption of the new *Act respecting Immigration to Québec* by the National Assembly on April 6, 2016.

The challenges and orientations developed in new policy have served as pillars for the proposed 2017–2019 immigration actions and policy orientations. They reflect Québec's intention to better select and integrate immigrants as well as encourage all members of society to live well together, in particular so that immigrants are able to contribute to society in a manner that is consonant with their skills and aspirations.

The proposed policy orientations also reflect the core measures of the action strategy slated for gradual implementation. They include, for instance, a new selection system that is based on declaration of interest will help ensure Québec's needs are optimally aligned with immigrants' profiles and that the immigration process is streamlined to facilitate people's rapid arrival.

This system will also provide Québec with an edge in the international race for talent and facilitate the transition from temporary to permanent immigrant status for international students and temporary workers who wish to settle here. We have made a commitment to promote immigrants' long-term settlement in Québec's regions. Their specific workforce needs will be better reflected and taken into account, especially through with the new selection system.

Québec has a long and proud tradition of humanitarian immigration. This planning exercise is an opportunity to reaffirm this commitment to those in dire circumstances. Our experiences have shown that such people quickly integrate into society and play a role in Québec's economic, social, and cultural development.

Immigration's marked contribution to ensuring the continuity and vitality of the French language also underpins our vision. The proportion of immigrants who speak French at the time of their admission has significantly increased, and we will continue these efforts because French language proficiency is a key condition for participation in Québec's social and economic life. French is our common language, our language of work, and an essential means of integration.

We want immigration and diversity to contribute in many ways, including making Québec and its regions more prosperous, promoting a model for living well together, ensuring the vitality of the French language, and enhancing Québec's international influence.

I invite you to attend the public consultations and share your thoughts on the proposed policy orientations for 2017–2019. We all have a stake in the consultation, for it concerns the Québec of tomorrow—a modern, open, and inclusive society that we will build together because together, we are Québec.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen Weil". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathleen" and the last name "Weil" clearly distinguishable.

Kathleen Weil

Minister

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Introduction

Québec has conducted pluri-annual immigration planning to determine future composition and admission levels since 1991. The orientations have been guided by the strategic choices and challenges discussed in the immigration policy. While previous exercises were guided by the 1990 policy statement *Let's Build Québec Together*, the current one is based on the Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*), which was unveiled on March 7, 2016.

This new policy is a cornerstone of the Government of Québec's efforts to completely revamp its approach to immigration, participation, and inclusion. This overhaul also resulted in a major review of the *Act respecting immigration to Québec*, which was passed by the National Assembly on April 6, 2016. The next pluri-annual planning exercise will therefore cover a crucial period during which the new 2016–2019 policy and action strategy will be implemented and the new *Act respecting immigration to Québec* will come into force.

This policy and law encourage full and active participation, in French, among immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities through individual and collective commitments. Their participation will contribute to Québec's prosperity, help ensure the continuity and vitality of the French language, and enhance Québec's international influence as an open and inclusive society, as well as support its cultural development through harmonious intercultural interactions. Furthermore, it will help establish an innovative, competitive, and efficient immigration system that reflects Québec's choices and allows the Québec government to select economic immigrants that best meet its needs.

The last immigration planning process which covered the four-year period from 2012 to 2015 was extended by a year to allow for the introduction of the *Together, We Are Québec* policy and action strategy and provide for the review and adoption of Bill 77 (*An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec*). Both are pivotal elements on which future pluri-annual immigration planning will be based. The current planning exercise—on which the public consultations will be held—will cover the period from 2017 to 2019. This is a transition period to effectively implement the new immigration system and apply the first results of the action strategy's core measures.

This consultation booklet has three sections. Section 1 gives an overview of the Québec policy on immigration, participation, and inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*) and its action strategy. Section 2 concerns immigration planning in Québec; it presents the planning exercise, takes a general look at immigration and summarizes outcomes from the 2012–2015 planning process. Section 3, which will be the focus of the public consultation, makes recommendations on the composition of Québec's immigration and its admission levels for the 2017–2019 period. An appendix contains an overview of Québec migration patterns in the permanent and temporary categories.

This document, which has been prepared to support public consultations on Québec immigration planning for 2017–2019, can be consulted in combination with the following two documents:

- *Recueil de statistiques sur l'immigration et la diversité au Québec* (in French only), updated in April 2016
- *L'immigration au Québec — Le rôle du ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion* (in French only)

All of these documents are available online at <http://www.midi.gouv.qc.ca>.

Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion

In November 2015, the government adopted the Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*) as well as a 2016–2021 action strategy.¹ The policy is built on three basic tenets:

- Immigration plays an important role in enhancing Québec's prosperity and the vitality of the French language.
- More effective selection, francization, and integration practices will encourage immigrants' full and active participation in society.
- The full and active participation of people of all origins, in keeping with Québec's democratic values, is both a right and a responsibility.

The policy calls for a collective commitment by society as a whole to recognize and value the contributions made by Quebecers of all origins. It also seeks to support immigrants' integration as well as each person's individual ability and commitment to play an active role in society, in a manner that respects Québec's democratic values. The policy proffers a collective plan that all of society can adhere to and support, and its action strategy will help Québec achieve its vision of inclusiveness:

Québec: an inclusive francophone society that seeks greater prosperity through immigration and the full and active participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities

Immigration has shaped Québec's history and will continue to play a key role in building its future, providing that conditions are in place for full and active participation. If full and active participation among Quebecers of all origins is to be achieved, Québec's needs must therefore be aligned as closely as possible with the profiles of selected economic immigrants, and the government and communities throughout Québec must address the needs of a diverse population.

¹ The policy and action strategy documents are available on the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion website at www.midi.gouv.qc.ca/nouvellepolitique.

The policy and its action strategy present a broad approach centered on two key challenges and four objectives and are the fruit of collaborations made by 26 departments and agencies.

Table 1

Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*)

<p>Challenge 1</p> <p>A Québec that values immigration's contribution to its prosperity and to the vitality of the French language</p>	<p>Objective 1.1</p> <p>Harnessing the Strategic Benefits of Permanent and Temporary Immigration</p>
	<p>Objective 1.2</p> <p>Making it Possible for Immigrants to Quickly and Effectively Complete the Immigration Process</p>
<p>Challenge 2</p> <p>An inclusive society committed to fostering full and active participation</p>	<p>Objective 2.1</p> <p>Strengthening Trust and Solidarity Among People of All Origins</p>
	<p>Objective 2.2</p> <p>Striving for Substantive Equality Through Cooperation with Economic Leaders, Local Community Partners, and Departments and Agencies</p>
<p>Responsible, coherent, and effective governance</p>	

The policy proposes new goals that better reflect 21st century Québec and can serve as a basis for all its immigration, participation, and inclusion activities in coming years, including:

- Transforming the selection system to better align Québec's needs with immigrant profiles
- Strengthening Québec's commitment to the principle of family reunification and international solidarity, in particular by welcoming refugees
- Adopting an approach that fosters inclusion and participation among immigrants and ethnocultural minorities

- Strengthening trust and solidarity between Quebecers of all origins
- Promoting greater collaboration among all society stakeholders (government, business, academia, municipalities, communities)

The 2016–2021 action strategy *Together, We Are Québec* consists of 12 innovative core measures and numerous means of action, the goal of which are to:

- Better select immigrants
- Better integrate immigrants
- Encourage all members of society to live well together

By implementing the policy and its action strategy, Québec will continue efforts begun decades ago to establish itself as a welcoming and inclusive society with innovative and effective ways to select immigrants and support French-language participation by Quebecers of all origins.

Immigration Planning in Québec

Since the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion's creation in 1968, the Government of Québec has consistently acquired greater powers in the management of its immigration. In 1991, it signed the *Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*, which strengthened and expanded its powers in three areas: the planning of immigration levels; immigrant selection; and reception, integration, and francization programs. Québec is thus the only province to exercise its full powers in this area of shared jurisdiction with the federal government.

The Québec government began planning immigration on a pluri-annual basis following the 1990 policy statement *Let's Build Québec Together*². Pluri-annual immigration planning allows the Government of Québec to determine orientations regarding immigration levels and composition for a period of years.

Québec's Immigration Powers

The *Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* signed in 1991 provides for shared immigration responsibilities between the Government of Québec and the Government of Canada.

For permanent immigration, Québec informs Canada about the number of immigrants it wishes to receive. Québec, on the other hand, has sole responsibility for selecting those who wish to come to the province, except for refugees recognized locally and immigrants who arrive under the family reunification program. It also manages sponsor commitments made in Québec.

Under the terms of the Accord, Québec chooses economic migrants and refugees selected abroad. These accounted for some 72.5% of immigrants admitted in 2015.

With regard to temporary immigration, Québec's consent is required before Canada can admit foreign students and certain temporary workers to the province, or before it can authorize people to visit Québec for medical treatment.

Among other things, the federal government is responsible for determining and enforcing criteria for entering and staying in Canada, establishing general immigration categories, processing requests for asylum, and admitting immigrants to the country.

² See Appendix 1 of the background paper *Immigration to Québec: The Role of the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and its Partners* for an overview of Québec's immigration history.

Though the public has been regularly consulted on desired immigration levels, it was not until 2004 that these consultations were mandated by law. An amendment to the *Act respecting immigration to Québec* has since required parliamentary committee hearings to be held whenever immigration policy is set for the coming years. This requirement has continued under the new *Act respecting immigration to Québec* adopted in April 2016,³ which calls for pluri-annual immigration plans to be tabled in the National Assembly for public consultation in parliamentary committee, where any person or organization may be heard. The Act also requires an annual immigration plan based on the selection guidelines to be tabled in the National Assembly by November 1 of the preceding year.

Permanent and Temporary Immigration

Immigration contributes to a range of objectives for Québec, including its prosperity, its international influence, the vitality of its regions, and the continuity and vitality of the French language. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate international solidarity through humanitarian immigration practices, and a commitment to the principle of family reunification. Each immigration class allows various people to come and settle in Québec. With their wide-ranging characteristics and backgrounds, these people enrich Québec with their diversity, skills, and aspirations.

There are two types of immigration in Québec—permanent and temporary⁴, and the different categories reflect a range of objectives. Permanent immigration consists of three main classes: economic, family reunification, and humanitarian.

The goal of economic immigration is to meet Québec's economic needs, thereby contributing to its continued prosperity. People admitted in this class, especially in the skilled worker subclass, are selected based on certain personal qualities seen as conducive to fast integration into society and the labor force. These immigrants meet

³ Section 4 of the new *Act respecting immigration* states that “multi-year guidelines address such matters as the composition of immigration and the projected number of persons to be admitted. They are to be tabled in the National Assembly for a general consultation to be held by the competent parliamentary committee.”

⁴ Permanent and temporary immigration classes are listed in the appendix (page 37).

labor market (skilled worker subclass), entrepreneurship (Entrepreneurs and Self-Employed Worker subclasses) or investment (Investor subclass) needs.

The family reunification class reunites Canadian citizens and permanent residents with members of their families. Québec does not select the people in this category, but since the category reflects past immigration patterns, some of its characteristics can be anticipated. Planning exercises also seek to predict the volume of immigration in this category. Furthermore, Québec is responsible for ensuring these immigrants receive francization and integration services to help them fully participate in all spheres of society, including the workforce.

Humanitarian immigration provides refugees or those in similar dire circumstances with an opportunity to settle in Québec. It is Québec's way of demonstrating international solidarity and its support for the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention). This immigration class includes refugees selected abroad as state-sponsored refugees or with a collective sponsorship, and refugees whose status is recognized subsequent to filing an asylum application in Quebec. Given the nature of this category, the Government of Québec can only make annual forecasts of the number of immigrants it can expect.

Temporary immigration applies mainly to international students and temporary workers. The latter come to Québec temporarily to meet a specific labor market need and may eventually become permanent residents, in particular through the Québec Experience Program (PEQ). This opportunity is also available to international students, if they meet certain conditions. Their temporary stay is a good way to start integrating into Québec society and is therefore encouraged.

A Careful Balance

Pluri-annual immigration results from considering and weighing various challenges while remaining mindful of maintaining balance in the effort to meet immigration's objectives. For example, for the total immigration volume to remain stable, an increase in the number of newcomers in the family reunification or humanitarian classes will implicitly require a drop in the economic category.

For years, the family reunification and humanitarian categories have accounted for some 30% of all immigrants admitted annually. This is the lower limit for the number of admissions in a given year. In 2015, it was 36.9% due to the influx of refugees from Syria.

Québec's role in determining immigration focuses on ensuring balance in Québec's total immigration admissions.

When planning pluri-annual immigration objectives we must consider the number of anticipated admissions from family reunification and refugee reception during the period in question, as well as the effect they will have on overall immigration characteristics (immigrant diversity, knowledge of the French language, etc.). It must also balance the required and available resources necessary to select and welcome the immigrants, teach them the French language (if they do not already speak it) and provide the support needed to ensure individuals can play a full and active role in their new French-speaking communities.

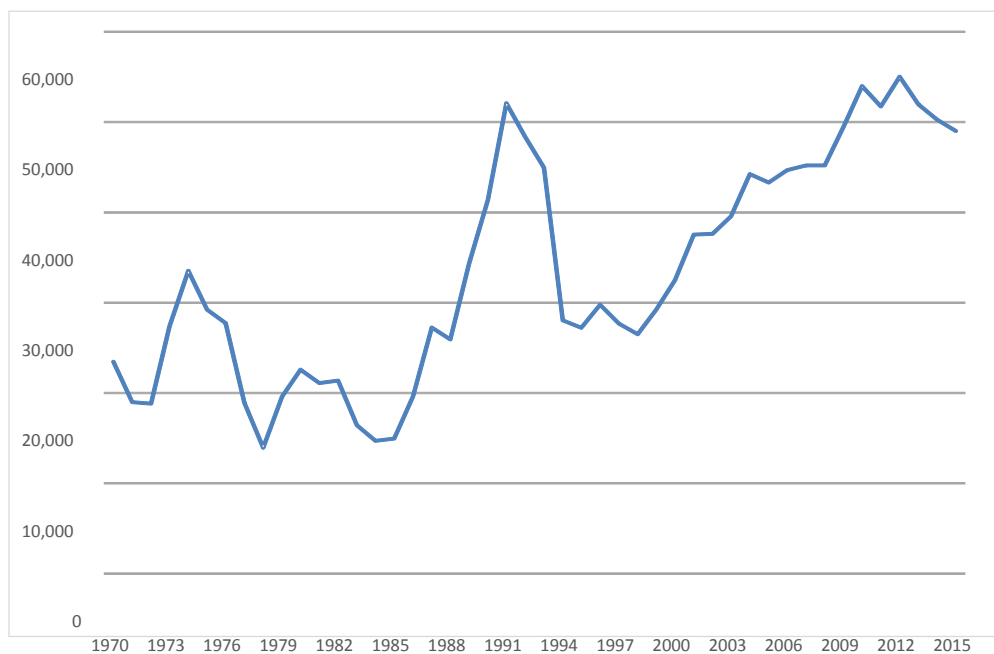
While these consultations concern total immigration levels and composition, Québec's real advantage comes from the selection of economic immigrants—which is why certain policy orientations submitted for consultation are specific to that category.

Immigration to Québec

The number of permanent immigrants admitted annually has fluctuated since 1970, as shown in Graph 1, from a low of 13,938 in 1978 to a high of 55,044 in 2012. Despite variations, the overall trend has been decidedly upward since the late 1990s. This rise is a reflection of past planning exercises and a sizeable increase in skilled worker subclass admissions; their numbers more than tripled between 1998 and 2014, rising from 9,026 to a peak of 29,006. In 2015, the total declined slightly to 23,415 to the benefit of the Refugee and Businesspeople subclasses. The relative stability in recent years is a result of the last planning exercise, which sought to stabilize immigration levels at 50,000 in 2015. It should also be noted that high admission levels from 1990 to 1993 were the result of regularization programs for people awaiting federal government recognition of their refugee status.

Figure 1

Number of Immigrants Admitted to Québec, 1970–2015*



Source: Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion

* Preliminary data for 2014 and 2015

Québec admitted some 49,024 immigrants in 2015. Though this marks a decline from the peak of 55,044 immigrants in 2012, it is consistent with the 2012–2015 planning guidelines.

There were slightly more women (50.7%) than men (49.3%) among those admitted in 2015.⁵ The majority (55.5%) said they knew the French language at their time of admission. Newly arrived immigrants were young, with some 66.5% under 35 at their time of admission and some 21.7% of these under 15. Of those 15 or older, 61.6% had at least 14 years of education and 65% planned to enter Québec’s workforce.

More than a third of newcomers in 2015 were born in Asia (35.5%), 31.6% in Africa, 16.9% in Europe, and 15.8% in North or South America. This geographic diversity is also apparent for the top seven birth countries, where four continents were represented: France (9.2%), China (7.4%), Iran (7.3%), Syria (5.9%), Algeria (5.5%), Morocco (5.1%) and Haiti (4.7%).

Just under two-thirds (61.1%) of 2015 arrivals were admitted as economic immigrants, most of these (47.8%) as skilled workers. A little over one in five (21.4%) came to reunite with family already in Québec, while some 15.5% were admitted as refugees.

The Global Context

Migratory movements affect the whole planet. According to United Nations figures, in 2013 some 3.3% of the world’s population, or 232 million, lived outside their country of birth. The free movement of people is a growing migration phenomenon, especially in Europe. In recent years, we have witnessed slightly fewer family reunifications and considerably more refugee claims, mainly due to armed conflicts.

Québec has significant competition in seeking to attract and retain strategic talent. Our closest neighbour, the United States, attracts the most immigrants and is a major draw. New Zealand and Australia are also major players and, like Québec, they have programs to attract skilled workers and businesspeople. Canada’s other provinces are increasingly active too, in particular with their Provincial Nominee Programs. In this competitive environment, Québec must stand out, create an efficient immigration system, develop strategies to find and attract new talent, and create an even more welcoming and inclusive society.

⁵ For detailed data on immigrants recently admitted to Québec, consult the statistical reference materials.

Of all admissions to Québec between 2004 and 2013, three-quarters (75.5%) were still in the province in 2015. Their numbers varied, however, depending on immigration class and knowledge of the French language. The immigrants most likely to still be here were those admitted in the family reunification class (83.8%), while the least likely were those admitted in the economic class (71.9%). There were also notable differences in the latter group depending on subclass, with businesspeople being the least likely to still be here (26.9% vs. 75.5% for skilled workers). Those who claimed to know only French at their time of arrival were those most likely to remain, and those who claimed to know only English the least likely (86.1% vs. 65.6%).

Temporary stays are also on the rise in Québec. The number of people with temporary status has more than doubled in recent years, from 42,226 in 2005 to 92,212 in 2015. International students account for the bulk of this migratory class, with a total of 50,428 in 2015.

Results of 2012–2015 Planning Exercise

The 2012–2015 pluri-annual planning exercise on immigration levels and composition had the following objectives:

- Gradually raise to 50% the proportion of principal applicants in the skilled worker category with training in areas that correspond to labor market needs
- Maintain a majority of individuals who know French in overall admissions
- Raise the level of knowledge of French among applicants in the skilled worker category
- Maintain annually between 65% to 75% the proportion of individuals under 35 years of age among overall admissions
- Maintain annually at a minimum of 65% the proportion of economic immigrants in overall admissions
- Foster diversity in immigration through information, promotion, and recruitment activities in various parts of the world where there are candidates with the knowledge of French, the training, and the skills to meet Québec’s needs
- Seek relative stabilization in the number of admissions during the period 2012–2015 such that, at the end of the period in 2015, the average annual number of admissions stands at 50,000

The pluri-annual planning exercise was extended by a year to include 2016 so that we could first unveil the Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*) and adopt Bill 77 (*An Act respecting immigration to Québec*) in the National Assembly. This section outlines results for the 2012 to 2015 period, and targeted levels for 2016. Remember that in order to maintain stable overall immigration levels, the 2016 levels should be similar to those for 2015. However, admissions will have to be divided up differently in 2016 in non-economic classes to make up for the increase in the number of refugees, whose greater numbers are a result of decisions made by the governments of Québec and Canada within the context of the global refugee crisis, most notably in Syria. The 2016 targets are outlined in the *Québec Immigration Plan for 2016* tabled in the National Assembly in October 2015.

Table 2
Number of Immigrants Admitted to Québec, 2012–2016^a

	Results ^b				2016 Plan ^d	
	2012	2013	2014	2015	Min.	Max.
Economic immigration	39,638	34,847	33,469	29,954	31,500	33,500
Qualified workers	32,236	29,800	28,844	23,415	25,500	27,000
Business people	4,634	3,998	3,900	5,427	5,200	5,500
Other economic categories ¹	715	530	563	1,112	800	1,000
Special Haiti program	2,053	519	162	48	N/A	N/A
Family reunification	10,254	12,408	11,333	10,493	10,500	10,900
Refugees and persons in similar situations	4,609	4,204	4,861	7,610	6,000	6,600
Refugees selected abroad ²	1,631	1,748	2,287	4,600	4,400	4,800
Government-assisted refugees	1,110	1,050	1,515	1 632	1,900	2,100
Privately sponsored refugees	521	698	772	2 967	2,500	2,700
Refugees recognized locally ³	2,978	2,456	2,574	3,010	1,600	1,800
Other immigrants ⁴	543	517	612	967	500	600
Immigration overall	55,044	51 976	50,275	49,024	48,500	51,500
Share of Quebec's selection ⁵	76%	71%	72%	73%	75%	76%
Share of economic immigration	72%	67%	67%	61%	65%	65%
Proportion of immigrants who know French	62%	57%	59%	56%	> 50%	> 50%

N/A : Not applicable

a. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred. Consequently, the totals may not correspond exactly to the sum of the components.

b. Preliminary data for 2014 and 2015.

d. Planned admission levels for 2016 and their breakdown by category are estimates.

1. Includes live-in caregivers and other economic immigrants.

2. Includes, in particular, government-assisted refugees and privately sponsored refugees.

3. Includes their dependents abroad.

4. Includes various specific categories of immigrants admitted for humanitarian reasons or public interest.

5. Economic immigration, refugees selected abroad and other immigrants.

Figures show that the 2012–2015 planning goals are being met. Most people admitted between 2012 and 2015 knew the French language, and economic immigration was above the 65% minimum target for 2012–2014. However, in 2015, with fewer immigrants in the skilled worker subclass and growing numbers of refugees, the proportion dropped below the target. Some 7 in 10 immigrants were below the age of 35. Moreover, a majority of selected primary applicants in the skilled worker subclass had training in sought-after fields.

Overall, Québec welcomed some 49,024 immigrants in 2015, meeting the *Québec Immigration Plan's target for 2015*.

The Québec Immigration Plan for 2016

tabled in the National Assembly in the fall 2015 states that Québec will welcome 48,500 to 51,500 immigrants from all categories combined—a figure consistent with planning exercise targets for the total number of immigrants in 2012–2015.

Syrian Refugees

Since 2011, the armed conflict in Syria has led to a record number of refugees and displaced persons. The displaced Syrian population at first fled to countries in the region, mainly Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Turkey. Living conditions in these countries are generally difficult, with most refugees (85%) living in places other than camps such as urban centers or makeshift shelters. Many people fleeing the conflict are now trying to reach Europe, which has led to the “migrant crisis.”

In September 2015, Québec underscored its international solidarity by announcing a sizeable increase in the number of Syrian refugees it would accept. In November 2015, it reaffirmed this commitment by announcing another increase. Joining the efforts of the international community, Québec plans to receive some 7,300 Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016. More than 5,500 Syrian refugees had arrived in Québec by mid-May 2016, with the rest expected before the year's end.

Pluri-annual Immigration Planning Policy Directions, 2017–2019

The pluri-annual planning policy orientations submitted for consultation on immigration levels and composition for the three-year period from 2017 to 2019 are based on the Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*) presented in the first portion of this booklet. The nine proposed policy orientations are based on the challenges and objectives discussed in this policy, in particular the first objective concerning the strategic benefits of permanent and temporary immigration.

The policy orientations also take into account the *Act respecting immigration to Québec* recently passed by the National Assembly on April 6, 2016. The act's provisions will make it easier for temporary skilled workers and international students to transition to permanent status. The act also introduces the powers required to implement a selection system based on declaration of interest. This new approach offers a way to continually target candidates whose backgrounds and experience best meet the needs of Québec and its regions.

The planning exercise's three-year period represents a transition phase, which will allow time for Québec to finalize its immigration, participation, and inclusion initiatives. At the end of this period, Québec will have a competitive, modern, and efficient immigration system. Numerous measures and means will have been implemented to help immigrants play a more substantial role in Québec society.

Contribution of Immigration to Prosperity and the Vitality of the French Language

All immigrants contribute to Québec's prosperity by actively taking part in community life. Economic immigration in particular, especially in the skilled worker subclass, can help meet labor market needs created by an aging workforce and growing demand in certain fields where recruitment is more difficult. Selecting candidates with prior training in these fields helps to align skills with demand. What's more, when immigrants are quick to find jobs in their fields of expertise upon arrival, they are better able to successfully complete the immigration process and make positive contributions to Québec society.

Québec's Prosperity

Immigrants make a valuable contribution to the labor pool for Québec companies. Emploi-Québec predicts that between 2013 and 2022, new immigrants will fill nearly one in five jobs in Québec. For this to materialize and in order to facilitate immigrants' expeditious entry on the labor market, a range of measures have been implemented to remove the barriers they face upon arrival, especially with regard to knowledge of French and recognition of their skills and qualifications. A number of steps can be undertaken or even completed from abroad. Potential immigrants' autonomy (particularly among those in the skilled worker subclass) will be put to good use in the efficient new system Québec is

Economic Prosperity

Québec's prosperity is notably linked to its economic strength and job growth. Immigrants are present in the labor market and contribute to our collective wealth. They fill jobs, consume goods and services, and pay taxes. In the last five years, the job situation for immigrants has improved when compared to that of the population as a whole. The employment rate for this group went up by 1.9 percentage point between 2011 and 2015 while remaining the same for the rest of the population, thus narrowing the gap between the two groups.

Immigrant income data for 2013 shows that 79.6% of main applicants in the Skilled Worker Class declared employment income in their year of arrival and 86.7% did so in their fifth year of residency. In 2013, a majority of immigrants in the humanitarian (65.7%) and family reunification (61.0%) classes declared employment income in their first year after admission. This proportion is nearly two-thirds after five years of residency (70.5% for refugees and 68.5% for family reunification). Though such immigrants may not come to Québec with the intention of entering the labor market immediately, they are nevertheless a strong presence in the workforce and contribute a great deal to Québec's prosperity.

creating to help streamline and expedite procedures, select candidates that best meet the province's needs, and make it easier and faster to get a first job in Québec.

Frequent updates to Québec's list of in-demand training sectors, in combination with efficient management of immigration applications through a system based on declaration of interest, should ultimately lead to greater alignment with Québec's needs, especially in terms of the labor market. This system will help attract the strategic talent Québec requires.

Candidates with sought-after talents can also meet Québec's labor market needs through temporary immigration. Temporary workers can quickly meet pressing labor market needs for which no local workers are available. Québec would benefit greatly from this pool of talent if large numbers of specialized temporary foreign workers were to settle here on a long-term basis. This is especially true given that, during their temporary stay, they can get to know Québec, learn French, and develop a social network. This is also the case for many international students who, upon completing their studies, have diplomas or degrees that are recognized in Québec's labor market.

Prior stays in Québec have a positive effect on the ability to obtain skilled employment and minimize the number of

Recognition of Skills

To promote government efficiency and synergy in recognizing the skills and qualifications of immigrants trained abroad, an interministerial committee was set up in the fall 2014. The committee is made up of the main ministries and agencies involved in the skills recognition process. Its task is to improve and streamline the process for immigrants trained abroad, to help ease their workplace integration.

An interministerial committee on the recognition of skills of internationally trained immigrants (*Comité interministériel sur la reconnaissance des compétences des personnes immigrantes formées à l'étranger*) helped develop the 2016–2021 Action Strategy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec*) by identifying means to resolve problems in the recognition of immigrant skills. Some short-term measures adopted by the Committee were also included in the strategy. A comprehensive report with recommendations is being finalized and will soon be submitted to the competent authorities. The government has also tabled a bill to allow the Complaints Commissioner (who would be renamed the Commissioner of Admission to the Professions) to intervene throughout the process of admission to the regulated professions.

jobs held before such work is found,⁶ thus increasing the job holder's contribution to Québec's prosperity.

The Québec Experience Program (*Programme de l'expérience québécoise*) was also devised and implemented to facilitate the transition from temporary to permanent status under certain conditions. Since the program's inception in 2010, Québec has selected more than 29,000 people as temporary workers or international students for this fast track to permanent immigration.

Immigrants can also contribute to Québec's prosperity by helping build its entrepreneurial base, especially through business people who come here to invest or start a company. They can use their networks to enhance Québec's international reputation as well as create jobs and encourage innovation.

Aside from meeting labor market needs, immigration has a positive impact on creating households and consumer spending.

It also has long-term benefits for the tax system, pension plans, and the funding of programs for young people

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is one of the key drivers of an economy. To strengthen its prosperity, economic development, and international prestige, Québec seeks to attract creative and innovative businesses that can stand out. Immigrants are a driving force for entrepreneurship in the province. According to *Fondation de l'entrepreneurship*, nearly a third of immigrants (whatever their category) want to start up a business compared to less than one in five native-born Quebecers.

As they have already taken the risk of changing countries, immigrants are often innovative and suited to entrepreneurship. According to a recent Statistics Canada study, immigrants who have been here more than 10 years are far more likely to own a business than people born in Canada are. Primary applicants in the business people subclass show the greatest propensity to becoming business owners or self-employed workers.

An influx of immigrants with diverse backgrounds can spur economic growth by giving rise to new ideas and a spirit of entrepreneurship.

⁶ LACROIX, Guy, *Enquête auprès des immigrantes de la catégorie des travailleurs qualifiés - L'intégration en emploi des immigrants de la catégorie des travailleurs qualifiés au Québec, 2002–2009* (in French only), CIRPÉE, 2013, p.24.

and seniors.

Ensuring the Continuity and Vitality of the French Language

The French language is an essential part of Québec's distinct character and the key to effective participation in community life. Immigrants will be able to contribute to the continuity and vitality of French if they know the language and have opportunities to use it each day in the workplace, for example. Immigrants help enhance Québec's international influence and that of its francophone community, as demonstrated by the rich contributions of French-speaking artists and creators from its ethnocultural minority groups.

Québec has an advantage in this regard through its ability to select immigrants—mainly for economic immigration, and specifically those in the skilled worker subclass—to meet labor market needs where command of French is a major factor in obtaining skilled employment. It has another powerful lever in its diverse and accessible francization services available through an extensive network of partners throughout Québec's various regions, to allow new immigrants who have not mastered the language to learn it or to improve their skills.

Knowledge of French is also a factor in long-term settlement. Among immigrants admitted to Québec between 2004 and 2013, a higher proportion of those who said they knew French were still in the province in 2015, versus those who did not (79.1% vs. 70.1%⁷). Knowledge of French also allows immigrants to play a more active role in all spheres of society.

Demographics

A society's prosperity is closely tied to its economic growth, which is based on three main factors, one of which is population growth (itself shaped by immigration). The latest

⁷ Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, *Présence en 2015 des immigrants admis au Québec de 2004 à 2013* (in French only), p.14, June 2015.

*Institut de la statistique du Québec*⁸ (ISQ) demographic projections for 2011–2061 predict no decline in Québec’s population if recent trends continue. Under the baseline scenario, which puts the immigration rate at 50,000 people a year, Québec’s population will continue to grow throughout the period. An annual arrival of 25,000 immigrants would only lead to a population decline at the end of the period.

In the last planning period, immigration levels, combined with higher birth rates, have helped slow the decline of Québec’s demographic weight in Canada as a whole (it comprised 23.3% of Canada’s population in 2012, 23.2% in 2013, and 23.1% in 2014 and 2015). However, changes to immigration levels in the other provinces in coming years also need to be considered. Canada aims to welcome 300,000 immigrants in 2016 compared to 279,200 in 2015. Annual immigration to Canada, and especially Ontario, accounts for more than 0.8% of the population. This ratio is lower in Québec, where it is around 0.6%. Based on immigration levels announced by Québec and Canada for 2016, Québec’s share of Canada’s overall immigration would be 16.7%, which is less than its demographic weight. If Québec only continues to receive a small share of Canada’s immigration in the long term, its demographic weight could rapidly decline. In the short term the effects would only be limited, especially if Québec is able to reduce losses from interprovincial migration (both by immigrants and native-born Quebecers).

In the longer term, admitting more immigrants each year would prevent a serious decline in Québec’s demographic weight within Canada and the resulting political and economic repercussions.

Contribution of Young Immigrants to Future Labor Market Needs

Relatively young immigrants settling in Québec addresses some of the demographic and economic issues the province faces. It also helps slow, albeit slightly, the aging of Québec’s population. The average age of Quebecers has risen by three years in the last

⁸ Graphs of Institut de la statistique du Québec demographic projections based on various immigration levels can be found on pages 20 to 23 of the *Recueil de statistiques sur l’immigration et la diversité au Québec* (in French only).

decade and a half, from 38.4 in 2001 to 41.5 in 2014,⁹ while the average age of immigrants admitted in 2014 was 28.4. The immigrant population can also offset population aging because young adults are more likely to have children in Québec. Aside from the issue of an aging population, the arrival of young immigrants increases the province's working age population and provides a new generation to replace Québec's aging workforce.

Working age population is a major consideration in determining the desired number of immigrants to admit in the coming years. The workforce consists mainly of people aged 20 to 64, and they are the ones who help develop Québec's economy and sustain its prosperity. Increasing Québec's working age population is one of the keys to economic growth, the other two being job creation and higher productivity.

ISQ projections indicate that with an annual limit of 50,000 immigrants, the size of the working age population should change very little in the long term but decline considerably between 2017 and 2030 to below the level in 2011. Admitting 55,000 immigrants every year would slightly increase the working age population in the long term. After a decline between 2017 and 2029, it would return to 2014 levels by 2036 and then see moderate growth. Only 60,000 new immigrants a year would keep Québec's working age population from declining to below its 2011 levels before returning to growth in the longer term. If immigration levels stabilized for a short period (two or three years) before increasing to 55,000 or 60,000, this would have only a limited impact on these long-term projections. Québec's aging population will also cause variations in the working age population, with more workers nearing retirement and fewer young people to replace them. Younger immigrants could help offset this.

Young immigrants tend to contribute to the economy for longer periods, which has long-term benefits for the tax system. This not only affects tax revenues but also funding such programs as pension plans throughout their lives.

Young immigrants are generally able to enter the workforce more quickly as they are more flexible and can adjust their training to labor market needs, they learn French more

⁹ Institut de la statistique du Québec, Direction des statistiques sociodémographiques (Sociodemographic Statistics Directorate), www.stat.gouv.qc.ca

easily, they readily adapt to life in Québec, and they participate more fully in society. Overall, this leads to a more successful immigration process and greater social cohesion.

Regional Vitality

Labour market needs can be fulfilled by permanent immigration as well as by temporary foreign workers. Their contribution, however, is not limited to the workplace—by choosing to live in rural areas; immigrants contribute to the general economy, population development, regional vitality, and community well-being.

Through attending school, international students also contribute to regional vitality by helping sustain the education system in smaller centers. Their presence is thus a factor in ensuring the vitality of the education and research sectors. They also forge international ties, promote Québec schools abroad, and enrich their host communities—especially if their temporary stay becomes a long-term one. They themselves then become a means of promoting the region and attracting other immigrants.

Efforts to encourage immigrants' long-term settlement in Québec's outlying regions reflect a willingness to promote the regions' vitality. It is important to increase the number of immigrants who settle there from the outset. We must also make efforts to attract immigrants to Québec's regions from among those who initially opt to settle in Greater Montréal.

These actions must be undertaken alongside economic and regional stakeholders to ensure that results are optimal and in keeping with the needs of Québec's regions.

A Welcoming and Inclusive Society

Québec is a welcoming and inclusive society that seeks to foster full and active participation by all in a French-speaking environment. Immigrants' diversity contributes to Québec's prosperity. Furthermore, Quebecers of all origins demonstrate their commitment to international solidarity by welcoming people in need.

Commitment of Economic and Regional Players to More Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

Immigrants' participation in community and economic life must be facilitated by collaborations and commitments made by ministries and agencies, economic stakeholders (including those in the labor market), and municipal authorities. This ensures that immigrants can participate in their communities at a level commensurate with their skills and aspirations. It does, however, require that these stakeholders are properly equipped to receive and integrate immigrants, i.e., to recognize skills, provide opportunities to learn and use the French language, foster diversity, etc.

A number of programs and measures to promote full and active participation have already been implemented. However, several indicators show that there are problems with immigrants' integration, including economic challenges. Recent immigrants are less likely to have jobs than immigrants who have been here longer or than native-born Quebecers, and immigrants who do have jobs are often overqualified. Persistent problems with social and workplace integration call for more effectively targeted action. Having an association of stakeholders who are better coordinated with government action would encourage participation by all.

Diversity's Contributions

Studies have shown that diversity within companies and work teams encourages innovation and leads to higher productivity.¹⁰ In addition, with their knowledge of foreign languages, immigrants can also open doors to new markets. There is even talk of a “diversity bonus” where companies with more diverse management introduce more new products and have less trouble penetrating foreign markets.¹¹ With the advent of globalization, Québec’s economy needs to build strong ties with foreign markets. Maintaining diversity is therefore an important means of reaping the full benefits of

¹⁰ ZHU, Nong, *Synthèse de la littérature sur l'impact de l'immigration sur l'innovation* (in French only), Discussion Paper, October 2014, available online [www.midi.gouv.qc.ca], 99 pages.

¹¹ QUEBEC EMPLOYERS COUNCIL, “The Contribution of Economic Immigration to Quebec’s Prosperity”, *PROSPERITE.QUEBEC*, Study No. 3, December 2015, p.9.

immigration. Québec is not the only government to support diversity, the United States, for example, has created a lottery aimed at diversifying its immigrant population.

As explained in the *Together, We Are Québec* policy, Québec is a diverse society. According to data from the 2011 National Household Survey, Québec's immigrant population is relatively equally divided between the main continents of birth (19% for Africa, 31% for Europe, 23% for North and South America, and 27% for Asia). This is less true for the rest of Canada, where people born in Asia account for 45% of the immigrant population and those born in Africa just 7%. In 2013, Québec's four top immigrant countries of birth were on four different continents and accounted for a third of admissions. Elsewhere in Canada, the four main countries are all Asian and account for nearly half of all immigrants.¹²

International Solidarity

Québec subscribes to the principles of the Geneva Convention and actively seeks to welcome its share of refugees as part of its humanitarian involvement and commitment to international solidarity. World events have a marked impact on refugee numbers from one period to the next. International authorities generally prefer refugees to return to their countries of origin but, in some cases, resettlement in another country is best. Québec is also committed to the principle of family reunification.

Through their desire to participate in community life, refugees and those who come here to join family members add to our diversity and contribute in ways of which we can be proud. State and privately sponsored refugees can be found in many regions of Québec.

In the current Syrian refugee crisis, Québec has demonstrated its humanitarian commitment and readiness to respond promptly with a warm welcome and a range of services for those in need.

¹² See *Facts and Figures 2013*, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, available online [www.cic.gc.ca]

Proposed Policy Orientations

As part of the pluri-annual immigration planning process for the 2017–2019 period, nine policy orientations are proposed. These orientations, which concern the composition and volume of immigrants to be admitted, align with the basic tenets and challenges of the *Together, We Are Québec* policy. Their implementation will occur in tandem with the measures in the policy's 2016–2021 action strategy. These measures and actions show Québec's determination to better select and integrate immigrants and encourage all members of society to live well together, in particular so that immigrants are able to participate in community life in a manner commensurate with their skills and aspirations. Once implemented, these measures and actions will help to establish winning conditions for increasing Québec's capacity to receive and integrate immigrants. The following table provides an overview of the various action strategy measures and actions associated with the proposed pluri-annual immigration policy orientations.

These policy orientations also have a direct impact on the levels and composition of immigration and on the specific characteristics of the immigrants to be admitted. That being said, these types of conclusions will only be evident after a certain time because individuals admitted to Québec in any given year were generally selected in preceding years given inherent the lead-time in the immigration process.

Table 3

Measures and Actions of the 2016–2021 Action Strategy *Together, We Are Québec* Associated with the Proposed Policy Orientations

- Implement a competitive immigration system that ensures immigrant profiles are aligned with Québec’s needs
- Resolve skills recognition issues so immigrants can quickly and successfully contribute to economic growth
- Facilitate collective sponsorship during humanitarian crises, especially by groups of two to five people
- Implement a mechanism for coordination, evaluation, and analysis that will quickly and efficiently assess the need to act in a humanitarian crisis and deliver a coordinated, organized response with stakeholders
- Offer an even-handed and concerted range of services tailored to immigrants’ profiles and needs in order to expedite and facilitate the integration process
- Expand professional francization services so that immigrants can acquire the French skills necessary to find jobs that meet their qualifications
- Implement a communication strategy, including an advertising campaign, to raise awareness among all Quebecers about society’s pluralist character and diversity’s contributions to Québec’s prosperity
- Underscore the importance of democratic values in information provided to immigrants
- Promote the role of French as a language of integration and social cohesion to ensure the vitality of Québec’s common language
- Engage the business community so employers can benefit from the full potential of people of all origins
- Build more welcoming and inclusive communities through the implementation of a new partnership-based approach with municipalities and local community stakeholders

Policy Orientation 1

Stabilize immigration admission levels at 51,000 immigrants for the first two years, then slightly increase levels during the third year to reach 52,500 in 2019

This target number of immigrants will allow Québec to pursue a path of growth and remain a prosperous society. The ultimate goal is a moderate increase in the number of immigrants admitted, which would position Québec midway between the scenarios of 50,000 and 55,000 immigrants per year as envisioned by the ISQ. This modest increase will address Québec's economic needs.

A larger increase could present increased challenges in terms of integration and participation by immigrants within Québec's diverse society, and could lead certain people to once again question immigration's contribution to Québec's wealth and development.

The Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI) is currently undergoing a massive transformation; it is rethinking the way it does things and adapting its practices in response to growing international competition and a changing environment. It is harnessing the power of information technology to attract and select strategic talent. At the same time, community partners, particularly businesses and municipalities, and various ministries and agencies, are being urged to collaborate more extensively and to achieve substantive equality as well as encourage immigrants' full and active participation. The new Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion, along with its action strategy and the new updated *Act respecting immigration to Québec* are prime examples.

A number of the core measures in the 2016–2021 action strategy will be implemented in 2016 and 2017 and will come fully into force in 2018. Thus, the changes under way at MIDI and the collaborative efforts with partners will gradually bear fruit. It is therefore important to account for the current transition period in our pluri-annual immigration planning.

With immigration holding relatively steady at the previous year's average for the first two years of the projected planning period, Québec will be able to lay new solid foundations in immigration, participation, and inclusion. Introducing an immigration system based on declaration of interest in 2017 should allow immigration numbers to grow moderately in 2019 to a level of 52,500, thus addressing Québec's economic needs while still ensuring immigrants' ability to successfully integrate into Québec society.

Policy Orientation 2

Gradually increase the portion of economic immigration to 63% by the end of the period

Immigrants admitted to Québec based on economic class criteria, particularly those in the skilled worker subclass, have characteristics, notably education and language skills, which give them considerable employment flexibility and facilitate their integration into the labor market. Furthermore, a very large proportion of these people intend to enter the labor market, and thus constitute additional workers for Québec as a whole and for its outlying regions. As for business people, they contribute to Québec's prosperity primarily by investing capital and creating businesses. In addition, it is essentially through economic immigration that Québec can exercise its leverage in selection to choose people whose profiles best meet its requirements.

Thus, the economic class offers Québec the best means of attracting strategic talent and active participants in its growth and development. It is therefore desirable to maintain a high level of economic immigration.

Policy Orientation 3

By 2019, increase to at least 40% the proportion of immigrants aged 18 years and older in the skilled worker subclass who are selected as international students, or were temporary workers at the time of their selection

Some people choose to come to Québec temporarily, to work or study. These people participate in community life and often begin their integration journey. Many of them already know French and use it, just as some hold a degree from a Québec educational institution. Québec has set an objective of selecting and admitting more skilled temporary workers for the upcoming years and aims to retain these prime candidates for immigration and encourage their long-term settlement.

Québec Experience Program (PEQ – Programme de l'expérience québécoise)

International students and specialized temporary foreign workers are great potential immigrants since they have good knowledge of Québec society and their integration is already well under way.

The Québec Experience Program (PEQ – *Programme de l'expérience québécoise*) is an expedited selection program for skilled workers that has been in place since 2010 and is specially designed for temporary workers holding specialized in Québec and international students who have earned degrees from Québec. The program offers these two target groups simple and quick access to permanent immigration.

Since its entry into force, just over 29,000 Québec Selection Certificates have been issued under the PEQ. This popular program ensures that Québec can hold on to the strategic talent that it needs.

This can be done through the Québec Experience Program (PEQ – Programme de l'expérience québécoise) or through the regular skilled worker program. In certain cases, temporary workers may submit their applications once in Québec, thus transforming their temporary stays into long-term settlement.

Policy Orientation 4

Ensure that the proportion of adults in the skilled worker subclass who declare knowing French at the time they are admitted is at least 85%

The Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion presents the French language as the key to successful economic and social participation and the vitality of the province's common language. Knowledge of French makes it easier to find and keep a job and to maintain social relations. Candidates in the skilled worker subclass are selected based on certain criteria, including knowledge of French.

Therefore, by maintaining a vast majority of adults in the skilled worker subclass who declare knowing French at the time they are admitted, Québec promotes quick integration of newcomers in society. Immigration thus also contributes to ensuring the long-term continuity and vitality of French. This is so much the case, in fact, that several options are available to immigrants who are not fluent in French, so that they can learn the language or improve their command of it before they arrive or in their first years in Québec. As for children, they have the opportunity to learn French at school.

Policy Orientation 5

Ensure that the proportion of candidates with in-demand training who are selected in the skilled worker subclass is at least 70%

Immigrants admitted to Québec in the skilled worker subclass are admitted to meet the labor market needs. They are selected based on certain socioeconomic characteristics, including whether they possess in-demand education or skills Québec's job market. For Québec to quickly and appropriately meet its requirements, those selected must already have the skills that Québec employers are looking for. The MIDI regularly updates the list of in-demand training in Québec and, through the new immigration system, aims to identify more candidates who meet them.

The target for this policy orientation takes into consideration the finite number of international immigration candidates and the competition between countries to attract

candidates with these desirable profiles. An additional constraint is the need to balance their various individual profiles.

Policy Orientation 6

Ensure that at least 65% of annual admissions are individuals under 35 years of age

For a number of years now, the vast majority of immigrants are aged 35 years and under. Immigrants alone cannot prevent the aging of the population, but they can certainly help slow the process. Through this policy orientation, Québec continues to encourage immigration among younger candidates. They provide Québec with workers who have a longer presence on Québec's job market and often contribute to the growth of its population through the birth of children. Their youth also makes it easier for them to find jobs, adapt to their new home, and learn French.

Policy Orientation 7

Contribute, alongside economic and regional stakeholders, to the development of Québec's regions through permanent and temporary immigration

Immigrants, both permanent and temporary, are part of local community life. Their contributions go beyond the labor market: by choosing to settle in Québec, they become active participants in community prosperity. Through their contributions to overall economic life, demographic growth, local vitality, and community enrichment, they encourage the development not only in the Greater Montréal area, but also in Québec City and regions throughout the province. Local authorities and businesses must, as community leaders, help forge even more inclusive and welcoming communities for immigrants to settle outside the Greater Montreal area.

Historically, a large majority of newly arrived immigrants have settled in Greater Montréal, and some subsequently migrate outside the metropolitan area. This policy direction reflects the government's determination to encourage immigrant settlement outside of Greater Montréal and help revitalize Québec's regions through immigration.

Policy Orientation 8

Continue to foster diverse migratory movements by encouraging immigration from different parts of the world in an effort to support Québec's economic dynamism and ensure the vitality of French language

People from different backgrounds have diverse knowledge and expertise that can encourage innovation and be useful to Québec. With their rich diversity, immigrants contribute to society in French, keeping Québec's economy vibrant and ensuring the vitality of the French language. In this age of globalization, having a diversified workforce that knows many languages, including French, can be of benefit to open economies like Québec's. This workforce creates a pool of strategic talents that society needs to remain prosperous. A diverse immigrant population also enriches the general culture and revitalizes communities. Fluency in French allows newly arrived citizens to take part in every aspect of their new home and society. Québec therefore seeks to continue attracting and selecting people and strategic talents from different parts of the globe, particularly people who speak French.

Policy Orientation 9

Annually reaffirm Québec's humanitarian commitment by welcoming refugees and other people in need of international protection

Québec adheres to the principles of the Geneva Convention and is proud to undertake its humanitarian commitments. It has long demonstrated its will to share with the international community in welcoming refugees. It has also committed, under the *Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*, to annually welcome a proportion of refugees that corresponds to its demographic weight within Canada. Through this policy orientation, Québec reiterates this commitment.

Projected Admissions

Combined, these nine policy orientations submitted for consultation aim to determine the composition and characteristics of Québec's immigration, as well as the number of immigrants to be admitted in upcoming years so that Québec remains a prosperous, French-speaking, diversified society able to meet the needs of its population. Immigration is expected to contribute on various levels- helping to ensure the continuity and vitality of the French language; adding the contributions of working aged people who can meet particular workforce needs; boosting our ability to innovate; attracting and retaining talent; enriching our culture through immigrants' multiple countries of origin; helping to

revitalize the regions; and meeting Québec's humanitarian commitment to refugees. These policy orientations therefore seek to meet Québec's needs, while taking into account our capacity to admit and integrate immigrants in a quick and effective way that allows them to participate actively and fully in community life.

The following table shows how immigration is expected to evolve from 2017 to 2019. Immigration should evolve thanks to the implementation of the proposed policy orientations. The projections are made based on the information and data available as of April 2016. A number of changes regarding how immigration is managed in Québec are also under way or forthcoming, in an effort to implement a competitive and high-performing demand management system. The future impacts of these changes were considered wherever possible. The long-term effects of these policy orientations on the composition and levels of admissions will gradually become evident over this period.

Table 4

2017-2019 Projected Admission

	2017		2018		2019	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
Economic immigration	29,900	32,200	30,300	32,600	32,200	34,500
Qualified workers	24,500	26,200	24,900	26,600	26,300	28,000
Business people	4,700	5,000	4,700	5,000	5,200	5,500
Other economic categories ¹	700	1,000	700	1,000	700	1,000
Family reunification	10,800	11,500	10,800	11,500	10,800	11,500
Refugees and persons in similar situations	7,600	8,300	7,200	7,900	6,800	7,500
Refugees selected abroad ²	5,600	6,000	5,200	5,600	4,800	5,200
Refugees recognized locally ³	2,00	2,300	2,000	2,300	2,000	2,300
Other immigrants ⁴	700	1,000	700	1,000	700	1,000
Immigration overall	49,000	53,000	49,000	53,000	50,500	54,500
Share of Quebec's selection ⁵	74%	74%	74%	74%	75%	75%
Share of economic immigration	61%	61%	62%	62%	64%	63%

a. The projections were established based on information and data available in April 2016.

1. Includes live-in caregivers and other economic immigrants.

2. Includes, in particular, government-assisted refugees and privately sponsored refugees.

3. Includes their dependents abroad.

4. Includes various specific categories of immigrants admitted for humanitarian reasons or public interest.

5. Economic immigration, refugees selected abroad and other immigrants.

People admitted to Québec in a given year were generally selected during the preceding few years. Thus, for the most part, immigrants who will arrive in Québec at the beginning of the 2017–2019 period were selected within the norms for levels and characteristics that were established in 2015 and 2016. Their selection at the time was a result of the policy orientations adopted for the previous planning period of 2012–2015.

Conclusion

The public consultation on immigration to Québec for the 2017–2019 period will be held at the end of summer of 2016. A parliamentary committee will then review the submitted policy orientations.

1. Stabilize immigration admission levels at 51,000 immigrants for the first two years, then slightly increase levels during the third year to reach 52,500 in 2019
2. Gradually increase the portion of economic immigration to 63% by the end of the period
3. By 2019, increase to at least 40% the proportion of immigrants aged 18 years and older in the skilled worker subclass who are selected as international students, or were temporary workers at the time of their selection
4. Ensure that the proportion of adults in the skilled worker subclass who declare knowing French at the time they are admitted is at least 85%
5. Ensure that the proportion of candidates with in demand training selected in the skilled worker subclass is at least 70%
6. Ensure that at least 65% of annual admissions are individuals under 35 years of age
7. Contribute, alongside economic and regional stakeholders, to the development of Québec's regions through permanent and temporary immigration
8. Continue to foster diverse migratory movements by encouraging immigration from different parts of the world in an effort to support Québec's economic dynamism and ensure the vitality of French language
9. Annually reaffirm Québec's humanitarian commitment by welcoming refugees and other people in need of international protection

At the end of this consultation, the government will consider all points of view expressed and adopt immigration planning policy orientations for 2017–2019. Subsequently the Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion will submit an annual immigration plan for each of these years to the National Assembly, specifying projected immigration levels. This will allow for updates to the number of projected admissions for the various immigration categories in light of anticipated and actual selection levels, changes in certain factors that could influence Québec’s capacity to admit and integrate immigrants, as well as necessary adjustments following the introduction of the new immigration system in Québec.

Appendix – Immigration Classes

In Québec, immigration is subdivided into permanent immigration and temporary immigration. This appendix briefly presents these two types.

Permanent Immigration

Permanent immigration is comprised of three main classes: economic immigration, family reunification, and humanitarian immigration. People admitted to Québec based on these categories present diverse profiles, have experienced different things, and are immigrating for their own personal reasons, but each one of them contributes to Québec and participates in Québec's economy and prosperity, and in the province's social and cultural life.

Economic Immigration

Candidates in the economic immigration class intend to pursue an economic activity in Québec: working, managing a business, or investing, as the case may be.

Skilled Workers

This component of the economic immigration movement includes the highest proportion of young, educated people who know French and have certain characteristics that are in demand, particularly in the Québec labor market.

This can be explained by the fact that they are selected based on factors, criteria, and requirements corresponding to Québec's objectives and needs. The selection criteria do not discriminate according to race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender.

Furthermore, all candidates selected must hold at least a high school graduation diploma and have sufficient financial resources to provide for their basic needs, and those of their family, for the first months following their arrival in Québec. People selected in this subclass intend to enter the labor market.

Business people

Business immigration occurs under three programs targeting separate clienteles: Entrepreneurs, Self-Employed Workers, and Investors. The current overhaul of the Entrepreneur Immigrant Program aims to attract the most talented foreign entrepreneurs, to promote the start-up of new businesses that will encourage economic development in Québec's regions, and to expedite business creation in Québec. Two access routes will be available to provide sufficient flexibility to attract a variety of entrepreneurial profiles. This program will thus become a means to boost economic development and vitality in the regions. The Self-Employed Worker Program targets people who want to settle in Québec and create their own employment.

For a number of years, however, demand from these two clienteles has been very low, such that 85% of admissions for businesspeople since 2010 have come from the Investor Immigrant Program. This latter program is also being updated to better contribute to Québec's interests by ensuring the selection of candidates who, through their profiles, presence, and capital invested, will encourage international partnerships in priority areas for Québec. The interest generated by the investment income of this program is used, for the most part, to subsidize small- and medium-sized businesses in Québec. A portion of the investment income is also used to fund the Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities (PRIIME).

Family Reunification

The objective of the Family Reunification class is to facilitate the reunification of Canadian citizens or permanent residents with their close family members, in consideration of a commitment by the former to provide for the needs of the latter for a given period. Family members may be a husband or wife, a common-law spouse or conjugal partner, a dependent child or a child being adopted, a direct ascendant (father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother), or a child under 18 years of age who has lost his or her father and mother and is not married or in a common-law relationship.

Humanitarian Immigration

Under the 1991 *Canada-Québec Accord*, Québec committed to welcoming a proportion of the total number of refugees and people in a similar situation admitted by the Canadian government corresponding to its demographic weight within Canada each year.

There are two separate programs for refugees selected abroad: government-assisted refugees and collectively sponsored refugees.

Government-assisted refugees are welcomed and supported in their integration by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported by the MIDI.

The Collective Sponsorship Program supplements government efforts with respect to refugees. It allows groups of residents in Québec and non-profit organizations to show their solidarity in practical ways with people in dire circumstances abroad by committing to facilitating their integration and providing for their needs for a one-year period, or in some cases, for three years.

These persons are selected primarily because of their need for protection and, when possible, criteria likely to foster their integration and retention in Québec.

Refugees recognized locally

Some people apply for refugee status after they are already in Canada. Under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, refugee status is accorded to people who fear being persecuted if they return to their countries of origin due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinions, or membership in a social group.

Managing the movement of asylum-seekers falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Canadian government, and the Commission of Immigration and Refugee Status is the one responsible for determining who may benefit from asylum. Persons who are recognized as refugees locally may subsequently obtain permanent residency. They are then counted in the admissions for a given year.

Temporary Immigration

Persons residing temporarily in Québec are not directly considered in pluri-annual immigration planning. However, they constitute a great recruitment pool for possible permanent residents. International students who have earned degrees from educational institutions in Québec and temporary skilled workers can make significant contributions to Québec. What's more, their process of integration has already begun since they have been in Québec for some time.

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