



THE QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT'S U.S. STRATEGY



Summary

Québec 



Ministère des Relations internationales
www.mri.gouv.qc.ca

Full or partial reproduction of this document
is authorized with mention of the source.

Legal deposit – 2010

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
National Library of Canada
ISBN : 978-2-550-58140-6 (print)
ISBN : 978-2-550-58141-3 (PDF)

© Government of Québec, 2010

This document is printed using ecological inks
on paper produced entirely from recycled fibre.



Foreword



Several Québec government departments and agencies participated in developing this U.S. Strategy and will carry out its implementation:

Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ);
Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine (MCCCF);
Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP);
Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE);
Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS);
Ministère des Finances (MFQ);
Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC);
Ministère des Relations internationales (MRI);
Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune (MRNF);
Ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP);
Ministère des Transports (MTQ);
Ministère du Tourisme (MTO);
Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques (CFA);
Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales (DPCP)
Investissement Québec (IQ);
Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones (SAA);
Secrétariat aux Affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes (SAIC).

Similarly, the Québec Government Offices in the United States are closely involved in the entire process:

Québec Government Office in Atlanta;
Québec Government Office in Boston;
Québec Government Office in Chicago;
Québec Government Office in Los Angeles;
Québec Government Office in New York;
Québec Government Office in Washington.

This Strategy, developed through the coordination of the North America Division (MRI), is fully consistent with Québec's *International Policy*.

A word from the Minister of International Relations



The world's greatest political, economic and cultural power is on our border. Consequently, nowhere else are Québec's interests more important than in the United States.

This vital relationship in which a number of issues converge must be the subject of careful management and attentive reflection.

The Québec Government's U.S. Strategy is the result of such reflection.

Since the opening of an initial office in 1940, Québec has been conducting its relations in the United States via a network of offices that are present in America's major markets. It maintains bilateral relations with a number of states, as well as with the Federal Administration and Congress.

Québec is an active member of regional forums where it has demonstrated true leadership on more than one occasion and where areas of activity cover a broad range of topics of common interest, including trade, the environment, energy and security.

The Québec government's *International Policy*, launched in 2006, acknowledged the vital nature of this relationship and made it possible to devote more resources to it. It is now up to us to ensure the optimal use of those resources.

By strengthening the cohesion of our initiatives, these measures will facilitate the coordination of our sectoral partners and our network of offices abroad.

The synergy of the activities we pursue in a country with which we share so many interests and challenges will be enhanced as a result.

This Strategy will help apprise all actors in Québec's public and private sectors of the extent to which our most important international relationship is at once crucial and laden with opportunities.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Pierre ARCAND

Minister of International Relations and
Minister Responsible for La Francophonie

The United-States: a strategic partner for Québec



The vitality of Québec's economy is heavily dependent on its ties with the United States, which buys nearly three quarters of Québec's international exports. With its 300 million consumers, countless companies in search of goods and services and investors looking for new prospects, the United States offers considerable development potential for Québec companies.

The Québec government is aware of the favourable ties it maintains with its U.S. partner and the interests at stake, and therefore made enhancing its relations with the United States a priority when implementing its most recent *International Policy*. Since that time, significant efforts have been made to strengthen its economic, political and institutional ties with this longstanding partner. In this regard, the contributions of Québec's six Government Offices in the United States have proved crucial.

Barack Obama's election as President marked a major turning point in the policies and directions put forward by the United States in recent years. Soon after his election, the first Afro-American President in history scored a major legislative victory by signing a two-year \$787B US stimulus package into law. Since then, we have witnessed legislative progress with respect to the environment, energy and financial sector reform. After the first signs of economic stability, the Democrats decided to focus their attention on healthcare reform.

Even though most of the changes initiated by the Obama Administration are essentially national in scope, several new measures that have been implemented correspond to Québec's strategic interests. Québec must therefore be prepared to take targeted and concerted action in the U.S. market in order to make the most of the opportunities resulting from these measures. The new approach contained in *The Québec Government's U.S. Strategy* will make it possible to achieve that goal.

In the coming years, the Québec government's efforts will focus primarily on five objectives:

- Contributing to the security of the North American continent;
- Fostering trade;
- Ensuring Québec's leadership regarding energy and the environment;
- Encouraging the sharing and promotion of Québec's culture and identity;
- Increasing Québec's capacity to take action and supporting the development of expertise.

Summary



1. FOSTERING TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES

After reaching a record figure of 63.5 billion dollars in 2000, Québec's goods exports to the United States totalled just over 51 billion dollars in 2008, which nonetheless accounted for 72.2% of Québec's international exports. The drop is all the more critical since exports to other markets have not succeeded in making up for the lost revenue.

The recent economic and financial crisis has had significant negative impacts in the United States, and these have directly affected imports: the collapse of the stock market, a dramatic decrease in the number of construction project start-ups and new orders for manufactured goods, a loss of 2.6 million jobs and a sharp decline in the consumption index.

The Québec Government's U.S. Strategy therefore seeks to foster approaches in sectors where the directions of the new Administration create unprecedented business opportunities for our most innovative and competitive companies. The measures adopted should:

- help companies establish adapted marketing strategies;
- provide increased support for their integration into expanding trade networks;
- facilitate contacts with potential clients and partners;
- foster an advantageous positioning of Québec and its companies;
- contribute to promoting Québec's excellence in research and innovation.

The increasing interdependence and integration of NAFTA member countries calls for finding joint solutions to the challenges they must face. Among these is maintaining a smart border that enables the smooth flow of goods and people.

That is why the Québec government will continue to keep a watchful eye on issues related to opening markets, intra-firm trade, creating cross-border economic zones, expanding tourism and passenger rail transportation corridors as well as the potential immigration pool that the United States represents.

2. ENSURING QUÉBEC'S LEADERSHIP REGARDING ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In the current international context, energy and environmental issues are becoming ever more closely linked. The same applies to the interests, priorities and initiatives of Québec and the United States in these sectors.

President Obama has made energy independence a major priority of his Administration. To achieve that goal, he intends to focus on energy efficiency (a 15% reduction in energy consumption by 2020) and on developing renewable energies so that by 2012 at least 10% of the energy produced in the United States will be derived from those sources (25% by 2025).

Despite these targets, electricity consumption in the United States is expected to increase by around 25% by 2030. Québec, the world's 4th largest producer of hydroelectricity, intends to promote this clean, renewable, reliable and safe energy source to its U.S. partner and is including Aboriginal communities and Québec environmental groups in this endeavour.

Québec must make sure that new U.S. legislation and future policies pertaining to renewable energies will enable it to rely on a long-term approach that promotes a flexible electricity supply by:

- not rejecting water-generated electricity from Québec;
- allowing full use of existing supply infrastructure;
- fostering the installation of new export corridors and the signing of long-term contracts.

U.S. environmental policies are those that have the greatest impact on Québec. Therefore, Québec is keeping a close watch on the positions President Obama is taking on this issue. Bringing about a major change of direction, he has indicated that he wants to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United States to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Accordingly, in October, 2009 he signed an important executive order on federal leadership outlining, among other things, sustainable development objectives for federal agencies.

Québec is also determined to fight climate change, as evidenced by its *Action Plan* (2006-2012), *Energy Strategy* (2006-2015) and *Public Transportation Policy*. In November, 2009, Québec reassured its environmental leadership by setting the most restrictive target in North America for itself: reducing GHG emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Since Québec is aware that environmental problems transcend borders and that it is essential not to act alone, Québec actively participates in several regional climate change and sustainable water management initiatives, including: the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP), the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), the Climate Registry and the Great Lakes Commission. Québec intends to play an active role in setting up a North American carbon market.

3. CONTRIBUTING TO THE SECURITY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

The risks of terrorist attacks remain a source of great concern for the U.S. Administration. Its internal security initiatives have almost always resulted in a tightening of border inspection measures, thereby having important repercussions on trade and the mobility of people between Québec and the United States. The current Administration has undertaken to increase the number of agents, strengthen the infrastructure and make broader use of technology in order to "preserve border integrity."

The Québec government likewise intends to continue its efforts to counter possible threats. It has made security one of the five major objectives of its *International Policy*, resulting in the creation of the security information management centre (Centre de gestion de l'information de sécurité - CGIS). Québec has also stepped up its collaboration with various U.S. partners by, among other things, signing cooperation agreements with bordering states. Additionally, Québec intends to continue to participate in the Northeast Regional Homeland Security Directors Consortium and support the *International Emergency Management Assistance Memorandum of Understanding* pertaining to mutual aid for civil protection.

Summary



4. ENCOURAGING THE SHARING AND PROMOTION OF QUÉBEC'S CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Promoting Québec's culture in the United States is part of the move to spotlight Québec's unique characteristics, such as the originality of its creators and excellence of its performers, in addition to its defining feature, namely the importance that the French language and La Francophonie hold for Québec society. Culture is also among today's diplomatic tools that help create a favourable environment for increasing the visibility of our identity. It actively contributes to positioning Québec and its uniqueness, modernity and expertise. While fostering a greater presence of artists and cultural enterprises in the United States, Québec's network of Government Offices in the United States relies on the excellence of our representatives from the cultural sector to raise U.S. awareness about Québec.

Québec's cultural initiatives in the United States are based on three major objectives that respond to economic, cultural and diplomatic considerations:

- Developing markets for Québec's creators and cultural enterprises;
- Promoting its productions to the U.S. public;
- Favourably positioning Québec's uniqueness in North America together with its modernity and high-level expertise via its culture and beyond.

The economic impact of the Québec cultural sector is considerable, but the limited size of the Québec market makes it imperative to take measures to boost the circulation of its creators and their works. Therefore, hosting U.S. distributors provides them an opportunity to discover Québec's latest productions. The Québec government also encourages collective participation in major U.S. events. It considers the acquisition of skills adapted to current demands with respect to cultural activities in the United States, especially those pertaining to export, to be a major issue.

The desire to guarantee the permanence of French as one of the major languages of the Americas is the cornerstone of the Québec government's initiatives in the United States with respect to La Francophonie. In its endeavours in the United States, Québec will therefore make certain to place emphasis on long-established, dynamic Francophone communities and the network of French teachers.

5. INCREASING QUÉBEC'S CAPACITY TO TAKE ACTION AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPERTISE

The Québec Government Offices in the United States (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C.) are among the preferred means for promoting and defending Québec's interests throughout the United States. Their mandate includes:

- Establishing lasting relations with governments, opinion leaders and other key stakeholders;
- Advantageously using their networks of influence to position Québec's expertise and target expanding markets for Québec companies and products;
- Keeping a watch on the regions they serve;
- Advising Québec companies and institutions wishing to establish ties with the United States.

In addition to the ongoing work of the Québec Government Offices, a number of ministerial, administrative, economic and institutional missions contribute to developing bilateral relations with many states, members of Congress, opinion leaders and other non-government partners in a host of sectors. Contact networks are established with the aim of advancing Québec's interests and targeting trends that are decisive for Québec. The Québec government is also a member of several regional forums which are important allies.

Québec cannot increase its capacity for influence and action in the United States without prior strategic knowledge about the country's politics, economy, society and culture. The government will work to better systematize its use of public diplomacy operations aimed at opinion leaders in priority sectors of interest in the United States, while at the same time establishing partnerships and targeted collaboration with the many highly influential think tanks there. Additionally, the government acknowledges the benefits derived from Québec chairs and research centres that focus on the United States. They enable the government to reach opinion leaders in political, economic and social circles and it is through them that networks of influence will be built. The government also acknowledges the benefits that result from expanding Québec studies in the United States since they enhance the credibility and stability of perceptions about Québec.

The ties that Québec colleges and universities maintain with their partners in the United States make possible the exchange of ideas and mobility of professors, academic researchers and students. They are necessary for the competitiveness of Québec's institutions of higher learning and their integration into international research and knowledge networks. Québec must continue its endeavours to promote the educational opportunities it has to offer among American students. As an example, creating dual-degree joint programs appears to be an especially interesting prospect for the United States.

Conclusion



The United States is currently experiencing tremendous change resulting from the new political leadership that has emerged as well as the challenges it must face: a major economic and financial crisis, the fight against climate change, energy independence, protecting the environment and security on the North American continent.

The Québec Government's U.S. Strategy is intended to provide the Québec government with the means to promote and defend its interests. In order to position itself as a leading U.S. partner, Québec can rely on the vision and innovativeness of its business people, entrepreneurs and researchers, the vitality of its economy, its leadership in fighting climate change and developing renewable energy sources, its deep understanding of critical issues such as continental security, and the originality of its culture and talent of its creators. These competitive advantages will enable Québec to seize all opportunities to provide its partner with concrete and mutually beneficial solutions.

