CEDEC | A BETTER ECONOMY FOR BETTER LIVES

Build enterprises.
Expand trade.
Create jobs.

Building the 2026–2028 Collaborative
Economic Development Roadmap

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Introduction

CAPITALIZING ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Powerful economic drivers are shaping new and exciting opportunities for the Official Language Minority Community in Quebec (OLMCQ). CEDEC is working to uplift the community and champion these drivers as a means to share economic success. Through intentional change and rigorous research, CEDEC has repositioned itself to identify and advance bold, practical opportunities for economic development.

CEDEC is helping move OLMCQ economic development from insight to action by identifying real economic opportunities and mobilizing the people best positioned to pursue them. The organization's work is practical, not abstract— grounded in research, experience, and cross-sector collaboration.

This Flagship Report is both proof of this transformation and an invitation to collaborate on achieving successes. The report is the third in a four-phase process that has so far included research, dialogue, and identification of key opportunities. Now, CEDEC is ready to move toward validation, prioritization and engaging partners to garner long-term commitment for implementation.

The Report will frame and inform an intensive workshop planned for February 16 and 17, 2026— an event that will clearly show that economic development happens when communities, government and sectoral experts work together.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economy[1] determines how opportunities are created, how prosperity is distributed, and how resources are invested for the future. All Quebecers, including English speakers and their communities, depend on the economy to live, work, and thrive individually and collectively. A healthy Quebec economy is the foundation of a vital community. The future prosperity of the OLMCQ depends on its full participation in the developing economy.

Today, the economy is being transformed by three powerful forces:

1. Artificial intelligence and digital technology
2. The transition to a green economy
3. Demographic shifts

The Report presents integrated clusters of distinct Collaborative Economic Development opportunities identified through CEDEC's applied research program.[2]

Effective economic development will ensure OLMCQ access to opportunities and the necessary assets to capitalize on them. By fully engaging with the transformative forces reshaping Quebec's economy, English speakers and their communities can participate meaningfully in high-potential sectors. This is how economic development delivers tangible benefits for individuals and their communities: it attracts investment, generates increased employment incomes, and enhances business and social enterprise revenues. By doing so, economic development also reduces persistent economic disparities.[3]

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1   The economy is the societal system that determines how scarce resources are used to produce valuable goods and services and distribute them among different individuals. Samuelson and Nordhaus, Economics – 19th Edition, page 4

2   CEDEC's OL Economic & Labour Market Development Applied Research Program (ELMDARP) provides integrated analyses, guidance documents, and advice to identify promising opportunities that can generate tangible economic benefits, and it supports purposeful capacity building through application of the Collaborative Economic Development Model.

3   OLMCQ exhibits greater income disparity compared to French-speaking Quebec (FSQ). The poverty rate among ESQ is nearly double that of FSQ. CEDEC – Economic Disparities of the Official Language Minority Community of Quebec: A Literature Review, September 2025.

WHY COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

The OLMCQ includes more than 1.25 million Quebecers—approximately 13% of the population spread across every region of the province. This community makes important contributions to Quebec's economy while navigating its own cultural challenges and opportunities. Although resilient and adaptable, economic disparities persist for the OLMCQ: unemployment is often higher, incomes lower, and poverty rates steeper than among the Francophone majority.

1.25m

QUEBECERS INCLUDED AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITY IN QUEBEC

CEDEC created the Collaborative Economic Development Model (CEDM) to optimize the contribution of English speakers to the development of Quebec's economy and to reduce disparities within the OLMCQ.

The CEDM serves four interrelated functions:

- **Applied Research** to identify emerging economic and labour market trends, opportunities, and practices

- **Opportunity Identification & Viability Assessment** to:

    - Align with the OLMCQ Ten-Year Plan and Quebec's economic drivers

    - Assess sustainability and investment potential

    - Ensure capacity to generate employment income and business and social enterprise revenues

- **Capacity Building** that mobilizes assets, resources, and collaborative action across public, private, and civil society partners to take full advantage of opportunities.

- **Measuring Results** to strengthen future development

This model reflects two CEDEC convictions:

- Collaboration is the engine of economic innovation and productivity

- Collaboration is the OLMCQ's strategic economic development edge

Leveraging Collaborative Economic Development, CEDEC and its partners are helping to shape the future of Quebec's economy, multiplying the value that the OLMCQ and all Quebecers can derive from our shared economy.

COLLABORATION IS THE OLMCQ'S STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EDGE

In a landscape where scale, adaptability, and innovation are crucial, the ability to gather diverse partners and foster collective action is the OLMCQ's most powerful tool for creating jobs, increasing revenues, attracting investment, and ensuring long-term community vitality.

This collaboration is the key to the OLMCQ's strategic economic growth. It enhances the community's ability to overcome ongoing disparities: its minority status, smaller size, and geographic dispersion.

Strong partnerships across public, private, and civil society sectors enable the OLMCQ to pool resources, share risks, and leverage networks that extend its influence far beyond what any single organization or community could achieve alone.

Collaboration also helps the OLMCQ align local, regional, provincial, national, and global assets, positioning English-speaking Quebecers as essential contributors to the progress of Quebec and Canada.

THE ECONOMIC DRIVERS RESHAPING QUEBEC'S FUTURE

Three global trends stand out for their potential to influence Quebec's economic development over the next decade.[4]

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Digital Technology

AI is transforming agriculture, health, education, tourism, and more. For OLMCQ communities, AI offers opportunities and challenges—the opportunity to overcome economic disparities and leverage local, regional, provincial, national, and global strengths, resources, and talents. The challenge is to fully prepare English speakers to build future-oriented AI-enabled businesses and social enterprises—and to secure AI-enabled jobs.

2. Green Economy Transition

The transition to a green economy is being driven by a growing public understanding of the impacts of climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, toxic chemicals, and industrial food production, among other factors. Quebec is committed to a low-carbon future, with billions invested in renewable energy, electrification, and sustainable construction. This green transition is forecast to create hundreds of thousands of clean energy jobs in Quebec between 2025 and 2050.[5] This eco-economy transition will lead to the creation of new businesses, social enterprises, and well-paying jobs.

3. Demographic Shifts

Quebec's population is aging, immigration is increasing, and some young graduates are facing underemployment. These shifts demand adaptive strategies for English-speaking youth, young graduates, adults, and seniors. Demographic shifts impacting the Quebec economy can become a driver of English-speaking resilience, inclusion, and prosperity. The key is to accelerate access to future-oriented jobs, support career reorientations, extend career opportunities, and foster entrepreneurship. Actions such as this will position the OLMCQ not as a vulnerable population or needy community, but as a key contributor to Canada's One-Economy vision.[6]

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCIES

These three drivers are deeply interdependent. AI accelerates green innovation, while the green transition creates new applications for AI. AI expands access to and participation in the labour market; each successful placement strengthens AI tools themselves, and makes space for new AI-enabled startups and entrepreneurship. Green investments draw in youth, graduates, older workers, and seniors—all of whom will rely on increasingly sophisticated AI tools to participate fully in the green economy.

CEDEC and its partners aim to capitalize on the synergies generated by these drivers.

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4   CEDEC, *Overview of Quebec's Economic Landscape, CEDEC-OQEL-ENG.pdf*

5   Government of Canada, *Quebec: Clean electricity snapshot – Canada.ca*

6   Government of Canada *One Canadian Economy Act – Canada.ca*

HOW TO USE THE REPORT

The remainder of the Report presents 24 promising Collaborative Economic Development opportunities. They have been identified through CEDEC's Official Language Economic & Labour Market Development Applied Research Program (ELMDARP). These opportunities have the combined potential to inform a Collaborative Economic Development Strategy that will optimize the contribution of English speakers to the Quebec economy and significantly reduce disparities for English speakers in Quebec for the next couple of years.

Each opportunity has been categorized by economic driver and cluster. Each driver and cluster is introduced with a brief narrative summary that explains its context, purpose, and potential.

Workshop participants are encouraged to use the information in the Report to:

- Validate promising opportunities and initiatives related to economic drivers.
- Assess the possibility of taking full advantage of these opportunities.
- Confirm the public, private, and civil society partners to be engaged.
- Advise on moving select Collaborative Economic Development opportunities forward.

Complementary Fact Sheets expand on the opportunities in the Report. They outline:

- Specific public, private, and civil society partners best positioned to support seizing opportunities
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress and achievement
- Critical enablers required for success

Taken together, the Report and the Fact Sheets provide practical guidance to help workshop participants discuss plans related to each opportunity. These tools are designed to help workshop participants quickly identify where they and other stakeholders can make a meaningful contribution, and how results will be measured. The Fact Sheets also set out what conditions must be in place to ensure that opportunities translate into jobs, employment income, business and social enterprise revenues, investments, and vital communities.

As you review these documents, please keep the collaborative model in mind. No single actor can advance these opportunities on their own. The Report is an invitation to unprecedented collaboration across the OLMCQ, between it and the Francophone majority of Quebec, and across public, private, and civil society sectors. This collaboration will ensure that all Quebecers thrive in a growing, innovative, resilient, and more inclusive economy.

Drivers, Clusters, and Opportunities

This table maps the 24 opportunities identified and explained in this Report. The opportunities are categorized by economic drivers and clusters, and coded for easy reference elsewhere in the Report and the Fact Sheets.

Economic Drivers	Clusters	Opportunities (CODE + TITLE)
AI & Digital Technology: Intelligent Futures	**Cluster 1** Smart_Farm: AI-enabled Farm Futures	• C1-OPP1 – Profit Through Knowledge: AI Upskilling in Agriculture • C1-OPP2 – Stabilizing Seasonal Incomes with AI Workforce Platforms • C1-OPP3 – Revenue Security Through AI-driven Succession Planning • C1-OPP4 – AI-optimized Equipment Sharing
	Cluster 2 Smart_Tourism	• C2-OPP1 – Smart_Tourism: Designing Tomorrow's Visitor Experience • C2-OPP2 – Smart_Tourism: Next-gen SME Tourism Sales & Marketing
	Cluster 3 Smart_Care Transformation	• C3-OPP1 – Smart_Care: Service Development through AI-enabled Tools • C3-OPP2 – Smart_Care: AI-enabled Telehealth and Monitoring • C3-OPP3 – Smart_Care: AI-enabled Accreditation • C3-OPP4 – Smart_Care: New Care Enterprise Development through AI Innovation
	Cluster 4 Smart_Culture Marketplaces	• C4-OPP1 – Smart_Culture: AI-powered Cultural Marketing and Sales • C4-OPP2 – Smart_Culture: Cost Reduction AI-powered Supply Chain

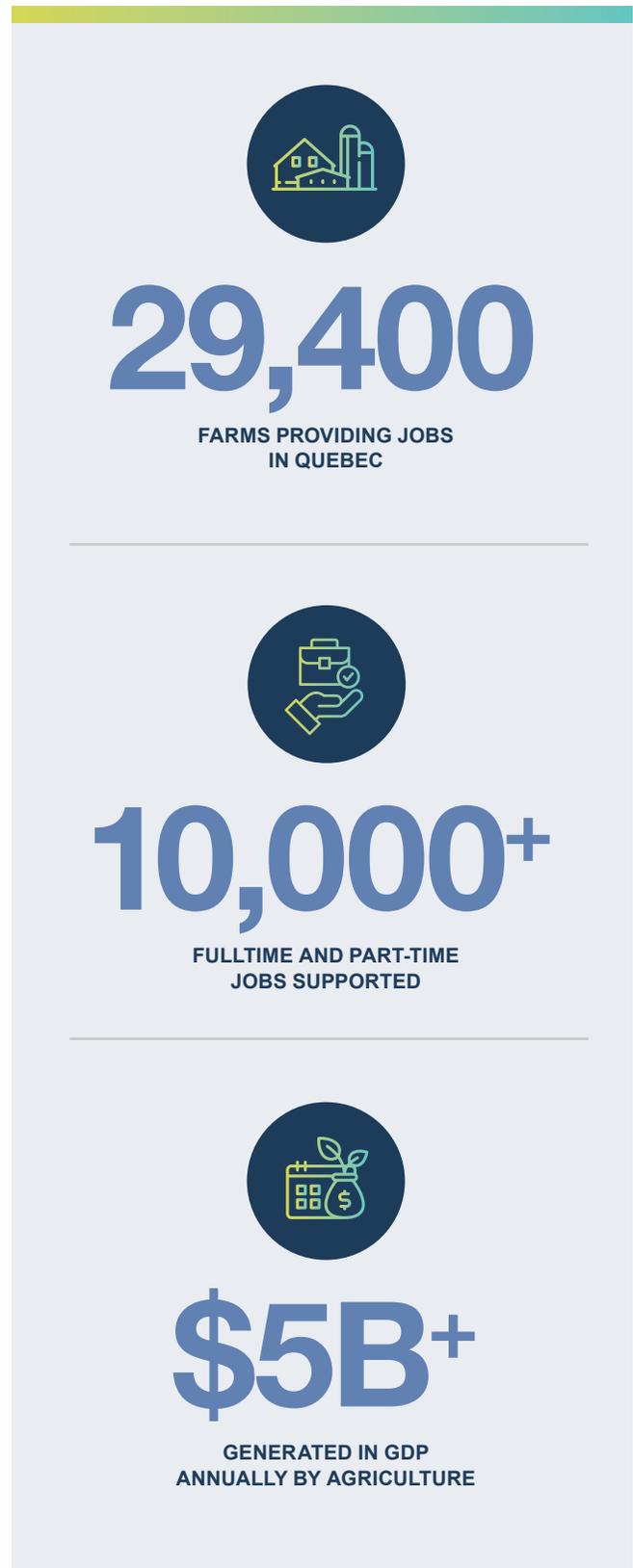| Economic Drivers	Clusters	Opportunities (CODE + TITLE)
Green Economy & Sustainability: Growth Meets Purpose	**Cluster 5** Next-gen RT (Rural Transportation): Communities in Motion	• C5-OPP1 – Next-gen RT: AI-enabled Passenger EVs • C5-OPP2 – Next-gen RT: Drones & Electric Aviation
	Cluster 6 Green_Build	• C6-OPP1 – Green_Build: Eco-housing for Community Growth • C6-OPP2 – Green_Build: Smart Retrofits for Community Institutions and Facilities
	Cluster 7 Bio_Value: Waste to Wealth	• C7-OPP1 – Bio_Value: Agri-waste Innovation
	Cluster 8 Sustainable Prosperity: Responsible for Nature and Profitable by Design	• C8-OPP1 – Developing the St. Lawrence River Green Cruise Corridor
Demographic Shifts: Turning Change into Growth	**Cluster 9** Workforce Pipelines and Pathways	• C9-OPP1 – AI-assisted Provincial Placement Platform • C9-OPP2 – Advisory & Support Services • C9-OPP3 – Incentivized Internship and Apprenticeship Programs • C9-OPP4 – Encore Seniors Cooperative (ESCOOP) • C9-OPP5 – Graduate Entrepreneurship and Start-up Supports
	Cluster 10 Community Investment Capital	• C10-OPP1 – Collaborative Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF)

AI & Digital Technology: Intelligent Futures

Smart_Farm: AI-enabled Farm Futures

Agriculture is one of Quebec's most important economic sectors. It generates more than $5 billion in GDP annually[7] and supports tens of thousands of full-time and part-time jobs across 29,400 farms,[8] including dairy, livestock, and fruit and vegetable operations.

For rural regions, particularly English-speaking communities in the Eastern Townships, Gaspé, Outaouais, and Magdalen Islands, farming is a livelihood and a cornerstone of community vitality. Many farms face structural pressures (such as an aging workforce), barriers to modernization, seasonal labor shortages, and steep capital costs. AI tools offer pathways to modernization, efficiency, and profitability.

29,400

FARMS PROVIDING JOBS IN QUEBEC

10,000+

FULLTIME AND PART-TIME JOBS SUPPORTED

$5B+

GENERATED IN GDP ANNUALLY BY AGRICULTURE

7   *Gouvernement du Québec,* Produit intérieur brut réel

8   *Government of Canada,* Agriculture–Crop production, animal production and aquaculture: Quebec, 2025

C1-OP1 – PROFIT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE: AI UPSKILLING IN AGRICULTURE

Building AI and digital literacy among small and medium-sized farmers, particularly across the OLMCQ, can raise farm productivity and reduce operating costs. Farmers equipped with AI knowledge and tools will manage crops more efficiently, better anticipate weather and pest risks, and make smarter, data-driven financial and operational decisions. The result: higher farm revenues, improved profit margins, and more stable incomes for workers.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Smart_Farm AI & Digital Literacy Portal**
  A bilingual and modular online learning service that delivers practical, affordable AI-literacy programs tailored for farm owners and operators.

- **Smart_Farm AI Incentive and Investment Navigator**
  A bilingual digital platform that offers farmers:

  - Farm operation assessment tools and advice to help evaluate current operations and readiness to adopt AI.

  - Personalized advice and resources to access federal, provincial, cooperative, and private sector investment and funding to support AI adoption.

  - Connections to expert advisors, templates, and success stories to streamline and facilitate access to AI investment and funding.

- **Smart_Farm AI Peer-to-Peer Demonstration Network**
  Farmers share their AI-adoption experiences online—for example, precision crop monitoring and weather and pest prediction to minimize related disruptions. Supported by incentives to encourage participation, this network could maximize collective learning.

C1-OPP2 – SMART_FARM: STABILIZING SEASONAL INCOMES WITH AI WORKFORCE PLATFORMS

Quebec's agriculture sector shares seasonal labour rhythms with the tourism industry. Farms face shortages during planting and harvest, while tourism peaks in summer and fall. Seasonal workers often cycle in and out of employment, resulting in income instability, while employers incur recurring recruitment costs. An AI-enabled workforce-sharing platform could coordinate labour needs across sectors. This platform would stabilize and increase employment income for seasonal workers, while lowering costs and enhancing profitability for farm operators.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Smart_Farm Workforce Exchange Platform**
  A bilingual AI-powered system that matches workers to seasonal roles across agriculture and tourism.

- **Smart_Farm AI Workforce Readiness Training**
  Short online courses to equip workers with transferable AI and digital skills, boosting employability and productivity.

- **Smart_Farm Seasonal Labour Mobility Fund**
  Subsidized travel and housing support for workers who move between regions and sectors to meet seasonal demand.

C1-OPP3 – SMART_FARM: REVENUE SECURITY THROUGH AI-DRIVEN SUCCESSION PLANNING
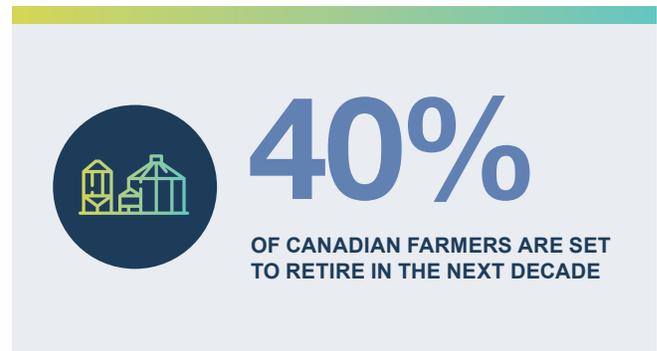
Nearly 40% of Canada's farmers, including many in Quebec, are set to retire in the next decade. Succession planning is critical.[9] Without clear plans, farms face closure, consolidation, or abandonment, which undermines profitability, food security, and rural tax bases. AI-enabled succession planning platforms could use predictive analytics, financial models, and matching tools to connect retiring farmers with new entrants. Retiring owners would secure stable income, new farmers would access viable businesses, and rural communities would retain vital revenue and jobs.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▶ **Smart_Farm Succession AI Platform**
Predictive analytics for farm viability to match successors with opportunities.

▶ **Smart_Farm AI-Guided Transition Planning Service**
Financial tools that model retirement income scenarios, intergenerational transfers, and investment readiness.

▶ **Smart_Farm Mentorship & Knowledge Transfer Program**
Combining AI matching with human mentorship to preserve farm-specific expertise.

40%

OF CANADIAN FARMERS ARE SET TO RETIRE IN THE NEXT DECADE

C1-OPP4 – SMART_FARM: AI-OPTIMIZED EQUIPMENT SHARING

High capital costs limit access to equipment for many small and medium-sized farms.[10] AI-enabled platforms could schedule and monitor shared equipment across multiple farms, reducing per-farm costs and maximizing equipment use. Predictive maintenance minimizes downtime and extends the life of assets. This would enable smaller farms to access advanced equipment and technology, increasing productivity, output, revenues, and profitability while ensuring more stable employment for workers.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▶ **Smart_Farm Equipment Sharing Platform**
AI-based scheduling and predictive maintenance for shared machinery.

▶ **Smart_Farm Shared Leasing & Co-investment Fund**
Partnerships with municipalities, suppliers, and co-ops to finance shared equipment.

▶ **Smart_Farm On-farm Demonstration Projects**
Recruit pilot farms to demonstrate equipment sharing ROI in minority-language regions.

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9   *RBC Economics and OECD Skills for Jobs Database, Farmers Wanted: The labour renewal Canada needs to build the Next Green Revolution - RBC*

10   *Government of Canada, QCSP111112Agriculture_en.pdf*

Smart_Tourism

Quebec's tourism industry stands out in Canada. From Old Québec City's historic streets and Montréal's cultural festivals to the rugged Gaspé, Magdalen Islands, and Lower North Shore, the province's landscapes and traditions attract millions each year. The sector serves as a vital economic lifeline for many rural communities. It generates 2% of Quebec's GDP and employs over 130,000 people—more than 3% of provincial jobs.[11] However, the industry is changing rapidly. Visitors now expect seamless, personalized, and immersive experiences shaped by global digital platforms. This expectation forces small and medium-sized operators—such as family inns, B&Bs, eco-guides, festivals, and heritage sites—to compete globally.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help level the field. By analyzing preferences, predicting flows, and enabling real-time personalization, AI can boost bookings, lengthen stays, and increase visitor spending. AI-powered marketing enables small operators to access data and audiences previously reserved for large players. Translation and accessibility tools make destinations more accessible and inclusive. Virtual and augmented reality can showcase Quebec's beauty and heritage before visitors even arrive. For the OLMCQ, AI enhances the visibility of English-speaking attractions province wide.

Together, these innovations can unlock revenue, stabilize seasonal earnings, and strengthen Quebec's position as a world-class destination.

C2-OPP1 – SMART_TOURISM: DESIGNING TOMORROW'S VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Personalized, data-driven experiences increasingly shape tourism visitor expectations. Small operators can leverage AI-enabled tools—such as itinerary planners, real-time translation, accessibility supports, and augmented reality/virtual reality (AR/VR) experiences—to transform service delivery, extend visitor stays, increase per-visitor spending, and boost profitability.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▷ **Smart_Tourism Experience Hub**
A bilingual digital platform that gives operators access to AI-enabled itinerary planning, translation, and AR/VR visitor tools.

▷ **Smart_Tourism Experience Accelerator**
An AI tourism hub that integrates AI visitor tools to support small businesses, directly increasing their revenues.

▷ **Smart_Tourism Indigenous Cultural Experience Network**
A collaborative initiative that integrates Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises into AI-enabled platforms. These platforms could showcase authentic cultural experiences (e.g., guided tours, traditional food, artisan workshops) and create new revenue streams for Indigenous communities.
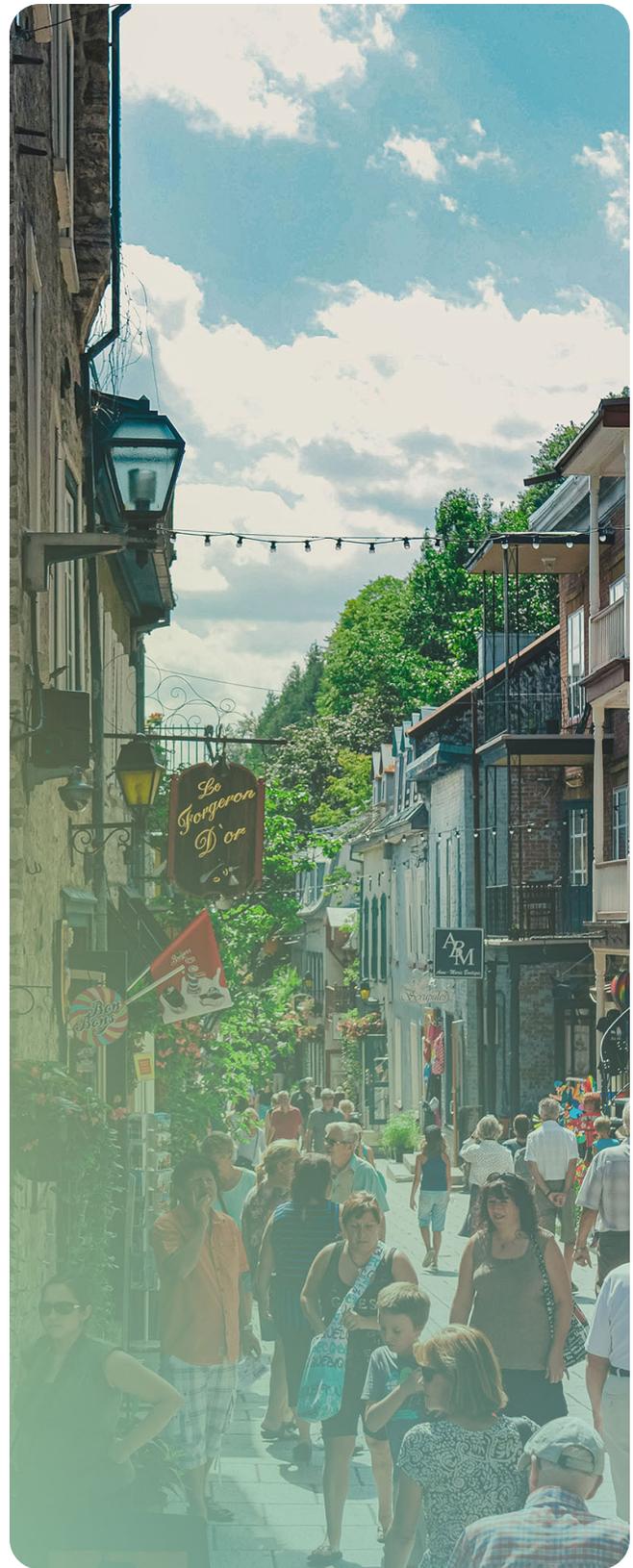
130,000+
PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN QUEBEC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

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11 *Statistics Canada, The Daily — Provincial and Territorial Tourism Satellite Account, 2019*

C2-OPP2 – SMART_TOURISM: NEXT-GEN SME TOURISM SALES & MARKETING

Many small operators lack the marketing reach and analytical capabilities of large competitors, which limits their visibility in competitive markets. AI-powered sales and marketing tools can level the playing field in tourism sales and marketing by predicting visitor trends, optimizing pricing, and targeting advertising more effectively. Small operators could increase attraction visits, improve occupancy, enhance off-season revenues, boost profitability, and achieve greater financial stability.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▶ **Smart_Tourism Marketing and Sales Platform**
A bilingual, AI-powered platform that pools resources to build a collective marketing and sales capacity, helping English-speaking operators increase bookings and revenues.

▶ **Smart_Tourism SME Consultancy**
Tailored SME consulting services to enhance the adoption and ongoing operation of AI-powered advertising, pricing optimization, and visitor trend prediction.

▶ **Smart_Tourism Data Cooperative**
A shared database that pools operators' visitor data (with privacy protections) to gain collective insights into demand and visitor behaviors.

Smart_Care Transformation

Quebec's care economy is one of the fastest-growing sectors. It is driven by aging demographics,[12] increasing demand for personalized health services, and shifting expectations for quality and accessibility. For entrepreneurs, social enterprises, and care providers—including those in English-speaking communities—this surge in demand is an unprecedented opportunity to innovate and capture new revenue streams.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the forefront of this transformation. Far from being a replacement for human caregivers, AI provides the tools to design new service models, strengthen workforce capacity, and deliver care more efficiently and profitably. AI can enhance workforce planning, expand telehealth services, expedite credential recognition for newcomers, and foster innovative care enterprises. Modernized AI-enabled care delivery has the potential to generate new revenue streams and create jobs.

C3-OPP1 — SMART_CARE: SERVICE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AI-ENABLED TOOLS

Quebec's health and social care providers face high turnover, staff shortages, and rising recruitment costs. Bilingual caregivers are especially scarce. AI-driven scheduling, competency matching, and placement can improve staff deployment, reduce overtime, lower turnover costs, and raise caregiver incomes.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Smart_Care Workforce Platform**
  AI scheduling and workforce planning tailored for bilingual care settings.
- **Smart_Care Predictive Workforce Analytics Service**
  Tools that anticipate shortages and optimize recruitment pipelines.
- **Smart_Care AI Competency Consultancy**
  Online, bilingual micro-credential programs that facilitate labour market participation.

C3-OPP2 — SMART_CARE: AI-ENABLED TELEHEALTH AND MONITORING

COVID-19 accelerated telehealth, but it also exposed gaps, especially for rural and English-speaking communities that face language and distance barriers. AI-powered platforms with diagnostic, triage, and predictive-monitoring features can expand access, cut ER visits, and create new revenue for providers.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Smart_Care Telehealth Platform**
  A bilingual telehealth solution that integrates AI-enabled diagnostics, triage, and monitoring.
- **Smart_Care Remote Monitoring Expansion Fund**
  Targeted subsidies to support deployment of AI-enabled monitoring tools in minority-language regions.
- **Smart_Care Telehealth Promotional Service**
  Community-based bilingual marketing and training to help clients in need adopt telehealth confidently.

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12   *Government of Quebec, Portrait of seniors in Québec*

C3-OPP3 – SMART_CARE: AI-ENABLED ACCREDITATION

Quebec faces chronic shortages of bilingual health workers while internationally trained professionals remain underemployed due to lengthy accreditation processes. A solution: AI-enabled credential recognition and job-matching platforms. Combined with online tailored consultancy services, such a platform could accelerate pre-accreditation readiness, place professionals into interim roles, and reduce vacancy costs—thereby increasing incomes for workers and stabilizing employer revenues.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▸ **Smart_Care AI Credential Navigator**
A platform to streamline recognition of international qualifications and provide a related online consultancy.

▸ **Smart_Care Bridge-to-practice Accelerator**
AI-driven matching of professionals to interim employment in care roles while awaiting licensing.

▸ **Smart_Care Talent Pool Forecasting Service**
Predictive AI models for staffing pipelines in English-language and bilingual institutions.

C3-OPP4 – SMART_CARE: NEW CARE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AI INNOVATION

Quebec's aging demographics and widening service gaps are both challenges and powerful drivers of economic development innovation. Where traditional systems cannot keep pace, new businesses and social enterprises can emerge to deliver care in novel ways—from AI-enabled virtual companionship to micro-clinics supported by predictive analytics.

The opportunity for English speakers is to establish businesses and social enterprises that enhance access to essential care services, cater to local needs, leverage the expertise of provincial care service provider networks, generate new revenue streams, attract investment, and create stable employment opportunities.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▸ **Smart_Care Enterprise Incubator**
A bilingual accelerator program that supports entrepreneurs and social innovators to develop AI-driven care models (e.g., AI-based home assistance, cognitive health tools, and remote caregiving platforms).

▸ **Smart_Care Investment Navigator**
An advisory service that connects startups and social enterprises with funding (government programs, impact investors, venture funds) and revenue models for sustainability.

▸ **Smart_Care Service Incentive Fund**
A collaborative fund that pools public, private, and civil society capital to finance pilot projects that reveal care-service revenue potential and fill service gaps.

Smart_Culture Marketplaces

Quebec's arts and culture sector fuels creativity, community vitality, and the economy. The sector sustains livelihoods and preserves cultural identity for English-speaking artisans—especially in rural regions. Yet many artists face limited market reach, fragmented supply chains, high costs, and linguistic barriers.

AI has the potential to turn these challenges into growth opportunities. Applied to e-commerce, logistics, and cultural marketing, AI would help artisans expand markets, boost revenues, and stabilize incomes. AI-enabled solutions could drive higher sales, stronger profitability, and sustainable growth for Quebec's cultural economy.[13]

C4-OPP1 – SMART_CULTURE: AI-POWERED CULTURAL MARKETING AND SALES

Many artisans, especially those in rural areas, rely on seasonal fairs and local shops to market and sell their products, which can limit sales and revenues. AI-powered e-commerce platforms, coupled with digital marketing of cultural tours, could expand market access and draw visitors to rural communities. These tools would create new income streams, raise artisan profits, and strengthen rural branding.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▶ **Smart_Culture Marketplace**
A bilingual, AI-enabled platform that integrates online and onsite marketing, sales, and customer analytics.

▶ **Smart_Culture Collective Branding Program**
A shared initiative that creates curated regional cultural tours and product bundles marketed collectively to visitors and online buyers.

C4-OPP2 – SMART_CULTURE: COST REDUCTION AI-POWERED SUPPLY CHAIN

High shipping costs and fragmented distribution networks erode artisan profitability, especially in remote regions. AI-enabled supply chain platforms can forecast demand, consolidate shipments, and facilitate bulk purchasing of raw materials, thereby directly reducing costs and enhancing margins.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▶ **Smart_Culture Collaborative Supply Chain**
AI-enabled joint purchasing, logistics pooling, shared warehousing, demand forecasting, and delivery optimization for artisan products to reduce input costs and boost profitability.

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13   *SPECIAL REPORT: How AI is Revolutionizing Small Businesses in Canada - Canada's Entrepreneur*
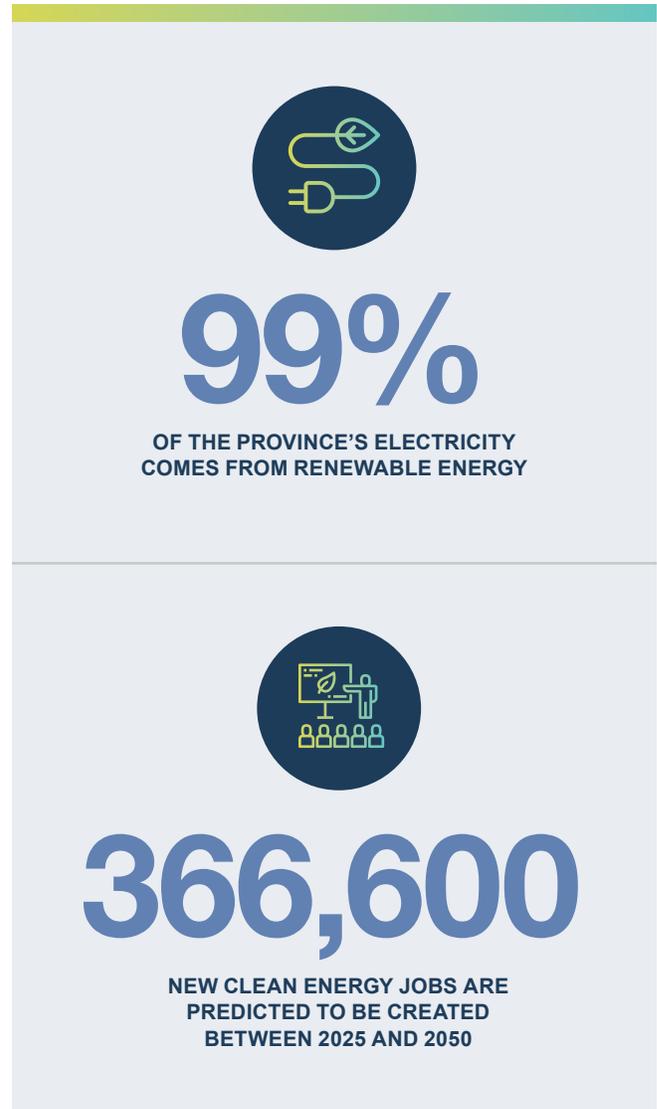
Green Economy & Sustainability (GES): Growth Meets Purpose

Quebec is leveraging green investments to drive revenue, jobs, and long-term prosperity. Nearly all the province's electricity comes from renewables—hydro, wind, and solar. Less than 1% is generated by fossil fuels.[14] This clean-energy base, paired with advances in clean tech, efficient buildings, sustainable transport, and circular economy initiatives, is reshaping what it means to grow sustainably.

Quebec's clean tech GDP fell 3.9% in 2023,[15] but the sector remains on a growth path that supports high wages and skilled jobs. From 2025 to 2050, national clean energy pathways are predicted to create about 366,600[16] new clean energy jobs, led by clean transportation, green buildings, renewable energy, and circular economy products.

For the Official Language Minority Community in Quebec (OLMCQ), the green economy brings new opportunities: jobs in eco-construction, transport, and renewable energy; business growth in green goods and services, and investment in sustainable infrastructure. The transition promises stable revenues, higher incomes, and resilient local economies—linking environmental stewardship with tangible economic benefits.

99%

OF THE PROVINCE'S ELECTRICITY COMES FROM RENEWABLE ENERGY

366,600

NEW CLEAN ENERGY JOBS ARE PREDICTED TO BE CREATED BETWEEN 2025 AND 2050

14   Government of Canada, _Quebec: Clean electricity snapshot - Canada.ca_

15   Statistics Canada, The Daily — _Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account, 2023_

16   Government of Canada, _Quebec: Clean electricity snapshot - Canada.ca_

Next-gen RT (Rural Transportation): Communities in Motion

Rural and isolated communities often struggle with limited transit and long travel distances, isolating residents from jobs, education, and markets.

C5-OPP1 — NEXT-GEN RT: AI-ENABLED PASSENGER EVS

AI-enabled electric vehicle (EV) businesses and co-ops, hydrogen-powered shuttles, and micro-mobility networks can improve accessibility and create profitable local ventures. For the OLMCQ, this means building businesses and social enterprises that expand mobility, generate revenues, and support job creation.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▸ **Next-gen RT Green Ride and Hydro Shuttles**
EV and Hydrogen-powered shuttles to serve remote communities.

▸ **Next-gen RT Smart Mobility Networks**
AI-enabled ride-scheduling, bike-sharing, and micro-transit tools.

▸ **Next-gen RT Charging & Infrastructure Co-ops**
Community-owned charging hubs powered by renewable energy to support EV adoption in rural areas.

C5-OPP2 — NEXT-GEN RT: DRONES & ELECTRIC AVIATION

Remote regions often face prohibitive costs for travel and to transport goods. Drone cargo delivery, electric short-haul aviation, and hydrogen shuttles could revolutionize access to markets and services while creating new clean-tech industries and service enterprises.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▸ **Next-gen RT Drone Delivery Hubs**
AI-optimized delivery of items such as health supplies, technical equipment, food and agricultural products, and parcels.

▸ **Next-gen RT Electric Aviation Pilots**
Short-haul EV flights linking isolated communities.

▸ **Next-gen RT Indigenous Mobility Partnerships**
Collaborative drone and electric aviation services co-designed and co-owned with Indigenous communities to improve access to health supplies, food, and goods in remote regions. These services would also create local jobs and build long-term expertise in clean transportation.

Green_Build

Housing shortages in rural and minority-language communities limit workforce attraction and retention. Prefabricated, eco-constructed housing could reduce housing shortages, create jobs in green construction, lower costs, and stimulate local enterprises.

C6-OPP1 — GREEN_BUILD: ECO-HOUSING FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH

Rural and minority-language communities across Quebec face persistent housing shortages that weaken their ability to attract and retain workers. Prefabricated, eco-constructed housing offers a sustainable solution, creating jobs in green construction while reducing costs for families and employers.

By developing community-owned housing co-ops, eco-construction hubs, and affordable rental networks, communities can turn housing from a barrier into an engine of growth. This opportunity would strengthen workforce stability and ensure long-term community vitality through greener, more affordable living options.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Green_Build Prefab Housing Co-ops**
  Community-owned modular eco-housing ventures.

- **Green_Build Construction Hubs**
  Training and scaling programs for eco-construction.

- **Green_Build Rental Networks**
  Affordable eco-rental units to improve workforce retention.

- **Green_Build Financing Navigator**
  A bilingual platform that helps communities and co-ops access housing grants, green construction subsidies, and blended public, private, and non-profit financing.

C6-OPP2 — GREEN_BUILD: SMART RETROFITS FOR COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND FACILITIES

Aging school, college, and university buildings, as well as recreational and cultural centres, are costly to maintain and operate. Retrofitting with green technologies reduces expenses and creates local jobs and business opportunities in retrofits, energy services, and smart tech.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Green_Build Retrofit Networks**
  Regional retrofit firms that coordinate energy upgrades.

- **Green_Build Smart Building Tech Hubs**
  Incubators for startups in energy monitoring and building management.

- **Green_Build Community Efficiency Funds**
  Blended financing models for community retrofits.
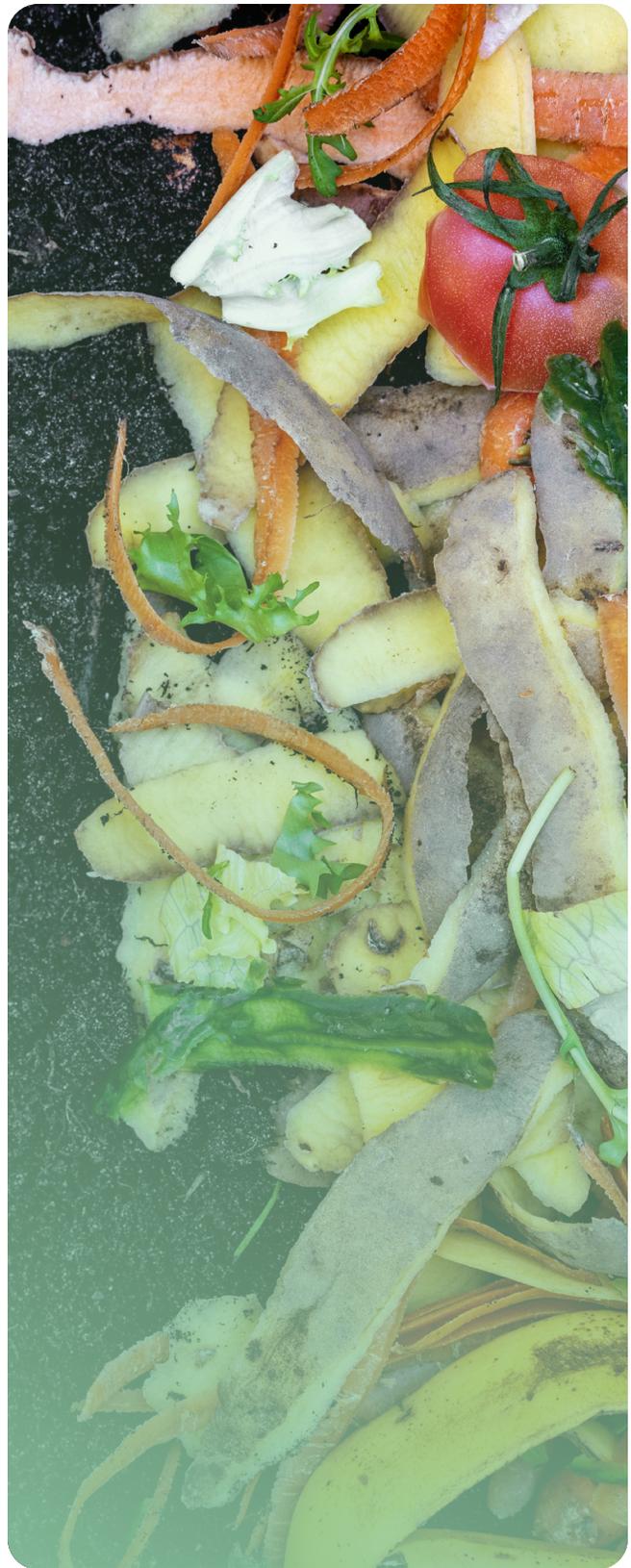
Bio_Value: Waste to Wealth

Quebec's farms produce large volumes of organic waste—manure, crop residues, and food by-products—often seen as costly burdens. Circular economy models could transform these into high-value products, such as renewable gas, biofertilizers, animal feed, and bio-based goods to generate new income and link stewardship to sustainable growth.

C7-OPP1 – BIO_VALUE: AGRI-WASTE INNOVATION

Through cooperatives, farmers can pool resources to run biodigesters, composting hubs, and bioproduct facilities—turning waste costs into revenue. Dairy- and crop-heavy regions like Estrie, Outaouais, and Gaspé are well placed to lead in Agri-waste innovation, creating jobs, boosting farm profits, attracting clean-tech investment, and strengthening Quebec's green economy.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▷ **Agri-waste Co-ops**
  Collective biodigesters that produce renewable gas and fertilizers.

▷ **Agri-bioproduct Hubs**
  Processing centres that convert crop residues into bioplastics and feed.

▷ **Agri-farm-to-energy Ventures**
  Local utilities that purchase farm-produced biogas.

▷ **Agri-BioMarket Partnerships**
  Programs that connect or match farmers with institutional buyers (schools, municipalities, large farms) for renewable gas, fertilizers, and bioplastics.

Sustainable Prosperity: Responsible for Nature and Profitable by Design

Environmental stewardship is no longer a limit on growth but a driver of it. By conserving resources, cutting waste, and adopting clean technologies, communities unlock new value chains, reduce costs, and attract investment. For Quebec's Official Language Minority Community, responsible enterprises protect ecosystems and create jobs, revenues, and stable businesses. Stewardship and profitability become mutually reinforcing pillars of a resilient economy.

C8-OPP1 – DEVELOPING THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER GREEN CRUISE CORRIDOR

The St. Lawrence River is one of Quebec's most important natural economic assets, already serving as a major corridor for international cruise lines. Yet rural ports from the Gaspé to the Magdalen Islands could benefit far more from passenger tourism. Quebec has the opportunity to transform this natural treasure into a profitable tourism engine by branding the St. Lawrence as a green cruise corridor. The corridor would attract international passengers, boost local revenues, and create year-round economic opportunities.

Curated community and cultural experiences can make smaller ports irresistible to global cruise operators and international visitors seeking authentic, experiential travel. For English-speaking communities along the St. Lawrence River, this translates into new job opportunities in guiding, hospitality, and retail, along with increased revenues for artisans and cultural enterprises. Positioned effectively, the St. Lawrence could stand alongside Norway's fjords and Alaska's Inside Passage. The St. Lawrence could generate millions in new revenues, stimulating business growth, and securing Quebec's place as a leader in sustainable, experience-driven tourism.

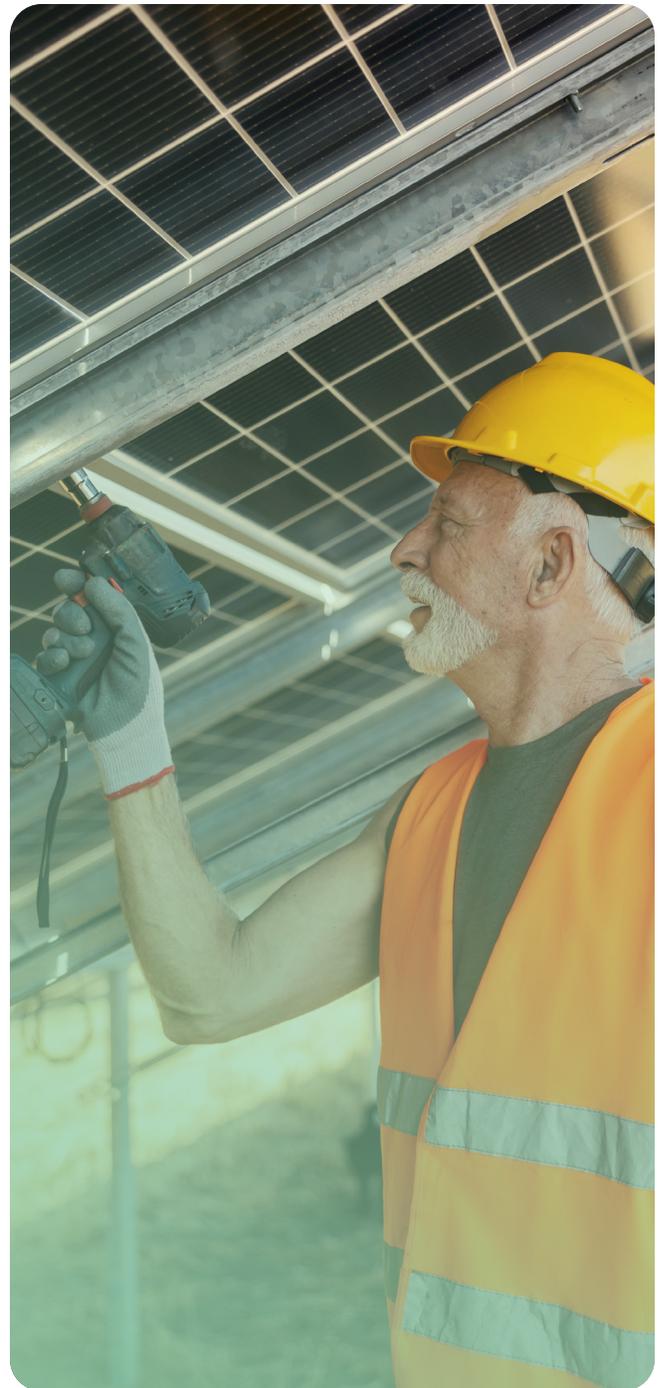Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▶ **Green Cruise Packages**
Eco-certified experiential cruises that link remote ports.

▶ **Local Experience Networks**
Partnerships with Indigenous, cultural, and eco-tourism providers.

▶ **Green Cruise B2B Supply Network**
A coordinated program enabling rural and minority language community businesses to become certified suppliers to cruise lines, including local food producers, artisans, and eco-friendly good providers.

Demographic Shifts: Turning Change into Growth

Quebec's demographic shifts—including immigration, aging, career changes, and rising diversity—present challenges and opportunities to create jobs, grow enterprises, attract investment, and increase incomes and productivity.

- **Immigration** is a strategic lever to address labour shortages. Immigrants bring essential bilingual skills and expertise but often face barriers such as credential delays and limited networks.[17] Faster job placement would enable newcomers to fill critical vacancies in businesses and services.

- **Seniors** represent an underused pool of experience and reliability.[18] Structured programs that place them in part-time roles, consulting, or mentoring could extend careers, reduce vacancy costs, and support stable retirement incomes.

- **Mid-career adults** increasingly need to reorient due to automation and sector shifts. Reskilling and entrepreneurship supports could help them launch ventures or transition into new roles.

- **Graduates** face underemployment despite strong education. Better-targeted career pathways would accelerate their placement into roles where employers urgently need talent.

17   LMIC-CIMT, _Welcome to Canada! (But Not the Full Labour Market) — LMIC-CIMT_

18   Centre for Productivity and Prosperity, Walter J. Somers Foundation, HEC Montreal, _An Aging Population : Solutions for a Poorly Prepared Quebec – Centre for Productivity and Prosperity Walter J. Somers Foundation_

Workforce Pipelines and Pathways

Quebec faces both labour shortages and underemployment. A bilingual, AI-assisted platform with regional and sectoral nodes could better match the English-speaking workforce to employer demand. The platform would help increase targeted placements, fill critical jobs, reduce vacancy costs, boost productivity, and increase employment stability and revenues.

To seize the opportunity, CEDEC proposes the creation of a single, integrated provincial AI-assisted placement platform that operates seamlessly across local, regional, sectoral, and provincial levels. This platform would include specialized work streams for:

- Immigrants (skilled newcomers and internationally trained professionals)
- Seniors (retirement age and up)
- Adults in career transition
- Secondary school graduates, including those from adult education and vocational programs
- Post-secondary graduates, including those in trades

AI-enabled placement, combined with incentivized internships and apprenticeships, can accelerate job entry, reduce recruitment costs, and increase incomes.

C9-OPP1 – AI-ASSISTED PROVINCIAL PLACEMENT PLATFORM

A bilingual, province-wide AI-assisted placement platform could link English-speaking labour supply to employer demand more effectively through regional and sector nodes. The system would enable targeted, efficient matching to fill critical vacancies, reduce employer recruitment costs, boost productivity, and generate more stable incomes.

The proposed platform would be developed using smart matching algorithms, enabling the creation of predictive models that forecast vacancies and align candidate skills with employer needs. It would feature specialized work streams for immigrants, seniors, adults in career transition, and graduates at both secondary and post-secondary levels.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Provincial Platform Core Programming**
  A bilingual, province-wide digital hub that connects workforce supply to labour market demand.

- **Provincial Platform Regional & Sector Nodes**
  Tailored modules for:

  - Youth & Vocational Pathways
    Direct matches to connect secondary and vocational graduates with trades, service sectors, and SMEs.

  - Graduate Launchpad
    Apprenticeships, internships, and entry-level opportunities linked to employers seeking fresh talent.

  - Newcomer Labour Market Integration Hub
    A credential recognition navigator that links French and English-language training and performs AI-matching to interim roles.

- Adult Career Transition Placement
  AI-guided retraining pathways and targeted re-entry opportunities for mid-career adults.

- Encore Seniors Career Extension
  Tailored placements, phased retirement options, and flexible contract opportunities for seniors.

- Indigenous Workforce Pathways
  AI-enabled placement, training linkages, and mentorship programs designed with Indigenous communities to support and match Indigenous-led enterprises and local talent with regional and provincial employers.

▷ **Provincial Platform Virtual Job Fairs & Recruitment Portals**
AI-assisted events that link employers directly to underemployed talent.

▷ **Platform Financing & Sustainability Fund**
A blended public-private-civil society fund to develop, scale, and sustain the placement platform for the long term.

C9-OPP2 — ADVISORY & SUPPORT SERVICES

This opportunity underscores the importance of helping employers prepare their workplaces for a new and more diverse workforce. SMEs require an Employer Support Consulting Service that offers tailored advisory tools and guidance to strengthen hiring and improve workforce integration and retention.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

▷ **Labour Market Intelligence & Workforce Planning Service**
Advisory support to help SMEs understand sector-specific demand and plan workforce needs more effectively.

▷ **Workplace Readiness & Integration Kits**
Practical tools and training modules, including cross-cultural communication resources, to prepare employees and workplaces for success.

▷ **Regulatory Guidance Service**
Expert advice on Quebec and federal labour standards to ensure compliance and reduce risk.

▷ **Funding Navigation Hub**
Guidance to access government wage subsidies, tax credits, and grants to support SME recruitment and retention.

▷ **SME Peer-to-Peer Exchange**
Networks in which businesses can share lessons learned and best practices in recruitment, integration, and workforce retention across industries.

C9-OPP3 — INCENTIVIZED INTERNSHIP AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

Quebec employers across various sectors face costly labour shortages and high turnover rates. At the same time, job seekers—graduates, immigrants, seniors—seek practical experience that leads to stable jobs. Incentivized internships and apprenticeships can bridge this gap and ensure participants move beyond short-term roles toward full-time employment.

Paid placements, supported by employers and public or civil society partners, provide structured training that:

- Raises participants' incomes
- Reduces employers' recruiting costs
- Builds long-term productivity and profitability

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Paid Internship & Apprenticeship Placements**
  Structured three- to six-month internships and six- to 18-month apprenticeships designed to provide meaningful, remunerated work experience.

- **Workplace Mentorship & Skills Development**
  On-the-job supervision, coaching, and tailored skill-building activities to accelerate learning and improve productivity.

- **Employment Readiness Evaluation**
  Assessment tools and feedback mechanisms to ensure candidates are prepared for sustained employment or entrepreneurship.

- **Employer-guaranteed Transitions**
  Structured pathways that move participants into full-time employment or self-employment following program completion.

C9-OPP4 — ENCORE SENIORS COOPERATIVE (ESCOOP)

A growing population of English-speaking seniors is eager to remain active, earn income, and keep contributing to their communities and Quebec's economy. This creates an opportunity to establish a provincial Encore Seniors Cooperative (ESCOOP). This cooperative space would help seniors transition to self-employment, launch businesses or social enterprises, and market their skills. ESCOOP would address pressing labour shortages, diversify Quebec's entrepreneurial landscape, and turn an underused demographic into a force for job creation, business expansion, and regional resilience.

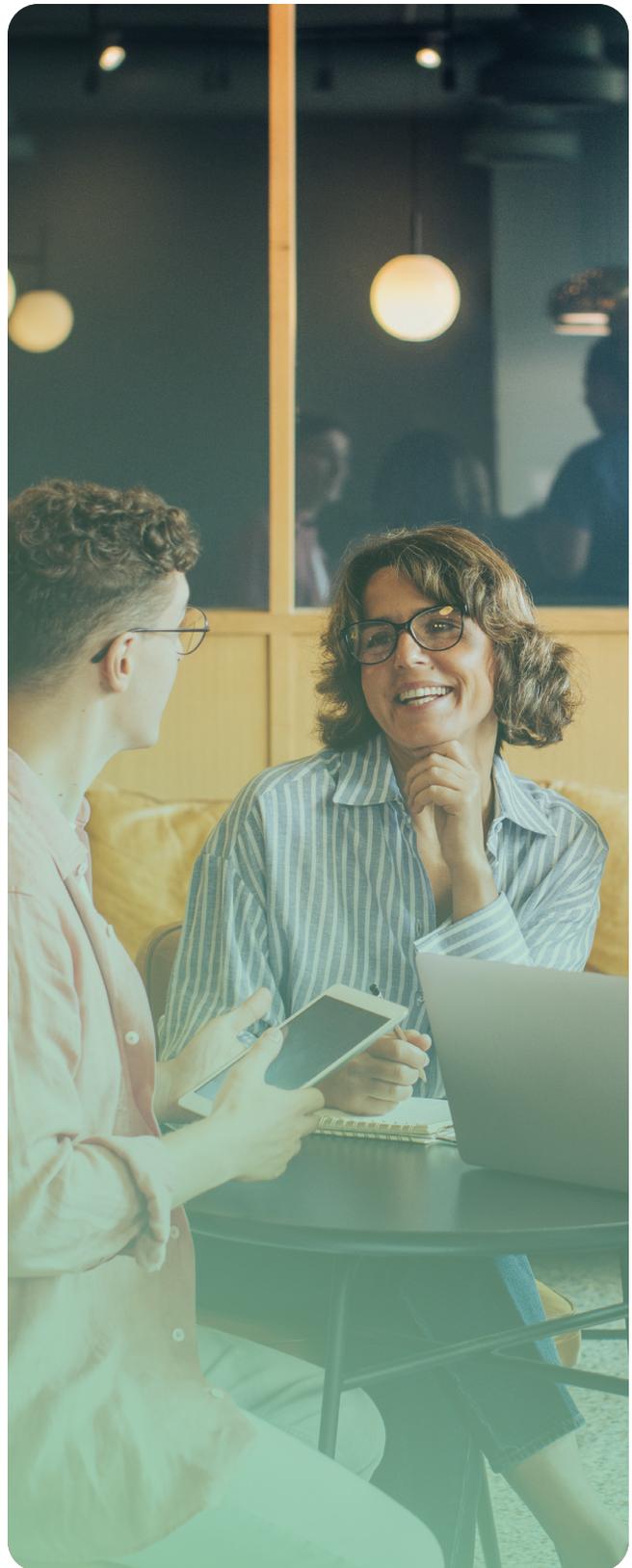Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Self-employment Pathways**
  Supports to help seniors transition into full- or part-time self-employment.

- **Business & Social Enterprise Launch Services**
  Incubation and cooperative supports for creating new businesses or social ventures.

- **Consulting, Mentoring & Coaching Platforms**
  Opportunities for seniors to market their expertise and provide advisory services to employers, entrepreneurs, and community groups.

- **Intergenerational & Cross-cultural Collaboration Programs**
  Initiatives pairing seniors with youth, immigrants, and other entrepreneurs to foster shared business creation and knowledge transfer.

- **Digital Academy for Seniors**
  A bilingual training hub focused on AI, digital tools, and e-commerce to expand entrepreneurial capacity and market reach.

C9-OPP5 – GRADUATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND START-UP SUPPORTS

Not all graduates will find traditional employment pathways appealing or available. Many, particularly in English-speaking communities, are well-positioned to launch start-ups in tourism, digital services, green tech, or social enterprises. Their potential presents a genuine opportunity to establish a Provincial Graduates Cooperative (PGC). The cooperative would support recent graduates in transitioning to self-employment (e.g., as autonomous workers), starting their own businesses or social enterprises, and marketing their skills and talents.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs that could be developed to take advantage of the identified opportunity include:

▶ **Graduate Self-employment Pathways**
Supports to help recent graduates transition into independent or freelance work.

▶ **Business & Social Enterprise Development Services**
Incubation and advisory programs to help graduates launch start-ups or social ventures.

▶ **Mentorship & Coaching Platforms**
Access to experienced professionals who can guide graduates through early-stage business development and career planning.

▶ **Graduate Incubation & Co-working Network**
Shared spaces and collaborative hubs providing resources, peer learning, and networking opportunities for graduate entrepreneurs.

Community Investment Capital

Quebec's aging population, rising immigration, graduate underemployment, and career transitions necessitate new financing models that capitalize on workforce change as an economic advantage. Too often, seniors, immigrants, graduates, and minority-owned SMEs in rural regions face barriers to the capital needed to start or grow their ventures.

C10-OPP1 – COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT FUND (CEDIF)

The Fund would pool community resources and make capital available only to individuals and ventures able to demonstrate a clear capacity to generate additional and well-defined streams of individual income, organizational revenue, or investment returns. Demographic shifts would then be converted into catalysts for growth and ensure that every dollar invested yields measurable economic outcomes. Capital would be reserved exclusively for ventures that can demonstrate how they will generate additional income, increase revenues, or deliver investment returns.

Potential Collaborative Economic Development Venture services and programs:

- **Performance-linked Seed Grants**
  Small grants for ventures with strong, evidence-based income generation potential.

- **Micro-loans for Revenue-generating Start-ups**
  Accessible financing tied to repayment through future revenues.

- **Community Equity Pool**
  Equity stakes in businesses that demonstrate realistic return potential.

- **Matching Incentives**
  Government or philanthropic partners who match community investments in ventures with defined ROI benchmarks.

- **Growth Capital Fund**
  Follow-on financing available only to ventures that meet pre-set revenue or income growth milestones.

- **Entrepreneur-in-residence Program**
  Mentorship provided by seasoned entrepreneurs.

Developing the 2026–2028 Collaborative Economic Development Roadmap

This Flagship Report has identified 10 clusters of Collaborative Economic Development opportunities shaped by Quebec's three major economic drivers: artificial intelligence and digital technology, the transition to a green economy, and demographic shifts. These opportunities have been identified through applied research, community insights, and the urgent need to reduce economic disparities in the OLMCQ. They are presented as a framework for collaborative dialogue and action.

CEDEC's February 16 and 17, 2026, Flagship Workshop will be critical to move from vision to implementation to tangible economic results. Participants will validate the 24 proposed opportunities, identify those with the strongest potential for measurable impact, confirm which public, private, and civil society partners should be engaged, and provide guidance on practical first steps.

CEDEC and its partners will use the insights gathered at the Workshop to build an actionable 2026–2028 Collaborative Economic Development Roadmap. Practical and time-bound, the Roadmap will help turn economic opportunity into higher individual incomes, more substantial organizational revenues, the creation and expansion of new business and social enterprises, and increased investment.

The Roadmap will serve as a shared guide, co-created with stakeholders and partners, to advance sustainable prosperity. It will ensure that collaboration remains a key foundation for economic growth and development in communities throughout the province of Quebec.

CEDEC reaffirms its commitment to collaborating across sectors—positioning the OLMCQ at the heart of Quebec's evolving economy and as a growth engine for Canada.

CEDEC | A BETTER ECONOMY FOR BETTER LIVES