



175th anniversary

STRATEGIC PLAN

SUPERIOR COURT OF QUÉBEC



2024
2029

This Strategic Plan was developed by the Chief Justices of the Superior Court of Québec

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICES	4
DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF QUÉBEC	5
SCOPE OF INTERVENTION	5
CLIENTS SERVED	6
STRUCTURE	6
KEY FIGURES	7
MISSION	7
VISION	7
TRUE NORTH	7
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	7
VALUES	8
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	9
KEY PRIORITY PROJECTS	9

A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICES

We are proud to publish the first *Strategic Plan* of the Superior Court of Québec while celebrating its 175th anniversary. This important milestone not only marks a moment to take proper note of the history and importance of our institution over the years, but also provides an opportunity to ponder how we can ensure that it evolves to meet the needs of our changing society. Our commitment to modernizing the Superior Court of Québec is not limited to mere internal evolution. It reflects a profound transformation in our approach and our interactions with society.

The development of this Strategic Plan is the result of an informed process designed to provide us with the means to achieve our ambitions and to ensure that we are aligned with the day-to-day realities of citizens, who are at the heart of our mission. We are committed to regularly reviewing our practices to provide high-quality justice that is faster and more accessible everywhere in Québec, while respecting judicial independence, an essential component of our free and democratic society.

This Strategic Plan is the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders, including groups representing the interests of the population we serve and the judges of the Superior Court of Québec. We gathered many constructive comments on our strengths and our challenges. These observations allowed us to identify our strategic priorities for the next five years, as well as the key projects we will be working on to better serve the public's expectations. From now on, we will produce an annual report on our management and progress, ensuring transparency in our commitment to continuous improvement.

We would like to thank the stakeholders and the members of the Court who participated in this exercise as well as the Ministère de la Justice for its support and funding. Finally, we would like to highlight the significant contribution of HEC Montréal in the planning, development, and drafting of this first Strategic Plan.

Please enjoy reading!



Marie-Anne Paquette
Chief Justice



Catherine La Rosa
Senior Associate Chief
Justice



Jean-François Michaud
Associate Chief Justice

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF QUÉBEC

The Superior Court of Québec was constituted in 1849.¹ Nearly 20 years later, sections 96 and following of the *Constitution Act, 1867*² enshrined its status as a constitutionally protected institution for “the better Administration of the Laws of Canada.”

As a court of original general jurisdiction, the Superior Court of Québec has extensive jurisdiction over all public and private law matters in Québec. This broad jurisdiction gives the Court a global perspective of the law, from which it can ensure the coherence of the judicial system and define its guiding principles on both a provincial and national scale.

The Court plays a central and essential role in the judicial system and actively contributes to the stability, fairness, and preservation of the legal and constitutional orders in Canadian and Québec societies.

SCOPE OF INTERVENTION

Pursuant to article 33 of the *Code of Civil Procedure*, the Superior Court of Québec has jurisdiction in first instance to hear any application not formally and exclusively assigned by law to another court or to an adjudicative body. It has exclusive jurisdiction to hear class actions and applications for injunctions.

In addition, pursuant to article 34 of the *Code of Civil Procedure*, the Superior Court of Québec is vested with a general power of judicial review over the decisions of the public administration and administrative bodies.

More specifically, the Court decides and settles disputes in the following areas :

- **Civil jurisdiction** : important matters where the value of the subject matter of the dispute is equal to or exceeds \$75,000, such as disputes involving contracts, property rights, successions, civil liability, etc.
- **Family law** : family law matters, including divorce, spousal or child support, child custody, partition of property between spouses, and other family issues, with the exception of adoption and youth protection matters.
- **Criminal jurisdiction** : solely competent to preside over trials before a judge and jury, it rules on serious criminal offences, such as murder.

1. *Act to amend the Laws relative to the Courts of Original Civil Jurisdiction in Lower-Canada, 1849 (Can.)*, 12 Vict., c. 38, s. III.

2. 30 & 31 Victoria, c. 3.

- **Administrative law** : administrative law matters, particularly applications for judicial review to examine the legality of decisions by government bodies or administrative tribunals.
- **Constitutional law** : constitutional law matters, including challenges to statutes based on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*, and the division of powers.

The Superior Court of Québec also exercises appellate jurisdiction over certain decisions rendered by other courts of justice, including the Court of Québec and the municipal courts, particularly in youth protection, criminal, and penal matters.

CLIENTS SERVED

- Individuals
- Public bodies
- Public or private legal entities
- Companies and associations
- Other groups

In this Strategic Plan, the term “citizens” refers to all these clients.

STRUCTURE

The Superior Court of Québec is composed of 155 puisne judges, a Chief Justice, a Senior Associate Chief Justice, an Associate Chief Justice, plus currently 41 supernumerary judges.³

The Superior Court of Québec is present all over Québec.

The organizational structure of the Superior Court of Québec is set out in the *Courts of Justice Act*.⁴ The Court sits in all regions, which are grouped under two large administrative entities that constitute the two divisions of the province: the Montréal Division and the Québec Division.

The Minister of Justice of Canada appoints the judges of the Superior Court of Québec, whereas the Ministère de la Justice du Québec appoints all court personnel under the *Public Service Act*.⁵

3. Information updated to 18-06-2024.

4. CQLR c. T-16.

5. CQLR c. F-3.1.1.

KEY FIGURES

Judges sit in 43 courthouses and 19 points of service spread across 36 judicial districts across Québec. In 2023, over 50,000 new cases were opened in the Superior Court of Québec, all matters combined.

MISSION

As the only court of original general jurisdiction in Québec, the Superior Court of Québec ensures the rigorous, accessible, and transparent resolution of disputes in all areas of the law. It exercises a power of judicial review over public bodies and decisions of other tribunals.

The Court plays a leading role in safeguarding the fundamental rights of citizens and in upholding democracy in Québec and Canada.

VISION

The Superior Court of Québec aims to stand as a model by responding with promptly and within a reasonable time to the needs of citizens, who are at the heart of its mission and with whom it seeks to maintain a relationship of trust.

TRUE NORTH⁶

The Court seeks to deliver high-quality justice to citizens everywhere in Québec.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Superior Court of Québec adheres, in its directions and actions, to these four cardinal principles :

- **Judicial independence**
The Court operates independently, without political interference, and guarantees impartial application of the law.

6. *True North* refers to a fundamental objective that guides the actions and decisions of our institution.

- **Fairness**

In accordance with the principles of natural justice, the Court strives to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all parties involved.

- **Accessibility**

The Court strives to make justice accessible to the public through simplified procedures and mechanisms that facilitate understanding and participation in the legal system.

- **Integrity**

The Court promotes the integrity of the justice system by ensuring that professional and ethical standards are respected.

VALUES

In conducting its mission and realizing its vision, the Superior Court of Québec is guided by four essential values :

- **Respect**

This value encompasses respect for judicial independence and is expressed through respect for court rules, institutions, and ethical and professional standards. The importance of respect also reveals itself through attentive listening, marked by empathy and benevolence, which fully recognizes the diversity and specific characteristics of each individual. This value is exemplified by a court that is accessible to all, while guaranteeing just and fair treatment.

- **Quality**

Quality is defined by a commitment to rigour, efficiency, and promptness. It manifests itself in intelligible and coherent decisions, based on professional skills imbued with integrity, fairness, and impartiality.

- **Collaboration**

Within a culture of transparency and openness, collaboration is characterized by close cooperation between various stakeholders to improve the quality of services rendered. It is also based on the principles of commitment and collegiality, entailing ongoing consultation and collaboration between colleagues to foster the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

- **Innovation**

The value of innovation is characterized by the willingness to explore new avenues, a concern for continuous improvement, and a desire to find creative solutions to the challenges faced. It is the ability to be in line with society, which involves dynamism and openness to new ideas, methods, and technologies.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Superior Court of Québec's four key strategic priorities are to :

- Simplify and harmonize administrative processes to maintain high-quality justice and reduce judicial delay for legal cases.
- Optimize the use of technology to support its activities.
- Provide the support and guidance judges need to carry out their judicial duties with their judicial duties with serenity.
- Raise awareness of its areas of activity and operating methods to improve access to justice.

These key strategic priorities aim to maintain and enhance public confidence by improving accessibility, efficiency, and the quality of services, and by raising awareness of the role of the Superior Court of Québec in our democratic society.

KEY PRIORITY PROJECTS

The key projects associated with the Court's strategic priorities are :

- The review and improvement of organizational procedures, starting with its various rules of practice and directives.
- The use of evidence-based data for informed management.
- A rational use of new technologies and artificial intelligence.
- A quality working environment.
- Communications and visual identity.

