

[TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH]

**POSITION OF THE RECREATION AND SPORTS SECTOR
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS (MELS)
GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC**

Canadian Sport Policy Renewal

1.0 What are the reasons for your organization's interest in promoting sports participation? Please present your reasons by order of priority. (See the reference document on trends in participation, barriers, etc.)

The main reason Quebec promotes sports participation is that it is faced with three major issues, and the government and relevant organizations can play a decisive role in addressing those issues. They are the following:

- 1) Integrating physical activity into the Quebec population's lifestyle – Although more and more people are aware that engaging in physical activity on a regular basis can have beneficial effects, too many Quebecers do not exercise at all or do not exercise enough to enjoy any benefits individually or collectively. The situation is getting worse in Quebec and in many other industrialized nations.
- 2) Participating in sports – Although sport participation is associated with all sorts of benefits and tens of thousands of Quebecers are active in sports organizations, there are not enough opportunities to participate in an environment where quality coaching is present—an essential condition for making sporting experiences enjoyable and beneficial, and therefore encouraging continued participation. For that reason, Quebec loses out on the positive benefits that might otherwise be gained, individually or collectively, from quality, mainstream sport participation at various levels of participation, whether initiation, recreational or competitive. Also, there are too few well-structured activities to recruit new participants, improve leadership or make sport participation more accessible.
- 3) Increasing the presence of Quebec athletes in Canadian and international sports – Although Quebec has progressively and substantially improved its presence in Canadian and international sports, much work has yet to be done to create a suitable environment and adequate leadership for talented athletes, given the exacting and ever-increasing demands of international sport.

1.1 What are the key challenges, issues and opportunities that influence your organization's efforts to promote sport and boost participation in sport activities?

The key challenges, issues and opportunities that influence the efforts made in Quebec to promote sport and boost participation in sports activities are as follows:

Challenges

- Position sport and physical activity within government.
- Improve funding for sport organizations, particularly single-sport federations in Quebec.
- Increase support for sports by municipalities and public educational institutions.
- Raise the level of understanding of the respective roles played by government and stakeholders in the sport community.
- Increase the quantity and quality of physical education instruction in elementary and secondary schools.
- Improve sport facilities infrastructure.
- Maximize accessibility to the sports facilities maintained by municipalities and educational institutions.
- Reverse the tendency to be sedentary, particularly among young people.

Issues

As indicated in Question #1:

- 1) the place of physical activity in the Quebec population's lifestyle;
- 2) participation in sports;
- 3) Quebec's presence in Canadian and international sports.

Opportunities

- The following measures, taken over the past decade by the Government of Quebec, all provide opportunities to promote physical and sports activities:
 - Refundable tax credit for top-level athletes (\$5 million annually, since 2000–01).
 - Addition of \$2.8 million in ongoing funding for the *Programme de soutien au développement de l'excellence sportive* (program to support the development of sport excellence), since 2001–02.
 - Creation of the *Programme de bourses Équipe Québec* (team Quebec grants program) (\$6 million annually, since 2003–04).
 - In 2006, creation of the Sports and Physical Activity Development Fund (facilities, major events; \$30 million annually, then \$50 million, then \$210 million beginning in 2011–12).
 - Development of the *Centre d'excellence des sports aquatiques du Québec* (\$2.9 million).
 - Announcement of the creation of the *Institut national du sport du Québec* (Montreal Olympic Park; \$24 million; 2010–11 budget).
 - In 2011, creation of *Culture du sport à l'école secondaire publique* (sports culture at public high schools program): \$13 million over three years to support athletic teams in public high schools.
 - Dramatic increase in number of sport/academics programs.
- A government initiative, in partnership with the sport community and private sector, that should lead to the diversification of funding for single-sport federations in Quebec.
- In 2011, unprecedented reaction to an opinion issued by Kino-Québec's scientific committee in *L'activité physique, le sport et les jeunes – Savoir et agir* (physical activity, sports and youth – knowing and taking action).
- A well-endowed organization dedicated to promoting a physically active lifestyle and healthy eating habits among young people, *Québec en Forme*, working in partnership with

Kino-Québec which is a program that has enjoyed unparalleled momentum and experience.

- A network of sports organizations that rely on a large number of volunteer sports enthusiasts.
- A population increasingly aware of the need to boost the level of physical activity among young people.

1.2 What are the strategies you might adopt to meet these challenges, tackle these issues and build on these opportunities?

The strategies that are being considered by MELS and its partners in the sports association community and focused on promoting a physically active lifestyle include the following:

- Establish the *Institut national des sports du Québec*;
- Adopt a measure to diversify funding for Quebec single-sport organizations;
- Develop a Web tutorial to train and educate parents and stakeholders in various areas (education, sports and recreation, health, municipalities, early childhood education centres and private daycare services) so that they are more likely to:
 - Promote a physically active lifestyle among young people; and
 - Maximize the beneficial effects of engaging in physical and sporting activities at all possible levels.

2.0 In your opinion, what makes for a quality sport experience? (Present the various elements of your answer by order of priority, if possible.)

A sport experience is a quality experience if it is orchestrated to provide participants with enjoyment, arouses and maintains a desire to continue engaging in physical and sport activities for life, and has beneficial effects individually and collectively, particularly as follows:

Individually

Relaxation, quality of life, physical condition (each of its determinants), psychological well-being and mental health, opportunities to socialize, social skills, cognitive abilities, student retention and academic success, striving for excellence, self-fulfillment.

Collectively

Brake on rising health care costs, secure social environment, economic benefits, integration of minorities and immigrants.

In addition, a quality sport experience reflects the fact that participants have diverse reasons, objectives, skills and degrees of motor, physical, mental and social development.

2.1 What barriers currently exist?

The following barriers are the main reasons why sport experiences are not always quality ones:

- A sports culture is not sufficiently developed among the population, leading to an imperfect view of the values of participating in sport and the extreme difficulty in instituting measures conducive to quality sporting experiences.
- The core motor skills developed in early childhood and the physical education received in elementary and secondary school have not enabled everyone to sufficiently develop the minimum competencies that are needed.
- The focus is too often on winning, not on personal development through sport (undue pressure on children).
- Concepts are needlessly set against each other: mainstream sport versus elite sport; organized sport versus non-organized sport; “civilian” sport versus “student” sport, when all forms of participation have their virtues.
- Sports and recreation facilities are insufficient and some are run-down, inadequate or insufficiently accessible (needs in Quebec total an estimated \$2 billion).
- At the local level, financial support for sport is insufficient, particularly outside the educational environment.
- Difficulties exist in recruiting and retaining competent leaders (volunteer administrators, coaches and officials).
- Some physical education teachers are less inclined to get involved in organizing physical and sports activities outside classroom hours than they used to be.

3.0 In your opinion, what values should define sport participation in Canada? Please list the five most important values in order of priority (where priority #1 is the most important).

- 1- Quality
- 2- Accessibility
- 3- Sportsmanship
- 4- Enjoyment
- 5- Health and personal development

4.0 Should efforts be made so that groups under-represented in sport participate more in sports activities? (See the attached reference document.) Please explain your answer.

Yes, to the extent that sufficient resources are allocated as well for sport participation.

4.1 If “yes,” how should the groups that need to be targeted be identified?

- * **Separate questions will be necessary for the usual target groups (women and girls, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal people), and these groups will need to be approached to organize consultations.**

Governments are expected to have a favourable bias towards citizens who need to overcome specific barriers: the disadvantaged, the needy, victims of unfavourable attitudes, etc.

5.0 Does your organization offer programs and services in both official languages?

MELS provides services in Quebec's only official language, French.

5.1 What are the challenges that must currently be met to provide programs and services of that kind in both official languages?

Ensuring implementation of the recommendations put forward by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in its reports, such as *Official Languages in the Canadian Sports System*; *Official Languages in the Canadian Sport System – Follow-Up* and *Organizing a Major Sporting Event in Canada: A Practical Guide to Promoting Official Languages*.

6.0 Sport Canada and many provincial governments have considerably increased their involvement and investments in high-performance sport in recent years. In that context, is it necessary for governments to more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the federal government and those of the provincial and territorial governments as they pertain to high-performance sport? Please explain your answer.

Since no accessible, recent and up-to-date document defines the roles and responsibilities of governments in the area of high-performance sport, those roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and disseminated, with special consideration for Quebec's particularities (including its major recent achievements, its major projects under way, and the special needs of French-speaking athletes).

6.1 What areas require special attention?

- Collaboration and communication (particularly between Sport Canada, Own the Podium and the Canadian Olympic Committee on the one hand and MELS on the other), and the delivery of services in French to French-speaking athletes from Quebec.

7.1 The “Canadian Sport for Life” model has been widely adopted by many governments and sports organizations as a way to provide a quality, development-focused sporting experience for participants of all ages and at all stages of their development. What are the current repercussions of implementing the “Canadian Sport for Life” model?

- That study paper has the merit of raising awareness among persons who were not already so aware, in the interest of ensuring that sports development programs are geared to young people's stages of development. It is worthwhile noting the importance of developing “physical literacy,” whether for acquiring and maintaining a physically active lifestyle or for excelling in sport.
 - However, the vision for long-term athlete development, as proposed in the study paper, obscured a certain number of elements. For example, that vision does not reflect the path of adults who begin taking part in sports or who carry on to participate in athletic competitions; it does not really give a place to promoting a physically active

lifestyle through sport. Finally, there are other visions and models for participant and athlete development that can be strategically applied to properly develop sport.

- In that regard, MELS already has a reference framework perfectly suited to identifying what children in Quebec need to develop in the area of physical and sports activities: the ministry's elementary school physical education program, which was developed in line with the relevant scientific literature. That program does not teach the competency "To perform movement skills" alone, but also the competencies "To interact" and "To adopt a healthy, active lifestyle," which together comprise the components needed to offer a multi-faceted and comprehensive physical education; the knowledge, motor skills and action rules provided by the competencies "To perform movement skills" and "To interact" are excellent benchmarks for reviewing sports development programs; as for the competency "To adopt a healthy, active lifestyle" (absent from "Canadian Sport for Life"), it should be core to all sports activities (coaches and sports instructors should constantly remind others how the regular practice of sports can have beneficial effects on young people's health and development whenever the conditions are conducive to frequent, intensive and uninterrupted participation).
- As for preschoolers, the *Québec en Forme* psychomotor development program is outstanding and goes well beyond what is proposed for the "Active Start" stage in "Canadian Sport for Life."
- The development models created by Quebec sports federations are founded not only on the principles of growth and maturation (development stages), but on the demands of high-performance sport as well; those models identify the components needed to provide the optimal program content and the best possible leadership conditions.
- The strategic sport development plans adopted by Quebec federations must be built on the four areas of sport participation, not on the stages of development as outlined in "Canadian Sport for Life."
- Finally, Quebec has its own resources for promoting a physically active lifestyle (Kino-Québec, the fund for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, *Québec en Forme* and the framework policy entitled "Going the Healthy Route at School"), and physical education is taught almost exclusively by specialists with a diploma in physical education (which is not the case in all the provinces).
- We might add that Quebec federations have been encouraged to adopt their own athlete development models under the MELS Program to support the development of excellence (PSDE), and to adopt a sport development plan under the Program to support Quebec sports federations (PSFSQ). The administrators of the single-sport federations concerned seem to have welcomed the opportunity to develop these models built on the vision of their choice, not necessarily the one promoted by "Canadian Sport for Life."

7.2 In your opinion, what will be the future repercussions of implementing this model?

The Government of Quebec shares the Canadian Sport Policy's key objectives with the other governments (more active population, enhanced participation and enhanced excellence). In those areas, the Quebec sports community and the Government of Quebec have their own ways of seeing and doing things. Quebec's position with regard to what "Canadian Sport for Life" has become has been expressed in the various federal-provincial/territorial forums. Quebec is a willing advocate, provided it continues to maintain its authority in its own areas of jurisdiction.

7.3 What are the barriers to the successful implementation of the "Canadian Sport for Life" model?

Other visions and models of participant and athlete development can be applied strategically to properly develop sports in Quebec, and they have been adopted by MELS partner organizations.

8.0 A list of program and service areas has been compiled to evaluate Canada's sport development delivery system (Note: The next question is related, as it deals with the high performance delivery system). What are the five priorities for sport development delivery?

- Priority #1: Facilities and equipment
- Priority #2: Organizational capacity
- Priority #3: Capitalizing on international events
- Priority #4: Coaches and instructors
- Priority #5: French in sport in Canada

8.1 What are, in priority order, the three areas where programs are currently sufficient and/or adequate?

- Priority #1: Parasport development – inclusion/integration
- Priority #2: Equity policies
- Priority #3: Dissemination of information

8.2 What are the three areas where programs are currently insufficient and/or inadequate, in order of priority?

- Priority #1: Facilities and equipment
- Priority #2: Sports funding (locally, outside schools)
- Priority #3: Resources needed by organizations to develop sports

9.0 The following is a list of program and service areas that have been identified as important components of Canada's high performance delivery system. What are the five priorities for high performance delivery?

- Facilities and equipment
- Organizational capacity and sustainability
- Research and innovation

- Coaches and technical leadership
- Sport science, sport medicine and technology

9.1 What are the three areas where programs are currently sufficient and/or adequate, in order of priority?

- Direct athlete support and incentives
- Hosting of international events in Canada
- Athlete talent identification, recruitment and development

9.2 What are the three areas where programs are currently insufficient and/or inadequate, in order of priority?

- Facilities and equipment
- Research and innovation (in institutions)
- Sport science, sport medicine and technology (in institutions)

10. What resources (e.g., human or financial resources, equipment, facilities) would your organization need to live up to its full potential for delivering sport programs and services? (Note: A more exhaustive question specific to human resources is included below.)

- A special measure to promote the diversification of funding for Quebec sports federations.
- A program sponsored jointly by the federal government and the Quebec government to support sports facilities specifically.

10.1 Please provide examples of the limitations you currently face.

- Quebec sports federations have trouble obtaining the financial resources they need to fulfill their mission in general and the mandates entrusted to them by the government.
- Conveying the following messages is difficult:
 - the relevance and value of the activities of sports organizations;
 - the benefits of quality sport participation.

10.2 What can you do or what are you doing to overcome those limitations?

- The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports has set up a task force comprising individuals from the sports community and private sector to propose measures that will promote the diversification of funding for Quebec single-sport federations.
- Wider dissemination is needed of information on the relevance and value of the activities of sports organizations, the benefits of quality sport participation (the relevance of the Web tutorial being prepared to train and educate parents and stakeholders in various areas so they are more likely to promote a physically active lifestyle among young people and maximize the beneficial effects of participating in physical and sports activities on all possible levels).

11.0 Does your organization have the HR capacity (management, professional development, staff recruitment and retention, etc.) to meet demand for the next 10 years (in terms of increased diversification or the aging population, for example)?

No sports organization in Quebec has the resources it needs to carry out all of the activities that are expected of it at the moment. As for the contingencies that will have to be dealt with in the future, they are more often linked to the constantly increasing resources that must be allocated in order to be and remain competitive on the international sports scene, than the aging population for example.

11.1 What are the key problems in the area of recruitment, training and retention of (i) personnel; and (ii) volunteers?

The contemporary lifestyle is not conducive to the recruitment and retention of volunteer sports administrators, and resources are often insufficient to pay staff properly.

11.2 How might those problems be resolved?

Strengthen the ability of sports organizations to fund themselves.

12.0 What benefits would arise from closer links between national sports organizations and their provincial or territorial counterparts?

- Programs developed and updated in a more streamlined manner.
- Less discrimination based on language or region of origin.
- Greater assurance that democracy is exercised across Canadian sports organizations.
- More effective governance.

12.1 What challenges need to be addressed to strengthen those linkages?

- Canadian federations should limit themselves to their acknowledged responsibilities: national teams, certain components of the National Coaching Certification Program...
- Canadian sports federations should ensure that they are capable of working in French with their affiliated Quebec federations.
- The federal government should allocate the resources it needs to ensure good governance across sports federations.

13.0 What benefits would arise from closer links between provincial or territorial sports organizations and (i) municipal sports clubs; (ii) schools; and (iii) recreational services and organizations?

“Local” organizations need to be tied in with regional associations, leagues and clubs, but they do not necessarily need to be “linked” to Quebec sports federations.

13.1 What challenges need to be addressed to strengthen these links?

The ability of Quebec sports federations should be improved so that they can develop more quality programs that can be delivered regionally and locally, for example.

14.0 Do you intentionally promote sport for the purpose of community building (where that concept is defined as the pursuit of non-sport objectives, such as youth development, health promotion, gender equality, social inclusion or conflict resolution), or are your objectives first and foremost sport-related? (See the attached document.)

For a few years now, Quebec sports organizations have shown that they are generally prepared to play a substantive role in countering physical inactivity.

14.1 If “no,” why not? Are there any conditions that might encourage your organization to pursue non-sport objectives? What might they be?

Many Quebec sports organizations have insufficient resources to act beyond their daily obligations.

14.2 If “yes,” please describe the positive results that your efforts have produced.

More and more Quebec sports federations are implementing worthwhile programs among potential participants to promote the sports they govern.

14.3 Some people feel that partnering between sport organizations and non-sport organizations is a way to pursue non-sport objectives, with more substantial resources being mobilized and links with new groups of individuals being established to increase participation in sports activities. In your experience or opinion, is there any basis for this point of view?

That is exactly what is being done across Quebec organizations, e.g., recreation/community centres, early childhood education centres and school daycare services. *Québec en Forme* already promotes a physically active lifestyle in addition to healthy eating habits among young people. In secondary schools, sport is increasingly used as a means to promote student retention and achievement.

14.4 What benefits can sport organizations derive from links with non-sport organizations devoted primarily to community-building (where that concept is defined as the pursuit of non-sport objectives, such as youth development, health promotion, gender equality, social inclusion or conflict resolution), and what are the challenges to establishing such links?

- Sources of funding.
- Projection of their image among the population.

15.0 Canadians participate in a broad range of activities on the international scene. We take part in competitions and sport exchanges. Canadians contribute to the

direction of international sports organizations. Canada hosts international sporting events; we combat doping in sport, promote a quality sport experience for persons with disabilities, women and girls. We build relations to advance the development of sport, both at home and abroad, and we contribute to the development of sport internationally, etc. What should Canada's international sport objectives be?

- Objectives might be set by the provincial, territorial and federal governments, based on their areas of expertise and needs, for introducing ways to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle, develop sport participation and improve Canada's place on the international sports scene.
- They might also set the objective of achieving a specific ranking (to be defined based on the outcome at the Olympic and Paralympic Games (e.g., top 3 for winter and top 12 for summer)).

15.1 Should Canada's participation in international activities be changed, increased or reduced? Why?

Canada might refrain from participating in the Youth Olympic Games (which forces young athletes to participate prematurely in intensive programs, somewhat inconsistently with the principles of long-term development of sport talent) and do everything within its power to maximize Canada's chances for success at major games and world championships.

15.2 In what areas should Canada change, increase or reduce its activities? What opportunities are available and what challenges must be overcome?

The federal government should focus on its own and shared areas of jurisdiction, such as supporting excellence in sports, training and development of coaches for top-level athletes and the Canada Games.