

# Québec's Economic Development

An Interview with **The Honorable Dominique Anglade,**  
Minister of Economy, Science and Innovation and Minister responsible for the Digital Strategy, Québec

**EDITORS' NOTE** *With a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from the École Polytechnique de Montréal and an M.B.A. from HEC Montréal, Dominique Anglade began her career in 1996 as an engineer at Procter & Gamble. Two years later, at the age of 24, Anglade was promoted to head of a production branch. From 2000 to 2003, she was employed by Nortel Networks and, in 2004, she became the company's Québec Director of Public and External Affairs. From 2005 to 2012, Anglade was part of McKinsey & Company. Until recently, she was President and CEO of Montréal International.*



*The Hon. Dominique Anglade*

## How has your experience in the private sector helped you in your current role?

Prior to getting into politics, I was involved in the private sector, and I felt I was not contributing enough to society.

Combining the two into one role is fantastic because now I can participate in economic development as well as having an impact on society on a larger scale.

## When it comes to addressing present challenges, is it the public or private sector that needs to drive change?

Governments don't create jobs – we create an environment in which people feel they have the confidence and the trust that things will go well and, therefore, they invest.

We obviously invest along with companies, but the investments I dislike the most are the ones where it's only the government investing. The private sector always has to be at the table in order to make the most profitable investment and to make the best decisions.

## Will you discuss where the economy in Québec stands today and how you define Québec's advantage?

The economy is doing well. When we look at unemployment, we are at a rate we haven't seen over the past four years. We had growth in 2016 that was higher than that of the U.S., proving that the economic situation in Québec is going well.

When people look for reasons to go somewhere, they look at the cost, the access to markets, and the talent.

The talent pool is great in Québec. We have a lot of strength in different sectors. The cost of operation is quite low compared to other jurisdictions. Access to markets is a trickier one because we are a small market, but we have access to Europe and North America because of NAFTA, and we have a direct link to the U.S. as well, so we are at the intersection of a lot of things happening.

There are many things that people should consider. Microsoft and Google are making investments here.

I met with Microsoft at Davos and they were talking about acquiring a company called Maluuba, which deals in Artificial Intelligence, but they said they had no intention of moving the company because the talent is right here. They believed that if they were to move, they could not find the right talent to support the deep learning in AI. We have a number of things going for us right now.

## What is the focus of your efforts in regard to digital strategy?

Looking at the strategy of economic development, we focus on entrepreneurship, but we also have a huge pillar in advanced manufacturing. We have been focused on every region in Québec and have told entrepreneurs we are ready to invest in organizing the economy. Last week, we had 1,000 of them attending a session around advanced manufacturing, and they indicated that there is momentum to mobilize people around that topic.

This is also related to the digital strategy, because we can't organize the economy and invest in advanced manufacturing if we don't also have heavy investment in innovation and the digital strategy.

We are going to be launching a new science and research strategy soon and, in the fall, we will be launching the digital strategy, which is going to touch on different sectors. I am responsible for that, although it's not necessarily related to economic development.



*Minister Anglade with the workers of Prelco factory in Rivière-du-Loup, during the announcement of the modernization of the factory.*

We have been focused on every region in Québec and have told entrepreneurs we are ready to invest in organizing the economy.

In May of last year, we launched what we call an action plan for the digital economy, and we had another action plan for the digital culture. Every sector is initiating an action plan. The strategies are going to be an overarching umbrella under which we will have the different action plans.

The next one to be deployed will be under education. In every sector, it is critical that we identify the two or three levers that will make a difference. With education, programming in primary schools is going to be the main element of what we're going to do with digital strategy. Looking at the economy, having everyone connected and having a heavy focus on retail is another lever that we want to focus on.

**Are there ample opportunities for women in the workplace in Québec and, when you talk to young women, what do you tell them about the opportunities to lead?**

There are plenty of opportunities, but there is a lot of work to be done. It's not just about opportunities but about leaning in and recognizing there are problems. It's not that easy to be a female in politics, nor is it easy to be a female in a business environment. It's doable, but when we look at the composition of boards in general, we still have a way to go.

There are many women going to engineering and business schools today, but we still don't have enough of those women in powerful positions.

I do believe we have to put more emphasis on science and technology because the number of women in those fields is not where it needs to be. We need more females in those fields.

**Is Québec as a brand well understood?**

It's known, though not well known. People, and investors in particular, are very surprised by the talent here because they never realized the depth of our businesses. We have a tendency not to brag. Canada, in general, is a country where we have a high quality of life, as well as excellent research and well-educated people. People from companies like Siemens came to Québec recently and were amazed by what we are doing here. We're known for hydroelectricity and for energy in general, so there are some areas where we're recognized and well-known. We recently launched an international policy for the government of Québec for the next 10 years in terms of how we're going to be present in a more aggressive way internationally. ●



*Minister Anglade in discussions with employees of COREM, a specialized research and development center in the mineral processing sector; to which financial aid of \$6 million was granted.*