Québec’s Approach to Regional Development: An historical analysis

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Webinar Questions

• What are the conditions that contributed to the implementation and survival of Québec’s rural policy?
• What have been its major impacts?
• What are its prospects for the future?
• What can we learn for rural and regional policy in other locations?
First Rural Policy 2001-2007

- Sustainable development and prosperity of rural communities
- Improve the quality of life and attractiveness
- Support citizens engagement and contribute to the capacity of the rural world
Why did it occur?

- New economy
- Failures in previous attempts
- Two Québecs in one (Trudel et al. 1989)
- Romanticization of rural areas
- Social-democrat approaches
- Social and political regional infrastructure
A Legacy of Capacity
First Policy Outcomes

- Large-scale mobilization
- Territory-based development perspective
- Elaboration and adoption of development and innovation tools
- A contact based agreement: the rural pact
  - More than 4,800 projects
  - Over 5,705 jobs
  - $86.4 million from the pacts have generated $504 million
  - Average cost was $123,016 with average contribution from the pact was about 15% of the cost
- Non-profit organizations carry out most projects, followed closely by the municipalities, the MRCs and municipal organizations.
OECD Review of the First Rural Policy

Suggested improvements

- Adaptation to regional conditions
- Support for devitalized communities
- Carry-over of expertise, experience, and knowledge to sustain current programs
- Use of rural pact budgets as a source for funding projects
- Promotion of the policy to citizens (beyond government officials)
Second Rural Policy 2007-2014

- Strengthen the role played by municipal representatives and consolidate the RCM’s role
- Ensure that each territory has the means to act
- Encourage a territorial development dynamic
- Pursue multifaceted development
- Foster rural-urban cooperation
- Promote the rural way of life
- Offer concrete gov’t support
Key Innovations of Policies

- Rural Pacts
- Rural Development Officers
- Adaptation to specific territorial conditions
  - Additional support for devitalized communities
  - Requirements for government (17 departments and agencies)
- Rural Laboratories (10 themes)
- Task Forces (10 themes)
- Measures focused on specialty products
- Indicators to monitor vitality
  - Rural information kit
Third Rural Policy 2014-2024

- Build on the progress of previous policies
- Greater decentralization;
- Promote intersectoral, multifunctional, development, rural-urban collaboration
- Maintain the flexibility and local autonomy
- Encourage citizen participation
- Advocate an inclusive and equitable approach

“Pactes Plus”
What Have We Learned?

- Regional focus
- Multisectoral approach
- Social Capital focus
- Consistent and long-term framework for collaboration
- Value of delegated and distributed authority
- Value of additional resources for devitalized communities
- Value of flexibility for local conditions
The future of Québec’s rural policy

- Significant change in government policy (Liberals)
  - Closure of “Rural Pacts” and “Rural Laboratories” programs
  - Establishment of “Transitional Financial Pacts”
- Closure of Solidarité Rurale du Québec
- Reduced support for Rural Development Agents
- Jeopardizes the Québec Rural University program
- The end of Québec’s rural policy?

...but: a strong MRC framework remains
Implications for other locations

- Multi-sectoral; multi-departmental
- Respect and utilize historical legacies
- Allocate rights and responsibilities – with access to resources
- Long-term framework
- Continuing need for knowledge mobilization and action
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