

Experimentation with

# Gender-Based Analysis

in the Government of Québec:

Its Lessons  
and Effects

**Summary  
Report**

1997 - 2004 Period



Québec 

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the lessons learned from the experimentation carried out from 1997 to 2003, and extended until December 2004, with the participation of eleven departments and agencies with a view to implementing gender-based analysis (GBA) in the Government of Québec.

In February 1997, at the time of the publication of the *Action Plan for Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000*, the government followed up on the commitments made during the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995; the government adopted the developmental project aiming to establish GBA in government practices. With this decision, the government authorized experimentation with gender-based analysis projects in those departments that registered as participants.

The objective of this experimentation initiative was to determine the best approaches and to propose flexible and adaptable avenues to ensure the effective and efficient establishment of this approach in government action.



# 1 Gender-based analysis: a management approach

On the face of it, a government intervention may present characteristics of neutrality, yet produce uneven effects when applied to women and men owing to the differentiations that characterize them.

From the start of the work, GBA was defined as being a management approach seeking to discern on a preventive basis, during the design or evaluation of a government intervention, the diverse effects that the adoption of this intervention could have on women and men given the socioeconomic conditions that characterize them. GBA sheds additional light for decision-making in keeping with the principle of equality between Quebecers of both genders.

In relation to a planned government intervention, a piece of legislation, a policy, a program or a service, GBA entails acquiring relevant knowledge of the situation in response to which a department, an agency or the government wants to take action. This means resorting to quantitative and qualitative data including data broken down according to gender and very often also more finely categorized by age, income, ethnic group, region or any other variable considered significant in the analysis. Based on this knowledge, scenarios are proposed according to the main objective of the intervention, while integrating, of course, the appropriate observations with respect to the diverse realities of women and men.

Considered a contribution to public management, GBA is in line with the spirit of the Public Administration Act, passed unanimously in 2000. This legislation stipulates that the quality of the services provided to the public is the ultimate purpose of government action. GBA ensures that citizens of both genders are afforded equal consideration by government action taking into account their diverse realities.

Without judging the decision ahead of time, GBA provides additional and indispensable light throughout the decision-making processes.

Following the example of specialists working for several international organizations, it is important to emphasize that in no case may gender-based analysis take the place of a corrective or specific approach. Rather, GBA is meant to complement such an approach. It may happen that the use of gender-based analysis reveals a situation of systemic discrimination affecting women or men.

## 2 An original initiative

In addition to situating GBA as a management approach, the originality of the initiative of the Government of Québec lies in three other main characteristics: a joint management of the work entrusted to three central agencies of the government, an internal mobilization that calls on political authorities, deputy ministers, managers and professional personnel; a strengthening of alliances with groups in civil society.

### Joint management of work

In authorizing the development of gender-based analysis on an experimental basis, the Cabinet entrusted the joint management of the work to three agencies: the Secrétariat général du Conseil exécutif, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor. The front-line participation not only of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine but also of the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor and the Secrétariat du Comité ministériel du développement social of the Ministère du Conseil exécutif testified to the commitment of the senior-most authorities and contributed to the credibility and continuity of the initiative. In this sense, Québec's approach is one-of-a-kind.

The **steering committee**, made up of deputy ministers from the three agencies in charge, was entrusted with the following mandate: make the necessary decisions as to the orientations to be favoured; ensure the participation of the deputy ministers concerned in the start-up and carrying out of GBA projects; inform the political and administrative authorities of the progress of the work, and propose to the government a strategy for establishing the approach chosen in light of the lessons learned from the experimentation.

Support for the steering committee is ensured by an **inter-ministerial committee** co-directed by a professional representation of the organizations in charge and made up of the following departments and agencies: Culture et Communications, Éducation, Emploi, Solidarité sociale et Famille, Finances, Relations avec les citoyens et Immigration,

Santé et Services sociaux, Transports, and the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

The mandate of the interministerial committee is to support the experimentation with GBA projects and the designated teams, to devise a government approach that is in line with the principle of the equality of the sexes and that seeks to improve the public services offered to the public, to develop a relevant set of tools for the personnel concerned of the public service, and to propose to the steering committee a plan of action in order to progressively introduce GBA in the departments and agencies.

### **Internal mobilization**

From the outset of the work, the favoured orientation was to adopt a participative operation that is flexible, open and dynamic, while respecting the culture and approaches of the departments and agencies.

This internal mobilization in departments and agencies with the professional teams responsible for projects complements the hierarchical mobilization that calls for the commitment of all levels of government, whether ministers, deputy ministers or managers.

Throughout the experimentation, the steering committee held regular discussions with the deputy ministers of the participating departments, which facilitated work between the members of the interministerial committee and the members of the GBA project teams, collaboration between the various administrative units in the departments, as well as the cooperation of specialists from different backgrounds.

### **Strengthening alliances with groups in civil society**

The action in favour of equality between women and men is a responsibility of society as a whole, whether it involves public, regional or local authorities, businesses, unions, organizations or individuals. It is truly a collective democratic endeavour. The government cannot act alone to achieve equality. It must bank on the mobilization of all groups in civil society.





# 3 A profitable experimentation

The experimentation period ran from September 1997 to December 2004. The work carried out mainly dealt with:

- a review of the literature and the experiments carried out by other governments;
- an examination of the decision-making processes in the government;
- a survey of the availability of statistical data broken down according to gender in the participating departments and agencies;
- consultation meetings;
- regular meetings with the authorities of the departments in charge of the GBA projects;
- a preliminary set of tools adapted to the context of the public administration (application tool, practical workshops, government intranet and Internet sites);
- presentations to various forums in Québec, in Canada and abroad;
- the publication of articles in international reviews and periodicals;
- and, at the very heart of all these activities, the carrying out of nine GBA projects in seven departments (see the summary table of GBA projects on page 9).

GBA projects serve as beacons to indicate the best practices that should be kept and to identify difficulties that need to be overcome within the context of the management of such an approach. The experimentation is characterized by a great diversity, which contributes to its wealth:

- a diversity in the nature of the planned interventions and in the stages of the decision-making process where GBA is included;
- a range of fields affected: culture, education, employment, taxation, immigration, health, transportation;
- distinct approaches from one department to the next, according to whether the services are provided directly to the public or by way of a network;
- diversified organizational cultures;
- a modification of some projects while they are under way, requiring an appropriate adaptation of the GBA;
- projects spread out over time, of variable pace and duration.

In all, nine GBA projects were carried out: two during the first phase of the experimentation (1997-2000) and seven during the second phase (2000-2004). The two departments associated from the outset, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and the Ministère des Finances, carried out work during both phases, whereas five departments started their projects beginning in 2000: the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, and the Ministère des Transports.

## Summary table of gender-based analysis projects, 1997-2004

	1997-2000	Phase
<b>DEPARTMENTS</b>	<b>PROJECTS</b>	
Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux	Integration of GBA in the work to establish the <i>Orientations ministérielles sur les services offerts aux personnes âgées en perte d'autonomie</i> (ministerial orientations concerning the services offered to seniors with a loss of autonomy)	
Ministère des Finances	Preparation of an analysis framework making it possible to measure the impact of taxation policies on the situation of women and men	
	<b>2000-2004</b>	<b>Phase</b>
<b>DEPARTMENTS</b>	<b>PROJECTS</b>	
Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux	Integration of GBA in the implementation of the <i>Orientations ministérielles sur les services offerts aux personnes âgées en perte d'autonomie</i>	
Ministère des Finances	Continuation of the work on the analysis framework making it possible to measure the impact of taxation policies on the situation of women and men	
Ministère de la Culture et des Communications	Evaluation of the Reading and Book Policy: <i>Les pratiques de lecture des Québécoises et des Québécois, de 1989 à 1999, Une analyse différenciée selon les sexes</i>	
Ministère de l'Éducation	Preparation of the Policy on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as part of primary and secondary education so that boys and girls are able to take full advantage of ICTs at school	
	Evaluation of two vocational and technical training promotion campaigns in order to observe the effects of the publicity campaigns on the evolution of the enrollment of girls and boys, starting off in these programs	
Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille	Evaluation of two employment assistance measures: <i>Support for self-employment</i> and <i>Wage subsidies</i> to determine the gross effects and the net effects of the measures on women and men	
Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration	Preparation of the <i>Québec measurement tool</i> to determine the satisfaction of clientele with public services taking into account the diverse profiles of citizens of both genders	
	Evaluation of the francization service offered by the Carrefour d'intégration de Sherbrooke to examine the adequacy of the francization services offered in relation to the needs of immigrants of both genders	
Ministère des Transports	Planning of urban transportation in light of a comparative study on the mobility of women and men in the Greater Québec City Area	



## 4 Outstanding effects

The experimentation phase of the gender-based analysis (GBA) in the Government of Québec has had repercussions that go well beyond the framework of the projects carried out and that exceed all expectations. Between 1997 and 2004, an overview shows that the desire to integrate GBA in various fields of responsibility, whether governmental, paragonmental, municipal or in civil society, is increasingly marked and has been given tangible form in decisions and achievements.

## 5 Lessons and findings on the initiative as a whole

Any initiative to experiment with gender-based analysis (GBA) in the Government of Québec makes it possible to draw invaluable lessons with respect to the establishment of this management approach in all government decision-making processes. Indeed, several findings emerge from the experience acquired, findings that are largely shared by different governments and international organizations currently in the process of implementing such an approach in their interventions and public services.

### Committed authorities

The adherence of all persons making up the hierarchy, deputy ministers and managers, is a key element in the success of the experimentation with and the implementation of GBA.

### An essential support network

Respect for the culture and the approaches of the departments, a key element of the operating method chosen, does not mean that there is no support, on the contrary. The

support and follow-up assured by the members of the interministerial committee have been indispensable to guarantee the constancy and the coherence of the initiative, which is resolutely geared to the examination of the issues and the search for appropriate scenarios.

### **Invaluable data and references**

Data broken down according to gender constitute basic material indispensable for GBA. The Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ), an invaluable partner, has included GBA in the Banque de données des statistiques officielles sur le Québec (BDSO), which the Institute coordinates. Moreover, all references that may be useful in the analysis of data, whether quantitative or qualitative data, indicators, research reports, analyses, comparative studies, or other elements, must be provided to the work teams and be readily accessible.

### **An adapted set of tools**

An appropriate set of tools, including notably an application tool and practical workshops, has turned out to be indispensable in supporting the tangible application of GBA. This set of tools must be rigorous, as simple as possible, and adaptable to the various fields of responsibility of the departments and agencies. The objective is to ensure that the set of tools is linked to the reality of day-to-day work and that it corresponds efficiently to the needs of the persons who will be called upon to use these tools.

### **A sharing of information and expertise that is enriching**

The exchanging of information and the sharing of expertise at the local, regional, national and international levels have helped to enrich the work carried out in the Government of Québec, to collect elements for comparison, and to identify conditions for the successful integration of this management approach in public administrations. GBA has sparked interest throughout Québec, as it has elsewhere in the world.

## CONCLUSION

Gender-based analysis (GBA) is proposed as a management approach. In this sense, it complies with the requirements of the Public Administration Act in that ultimately, it aims for a delivery of services that is better adapted to the population by taking into account the diverse realities of women and men. The purpose of the experimentation mandate was to find better ways of integrating this approach in day-to-day work within the context of government interventions.

In summary, in light of the knowledge acquired to date, the establishment of the following conditions will contribute to the successful implementation of gender-based analysis:

- the principle of equality between women and men must be reaffirmed publicly by the government as a fundamental value of Québec society and be included in its structuring instruments;
- the full exercise of the right to equality between women and men must be ensured within the perspective of transforming social relations;
- the commitment of senior political and administrative authorities is a strategic element that is decisive for the implementation of GBA in government action;
- the joint management of the work entrusted to central organizations is another key element for success;
- the respect for the culture and the approaches of each department and sectorial agency promotes adherence to and participation in the establishment of GBA;
- a communication strategy adapted to the authorities and to the personnel of the public service promotes a common vision of the approach and a shared responsibility for its application;
- quantitative and qualitative data which take into account the realities of women and men constitute basic material essential for the application of GBA;
- a flexible and rigorous set of tools (application tool, practical workshops, government intranet and Internet sites) is vital to ensure the integration of GBA in the day-to-day work of departments and agencies;
- the exchanging of information and the sharing of expertise at the local, regional, national and international levels contribute to the creation of solid and influential networks;
- the maintaining of links with groups in civil society interested in the evolution of practices associated with GBA makes it possible to ensure the transparency of government action.

Finally, the experimentation carried out for more than six years is conclusive and certainly makes it possible to support any decision regarding the progressive implementation of gender-based analysis in the departments and agencies of the Government of Québec.





Québec 

Une réalisation de :  
• Ministère du Conseil exécutif  
• Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor  
• Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés  
et de la Condition féminine