

CIRIEC-Canada, 2020-2022 activities

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS 2020-2022

Initiated in previous years and active since 1966, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Research and Information on Collective Enterprises (CIRIEC-Canada) brings together both collective members (public enterprises, cooperatives, mutuels, associations, labour funds, unions, university research centers, training institutes) and individual members (researchers, teachers, students and practitioners). The purpose of our scientific association is to contribute to the construction of a plural economy, by an informed and critical support to the development of the collective economy (social and public) and by the promotion of the general interest in economic and social development.

The climate emergency, the COVID 19 pandemic and the post-pandemic highlight major challenges. The role and impact of public authorities and their organizations as well as the importance of the social and solidarity economy (cooperatives, mutuels, associations) and social utility trusts are more important than ever for a better future.

Dealing with social, economic and environmental issues necessarily implies a transdisciplinary approach open to a renewed citizen, scientific, entrepreneurial and managerial training concerned with societal values.

Activities at CIRIEC International

The members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee continued their active participation in CIRIEC International bodies and its scientific activities. Léopold Beaulieu is Honorary President of CIRIEC International. Marie J. Bouchard chairs the "Social and Cooperative Economy" scientific commission and Martine Vézina is a member of it. Luc Bernier and Hubert Rioux are members of the "Public Services/Public Enterprises" scientific commission.

These four members of the Board of Directors of our national section are also regular and alternate members of the International Scientific Council (ISC). At this time, I would like to congratulate Marie J. Bouchard who was awarded the Prix du mérite de l'UQAM 2022, Research Career category, in recognition of the influence of her work at the national and international levels.

Let us mention the preparation and the participation to the congress in Valencia, Spain, from 13 to 15 June 2022.

CIRIEC-Canada's activities

During this period, CIRIEC-Canada reviewed its strategic planning to update its action plan.

CIRIEC-Canada takes advantage of its Board of Directors meetings to present - prior to the start of these meetings - a seminar to share and discuss the results of academic research or strategic orientations conducted by practitioners. Among the themes addressed during the 2020-2022 period are new affordable housing cooperative formulas, the government's social economy action plan, the union's point of view on public enterprises and social economy enterprises, the agricultural trust as an innovative formula, the contribution of the Caisse d'économie solidaire to the Quebec economy over the past 50 years, the roadmap of the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité and the strategic plan of the Chantier de l'économie sociale.

We would also like to remind the preparation and holding of a special general assembly held on 22 January 2021 to review our bylaws, including the creation of an audit committee.

In addition, let us note the preparation of our annual colloquium at ACFAS, held in 2021 at the University of Sherbrooke, on the theme of the crossroads of research and practices in public and social economy.

CIRIEC-Canada is also a member of the Board of Directors of TIESS (Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire), where Martine Vézina, a professor at HEC Montréal, is our representative.

Furthermore, we would like to highlight the work of the director and editor, Annie Camus, in consolidating the CIRIEC-Canada review and in developing our website.

Overview of 2020-2021 activities (details below)

At the international level, the members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee continued their active participation in CIRIEC international bodies and in its scientific activities.

At the national level

- 3 to 5 May 2021, colloquium organized by Claude-André Guillothe, member of CIRIEC-Canada, in co-responsibility with Luc Bernier, member of our Board of Directors and Josée Charbonneau, research professional at the Université de Sherbrooke, on the theme "L'aurait-on su autrement ? Le double regard croisé de la recherche et des pratiques sur l'économie publique et l'économie sociale";
- Holding seminars and exchange sessions to which all members are invited. These meetings precede the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors.

Overview of 2021-2022 activities (details below)

At the international level, active participation in CIRIEC International activities and bodies, including the preparation and participation to the congress in Valencia, Spain, from 13 to 15 June 2022.

At the national level

- CIRIEC-Canada is renewing its action plan for the next few years by addressing notably expectations, collaborations and the increase in the number of member organizations and, before the end of the year, submitting an updated action plan that we hope will mobilize;
- Continued consolidation of the CIRIEC-Canada review, new take-off;
- Review and increase the importance of the website;
- Holding seminars and exchange sessions to which all members are invited. These meetings precede the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors;
- Organized seminars open to the public as part of CIRIEC-Canada's new *Les grands séminaires* Series, in addition to those offered at Board meetings.

The 2021 CIRIEC-Canada Colloquium

The Annual Colloquium of CIRIEC-Canada was held on 3 and 4 May 2021 as part of the ACFAS congress organized by the Université de Sherbrooke and held in virtual mode. The theme of the colloquium was: **“L’aurait-on su autrement ? Le double regard croisé de la recherche et des pratiques sur l’économie publique et l’économie sociale”**. It brought together researchers and practitioners on three cases: the Coopérative nationale de l'information indépendante - CN2I (ex-Groupe Capitales Médias), Fondation and Investissement Québec.

In a first step, we focused in the takeover of companies in the form of cooperatives. The case we explored is that of the crisis affecting the media and the cooperative transformation of the Groupe Capitales Médias. The situation illustrates democratic and economic issues that go beyond the simple survival of regional enterprises. The democratic health of a society requires a reflection and a deepening of concepts and theories such as ownership, the role of private enterprise in the management of essential goods such as information and, even more, the partnership role of the State with local actors. The case of regional media opens up this redefinition of collective entrepreneurship and ownership of common goods. What lessons can we learn from this case?

In a second step, and in the same way, we discussed the transformation of a government corporation, Investissement Québec (IQ), which has been in a state of perpetual redefinition since its origins in the 1960s. This reform, which was underway before the pandemic, continues and is taking place in

the global context of a generalized return to state intervention and a growing recourse to industrial and export subsidies, coupled with a rapid multiplication of public trade and investment promotion agencies.

In a third step, we turned our attention to Fondation. As the book edited by Benoît Lévesque pointed out, we can see a concrete utopia in this retirement fund that aims to invest in companies that promote worker participation and are concerned about the environment. We can see in this collective enterprise an example of another model of development where we link socially responsible finance, social economy and environment.

Seminars presented at board meetings of CIRIEC-Canada

Despite the challenges, again this year, of the pandemic and the impossibility of holding face-to-face meetings, CIRIEC-Canada still presented an important program of virtual seminars during its meetings:

14 December 2020 - **Government of Quebec's Social Economy Action Plan (PAGES) 2020-2025**

Presentation by Mr. Michel Jean, member of the Board of Directors of CIRIEC-Canada and Director of Collective Entrepreneurship at the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec.

It was stated that the contribution of social economy enterprises in Quebec, which includes 11,200 enterprises and 220,000 jobs, represents \$47.8 billion in revenues.

The PAGES complements other government interventions for enterprises and has a budget of \$137 million, provides for 3,500 support and financing activities and \$520 million in investments.

24 March 2021 - **"Point de vue syndical sur les pouvoirs publics, les sociétés des pouvoirs publics et les entreprises d'économie sociale"**.

Presented by Mr. Pierre Patry, former treasurer of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).

26 May 2021 - **"Présentation de la fiducie d'utilité sociale fondée dans le but de contribuer à la préservation des terres agricoles, de contrer la spéculation, et de rendre les terres accessibles à de jeunes agricultrices et agriculteurs de sorte à favoriser l'émergence d'une nouvelle génération"**.

Presented by Mr. Marc-André Côté, Executive Director, Fiducie agricole UPA-Fondation.

17 September 2021 - **"Contribution de la Caisse d'économie solidaire à l'économie québécoise au cours des 50 dernières années. Enjeux et perspectives"**.

Presented by Mr. Marc Picard, Director General, Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins.

9 December 2021 – **“La Feuille de route coopérative et mutualiste pour une relance économique durable du Québec”.**

Presented by Mrs. Marie-Josée Paquette, Executive Director of the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité (CQCM).

It should be noted that this seminar was held on 9 December 2021 alongside a special meeting of CIRIEC-Canada members on strategic planning.

14 January 2022 – **“Planification stratégique 2021-2025 – Orientations et priorités”.**

Presented by Ms. Béatrice Alain, Executive Director, Chantier de l'économie sociale.

Reflections - Strategic Planning

In the spring of 2021, CIRIEC-Canada's Executive Committee undertook a reflection process in order to define its orientations for the coming years. As a first step, an online survey was administered to members from 28 September to 8 October 2021 in order to obtain their opinions on the major socio-economic trends, the issues of the public economy/social economy, their main motivations for participating in CIRIEC-Canada as well as their interest in different CIRIEC-Canada activities in the future. This reflection is ongoing.

Following the reading of the survey results, a summary of the key findings was presented to the Board of Directors at the 9 December 2021 meeting. The executive committee also identified the priorities it plans to address first:

- Promoting CIRIEC-Canada's distinctive international network to its members;
- Expanding CIRIEC-Canada's national network to increase its membership;
- The development of a program of events that support the mission of CIRIEC-Canada and its members (virtual and in-person).

In the short term, the Executive Committee launched work on three projects:

- “Membrariat” Project: under the direction of Jean-Maxime Nadeau, Investissement Québec, with the collaboration of Luc Bernier, University of Ottawa and Marc Picard, Caisse d'économie solidaire (Desjardins);
It should be noted that a first meeting of this project was held on 9 February 2022;

Activities Project: under the direction of the CIRIEC-Canada Executive Committee and with the collaboration of interested members;

- Governance/Associative Life/Recovery Project: under the direction of the CIRIEC-Canada Executive Committee and with the collaboration of interested members.

Also, Ms. Marie-Josée Paquette, CQCM, Mr. Marc Picard, Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins and Ms. Geneviève Huot, TIESS, have offered to support

the Executive Committee in its strategic reflections. A first meeting was held on 8 February to start the work.

State-owned enterprises Exchange Group

Public enterprises have been present at CIRIEC-Canada since the beginning. As part of its action plan, CIRIEC-Canada wishes to increase its membership. Chantal Malo, CIRIEC-Canada's Treasurer, and members of CIRIEC's Executive Committee, including Jean-Maxime Nadeau, Vice-President - Enterprises Affairs, have identified a dozen public-sector companies to invite to join CIRIEC-Canada.

CIRIEC-Canada also wishes to fully deploy the transversality inherent to the nature of the association and to ensure a transfer structure between researchers and practitioners from public enterprises. While practitioners are questioning issues conferred on them by their status, governance, regulation, etc., many researchers are working on these themes or could consider it.

CIRIEC-Canada is interested in participating in research initiatives, sharing new trends and/or identifying solutions that will lead to more frequent delivery of concrete results to practitioners. A new project will be proposed in the fall of 2022.

By the way, in its series *Les grands séminaires* (in addition to those held during the Board of Directors' meetings), CIRIEC-Canada will hold a seminar with Marie J. Bouchard on **"Le périmètre de l'économie sociale"** on 20 April 2022. On 4 May 2022, a conference on the current revision of the *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises* will be given by Marie-Soleil Tremblay of ÉNAP and Martin Frappier of the Chantier de l'économie sociale on the evolution of governance in the social economy. The working title of this seminar is: **"Évolution de la gouvernance des entreprises collectives : Entreprises publiques et Entreprises d'économie sociale sur la gouvernance des entreprises collectives"**.

The CIRIEC-Canada review, <i>Économie et Solidarités</i>
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The review was first published in 1968 under the name *Canadian CIRIEC Review / Revue du CIRIEC Canadien*. In 1978 it became *Coopératives et développement - Revue du Ciriec*. Then in 1996, it was renamed *Économie et Solidarités - Revue du CIRIEC-Canada*.

Since 2010, the review is available in digital format in open access on the Érudit platform.

Under the direction of Annie Camus, the review is preparing to take off again under a new name and with a new team, but with the same rigour, the same concern to publish accessible scientific articles and to promote research in social economy and public economy in French.