Forum IA Québec

2020 - 2021

FROM APRIL 1   TO MARCH 31

ANNUAL REPORT

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A word from the Chairman of the Board

Over the years, a dynamic artificial intelligence ecosystem has been established in Quebec, one that benefits from the expertise of specialized AI players who are involved along the entire value chain, wherein all stakeholders work closely with each other. These major assets are the envy of many and lend a unique aspect to our ecosystem.

The Quebec and Canadian governments' actions and investments have played a major role in structuring this ecosystem. For instance, the creation of the AI Cluster Steering Committee by the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation (MEI) in 2017 was the first milestone in the development of a coordinated AI ecosystem in Quebec where stakeholders act in synergy for the collective good.

Forum IA Québec was launched in 2020 and represented the second major milestone in the effort by ecosystem players to mobilize around common goals. For a year now, the Forum has been working, with the financial support of the MEI, to improve the ecosystem's access to the talent it needs and support AI appropriation by organizations in various industries, in addition to showcasing Quebec's AI successes, conducting strategic reflection activities, and supporting the Quebec government for some key projects.

The wealth of expertise in the field and the strong collaboration of ecosystem players in the initiatives described in this report do not mean that the game is won. As Quebec moves forward in the production and use of AI, other nations are looking to increase their competitive advantage in this key area by stepping up their game.

Quebec will succeed in making AI the foundation of its future prosperity by continuing to target investments in key sectors and leveraging the strength of its AI ecosystem.

And Forum IA Québec will continue to act as a catalyst for the AI ecosystem and increase the positive impacts of this technology on Quebec's prosperity.

Pierre Boivin
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
OF DIRECTORS

A word from the President and CEO

2020 marks Forum IA Québec's first year of existence, and we are pleased to present our first annual report.

This first year, which took place in a particular context, allowed us to lay the foundations for the smooth running of the Forum: a solid governance structure was set up in the first few months, and a strategic plan and an action plan with ambitious and realistic objectives were drawn up. These valuable tools will guide the Forum's future activities and outline a clear vision to take the Quebec AI ecosystem further and higher.

With the mission of making AI a real lever for economic and social development in Quebec, the Forum has undertaken initiatives that are already promoting or will eventually promote the ecosystem's growth. For example, the Forum has set up the major stakeholder committees responsible for overseeing the launch of two important projects: the "Ecosystem's Common Showcase" and "Promotion" projects. It actively supported the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration in the creation of its programme to attract immigrants specialized in AI. The Forum supported the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation in its call for large-scale AI projects. It also collaborated with the Observatoire international sur les impacts sociétaux de l'AI et du numérique (OBVIA) in the start-up of a project to stimulate the adoption of AI in the agri-food sector.

Throughout the past year, the Forum has stayed tuned in to ecosystem actors endeavoured to remain agile to find effective solutions to the challenges encountered.

At the end of its first year of operation, the Forum is well positioned to fully play its role as a federator of all AI driving forces in Quebec. The actions carried out over the last few months will contribute to the development and use of AI in Quebec and, consequently, to the increase of our collective wealth.

Happy reading!

Marie-Paule Jeansonne
FORUM IA QUÉBEC
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Forum IA Québec in brief

Forum IA Québec supports the development of the Quebec AI ecosystem and promotes it in Quebec, in Canada and abroad.

Forum IA Québec

Resulting from the *Strategy for the Development of Quebec's Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem*, Forum IA Québec began its activities in April 2021.

FORUM IA QUÉBEC'S MISSION IS TO...

Mobilize all the players in the artificial intelligence (AI) ecosystem

to make this technology a lever for economic and social development in Quebec.

FORUM IA QUÉBEC'S VISION IS TO...

Ensure that all levers are available to the ecosystem to:

Ensure the growth and sustainability of cutting-edge AI research

Help large and small organizations adopt AI

Promote the creation of Quebec's flagship AI companies

Leverage AI to tackle major societal challenges, such as climate change and the ageing population

Position Quebec as a leader in the production and use of AI in an ethical and socially responsible manner

The Forum in brief

The Board of Directors

The Forum's Board of Directors is composed of people who are active in AI in various capacities. These directors come from AI business, research, and training communities across Quebec. Nearly half of the directors on the Forum's Board of Directors are women.[1]

The Forum believes that diversity makes it possible to consider different perspectives, opinions, and ideas, which will lead to a more robust strategy, improved performance, and greater innovation. The Forum's Board is therefore committed to establishing and maintaining an inclusive and diverse approach to the selection of new directors.

Pierre Boivin — PRESIDENT
President and Chief Executive Officer
Claridge

Gilles Savard — SECRETARY
Managing Director
IVADO

Julien Billot
CEO
Scale AI

Valérie Pisano
President and Chief Executive Officer
Mila

Hélène Desmarais
Founder and Executive President
IVADO Labs

Lyse Langlois
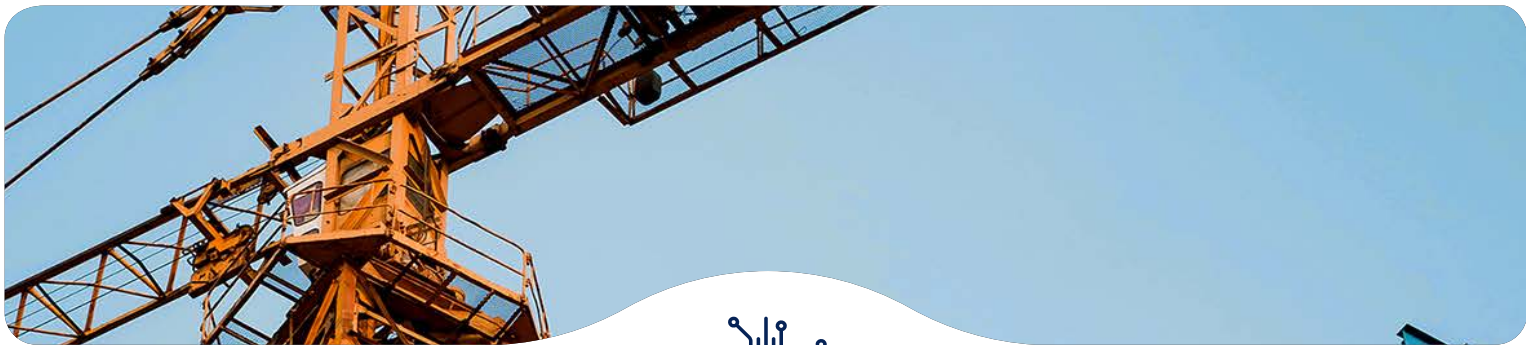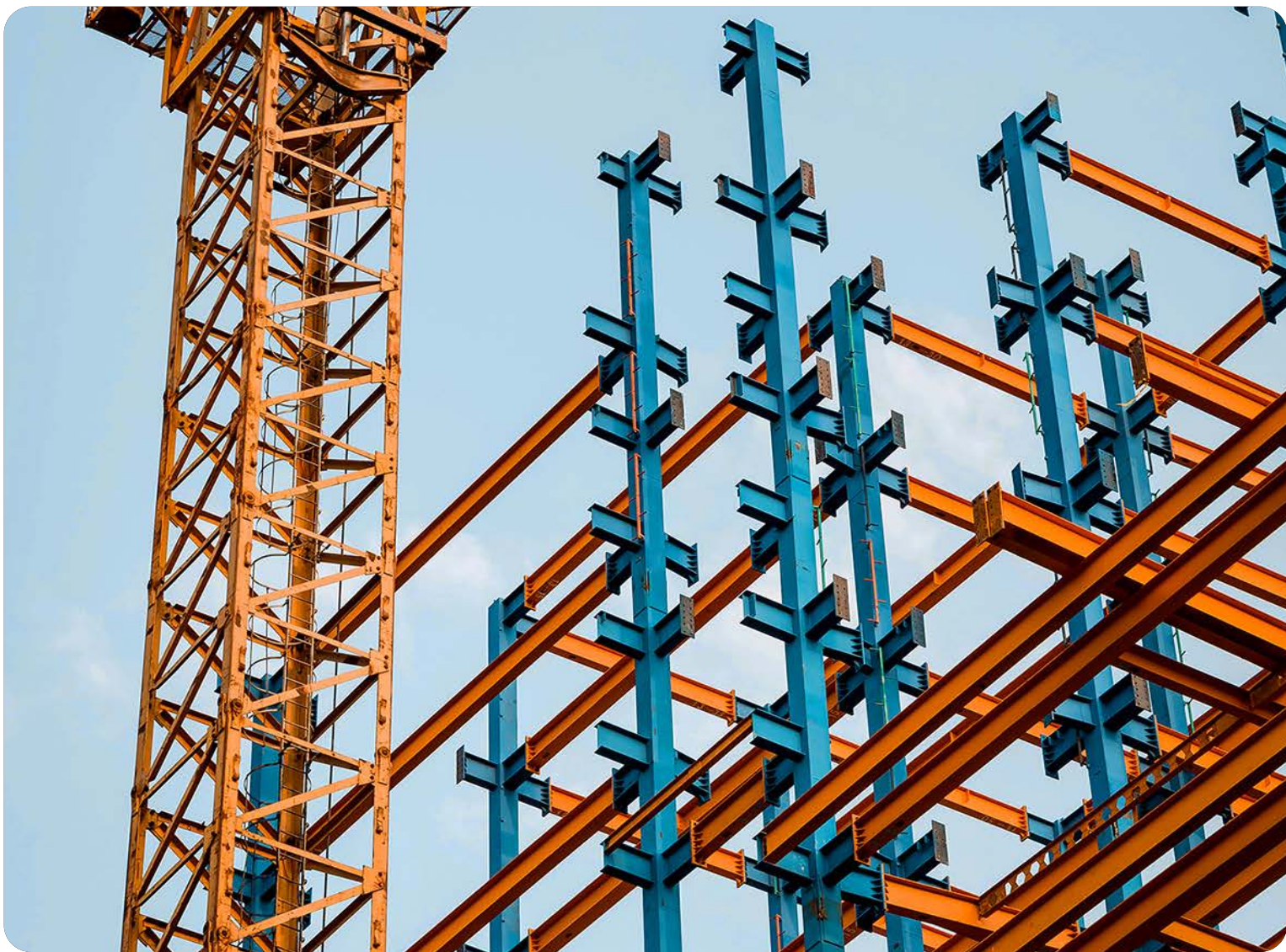Executive Director
International Observatory on the Societal Impacts of AI and Digital Technologies

Marc-Étienne Ouimette
Director, Public and Government Relations
Element AI

Company
From outside of Montreal
(Position to be filled)

TREASURER — **Alain Lavoie**
President and Co-founder
Irosoft

Anna Chif
Stratedy and Product Manager & Co-founder
Dialogue

Chris Arsenault
Partner
Inovia

Martin LeBlanc
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Montréal InVivo

Josée Lanoue
Executive Director
TECHNOCompétences

Vincent Aimez
Vice-Rector, Valorization and Partnerships
Université de Sherbrooke

Isabelle Cayer
Executive Director
CDRIN (CCTT du Cégep de Matane)

Sylvie Normandeau
Co-Chair
Pôle montréalais d'enseignement supérieur en IA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1 representative from each of the following 5 organizations:
Ivado
Scale AI
MILA
Ivado Labs
OBVIA

2 representatives of companies that use AI

1 representative of financial players

2 representatives of other ecosystem stakeholders, including 1 representative of an industrial cluster

2 representatives of AI producing companies

3 representatives from post-secondary institutions

Governance and Nomination Committee

- Lyse Langlois, Committee Chair
- Pierre Boivin
- Anna Chif
- Hélène Desmarais

Audit Committee

- Alain Lavoie, Committee Chair
- Chris Arsenault
- Julien Billot
- Valérie Pisano

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[1] Marc-Étienne Ouimette stepped down as a director in December 2020, and Josée Lanoue of TECHNOCompétences was replaced by Mélanie Bosc, then Acting Executive Director, in February 2021.

Highlights

Ongoing projects and events the Forum has taken part in

02
PROJECTS

09
FORUM INITIATIVES

07
INITIATIVES IN WHICH THE FORUM IS INVOLVED

IA
ORGANIZATION OF RENCONTRES IA
A key event in the AI ecosystem

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN

08
events bringing together close to

2 000
participants

Forum IA Québec activities

To better serve the Quebec AI ecosystem, Forum IA Québec aligns its activities using three strategic directions and eight approaches.

2020-2023 Strategic Plan

During 2020, the Forum undertook a large-scale virtual tour of the ecosystem to listen to the concerns of its stakeholders and update the findings formulated in May 2018 in the *Strategy for the Development of Quebec's Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem*.

Based on this consultation, the Forum developed and adopted a *2020-2023 Strategic Plan* with three strategic directions and eight strategic approaches to guide its actions.

Strategic directions

Strategic approaches

1. CONCERTATION

Promote concerted action by local stakeholders and their mobilization around common projects

1.1 Ensure the **cohesion**, **collaboration**, and **cooperation** of artificial intelligence stakeholders in Quebec.

1.2 Facilitate access to information on the resources available to the actors of the AI ecosystem and promote their networking, specifically through a **common showcase**.

2. STRATEGIC THINKING AND MONITORING

Conduct strategic thinking and monitoring activities

2.1 Carry out **a talent watch** to align the needs of the ecosystem, the job profiles of the future and the training offering, while facilitating a better link between job supply and demand.

2.2 Put in place mechanisms to enable the ecosystem to **assess its performance** and **adjust** quickly and nimbly to scientific advances, the emergence of new players and the evolution of international best practices.

2.3 Help accelerate the **development and adoption of AI solutions** by the entire Quebec economic fabric and promote the **emergence of Quebec's flagship AI companies.**

2.4 Help the ecosystem leverage AI to **tackle major societal challenges** and position Quebec as a leader in the production and use of AI in an **ethical and socially responsible manner.**

3. REPRESENTATION AND PROMOTION

Represent and promote the ecosystem in Quebec, Canada and abroad

3.1 Act as a **reflection-process partner** with the government to promote the adoption of a legislative framework and public policies that encourage the development of Quebec's AI ecosystem.

3.2 Raise the profile of the ecosystem in Quebec, Canada and abroad, to maximize its international visibility, attract foreign investment and talent, and promote the export of our goods and services, while fostering greater social acceptance of AI.

Forum activities

Overview of activities

In line with the strategic directions and approaches, here are the initiatives implemented by the Forum and those in which it participated during the last year.

Strategic approaches	Ongoing and planned projects set out in the *2020-2022 Action Plan*

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1. CONCERTATION

1.1
Concertation and mobilization

🚀 **Forum projects**

Project launch and rollout

- Ecosystem showcase
- Ecosystem promotion
- Talent

Participation in and organization of events that bring players together

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1.2
Ecosystem's Common Showcase

🚀 **Forum projects**

Release of a first version of the Showcase

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2. STRATEGIC THINKING AND MONITORING

2.1
Talent

🚀 **Forum projects**

Creation of the MIFI expert committee with TECHNOCompétences

Study of international best practices in AI training and knowledge transfer with PIA (Pôle montréalais d'enseignement supérieur en intelligence artificielle)

Building and facilitating an AI researcher practice community

👍 **Initiatives in which the Forum is involved**

Identification of AI skill profiles

AI salary study

2.2
Ecosystem performance

🚀 **Forum projects**

Study of the economic and social impact of the *Strategy for the Development of Quebec's Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem*

Ecosystem performance measurement

2.3
Ecosystem appropriation and growth

💡 **Joint initiative**

Study of AI's potential in the agri-food sector

👍 **Initiatives in which the Forum is involved**

Supporting the Sécretariat du Conseil du trésor (SCT) in developing the development of the *Stratégie d'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans l'administration publique*

Participation in the AI Integration Community

Participation in the Rencontres IA et Santé des Fonds de recherche du Québec

Participation in the Montréal InVivo AI project

2.4
AI at the service of society

🚀 **Forum projects**

Creation of a round table at the Effervescence 2021 conference

Drafting an overview of AI advances in life sciences and health technologies (Portrait des avancées de l'IA en sciences de la vie et technologies de la santé (SVTS))

👍 **Initiatives in which the Forum is involved**

Participation in the CHUM working group for the development of a responsible-AI tool

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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3. REPRESENTATION AND PROMOTION

3.1
Representation

Ongoing actions as the government's reflection-partner to encourage the adoption of public policies that promote the development of the Quebec AI ecosystem

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3.2
Promotion

🚀 **Forum projects**

Co-organization of the Rencontres IA (AI Meetings)

Development of a common narrative

Forum activities

Overview of actors and collaborators

The Forum works and collaborates with many actors to carry out its various projects.

Fifty-five actors were involved in the Forum's projects and workstreams in 2020-2021.[2]

10
LARGE, HIGH GROWTH CORPORATE PLAYERS AND STARTUPS

09
EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

09
RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER CENTRES

08
GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

08
OTHER ECOSYSTEM SUPPORTING ACTORS

06
FINANCIAL ACTORS

03
SECTOR CLUSTERS

02
INCUBATORS AND ACCELERATORS

Types of actors involved in the Forum's projects and workshops

Incubators and accelerators
4 %

Sector clusters
5 %

Financial actors
11 %

Other ecosystem supporting actors
15 %

Governmental actors
15 %

Large, high growth corporate players and startups
18 %

Educational and training institutions
16 %

Research and knowledge transfert centres
16 %

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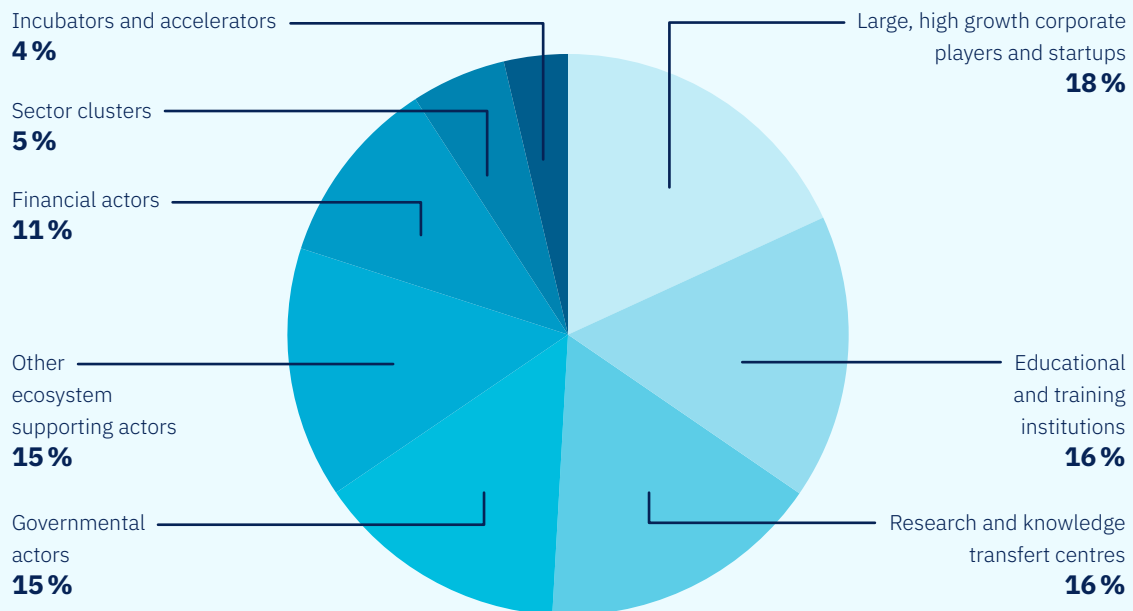
[2] Does not include organizers of initiatives in which the Forum is involved or other participants in such initiatives.

Of these 55 actors, eight are governmental actors, including various ministries of the Governments of Quebec and Canada. The 47 other actors are distributed according to the following administrative regions:[3]

Geographical origin of the Forum's non-governmental collaborators

Bas-Saint-Laurent
2 %

Estrie
2 %

Capitale-Nationale
13 %

Outside Quebec
19

Montérégie
2 %

Montreal
60 %

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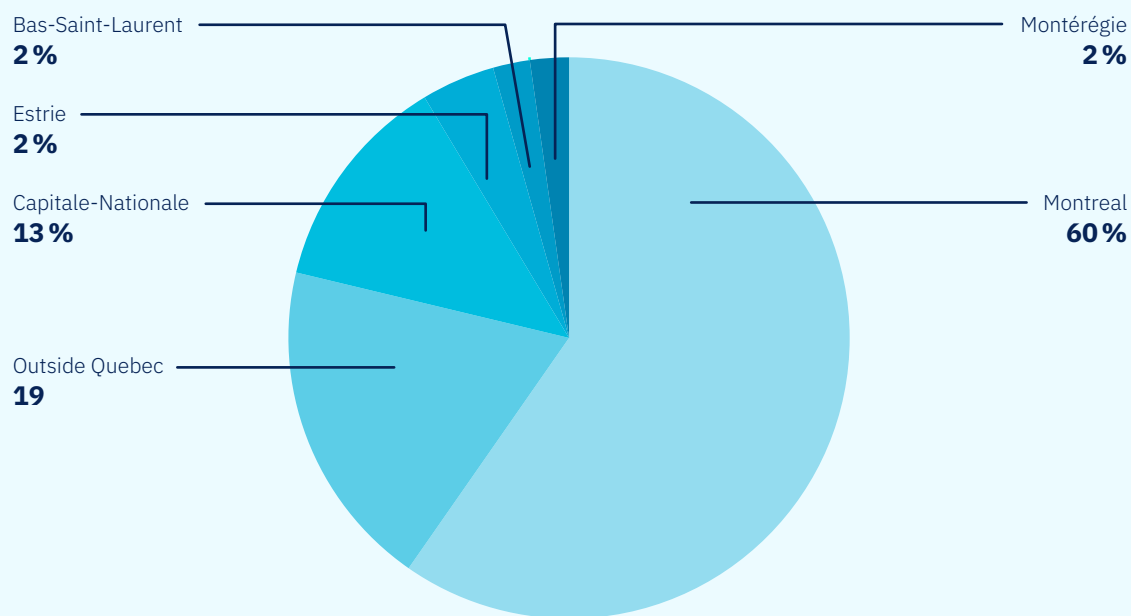
[3] Administrative regions based on the address of the organizations' headquarters.

Our achievements

During 2020-2021, the Forum undertook nine projects and participated in seven initiatives led by other players in the ecosystem.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Concertation

The aim of this first strategic direction is to encourage concertation between the players in the field and mobilize them around common projects. Two approaches guide this strategic direction.

1.1 Concertation and mobilization

To ensure the cohesion, collaboration, and concerted action of AI actors in Quebec, the Forum's objective in 2020-2022 is to organize and participate in events that bring the community together, in addition to launching and leading three projects:

- Ecosystem's Common Showcase (launched in December 2020)
- Promotion of the Quebec AI ecosystem (launched in January 2021)
- Talent (launch coming in 2021-2022)

The projects are working groups that mobilize a dozen ecosystem actors. Each one acts as an advisory committee to help the Forum prioritize the projects to be launched and ensure their success.

The concertation and mobilization of the Quebec AI ecosystem involves the consultation and proactive involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of initiatives that will serve the community. The first two projects mentioned above have been launched and are currently working on identifying the functionalities and content that will be hosted on the Ecosystem's Common Showcase. The Talent project will be launched in 2021-2022.

Since its first year of activity, the Forum has participated in many events that bring together the community. In collaboration with various partners, it has been involved in the development of large-scale events to showcase Quebec's AI expertise.

1.2 Ecosystem's Common Showcase

Forum initiative

Description

The Ecosystem's Common Showcase is both a project and a workstream, the latter allowing for consultation with stakeholders in the Quebec AI ecosystem to identify the functionalities that should be developed as a priority for this showcase.

This initiative aims to facilitate access to information on available resources and ongoing projects for the actors of the AI ecosystem and promote their connection, in particular through a common showcase, with various functionalities designed to meet the needs of end users.

Forum IA Québec thanks the project participants:

- Bonjour Startup Montréal
- Creative Destruction Lab
- IVADO
- Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie
- Mitacs
- Moov.ai

- Next AI
- Pôle montréalais d'enseignement supérieure en intelligence artificielle
- Productique Québec
- Prompt
- Québec Innove
- Québec International
- Scale AI

Status: ● Ongoing project

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Strategic thinking and monitoring

The objective of this second stratetic direction is to identify the actions necessary to ensure the growth and sustainability of AI development in Quebec. It is broken down into 4 approaches.

2.1 Talent

Creation of the MIFI expert committee, together with TECHNOCompétences

Forum initiative 🚀

Description

The Forum assisted the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration (MIFI) in defining the main parameters of the Permanent Immigration Pilot Program for Artificial Intelligence, Information Technology and Visual Effects Workers by conducting consultations with ecosystem stakeholders and producing a document containing findings and proposals (e.g., regarding the minimum wage to be taken into consideration or the requirements to be established in terms of knowledge of French).

It also worked with TECHNOCompétences to define the process and rules to be put in place to determine whether an organization's application for an AI resource is admissible; to recruit the experts to sit on the committee responsible for advising the MIFI on each application; and to recruit the consultant responsible for supporting the work of the expert committee. The Forum developed the contractual agreement between the experts and TECHNOCompétences and continues to support the efforts of MIFI and TECHNOCompétences.

Actors involved

MIFI and TECHNOCompétences

Composition

Expert committee composed of 7 members

Status: ● Ongoing project The MIFI program became effective on April 22, 2021. The expert committee has started evaluating applications.

Forum activities

Study on international best practices in AI training and knowledge transfer

Forum initiative

Description

An international comparative study commissioned by the Forum and the PIA at CIRANO, OBVIA and EY aims to define the practices to adopt and the links to be put in place by the actors of higher education (colleges and universities) and the other actors of the Quebec AI ecosystem to improve AI training programs and promote knowledge transfer and collaboration between all AI ecosystem stakeholders.

Actors involved

Partners organizations:

- CIRANO
- EY
- Observatoire international sur les impacts sociétaux de l'IA et du numérique (OBVIA)
- (PIA) Pôle montréalais d'enseignement supérieur en intelligence artificielle

Composition

- Advisory committee composed of 6 members

Status: ● Ongoing project (50% of the project completed as of March 31, 2021)
A draft version of the report was presented to the PIA and the Forum in May 2021.
The final version is expected by the end of August 2021.

Building and facilitating an AI researcher practice community

Forum initiative

Description

The PIA (Pôle montréalais d'enseignement supérieur en intelligence artificielle) has commissioned several studies on the impact of the rise of AI on training in various sectors (e.g., nursing, management) at the college and university level, and on the needs to be met. The PIA and the Forum have brought together those responsible for these studies in a community to discuss ongoing projects.

Actors involved

Organizers:

- TECHNOCompétences
- Pôle montréalais d'enseignement supérieur en intelligence artificielle (PIA)

Community members

- Dawson College
- John Abbott Collage
- Vanier College
- Montréal InVivo
- Concordia University
- Université de Montréal
- TECHNOCompétences
- TELUQ

Status: ● Ongoing project (regular meetings)

AI skills profile

Initiative in which the Forum is involved 👍

Description

TECHNOCompétences produced a report on the various AI professions and the skills required by the people who occupy such positions. A representative of the Forum was part of the steering committee that made proposals to improve the report.

Organizer

TECHNOCompétences

Salaries in the AI industry

Initiative in which the Forum is involved 👍

Description

The Forum supported Normandin Beaudry's efforts to launch a pan-Canadian survey to study salaries in the AI field.

Organizer

Normandin Beaudry

2.2 Ecosystem performance

This approach focuses on setting up mechanisms that allow the ecosystem to assess its performance and adjust quickly and flexibly to scientific advances, the emergence of new players and the evolution of international best practices.

Always keeping its ear to the ground thanks to its many consultation activities and various projects, the Forum has been able to take the pulse of the ecosystem and use the knowledge acquired to guide its actions.

The Forum's goals in this regard are spread out over 2021-2022. More projects will be part of this approach in the coming year, including the launch of a study on the economic and social impact of the *Strategy for the Development of the Quebec's AI Ecosystem* and the production of a Quebec index to measure the performance of the ecosystem.

2.3 Ecosystem appropriation and growth

Study on the potential of AI in the agri-food sector

Joint initiative

Description

The International Observatory on the Societal Impacts of AI and Digital (OBVIA), in collaboration with the Forum and IVADO, co-organized a series of workshops on the potential of AI in the agri-food sector, as well as on measures to foster organizational shifts towards data and AI. The Forum is funding and supporting the drafting of a report outlining the findings and recommendations from this work.

Actors involved

- OBVIA
- IVADO
- Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ)

Status: ● Study ongoing

Supporting the Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor (SCT) in the development of the *Stratégie d'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans l'administration publique 2021-2026*

Initiative in which the Forum is involved

Description

The SCT developed a strategy for the introduction of AI in the Quebec public administration. It asked the Forum to help it organize consultations in the ecosystem on this strategy and then to identify organizations the SCT could survey.

Organizer

Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor

Participation in the AI Integration Community

Initiative in which the Forum is involved

Description

The AI Integration Community is a multi-stakeholder initiative whose mission is to "transform organizations and break down barriers to AI integration to develop the full potential of the Quebec economy by evolving best practices."

The Community takes the form of monthly meetings bringing together a dozen or so large organizations wishing to share their learnings from applied AI projects, particularly with regard to change management.

Organizers

- Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec
- Desjardins/KPMG

Participation in the *Rencontres IA et Santé des Fonds de recherche du Québec*

Initiative in which the Forum is involved 👍

Description

The Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) organize a monthly meeting led by the Chief Scientist of Quebec, bringing together some twenty actors – researchers, consensus-building organizations, research centres, companies, MSSS, MEI, SCT, etc. – concerned about the adoption of AI in the health field.

Four sub-working groups are led by the participants at this table:

- Access to data
- Social acceptability
- Outreach and visibility
- Analysis of the recommendations of various reports

Le Forum is piloting a project on Artificial Intelligence in Québec's Life Sciences and Health Technology Sector (*Portrait des avancées de l'IA en sciences de la vie et technologies de la santé*) (see section 2.4: AI in the service of society), to raise awareness among policy makers of the potential impact of AI advances in health under this third sub-working group.

SEE SECTION 2.4 →

Organizer

Quebec's Chief Scientist and FRQ – Santé

Montréal InVivo's AI workstream

Initiative in which the Forum is involved 👍

Description

Participation in a working group set up by Montréal InVivo to "foster the development of an AI-powered life sciences and health technologies (LSHT) sector, from diagnosis to therapy, as well as for health prevention," which brings together players from various LSHT segments (biopharmaceuticals, health technologies, health information and communication technologies, etc.).

Organizer

Montréal InVivo

Forum activities

2.4 AI at the service of society

Creation of a round table during the Effervescence 2021 event

Forum initiative

Description

As part of the Effervescence 2021 event organized by Montréal InVivo, the Forum, in collaboration with its partners, organized a round table on the use of AI across the value chain in the fight against cancer, from identifying therapeutic targets to precision medicine, to conducting clinical trials 2.0.

Actors involved

- Québec Consortium for Drug Discovery
- IVADO
- Montréal InVivo

Status: ✔ Completed project

Artificial Intelligence in Québec's Life Sciences and Health Technology Sector

Forum initiative

Description

At the Rencontres IA et Santé mentioned in section 2.3 (Ecosystem appropriation and growth – Participation in the Rencontres IA et Santé des Fonds de recherche du Québec), the Forum is drafting a portrait of AI advances in LSHT in Quebec in collaboration with Jean-Pierre Perrault, Vice-Rector of the University of Sherbrooke. The process aims to:

- Demonstrate the potential contribution of AI to achieving the objectives of the *Québec Life Sciences Strategy*.
- Provide concrete examples of the potential effects of greater access to health data.

Status: ● Ongoing project

Participation in the CHUM working group

Initiative in which the Forum is involved

Description

The Forum supported the CHUM working group for the project "Activating/realizing the CHUM's responsible innovation and AI strategy" by producing two deliverables for innovators: a checklist and a guide to responsible innovation in health.

Organizer

Centre hospitalier universitaire de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM)

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Representation and promotion

This third strategic direction aims to optimize the representation and promotion of the ecosystem in Quebec, Canada and abroad. It is guided by two approaches.

3.1 Representation

Description

With this approach, the Forum wants to act as a reflection partner with the government to contribute to the adoption of public policies favouring the development of the Quebec AI ecosystem.

As mentioned in the Talent approach, the Forum guided the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration in setting up the *Permanent Immigration Pilot Program for Artificial Intelligence, Information Technology and Visual Effects Worker*s. It also collaborated with TECHNOCompétences in defining the application assessment process and creating a committee of experts capable of conducting assessments.

The Forum also supported the SCT in the ecosystem consultation on the *Stratégie d'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans l'administration publique,* as detailed in the "Ecosystem appropriation and growth" approach.

Throughout its activities, the Forum provides expertise and plays a key role in linking the ecosystem with public authorities.

3.2 Promotion

Rencontres IA (AI Meetings)   *Forum initiative*

Description

In collaboration with the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal and Scale AI, the Forum participated in the development of an event that highlighted the Quebec and pan-Canadian AI ecosystem. These two days of virtual sessions were a must for all players in the field and for companies looking to discover how and why to invest in AI. Numerous AI-producing organizations were able to benefit from a choice platform to make themselves known.

Actors involved

- Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal
- Scale IA

Status: ✔ Completed project

Forum activities

Common narrative

Forum initiative

Description

The Promotion of Quebec's AI Ecosystem workstream aims to ensure the influence of the ecosystem in Quebec, Canada and abroad by developing a common narrative and tools to maximize its international visibility, attract foreign investment and talent, and promote the export of Quebec's goods and services.

This project allows the Forum to consult the stakeholders of the Quebec AI ecosystem to identify the promotional content that should be developed as a priority and uploaded to the AI Ecosystem's Common Showcase.

One of its first tasks will be to draft a common narrative that describes the unique value proposition of the AI ecosystem, defines its strengths, provides a clear vision of what sets it apart, and paints an overall picture of the AI ecosystem across Quebec.

Forum IA Québec thanks the project participants:

- Global Affairs Canada
- Centre for Digital Imaging and Interactive Media (CIMMI)
- Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal
- Csciences
- Investissement Québec international
- Irosoft
- Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation
- Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie
- Mitacs
- Montréal International
- Numana
- Prompt
- Québec International
- Samsung Advanced Institute of Technology
- Scale AI

Status: ● Ongoing workstream

Forum activities

Profile raising

During its first year of operation, the Forum helped set up eight unifying events, in addition to promoting the ecosystem at numerous other local and international events.

Events

WORKSHOPS

Artificial intelligence in the bio-food sector

OBVIA, IVADO and the Forum have collaborated on a series of three webinar-workshops on the challenges and opportunities related to the application of AI in the bio-food sector. As mentioned under Strategic direction 2.3 – Ecosystem appropriation and growth (*Study of the potential of AI in the agro-food sector*), the Forum is funding and overseeing the preparation of a report outlining the findings and recommendations from this work.

Number of participants : **317**

SEE SECTION 2.3 →

FORUM

From IA to businesses

Number of participants : **353**

For the occasion, the Forum worked closely with the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation to organize a morning session dedicated to AI. As Minister of Economy and Innovation, Pierre Fitzgibbon shared his vision of this rapidly growing field. The Forum's CEO had the pleasure of moderating the discussions and speaking with Marie-Chantal Chassé, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economy and Innovation (innovation and entrepreneurship), to discuss the role of the Forum and the future of AI in Quebec.

AI RESEARCH

Springboard for economic innovation

Organized by the International Economic Forum of the Americas – Conférence de Montréal, the round table moderated by the Forum's CEO brought together François Terrier, Research Director and Head of the AI program at CEA List, affiliated with Université de Paris-Saclay, Éric Badiqué, Senior Advisor for Artificial Intelligence, DG CNECT, of the European Commission, and Mathieu Boisclair, Executive General of JACOBB – Centre for Applied Artificial Intelligence. Focusing on the transition from research to the application of AI in concrete cases this roundtable was an opportunity to highlight Quebec's expertise in both fundamental and applied research.

Number of participants : **81**

Profile raising

Women's views and thoughts on ethics in AI

The Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, as well as its general delegations in Brussels, London and Barcelona, called on the Forum's CEO to moderate this roundtable on the challenges related to the governance of the use of personal data, in which four AI specialists participated: Evelina Antilla, General Counsel in Artificial Intelligence Ethics at the Swedish company Peltarion, Regina Llopis, President of the Spanish AIA Group, Aida Nazarikhorram, co-founder of the Luxembourg startup LuxAI, and Ève Gaumond, Master of Laws candidate and Project Manager at OBVIA.

Number of participants : **167**

Rencontres IA (AI Meetings)

Number of participants : **784**

As part of the Effervescence 2021 event organized by Montréal InVivo, the Forum, in collaboration with its partners, organized a round table discussion on the use of AI across the value chain in the fight against cancer, from identifying therapeutic targets to precision medicine, to conducting clinical trials 2.0.

WATCH THE VIDEO →

EFFERVESCENCE 2021
AI in oncology: from drug discovery to market

As part of the Effervescence 2021 event organized by Montréal InVivo, the Forum, in collaboration with its partners, organized a round table discussion on the use of AI across the value chain in the fight against cancer, from identifying therapeutic targets to precision medicine, to conducting clinical trials 2.0.

Number of participants : **275**

Online profile raising

11

BOOTHS

145

SUBSCRIBERS[4]

242

SUBSCRIBERS

380

SUBSCRIBERS

Outlook for the future

After its first year of existence, the Forum has already achieved many of the targets it set itself in its *2020-2022 Action Plan*. It is well on its way to achieving all its objectives, and the upcoming year will be just as busy.

Several projects are in the preparation stage. The Forum plans to participate in the *Stratégie québécoise de la recherche et de l'innovation 2022* consultations and *Stratégie québécoise des sciences de la vie* update.

The Forum also plans to launch its third "Talent" project, focusing on labour issues in the sector.

Strengthening Quebec's position in AI also requires a better understanding of the Quebec environment. To this end, two studies are planned to assess the ecosystem's performance.

The Forum intends to work with the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor and Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation to become a privileged partner of the Government of Quebec and promote the adoption of public policies that foster the growth of Quebec's AI ecosystem and the productivity of Quebec organizations.

In the wake of the Ecosystem's Common Showcase workstream, promotional tools and a common narrative will be developed. A first iteration of this showcase should be available next winter.

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[4] Since September 16, 2020, for the three social networks mentioned.

Extract from the audited financial statements

Results

EXTRACT FROM THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended March 31, 2021, and the initial ten-month period ended March 31, 2020

	2021 (12 MONTHS)	2020 (10 MONTHS)
	$	$
Revenues		
Provincial Government – Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation (MEI)	579 448	69 582
Partner contributions		
• Monetary	28 410	
• Contributions received in the form of supplies and services	10 000	
	617 858	**69 582**
Expenses		
Operating expenses (schedule)	352 944	69 582
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	40	
Project – Concertation		
• Approach – Ecosystem's common showcase	17 359	
• Approach – Concertation and mobilization	18 785	
Project – Strategic thinking and monitoring		
• Approach – Talent	68 613	
• Approach – Ecosystem appreciation and growth	9 395	
• Approach – Ecosystem performance	2 266	
• Approach – IA in the service of society	10 457	
Project – Representation and promotion		
• Approach – Ecosystem representation	3 602	
• Approach – Ecosystem promotion	54 397	
	537 858	**69 582**
Excess of income over expenses	**80 000**	**-**

Financial situation

EXTRACT FROM THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31 March 2021 and 2020

	2021 ($)	2020 ($)
Assets		
Short term		
• Cash on hand	175 769	
• Accounts receivable and other receivables (note 4)	23 230	69 582
• Prepaid expenses	2 489	
	201 488	**69 582**
Long term		
• Tangible assets (note 5)	3 628	
	205 116	**69 582**
Liabilities		
Short term		
• Accounts payable and other operating liabilities (note 6)	124 146	69 582
• Deferred contributions (note 7)	970	
	125 116	**69 582**
Net assets		
Earmarked	80 000	
	205 116	**69 582**

Québec

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