

In the final analysis, Quebec came out of the recession that began in the autumn of 2008 relatively unscathed. While we don't wish to minimize its scope or trivialize the difficulties experienced by many Quebecers, we can assert that it was short-lived and that growth rebounded in the second half of 2009.

2010 in short

Quebec's economy and labour market recovered rapidly, posting a GDP that has already surpassed its pre-recession peak. Quebec also reports 62 000 more jobs than in the fall of 2008. This is not a generalized phenomenon; since Ontario still had 68 000 fewer jobs in September 2010 than in September 2008. As of January 2009, the Quebec unemployment rate has been below that of Ontario: Historically Quebec's rate has always been higher.

However, the fallout of the recession on government finances persists. Several more years of budgetary deficits are forecasted. To all appearances, a resumption of economic growth will not be enough to eliminate these deficits, which are both cyclical and structural in nature: Higher taxes and tighter controls on expenditure growth have been announced. Once again, the situation seems less critical in Quebec than in Ontario. In 2009–2010, the budget deficit—as a share of collective wealth (GDP)—was only half as large in Quebec as in Ontario: 1.8% versus 3.9%.

The return of economic growth

In contrast to the economic climate that gave rise to the publication of *Le Québec économique 2009*, a resumption of growth provided the backdrop against which we conceived of the idea of continuing the adventure by releasing *Le Québec économique 2010*.

While Quebec was less severely affected than other jurisdictions, it nonetheless must contend with some serious economic challenges that predate the recession: an imminent shrinking of the pool of potential workers, a lower level of collective wealth compared to its neighbours, flagging productivity

growth, an unacceptably high school drop-out rate, etc.

In order to rise to the many challenges associated with economic growth, Quebec must demonstrate audacity and innovation while capitalizing on its recent economic strength.

In addition to examining the various economic challenges confronting Quebec today, the 2010 edition of *Québec économique* argues that we should take advantage of the resumption of economic growth in order to perform an analysis of the favourable elements.

For these purposes, recognized academics and respected members of Quebec society share their perspectives in accessible language and contribute their thoughts regarding factors of economic growth, from human capital to innovation, including the role played by government. The goal is to present a realistic portrait of elements that should indisputably be integrated into an economic growth plan for Quebec. Some fifty factsheets, covering themes such as economic activity, industrial sectors, the labour market, demographics, social indicators, government finances, the environment and resources, and the regions, provide a snapshot and comparison of modern Quebec and illustrate the structural changes its economy has experienced.

While *Québec économique 2010* does not provide a comprehensive discussion of all aspects of economic development, it does reflect a sufficiently broad picture to potentially yield a "growth plan" for Quebec.

For more information, we invite you to consult the book *Le Québec économique 2010*, under the direction of professors Marcelin Joanis and Luc Godbout (Université de Sherbrooke and CIRANO), published by Laval University Press, as well as the Website at the following url: <http://qe.cirano.qc.ca/>.