2012 IACA MERIT AWARD APPLICATION
"Remembering the Past While Embracing the Future"

Québec Initiatives in Government and Business Services

Description of the Innovation

Background

In 2004, the Québec government set out to simplify and streamline the administrative procedures required to register a new business. This marked the starting point for a review process with two main goals: improving the services offered to businesses and facilitating better management of Québec's enterprise register. More specifically, the project sought to reduce processing times, increase the reliability of the register, which has a legal status that is unique in Canada, and upgrade an outdated technology platform for which few qualified technicians were available. Another key objective was to establish a paper-free process, in keeping with other government guidelines.

The Registrar organized a consultation of its client base, which includes mostly paralegals. The main legislative provisions were completely revised to bring them into line with market conditions and to give businesses more autonomy, while ensuring that the rights of shareholders and creditors were respected.

The transfer of the Enterprise Registrar to Revenu Québec[1], on April 1, 2007, simplified the task of updating the technology platform. Revenu Québec was already among the government organizations offering the broadest array of online services, and it had built up impressive expertise and resources in technology and technology development.

Innovation

In less than 36 months, the design and implementation stages were completed, and almost all of the services were online by February 14, 2011. The main innovation was the introduction of four commercial software packages that allowed the Registrar's operations to be restructured quickly and at a reasonable cost. The solution includes an authentication mechanism based on data from the register itself. These data acquired official status and constituted the first public database containing legal information on businesses. The clicSÉQUR access code issued is based on data from the register, and is also used for user updates and authentication for other purposes, such as filing income tax returns.

---

[1] Revenu Québec: department responsible for provincial sales tax and income tax collection.

A clicSÉQUR access code was initially issued to all businesses that were registered and active when the new services went online on February 14, 2011. From that point on, all newly-registered businesses would receive their access code in the days following registration.

In addition, legal clients can apply to the Enterprise Registrar for accreditation to file documents electronically on behalf of a third party, using the access code they are assigned.

Before the new online services were introduced, the website of the Enterprise Registrar was basically an access point for consulting the register online. Registering a business in the register was a complex administrative procedure.

New legislation

The applicable legislative provisions were revised, and two new statutes were passed: the *Act respecting the legal publicity of enterprises* and the *Business Corporations Act*.

The *Business Corporations Act* replaced Parts I and IA of the former *Companies Act*, which had not been revised since 1981. It included measures to improve the protection afforded to minority shareholders, and simpler, more flexible rules that reduce the administrative burdens on businesses. It also provided for technology to simplify procedures, such as technology allowing shareholders to cast ballots from a remote location during meetings.

The new *Act respecting the legal publicity of enterprises* combined in a single statute the former *Act respecting the legal publicity of sole proprietorships, partnerships and legal persons* and the *Act respecting the enterprise registrar*. It introduced new rules to facilitate the electronic filing of documents with the Enterprise Registrar, using the new online services made available on the Registrar's website.

The new laws came into force on February 14, 2011, marking the birth of Canada's most up-to-date legislative framework in the business law field. Of particular note is the new authentication process, which uses access codes to solve the problem of electronic signatures.

Innovations

All the applications for the Web transaction solution were developed in a way that ensured their compatibility and interoperability with the software packages and systems already in place at Revenu Québec. The solution was designed around a service-oriented architecture with four commercial software packages that each addressed specific administrative needs:

- Siebel (Oracle) was the software at the core of the business solution used to create all the interfaces for the monitoring process (see Figure 1).
- Search algorithms and Oracle Text were used to make the register publicly available and offer online consultation of all public and legal data on businesses doing business in Québec (see Figure 1).
- The accounting software package Virtuo was used to create all the interfaces for finance-related processes (see Figure 1).
- Biztalk (Microsoft) was used as the underlying software to link all the systems and provide access to the organization's shared services, such as mass printing, scanning, Web access and controls, etc., which are simply adapted to the needs of the Enterprise Registrar.
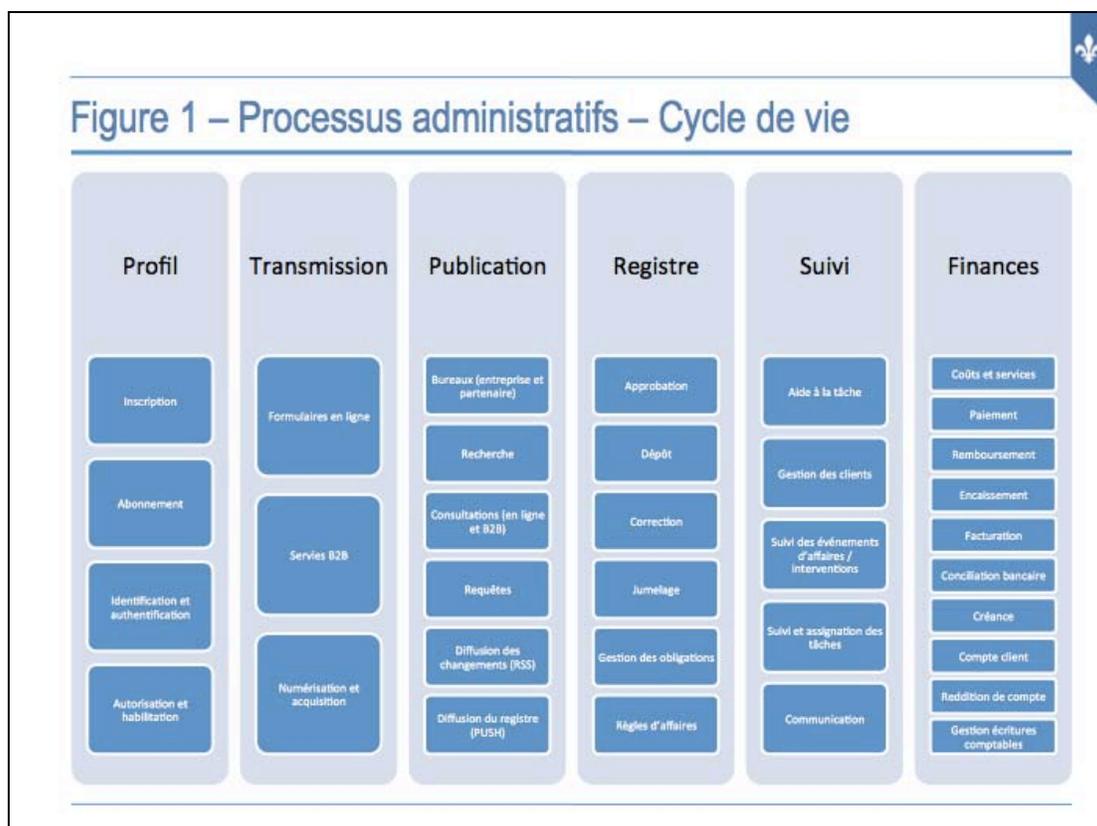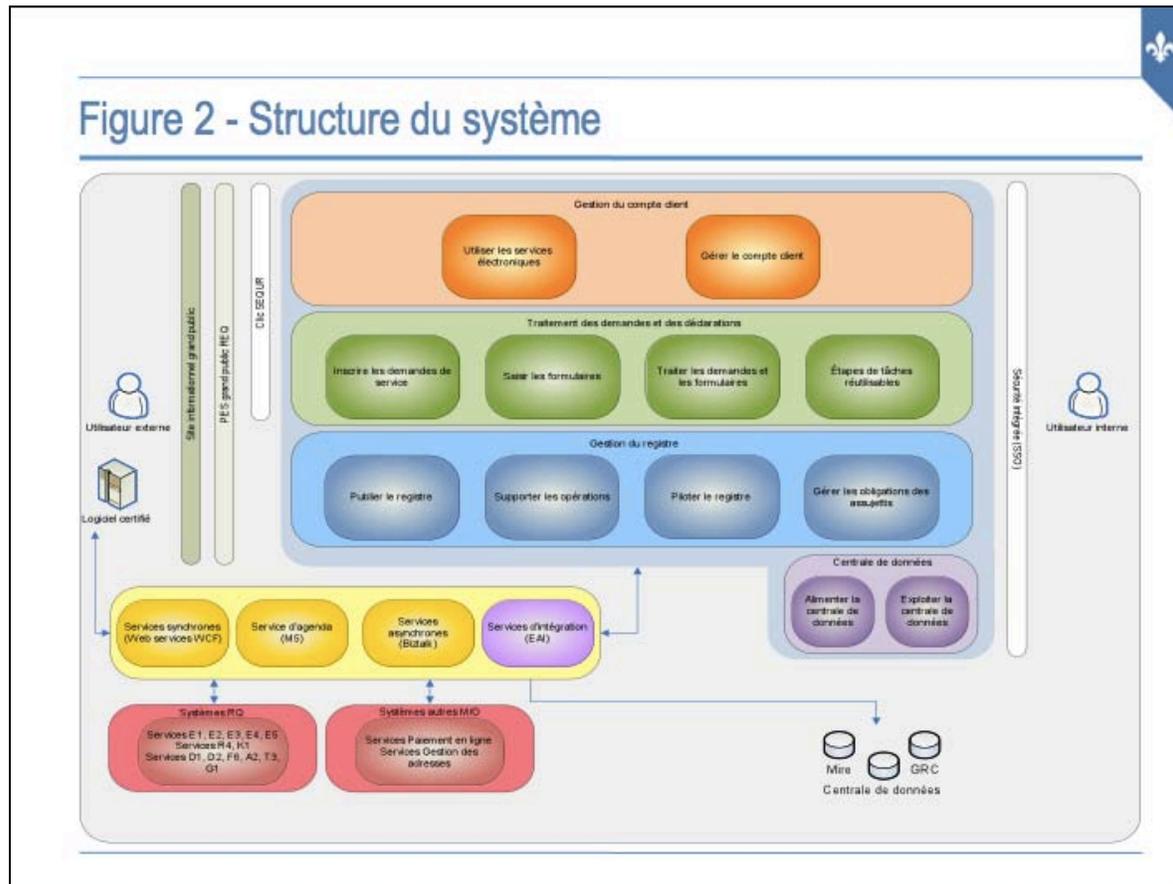
Figure 1

Figure 1 – Processus administratifs – Cycle de vie

Figure 2 illustrates the structure of the solution.

Figure 2 - Structure du système

Thanks to especially efficient project management processes, the project was successful despite numerous challenges, including the need to

- maintain service on an ongoing basis;
- convert data stored under Ingres and SQL Server for use by Oracle;
- link the implementation of the new computer platform with a full revision of the legislation that Revenu Québec and the Enterprise Registrar are responsible for applying;
- implement the solution in parallel with other major restructuring work at Revenu Québec, including the upgrading and modernization of its technological infrastructures.

Process documentation

The project also offered an opportunity to design and record the processes involved using ISO standards to describe the activities and interactions of the business processes (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3

Cartographie des Procédures de la Direction du Registraire des entreprises V0.5

Figure 4

Results of Implementation

Making a public register available online involves careful management of the information flow containing source data. The data must be validated, indexed and stored before being made accessible for public consultation. A robust verification process was established to ensure system security and strict management of access rights for the following client groups:

- members of the general public, who can consult the register free of charge without authentication
- businesses and accredited intermediaries, who must authenticate their identity using their clicSÉQUR access code
- accredited practitioners, who have access to an electronic "bureau" through which they can manage all their client files
- internal users, authenticated using an integrated security module

Benefits of the Project (cost, production or customer service)

Main advantages of the solution

The advantages of the solution reflect the judicious technological choices made, in particular concerning the selection of software packages:

- Reduced paper use: more than 90% of all applications are now made online.
- Major improvements to online service delivery: 53% of applications are processed the same day, and many cases are settled within 24 hours.
- Automated processing of applications: 55% of applications are automatically published in the register after the validation stages are completed with no human intervention.
- Businesses can now file their annual updating declaration online, and validate or update the information in their file.
- Maintenance costs have been reduced using commercial software packages instead of developing an in-house solution.
- The time required to complete the main formalities for registering a business and updating a file has been reduced from 5 and 15 days, respectively, to 2 days for simple online transactions.

The solution offers considerable advantages, because it eliminates the use of paper, although certain technological limits still require staff to deal with more complex tasks. This means that the organization can provide jobs involving greater challenges.

The use of commercial software packages has several advantages:
- Time is saved thanks to the use of high-performance, accessible solutions.
- New needs can be addressed more quickly by taking advantage of technological advances.

Lessons Learned

The project led to the first large-scale use of commercial software packages in the design of an electronic solution at Revenu Québec.

The Enterprise Registrar has designed an online service that can quickly process applications for the registration of a business. The Web-based solution increases speed, but also increases user expectations, since customers expect that all tasks will be completed by a machine. As a result, the back office rules were also reviewed to assign priority to certain tasks.

The people employed at the time of the technological shift were also the people most able to find workarounds during the start-up period when the systems were not yet fully responding to commands.

The concerns of professional clients have to be kept in mind to reduce any impact on their practice when new paper-free technologies are introduced. Professionals must be seen as partners in the process with the public service.

The ingenious use of four commercial software packages made it possible to quickly restructure the business process at a reasonable cost.

The benefits obtained through the use of commercial software packages are clear, since employees are now more available for system maintenance.

Reliance on development firms cannot replace in-house expertise. The organization's own employees must be involved in the evolutionary change to ensure proper risk management.

Figure 1

Figure 1 - Administrative processes - Life cycle

Demande de traduction	Traduction / Anglais
Profil	**Profile**
inscription	Registration
abonnement	Subscription
Identification et authentification	Identification and authentication
authorisation et habilitation	Authorization and clearance
Transmission	**Transmission**
formulaires en lign	Online forms
services B2B	B2B services
numérisation et acquisition	Digitization and acquisition
Publication	**Publication**
bureaux (entreprise et partenaire)	Offices (businesses and partners)
recherche	Searches
consultations (en ligne et B2B)	Consultations (online and B2B)
requêtes	Queries
diffusion des changements (RSS)	Publication of updates (RSS)
diffusion du registre (PUSH)	Publication of the register (PUSH)
Registre	**Register**
approbation	Approval
dépôt	Filing
correction	Corrections
jumelage	Matching
gestion des obligations	Management of obligations
règles d'affaires	Business rules
Suivi	**Follow-up**
aide à la tâche	Task support
gestion des clients	Client management
suivi des événements d'affaires/interventions	Follow-up on business events/client input
suivi et assignation des tâches	Follow-up and tasking
communication	Communication
Finances	**Finance**
coûts et services	Costs and services
paiement	Payment
remboursement	Reimbursement
encaissement	Cash inflow
facturation	Invoicing
conciliation bancaire	Bank reconciliation
créance	Accounts receivable
compte client	Client account
reddition de compte	Reporting
gestion écritures comptables	Management of accounting entries

Figure 2

System structure

Demande de traduction	Traduction / Anglais
utilisateur externe	External user
logiciel certifié	Certified software
Site informationnel grand public	General public information site
PES Grand public REQ	REQ General public ESD
Clic SEQUR	clicSÉQUR
gestion du compte client	Client account management
utiliser les services électroniques	Use e-services
gérer le compte client	Manage client account
traitement des demandes et des déclarations	Processing of applications and declarations
inscrire les demandes de service	Enter service requests
saisir les formulaires	Input forms
traiter les demandes et les formulaires	Process applications and forms
étapes de tâches réutilisables	Reusable job steps
gestion du registre	Register management
publier le registre	Publish the register
supporter les opérations	Support operations
piloter le registre	Oversee the register
gérer les obligations des assujettis	Manage registrants' obligations
services synchrones (Web services WCF)	Synchronous services (WCF Web services)
service d'agenda (MS)	Agenda service (MS)
services asynchrones (biztalk)	Asynchronous services (BizTalk)
services d'intégration (EAI)	Integration services (EAI)
Centrale de données	Central database
alimenter la centrale de données	Feed central database
exploiter la centrale de données	Operate central database
Systèmes RQ	RQ systems
Services E1, E2, E3, E4, E5 …	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5… services
Systèmes autres M/O	Other department and agency systems
Services paiement en ligne	Online payment services
Services gestion des adresses	Address management services
Sécurité intégrée (SSO)	Integrated security (SSO)
Utilisateur interne	Internal user

Figure 3

Procedures mapping - Direction du Registraire des entreprises

Demande de traduction	Traduction / Anglais
GOUVERNE	**OVERSIGHT**
Écoute client	**Client concerns**
procédures	Procedures
mesure de la satisfaction des clients (ex. questionnement	Client satisfaction measurement (e.g. telephone service
sur qualité de service via téléphone)	quality survey)
analyse des plaintes	Complaints analysis
Revue de direction	**Management review**
procédures √	Procedures
organisation des comités de direction	Management committees organization
audit qualité interne	Internal quality auditing
actions correctives et préventives	Remedial and preventive action
Traitement des plaintes	**Complaints processing**
procédures √	Procedures
traitement des plaintes au niveau de Revenu Québec	Processing of complaints by Revenu Québec
traitement des plaintes reçues de Services Québec	Processing of complaints received from Services Québec
actions correctives et préventives √	Remedial and preventive action
OPÉRATIONNEL	**OPERATIONAL**
Publication du registre	**Register publication**
procédures √	Procedures
abonnement aux fils de syndication	Syndicated content feed subscription
gestion des ententes (transmission d'information aux ministères et organismes…)	Management of agreements (information sent to departments and agencies…)
protection des informations des assujettis	Protection of registrants' information
articles de correction (68…)	Remedial sections (68...)
instructions de contrôle	Control instructions
recherche d'un assujetti et vérification de ses obligations	Search for a registrant and verification of registrant's obligations
Règlement des recours	**Recourse and settlement**
procédures √	Procedures
types de recours	Types of recourse
gestion du registre des décisions	Management of the decisions register
Autres lois	**Other laws**
procédures √	Procedures
prise en charge des demandes non courantes	Handling of non-current requests
Prise en charge d'une demande	**Handling of a request**
procédures √	Procedures
prise en charge des demandes liées aux formulaires*	Handling of requests concerning forms*
prise en charge des demandes prioritaires liées aux formulaires	Handling of priority requests concerning forms*

Demande de traduction	Traduction / Anglais
prise en charge des demandes liées aux services et support*	Handling of requests concerning services and support*
prise en charge des demandes de copies de documents	Handling of requests for copies of documents
prise en charge des demandes liées aux recours	Handling of requests concerning recourse
Création d'une entreprise	**Creation of a business**
procédures √	Procedures
immatriculation	Registration
ré-immatriculation	Reregistration
constitution des sociétés par actions	Incorporation of business corporations
constitution des personnes morales sans but lucratif	Incorporation of non-profit legal persons
reconstitution	Revival
continuation à l'importation	Continuance through an import transaction
reprise d'existence	Resumption of existence
révocation de radiation	Revocation of striking-off
coopératives	Cooperatives
réservation de nom	Name reservation
instruction de contrôle √	Control instructions
règles de conformité des noms et autres noms	Name/other name compliance rules
recherche d'un assujetti et vérification de ses obligations	Search for a registrant and verification of registrant's obligations
échantillonnage et contrôle qualité	Sampling and quality control
Remplir ses obligations	**Fulfilling obligations**
procédures √	Procedures
déclaration de mise à jour annuelle	Annual updating declaration
déclaration de mise à jour courante	Current updating declaration
dépôt de statuts de modification	Filing of articles of amendment
dépôt de statuts de refonte	Filing of articles of consolidation
dépôt de statuts corrigés	Filing of articles of correction
annulation d'un statut	Cancellation of articles
déclaration modificative de correction	Corrective updating declaration
réservation de nom √	Name reservation
instruction de contrôle √	Control instructions
règles de conformité des noms et autres noms √	Name/other name compliance rules
recherche d'un assujetti et vérification de ses obligations	Search for a registrant and verification of registrant's obligations
pénalités, dispositions pénales (constats d'infraction)	Penalties, penal provisions (statements of offence)
échantillonnage et contrôle qualité √	Sampling and quality control
Cessation d'une entreprise	**Discontinuance of a business**
procédures √	Procedures
dissolution d'une société par actions	Dissolution of a business corporation
dissolution d'une personne morale sans but lucratif	Dissolution of a non-profit legal person
dissolution d'une société de personnes	Dissolution of a partnership
liquidation d'une personne morale	Liquidation of a legal person
radiation volontaire	Voluntary striking-off
radiation d'office par le registraire des entreprises	*Ex officio* striking-off by the Registraire des entreprises

Demande de traduction	Traduction / Anglais
liquidation d'une coopérative	Liquidation of a cooperative
instruction de contrôle √	Control instructions
vérification des obligations des assujettis	Verification of registrant's obligations
échantillonnage et contrôle qualité √	Sampling and quality control
Transformation d'une entreprise	**Transformation of a business**
procédures √	Procedures
continuation à l'exportation	Continuance through an export transaction
continuation sur la L.S.A.	Continuance under the B.C.A.
fusion simplifiée	Simplified amalgamation
fusion ordinaire	Ordinary amalgamation
arrangement	Arrangement
réservation de nom √	Name reservation
instruction de contrôle √	Control instructions
règles de conformité des noms et autres noms √	Name/other name compliance rules
échantillonnage et contrôle qualité √	Sampling and quality control
Cartographie des Procédures de la Direction du Registraire des entreprises V0.5	**Procedures mapping - Direction du Registraire des entreprises V0.5**
* Documents en lien avec Services Québec	***Services Québec-related documents**
SOUTIEN	**SUPPORT**
Gestion financière	**Financial management**
procédures √	Procedures
encaissement	Cash inflow
recouvrement	Collection
annulation de demande	Cancellation of application
remboursement	Reimbursement
instruction de contrôle √	Control instructions
vérification de l'état du compte	Verification of account status
Gestion informationnelle	**Information management**
procédures traitement massif	Mass processing procedures
numérisation	Digitization
saisie	Input
courrier	Mail
procédures gestion informationnelle	Information management procedures
gestions des communications (correspondances)	Communications management (correspondence)
gestion des accès informatiques*	**Systems access management***
demande de soutien informationnel *	**Systems support request***
gestion d'événements liés à la sécurité *	**Security incidents management***
gestion du contenu du site informationnel	Information site content management
Ressources humaines	**Human resources**
procédures √	Procedures
accueil d'un nouvel employé et/ou changement de statut	New employee orientation and/or change of status
mise à jour d'un dossier d'employé (prolongement, départ, retour)	Employee record updating (extension, departure, return)

Demande de traduction	Traduction / Anglais
formation	Training
Ressources matérielles	**Material resources**
procédures √	Procedures
fournitures de bureau	Office supplies
affectation de matériel informatique	Allocation of computer equipment
aménagement des bureaux	Office layout
demande de soutien technique	Technical support request
Expertise de programme	**Program expertise**
procédures √	Procedures
veille et révision des façons de faire	Methods monitoring and review
soutien et expertise au niveau des recours	Recourse support and expertise
soutien et expertise au niveau des formulaires	Forms support and expertise
gestion des relations avec les partenaires	Partner relations management
gestion des exceptions	Exceptions management
formation √	Training
pilotage des équipes opérationnelles	Operational teams oversight
gestion du registre d'avis…	**Management of register of notices**
√ : mots se retrouvant déjà dans le texte	

Figure 4	
Oversight Process	
Demande de traduction	**Traduction / Anglais**
Écoute client	**Client concerns**
Revue de Direction	**Management review**
Traitement des plaintes	**Complaints processing**
Client M/O Partenaires	**Department/Agency partner clients**
Expression du besoin	**Statement of need**
Prise en charge - Demande	**Handling of applications**
Publication du registre	**Publication of register**
certification, validation	**Certification, validation**
création d'une entreprise	**Creation of a business**
remplir ses obligations	**Fulfilling obligations**
cessation d'une entreprise	**Discontinuance of a business**
transformation d'une entreprise	**Transformation of a business**
règlement des recours	**Recourse and settlement**
Processus opérationnels	**Operational procedures**
Client M/O Partenaires √	**Department/Agency partner clients**
satisfaction du besoin	**Needs met**
gestion financière	**Financial management**
gestion informationnelle et traitement massif	**Information management and mass processing**
ressources humaines	**Human resources**
expertise de programme	**Program expertise**
ressources matérielles	**Material resources**
processus de soutien	**Support procedures**

√ : mots se retrouvant déjà dans le texte