

Citizen round table



OPERATING RULES

FOR THE CITIZEN ROUND TABLE OF ÉLECTIONS QUÉBEC

1 MISSION

The Citizen round table of Élections Québec is an advisory committee made up of Québec citizens. It provides advice, suggestions and opinions to Élections Québec on matters relating to the administration of elections, the application of election laws and issues affecting the Québec electoral system. The mission of the Table is to advise Élections Québec and enrich the institution's reflection on these matters in an impartial and nonpartisan way with respect to all subjects submitted to the Table by the latter, and to do so in the interest of the Québec population.

The following subjects are excluded from the work of the Table:

- Investigation files.
- Matters before the courts.
- The political aspects of draft bills tabled to the National Assembly.
- Any other confidential file.

2 COMPOSITION

The Citizen round table comprises a maximum of 12 current and future Québec electors (men and women) appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer based on the recommendations of a selection committee. The Chief Electoral Officer may also designate substitute members.

2.1 DURATION OF THE TERM

Members are appointed for a two-year term. This term is renewable only once by the Chief Electoral Officer and for the same duration.

2.2 SELECTION PROCESS

Periodically, the Chief Electoral Officer issues a call for applications to all Québec citizens by whatever means he considers appropriate. He publishes the conditions of eligibility (Appendix 1) and the criteria established for the evaluation of candidates' applications. A selection committee evaluates the applications received and submits its recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer, who makes the final choice of members and proceeds to their appointment.

Insofar as possible, the composition of the Table aims to reflect the diversity of Québec society, all age groups and strives for gender balance.

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

3.1.1 ROLE

The Chief Electoral Officer:

- Recruits and appoints the members of the Table.
- Chairs the Table. The Chief Electoral Officer himself is the ex-officio chairperson. He may, however, delegate to a member of the institution's personnel the responsibility of chairing the meetings.
- Convenes the meetings, taking into account the institution's calendar of activities and the availability of the most members possible.
- Determines the meeting agendas.
- As needed, calls on the expertise of the institution's personnel to assist in the work of the Table.
- Publishes on the institution's website the reports of the Citizen round table meetings after approval of the reports by the members present. The reports are drafted in such a way as to ensure the anonymity of discussions.
- Gives a yearly account of the work of the Citizen round table in his annual management report.
- May, after consulting with the members, make changes to the Citizen round table's Operating rules and Code of conduct in order to ensure that these documents continue to meet the institution's needs.

3.1.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Electoral Officer:

- Takes the steps needed to enable all of the members to contribute to discussions.
- Ensures compliance with the Operating rules and Code of conduct and imposes penalties in the event of any non-compliance.
- Considers suggestions for improvements made by the members.
- Pays an allowance to the members for their participation in the meetings.
- Reimburses the members' travel expenses in keeping with the established terms and conditions.

3.2 CITIZEN ROUND TABLE COORDINATOR

3.2.1 ROLE

The Citizen round table coordinator:

- Ensures the secretarial function for the Table and coordinates its work.
- Handles the organizing of the Table's meetings.
- Provides all the assistance and logistical support needed for the work of the Table.

3.2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Citizen round table coordinator:

- Conveys the meeting agenda to the members.
- Prepares and conveys to the members the briefing documents for the work of the Table.
- Handles the drafting of the reports of the meetings.
- Coordinates the drafting of notices and reports of the Table, as the case may be.
- Coordinates travel and accommodations for the members.

3.3 MEMBERS OF THE CITIZEN ROUND TABLE

3.3.1 ROLE

The members:

- Advise Élections Québec and enrich the institution's reflection.
- Act as intermediaries between the concerns of Québec citizens and Élections Québec for matters coming under the institution's range of activities.
- Propose, where applicable, actions for responding to the expectations and needs of the Québec electorate.
- Provide opinions between meetings, as needed.
- May consult experts, with the approval of the Table chair, and do so, with a view to deepening their reflection on the matters that they are asked to consider.

3.3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The members:

- Participate in discussions and the work of the Table in a spirit of respect and co-operation.
- Sufficiently prepare themselves for the work, including, reading the documents provided to them in preparation for the meetings.
- Attend the meetings regularly and show diligence and dedication.
- Give advance notice of any absence from meetings.
- Comply with the Operating rules and Code of conduct for the Citizen round table and sign the form *Declaration regarding the Operating rules and Code of conduct*.
- Sign the form *Declaration regarding conflicts of interest* and agree to quickly inform the Chief Electoral Officer of any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest that might arise during their term.
- Provide the information needed for payment of the allowance and reimbursement of travel expenses.

4 MEETINGS

4.1 FREQUENCY

The Citizen round table meets a minimum of two times a year. The chairperson may hold other meetings, as needed.

4.2 LOCATION

Meetings of the Table usually take place at the offices of Élections Québec, in Québec City.

4.3 QUORUM

Quorum for the holding of a meeting is reached when three quarters of the members confirm they will be attending. However, a meeting can be held even though the quorum is not reached if members who had confirm their presence cannot attend the meeting due to unforeseen events.

4.4 CLOSED MEETINGS

Meetings of the Citizen round table are closed meetings. Only the chairperson, members of the Citizen round table, members of the Chief Electoral Officer's personnel and experts invited by the chairperson may attend.

4.5 ANONYMITY OF DISCUSSIONS

In order to promote open and honest discussions, everything said during the meetings will be done so anonymously. Hence, when talking about the Table and its work, the members shall abstain from naming any member of the Table in relation to the comments and opinions expressed.

The meeting reports will also be drafted in such a way as to ensure anonymity regarding what is expressed during the meetings.

4.6 ALLOWANCE AND REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

Members will receive an allowance of \$250 per day (taxable amount) for their participation in the meetings. This covers the time spent preparing for meetings, travel time to Québec City or the planned meeting location and all costs associated, with the exception of travel expenses.

Transportation costs and meal costs incurred from participating in the meetings, as well as the cost of accommodations, when necessary, are reimbursed in accordance with a directive issued by the Chief Electoral Officer and based on the *Directive sur les frais remboursables lors d'un déplacement et autres frais inhérents* as issued by the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor of the gouvernement du Québec.

5 END OF TERM

A member's participation is finished at the end of the two-year term for which the member was appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Chief Electoral Officer may renew a member's participation for only one more two-year term.

5.1 RESIGNATION

Members may resign from the Table. In such case, the member in question must provide the Table's secretary with written notice, addressed to the chairperson, of his or her intention to resign. The notice must specify the effective date of the resignation and be conveyed at least 14 days prior to such date.

5.2 ABSENCES

The Chief Electoral Officer may, after giving notice, terminate the participation of a member who fails to attend a meeting of the Citizen round table without a valid reason.

5.3 NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPERATING RULES OR CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chief Electoral Officer can terminate the participation of any member who does not uphold the Code of conduct for the Citizen round table or who does not abide by its Operating rules. Except in the case of a serious fault, the Chief Electoral Officer shall give advance notice to the member.

5.4 NON-ELIGIBILITY

The participation of a member shall end when the member no longer meets the conditions of eligibility to be on the Citizen round table (Appendix 1).

6 VACANCY

When a seat on the Table becomes vacant, the Chief Electoral Officer may call on a substitute member to fill the position. The member so named shall complete the current term, which can be renewed only once by the Chief Electoral Officer.

When a vacant seat cannot be filled by the substitute members, the Chief Electoral Officer can fill it the way he sees fit. The person named completes the current term and his or her mandate can be renewed only once by the Chief Electoral Officer.

APPENDIX 1 CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

To be a member of the Citizen round table, a person must:

- Be aged 16 or older.
- Be a Canadian citizen.
- Have been domiciled in Québec for more than six months.
- Be able to express her or himself orally in French.
- Not be under curatorship.
- Not have been convicted of an offence under the election laws.
- In the past five years, not have:
 - Been a staff member of a political party (federal, provincial or municipal).
 - Held a position or performed duties within a political party (federal, provincial or municipal) further to being appointed.

The following persons are also ineligible:

- Elected representatives anywhere in Québec.
- Employees of the Chief Electoral Officer appointed under the Public Service Act.
- Temporary employees of the Chief Electoral Officer appointed under Section 497 of the Election Act.
- Returning officers and assistant returning officers.
- Members of the Commission de la représentation électorale.
- Members of the Permanent board of revisors.
- Members of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties, including technical committees.