

Evol unveils the View on Integrating Sustainable Development in Businesses: action hampered by lack of knowledge

Montreal, November 15, 2023 – While sustainable development appears to be central to the concerns of Quebecers, a study unveiled today by Evol shows that entrepreneurs are hindered in their integration efforts by their lack of familiarity with sustainable development. The results of this study of some 2,000 business owners, conducted alongside the Réseau Mentorat's Indice entrepreneurial québécois (Quebec entrepreneurial index), are unequivocal: Quebec entrepreneurs need more support to act.

Among the obstacles, we note that many business owners report that they lack information or have the impression that the issue of sustainable development does not apply to their sphere of activity. Furthermore, eight in ten entrepreneurs are unaware of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a framework used by many organizations globally.

Women, immigrants, and youth stand out

According to the study, women, immigrants, and youth 18 to 35 know more about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. More of them also integrated sustainable development principles before starting their business, either in their initial reflections or when drafting their business plan.

Human resources a priority for entrepreneurs

Further according to the results of this study, entrepreneurs seem to pay particular attention to human resources practices, and it is on this theme that they reported a slightly higher level of integration within their business. This is not the case for working conditions or diversity and inclusion. These results exceeded those of efforts in terms of business operations and resource and waste management, including managing greenhouse gas emissions.

Half of inactive owners ready to act

While one in three entrepreneurs has not yet acted, one in two indicated wanting to do so soon.

Furthermore, looking specifically at small businesses in the Quebec entrepreneurial ecosystem shows us that they can also make a difference in transforming our economy. In fact, 50.8% of business owners with sales of under \$200,000 integrated sustainable development principles before starting their business.

Quotes

“The results of this study show that there are more and more agents of change in the Quebec entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said Géraldine Martin, CEO of Evol. “That said, it is essential that the entire entrepreneurial ecosystem continue to pursue initiatives to inform and equip entrepreneurs to foster action. Appropriate guidance is also necessary from the early stages of creating a business. This is how we can give entrepreneurs the means to respond to the social, environmental, and economic challenges we face.”

“Better understanding and guiding entrepreneurs when it comes to sustainable development are priorities for Réseau Mentorat,” said Karyne Alstream, General Manager, Réseau Mentorat. “We are proud to be partnering with the Evol team and to use data from the Indice entrepreneurial québécois to create an up-to-date, detailed understanding of these critical realities for Quebec.”

[View on Integrating Sustainable Development in Businesses including our special dossier “Small businesses, big impact.”](#)

About Evol

Operating in Quebec’s 17 regions, Evol (formerly Femmessor) is an organization financially supported by the Ministère de l’Économie, de l’Innovation et de l’Énergie (MEIE) and the Government of Canada as part of its Women’s Entrepreneurship Strategy. Its mission is to contribute directly to the creation, growth, and acquisition of diversified, inclusive businesses that have a positive impact on society.

Evol has a significant budget envelope to offer financing that, combined with a personalized coaching experience and tailored complementary services, enables entrepreneurs to build sustainable, prosperous businesses.

Through partnerships with the Government of Québec (with Investissement Québec as its agent), the Government of Canada, National Bank, BDC, the Fonds de solidarité FTQ, and Fondation, Evol offers financing and guidance to businesses with diversified, inclusive ownerships that generate positive impacts aligned with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

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