

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

\$5 MILLION FOR A NEW PRE-STARTUP FUND FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY BUSINESSES

Montreal, April 16 2010 - The Réseau d'investissement social du Québec (social investment network, or RISQ) is pleased to announce the launch of a new pre-startup fund for social economy businesses. The creation of the fund was made possible thanks to a \$5 million grant from Quebec's ministry of municipal affairs, regions and land use, the ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMROT). This \$5 million, announced during the 2009-2010 provincial budget, came following a request to the Quebec government from the Chantier d'économie sociale, which has long called for more adequate financing of social economy businesses at this crucial point in their development, namely the pre-startup.

A one of a kind, the pre-startup fund aims to support social economy businesses exclusively during the preparation and implementation of their development and innovation projects. It offers unguaranteed loans, to a maximum of \$100,000, in the form of patient capital during the pre-startup period, generally up to a maximum of two years. This new fund will allow the introduction of new projects by allowing the hiring of the human resources required for their implementation and to take advantage of development opportunities.

Soon the RISQ will be holding information meetings on this new product which will bring together all of its partners. As for the businesses interested in this pre-startup fund, they can make a request beginning on Monday, April 19, 2010. For more information and to learn how to submit a request, we invite you to consult our **new Internet site** at www.fonds-risq.qc.ca or contact us at 514-866-2355, extension 205.

With this new fund, which responds to a need that came up frequently in recent years, the RISQ is in an even better position to be one of the major and innovative players in supporting the development of social economy businesses in Quebec.

Remember that as of December 31, 2009, the RISQ had been involved in 577 financing projects of social economy businesses through technical support and capitalization for a total of nearly \$13 million. These businesses have contributed to the employment of more than 7,800 people, through permanent, part-time and replacement positions.

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Source: Stéphane Chabot Director General
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