



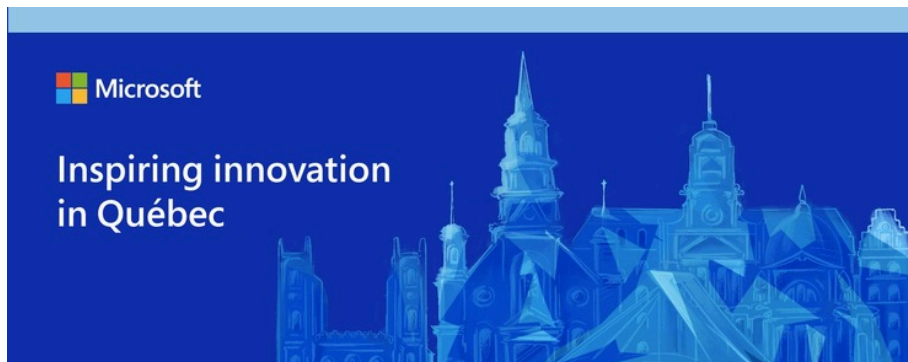
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MICROSOFT EXPANDS DIGITAL FOOTPRINT IN QUEBEC WITH USD\$500 MILLION INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SKILLING INITIATIVES

November 22, 2023



Quebec – Nov. 22, 2023 – Today, Microsoft announced it will expand its current digital infrastructure footprint in Quebec alongside new AI and cybersecurity skilling initiatives that will reinforce the province's robust innovation economy, fuel high-value job creation, and help prepare the province for the new AI economy.

Microsoft will invest USD\$500 million in expanding its hyperscale cloud computing and AI infrastructure in Quebec over the next two years. This investment will also increase the size of Microsoft's local cloud infrastructure footprint by 750 percent across Canada.

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The announcement also coincides with the [launch of a report from Ernst & Young LLP \(EY\)](https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/industry/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/11/ENG_EY_Microsoft-Quebec_Report_Final.pdf) (https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/industry/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/11/ENG_EY_Microsoft-Quebec_Report_Final.pdf) which found that Microsoft and its ecosystem in Quebec, which includes more than 3,200 partners and substantial cloud infrastructure accounts, supports over 57,000 jobs, and contributes more than \$6.4 billion annually to Quebec's GDP.

"Quebec is at the forefront of global innovation on artificial intelligence, with one of the highest concentrations of deep learning researchers in the world. Our Government is committed to working with the partners, like Microsoft, to ensure that all actors in the Canadian AI ecosystem have access to the resources and computing infrastructure they need to advance the commercialization of AI systems here at home, and to advance AI that provides social and economic benefits to all Canadians," said The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry.

"Today's announcement builds on the extensive investments Microsoft has made in Quebec and is just the latest example of our deep commitment to this province," said Chris Barry, President of Microsoft Canada. "These investments will not only provide Quebec's private and public sector organizations with more capacity and added resiliency to transform operations but will also enable a trusted and secure foundation to scale solutions faster to market and compete globally, securing Quebec's future in the digital economy."

Expanding Quebec's Digital Capacity to Seize the AI Opportunity

Microsoft's USD\$500 million digital infrastructure investment in Quebec will expand its computing capacity by approximately 240 percent over the next three years. It will also accelerate the pace of AI innovation and enable Quebec organizations to further build on the significant capacity already in place across the province – including an existing datacentre region, launched in 2016. Microsoft was the first company to launch enterprise-grade, hyper-scale cloud services in Quebec.

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"This is excellent news for our economy, both in terms of its impact and to attract new investment to our region. The fact that an innovative global company like Microsoft has chosen Quebec for a project of this magnitude demonstrates the quality of foreign investments we are able to attract. It also secures our position in future-forward fields such as cybersecurity and artificial intelligence." – Carl Viel, President and CEO of Québec International.

Microsoft will ensure that the future datacentre locations, which are intended to start construction in the coming months in L'Ancienne-Lorette, Donnacona, Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, and Lévis, will help meet the company's sustainability goals to be carbon negative, water positive and zero waste by 2030. This includes using low-carbon materials during construction, and using renewable energy, advanced cooling features and measures to decrease diesel fuel use during operation.

Build Capability for the Era of AI

New economic opportunities fueled by digital transformation and advancements in AI cannot be realized without a robust skilled workforce in place. As part of today's announcement, Microsoft is also working with industry leaders in Quebec on a series of initiatives to help people gain the skills and capabilities they need to succeed in the digital economy by providing access to learning resources, certifications, and job-seeking tools.

In the face of accelerated AI innovation and growing cybercrime, these programs are designed to help futureproof Quebec's thriving digital economy and create new opportunities for citizens and businesses across the province.

KPMG and Microsoft Launch the Operational Risk Skills Development Centre

KPMG International's latest [CEO Outlook](https://kpmg.com/ca/en/home/insights/2023/10/kpmg-ceo-outlook-canadian-insights.html) (<https://kpmg.com/ca/en/home/insights/2023/10/kpmg-ceo-outlook-canadian-insights.html>) revealed that an astonishing 93 per cent of Canadian CEOs are concerned that the emergence of GenAI will make them even more vulnerable to cybersecurity breaches. Yet only 56 per cent of them believe they are ready to face a cyberattack.

To address this challenge, KPMG Canada and Microsoft Canada recently launched [the Operational Risk Skills Development Centre](https://news.microsoft.com/en-ca/2023/11/21/kpmg-in-canada-and-microsoft-canada-launch-operational-risk-skills-development-centre-to-support-quebecs-innovation-economy/#:~:text=%2Fen%2Dca%2F,KPMG%20in%20Canada%2) (<https://news.microsoft.com/en-ca/2023/11/21/kpmg-in-canada-and-microsoft-canada-launch-operational-risk-skills-development-centre-to-support-quebecs-innovation-economy/#:~:text=%2Fen%2Dca%2F,KPMG%20in%20Canada%2>) which will offer free and hands-on French-first training to help businesses and governments build cybersecurity protections, navigate the opportunities and challenges of GenAI, and implement it responsibly. Representing an investment of \$1.7M over three years, the Centre aims to train more than 11,000 learners in its first phase.

"The creation of the Operational Risk Skills Development Centre marks a significant step in the global alliance between KPMG International and Microsoft," said Benoit Lacoste Bienvenue, Regional Managing Partner Québec region, KPMG. "Through this collaboration, we aim to strengthen cybersecurity and make generative AI a transformative opportunity, instead of a threat."

[Microsoft Deepens Collaboration with NPower Canada](#)

NPower Canada, in collaboration with Microsoft Canada, is [expanding its Canadian Tech Talent Accelerator in Quebec \(https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/npower-canada-joins-forces-with-microsoft-to-empower-quebec-job-seekers-with-in-demand-digital-ai-and-cybersecurity-skills-855496278.html\)](https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/npower-canada-joins-forces-with-microsoft-to-empower-quebec-job-seekers-with-in-demand-digital-ai-and-cybersecurity-skills-855496278.html) to provide new digital training and career development opportunities, which will help Quebec's diverse job-seekers compete. With significant investment from DIGITAL, Microsoft and the CIBC Foundation, the [Canadian Tech Talent Accelerator \(https://news.microsoft.com/en-ca/2022/10/20/microsoft-canada-and-cibc-foundation-form-social-impact-alliance-to-empower-inclusive-economic-opportunities-across-canada/\)](https://news.microsoft.com/en-ca/2022/10/20/microsoft-canada-and-cibc-foundation-form-social-impact-alliance-to-empower-inclusive-economic-opportunities-across-canada/) expanded in the fall of 2022, allowing NPower Canada to establish its first bilingual site for in-person training in Quebec.

As part of the Canadian Tech Talent Accelerator, NPower Canada will now leverage Microsoft curricula to launch its intermediate Junior Data Analyst program in the province, including Microsoft Azure AI Fundamentals certification, preparing job-seekers with essential skills for digitally-enabled careers. Applications are now open for the inaugural cohort starting in May 2024.

"Microsoft has played a pivotal role in our mission to provide in-demand digital skills and professional development to Quebec's job-seekers. We are excited to continue our alliance with Microsoft to offer even more opportunities in the province and continue to equip Canadians with the skills they need to thrive in digitally-enabled roles," said Julia Blackburn, CEO, NPower Canada.

Quotes:

"I am pleased with the investments announced by Microsoft Canada, which help make the region a major economic hub. When a global company chooses Quebec, all citizens benefit because of access to quality, well-paying jobs in cutting-edge fields. This will stimulate the local economy and bring Quebec City region to the global stage, while improving the quality of life of its residents. Congratulations to all the stakeholders who made this possible." – Jonatan Julien, Minister responsible for Infrastructure and Minister responsible for the Capitale-Nationale Region

"By choosing to locate in the Québec-Lévis economic zone, Microsoft is sending a strong message that our region has become an important hub for the development of artificial intelligence in Quebec. I applaud these investments that will stimulate regional economic development by enabling our organizations to remain competitive, improve their technical skills and accelerate their digital transition." – Bernard Drainville, Deputy for Lévis, Minister of Education and Minister responsible for the Chaudière-Appalaches region.

"Since the beginning, the City of L'Ancienne-Lorette has worked closely with Microsoft. We are pleased that the project is moving forward, which will generate significant economic benefits for the City of L'Ancienne-Lorette and the entire National Capital region." – Gaétan Pageau, Mayor of L'Ancienne-Lorette

"The City of Donnacona is proud to welcome Microsoft to its territory and contribute to the expansion of the global giant's cloud infrastructure in Quebec City. We will benefit from having such a large player in our industrial park, which will have a positive impact on our municipality." – Jean-Claude Léveillé, Mayor of Donnacona

"Microsoft's commitment to establishing itself in Quebec and especially in Lévis in such a large-scale project not only confirms the strength of our economic attractiveness, but also our leading position for foreign investment. This demonstrates Lévis' ability to attract major players in the technology sector, strengthening our reputation as a technological innovation hub." – Gilles Lehouillier, Mayor of Lévis.

ABOUT MICROSOFT CANADA

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