On behalf of the Québec Government, Foncier Québec maintains and develops the land registration infrastructure, helping to protect the land rights of citizens and the State and support Québec’s socioeconomic development. It plays an essential role in Québec society by creating a secure, investment-friendly environment for property transactions by individuals and businesses. All societies need a reliable, effective land registration infrastructure in order to function properly, since respect for rights of ownership provides a foundation for economic development within a sustainable development framework.

A land registration infrastructure is also needed to help the Government and municipalities perform their duties relating to land management, the enforcement of land planning legislation, and municipal taxation.

As the manager of the land registration system, Foncier Québec is responsible for keeping and updating the registers that record divisions of private and public land, and for making public rights in land.
A large-scale mission
Foncier Québec has a large-scale mission, given the vast size and specific features of Québec's land base. Québec covers an area of almost 1.7 million square kilometres, of which 92% is under public ownership. The remaining 8% is privately owned and mainly located in southern Québec, where a majority of the population of 7.7 million people lives.

Different legal rules apply to the private and public portions of the territory; privately-owned land is governed by civil law, which regulates relations between individuals and their property, while publicly-owned land is governed by administrative law, which regulates relations between the Government and citizens.

Publicly-owned land:
the State, as the landowner, protects its own rights
As the owner of all public land, the State has various rights and responsibilities. No work can be done on public land without State consent. As the landowner, the State must also manage, develop and protect public land on behalf of Québec society. It must, for example, determine its boundaries and divisions. Public land surveys underlie all deeds of ownership issued by the Government, since before it is sold, all public land must first be surveyed.

Survey work on public land is carried out under the authority of the Minister of Natural Resources and Wildlife, who is also Surveyor General of Québec. On behalf of the Minister, the Office of the Surveyor General of Québec, under the direction of Foncier Québec, is responsible for marking the borders under its jurisdiction and establishing boundaries between public and private land. The Office also establishes the official boundaries of municipalities and areas with special status.

In addition, the Surveyor General of Québec keeps the Register of the domain of the State, in which information on all public land is recorded, preserved and made public. To harmonize and develop public land use, integrated information on current uses of public land and resources must be made available.

In short, Foncier Québec acts on behalf of the State, as the landowner of public land, and protects its rights.

Privately-owned land:
the State helps protect the rights of citizens
In Québec, the State helps protect the land rights of citizens by exercising various responsibilities, entrusted to Foncier Québec. It witnesses subdivisions of private land, and keeps land registration information. It provides a public infrastructure to make public and protect landowners' rights in land. The Government authorities set up a land registration system covering the whole of Québec in 1841 in the form of a land register. Then, in 1860, the State introduced legislation to allow cadastral plans to be used as a graphic representation of land ownership and to facilitate registration by making public rights in land.