



COLLECTIF
RÉCOLTE

December 2025



tomat

A review of lessons learned and impact measurement since the project's inception

2022-2025

produced as part of the

Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal (SALIM)

thanks to Montreal in common

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Report reference: Collectif Récolte (2025). TOMAT - A review of lessons learned and impact measurement since the project's inception. 2022-2025. *SALIM Program - Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal.*

<https://ressources.recolte.ca/en/ressource/tomat-a-review-of-lessons-learned-and-impact-measurement-since-the-projects-inception/>

This report is part of the [Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal](#) (SALIM) program, a multi-partner program led by Collectif Récolte, with funding from Montreal in common.

[Montreal in common](#) is an innovation community led by the [City of Montréal](#) made possible with the financial support of the [Government of Canada](#) as part of [the Smart Cities Challenge](#).

Montréal 

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Introduction

This document presents the final report of the Tomat project, **a web platform for managing digital food coupon programs**, developed as part of the [Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal](#) (SALIM) program. It reviews the project's development, the results, and the main lessons learned, as well as the elements used to measure impact since the project's inception. Although this phase will conclude with the end of SALIM (December 2025), Tomat will continue to develop. This report aims to document the contributions made possible by SALIM's support, while putting the next steps for the platform into perspective, and marks the final assessment of the project within the program, which is coming to an end after several years of experimentation, collaboration and learning.

What is SALIM?

The [Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal](#) (SALIM) is a program led by Collectif Récolte as part of [Montreal in common](#), an initiative supported by [Canada's Smart Cities Challenge](#). This challenge, launched by the Government of Canada, aimed to encourage cities to improve the lives of their residents through innovation, data and connected technology. With the \$50 million prize won by the City of Montreal, the Laboratoire de l'innovation urbaine de Montréal (LIUM) has established Montreal en Commun: an urban innovation ecosystem composed of several structuring projects, supported by numerous partners.

Launched in 2020, SALIM's objective was to strengthen Montreal's food system while facilitating access to healthy, local food for people experiencing food insecurity. SALIM had a clear **vision**: a city where healthy, locally sourced food is accessible to all, especially those experiencing food insecurity. To achieve this vision, SALIM set itself the **mission** of strengthening the supply network of community food organizations in Montreal, while improving market access for local producers through a network of shared physical and digital infrastructure.

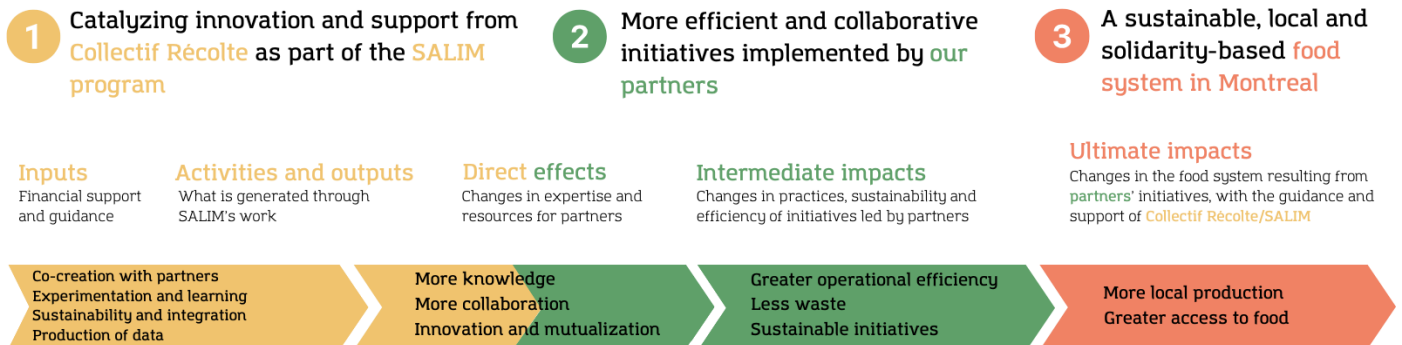
A collaborative approach rooted in social innovation

Throughout SALIM, Collectif Récolte has mobilized and collaborated with a diverse group of Montreal change agents with complementary expertise. Together, they have carried out collective ideation processes to develop solutions adapted to the realities of Montreal's local and solidarity-based food supply network. These collaborative efforts led to the implementation of several pilot projects, led or co-led by the partners involved. These projects made it possible to test innovative, collective, structuring and sustainable solutions, while promoting shared learning among those involved.

Catalyzing innovation and supporting change

The strategic support provided by Collectif Récolte, combined with financial contributions through the SALIM program, has strengthened the capacity of change partners to design and implement more innovative, collaborative and resilient initiatives. Together, we have helped to transform Montreal's food system into a more sustainable, local and solidarity-based model.

Logic chain of outcomes of the SALIM program



Collectif Récolte is a social enterprise that leverages collective intelligence and community mobilisation to catalyze solutions that will lead to local and sustainable food practices.

We are working towards a just food ecosystem that supports thriving local economies, healthy communities and resilient natural environments.

We support change agents in various initiatives and approaches across Quebec.

Discover our [range of services!](#)

The Tomat project

Tomat's mission is to support the development, expansion and collaboration of food voucher programs through a shared, accessible and high-performance digital tool.

Its vision is one of **fair and inclusive access to food**, where the purchasing power of households experiencing food insecurity is increased through the availability of digital food vouchers.

Tomat is based on three fundamental values:

- **Fairness**, by offering an affordable service, particularly for non-profit organizations, and by supporting programs that promote equitable economic access to food;
- **Inclusivity**, through plural governance, support for equitable programs and the use of open-source code for the common good;
- **Sustainability**, by developing a sustainable digital solution, by supporting sustainable agriculture and short supply food chains, and by ensuring responsible data governance.

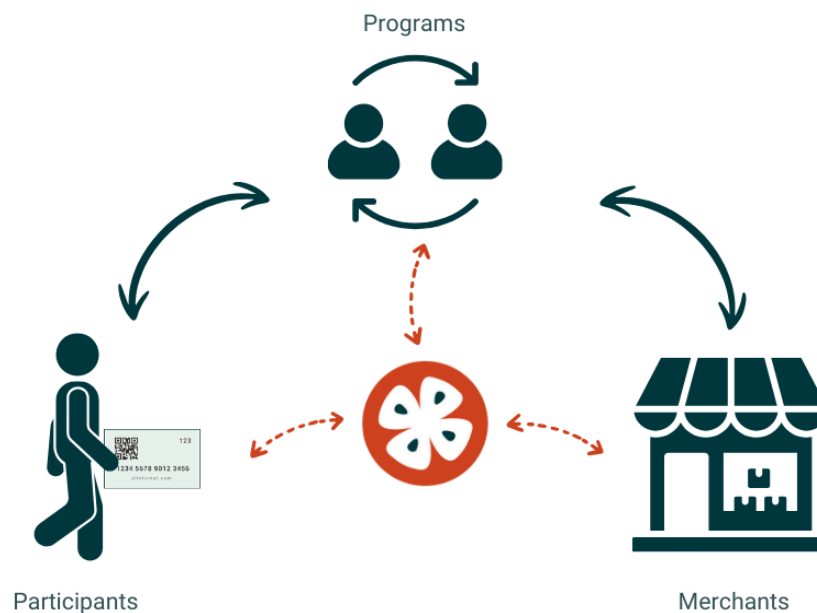
The [Tomat](#) project was initiated to address the challenges faced by several food voucher programs. These programs distribute coupons with a monetary value to people experiencing food insecurity to help them purchase food at participating merchants. When SALIM contacted them, program managers were relying on paper vouchers and/or cumbersome, costly and limiting third-party tools and technologies. For example, there was no technological solution that allowed for the management of recurring payments on cards. The use of paper vouchers required several hours of work (counting, printing and management) and offered no means of tracking the use of funds.

Collectif Récolte therefore set itself the task of designing a transactional web platform dedicated to managing food voucher programs, in response to the varied needs of these initiatives across Canada. The project is based on the assumption that an affordable digital tool, designed specifically to meet the constraints and needs of these programs, would improve their efficiency, reduce costs, facilitate impact measurement and reporting, and reach a greater number of people experiencing food insecurity. Launched in the summer of 2023, the platform is now used by several Canadian partners across the country.

Partner programs using Tomat:

- [Carte Proximité](#) Québec (Montreal, Laval, Outaouais, Estrie)
- [Islands Wellness Society](#) (IWS), British Columbia
- [Roots Community Food Centre](#) (Roots CFC), Ontario
- [Mobile Food Market](#) (MFM), Nova Scotia
- [Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program](#) (FMNCP), British Columbia

Added value of Tomat

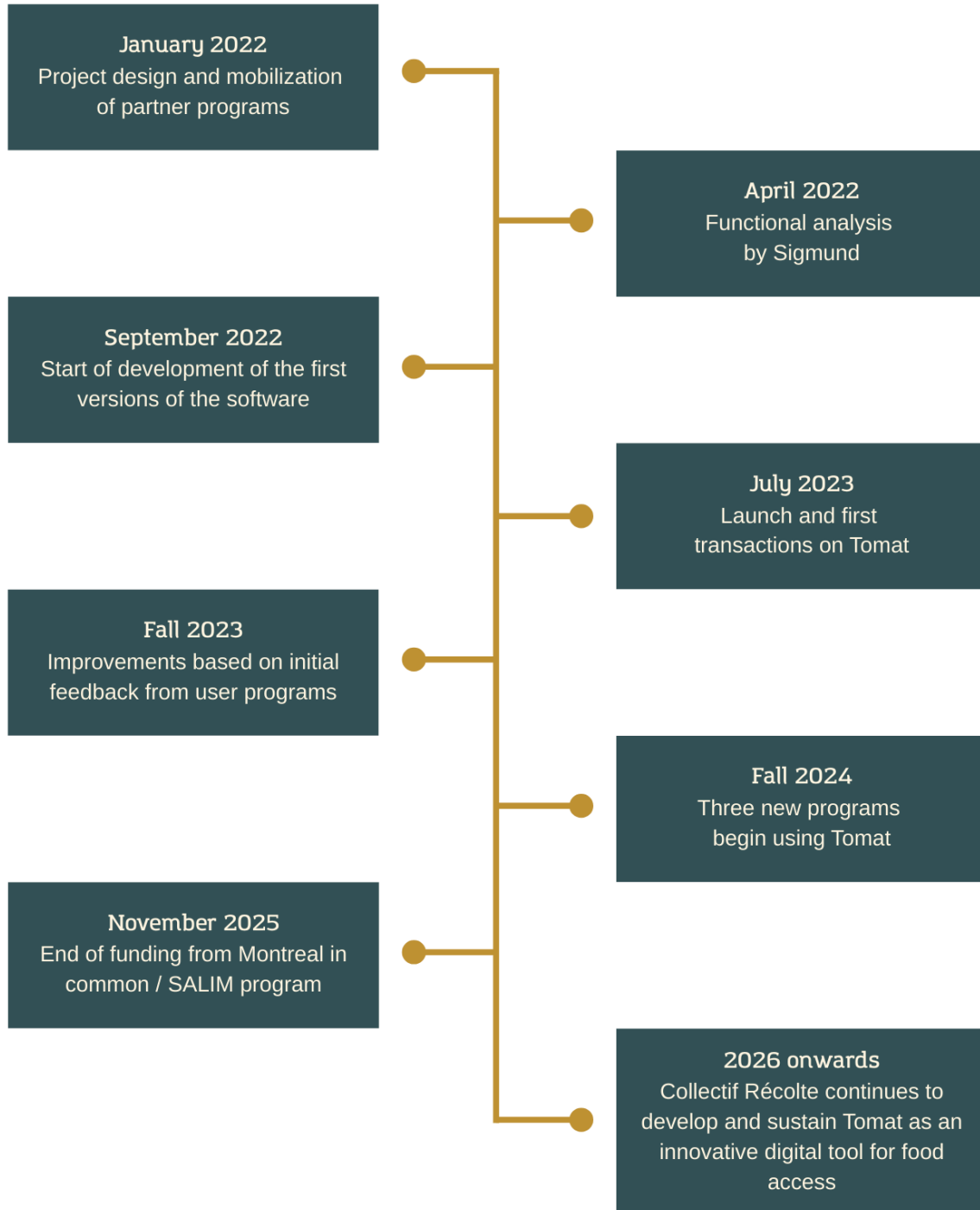


- Tomat enables food voucher programs to replace paper vouchers with rechargeable cards, offering participants a more reliable, simple and discreet way to shop at participating merchants.
- The platform makes managers' jobs easier by allowing them to manage participant data, assign cards to each participant, and set up recurring payments according to customizable rules, in addition to providing access to detailed reports.

- It also enables better collaboration between program managers and organizations distributing cards by creating budget envelopes managed directly by the organizations, thanks to the different possible roles on the platform.
- The development of specific features for each program has often been funded by grants obtained directly by the user programs, which are then made available to all. The usage fees charged to programs are reasonable given the non-profit nature of the project and take into account each party's contribution to the development.
- Tomat does not add any transaction fees for merchants, as it does not transfer any actual money: it only records transactions and generates monthly reports; payments are then made by managers directly to merchants.
- Tomat supports local businesses and producers, with most programs collaborating with public, farmers' and solidarity markets, in some cases selected according to agroecological production criteria.
- Tomat is also an accessible and easy-to-implement solution for merchants, requiring only a device (phone, tablet, computer, etc.) equipped with a camera and Internet access, and offering a smooth and easy-to-use interface.

For more information: <https://info.allotomat.com/about/>

Timeline



Identification of needs and initial collaborations – 2019 to September 2022

The need for a platform dedicated to managing food voucher programs became apparent during discussions with the project's first partner programs. *Carrefour solidaire centre communautaire d'alimentation*, which manages the *Carte Proximité*, played a central role in this process. For several years, this food voucher program had been using third-party tools and technologies that proved to be costly, complex and ill-suited to its specific needs. It was in close collaboration with its managers that the idea of a tailor-made, more fluid, reliable and economical solution was born.

Subsequently, other actors involved in food security, such as Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC), The Depot Community Food Centre and the BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program (FMNCP), quickly joined the project. Their participation in the development of the Tomat platform reinforced the common interest in a flexible and accessible solution capable of meeting the diverse needs of food coupon programs nationwide.

Development of the first versions – September 2022 to May 2023

Between September 2022 and May 2023, the first versions of the digital platform were developed by the Quebec-based company [Sigmund](#). The collaborative structure established at that time continues today: the Collectif Récolte project team meets with partners to better understand the needs of their programs and define the features to be developed, and the Sigmund team translates these needs into concepts, mock-ups and then code.

The project has adapted to keep pace with the changing needs of the programs, while encouraging the continued involvement of partners and the addition of new programs. The budget was bolstered by an initial financial contribution of \$5,000 from the *Caisse Desjardins des Versants du Mont-Royal*, obtained by The Depot Community Food Centre to cover the costs of developing features specific to their needs. At the same time, significant efforts were devoted to data protection and governance.

Pre-launch – May to July 2023

In the spring of 2023, as we approached a launch-ready version, training began with Tomat users, particularly with the *Carte Proximité* team and partners, the only program ready to use the platform as of July. Support was also provided for card printing. Despite tight deadlines,

everything was in place to enable the first transactions on the platform on July 1st, 2023, a milestone for all stakeholders.

Launch and refinement – July to September 2023

The first few months of using Tomat went very well, with few problems reported and no major incidents. A temporary Tomat user support position was set up during market season, leading to the creation of a platform [User Guide](#) and support tools. Communication remained active with the *Carte Proximité* team in order to convey the necessary adjustments to Sigmund. Feedback was largely positive.

Post-deployment phase – September 2023 to June 2024

Between September 2023 and June 2024, development of the platform continued with several updates. New partners, such as Roots CFC in Ontario, contributed to the development of targeted features, and pilot projects using the platform were launched in British Columbia with the FMNCP. Despite the ongoing challenges of the financial context, the various partner programs demonstrated a strong commitment, successfully securing funds to contribute to the development of the project and its features. At the same time, significant efforts were made to formalize the project's governance, notably by developing a vision and creating an **advisory committee** to guide strategy and strengthen collaboration between programs.

Expansion phase – July 2024 to June 2025

Tomat has grown from a local tool to a platform used across Canada, supporting five food voucher programs in four provinces. To meet the diverse needs of new users, several features have been developed through close collaboration with partners, who have also contributed financially to the project. Governance has been significantly strengthened with the establishment of a multi-stakeholder advisory committee, and the first foundations of a sustainable business model have been laid, notably through the introduction of user fees and the search for grants. However, certain challenges were encountered, such as technological limitations and a decline in the level of commitment among some partners. Despite this, feedback continued to be very positive, and concrete results in the field confirmed the usefulness and value of the platform.

The results of the Tomat project – 2022-2025

Data sources and collection methods

The data comes from three main sources: partners, Collectif Récolte's internal collection tools, and extracts from the Tomat platform. Partner data was collected in 2023 and 2024 using forms and individual interviews. In 2025, a review workshop was organized to supplement the information received through the survey.

More specifically, in 2023-2024, only Carrefour solidaire participated in this collection. In 2024-2025, participation expanded to five partners: **Carrefour solidaire, Roots CFC, The Depot, Mobile Food Market, and Islands Wellness Society.**

Tomat's results chain was evaluated for the two main aspects of the project: Firstly, the results related to the **co-creation of the digital tool**, and secondly, the results of the work carried out to establish sound **governance and ensure the sustainability** of the project.

Inputs, activities and outputs of the project



Inputs

What SALIM has invested in the Tomat project since its inception

The Collectif Récolte team, through SALIM, has devoted more than 1,400 hours to the Tomat project during the four years since its inception and structuring. A total of 17 employees and consultants contributed to the project during this period.

In addition to the team's working hours, SALIM has invested approximately \$471,000 in the project over the years, including more than \$450,000 for the improvement and development of the platform by Sigmund, and the remainder in external consultants (legal and other).

It should be noted that approximately 84% of the expenditure was invested in Canadian companies. We were unable to avoid using certain major foreign providers for hosting platforms, documentation and email management.



Activities and outputs

Activities carried out under SALIM from 2022 to 2025

The Collectif Récolte team played several roles:

Partner training

The deployment of the platform required in-depth training for change partners on its use. Collectif Récolte led training sessions for program managers, their card distribution partners and participating merchants to ensure optimal use of the platform.

Platform improvement and development

Since its launch in July 2023, the platform has continued to be improved by the developer (Sigmund). Using the platform in the field has helped identify areas for improvement. User partners were consulted to incorporate their feedback throughout the project.

Support for platform deployment

Collectif Récolte participated in the deployment of the platform, led by participating program managers, by facilitating the printing of cards and providing technical support and training to ensure smooth operation at participating solidarity merchants.

Governance and management of sensitive data

In the fall of 2023, Nord Ouvert supported the project in its data governance, focusing in particular on best practices related to the storage and deletion of personal information and the assessment of risks related to this issue.

Establishment of an advisory committee

The project team created an operating charter for the project's advisory committee, which currently consists of partners who use the platform and the developer, Sigmund.



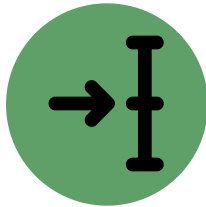
Project impacts



Direct effects of SALIM
Changes in expertise and resources for partners



Digital tool co-creation component	Governance component
<p>Partners have access to a simple and effective digital management and payment system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner users understand how Tomat works and are able to ensure its smooth operation. They reported using Tomat frequently (3.5/4) and having a good understanding of the system (4/5). - Throughout the project, partners were very satisfied with the support provided by Collectif Récolte (5/5). These results were confirmed during our workshops, where partners stated: <i>"[The project manager] was available and responsive throughout our collaboration. Whenever we had a question or a problem arose with Tomat, he responded with a solution within minutes."</i> <p>More programs are using Tomat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tomat started with a single user program, and today five programs across Canada use this platform, including <i>Carte Proximité</i>, which deploys programs throughout Quebec. - The total number of active user merchants has grown from 48 in 2023-2024 to more than 150 in 2025. There are now 201 today. 	<p>Member participation in the advisory committee:</p> <p>Partner members meet or are consulted approximately four times a year. Current members include key partners in the development of Tomat.</p> <p>Best practices in data governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support from Nord Ouvert in 2023 helped establish effective and secure management of the data collected. In 2024 and 2025, our partners reported high confidence (5/5) in the security of data collected by Collectif Récolte. <p>Better understanding of data governance issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Collectif Récolte team has become more efficient with regard to the storage and deletion of personal information, as well as risk assessment. Creation of tools and processes shared with the Montreal in common community.



Intermediate impacts
Changes in practices, sustainability and efficiency of initiatives led by partners



Digital tool co-creation component	Governance component
<p>Effectiveness of mutualizing resources: Program managers are more autonomous and efficient in their operations thanks to the features offered by Tomat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of Tomat was relatively inexpensive, costing approximately \$24 per person experiencing food insecurity who used a card during this period. 	
<p>Increased supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 8,100 cards were used by participating households through partner programs. - Voucher programs managed 13,725 transactions through the Tomat platform in 2023-2024, and 23,831 transactions in 2024-2025, representing an increase of 73.6%. <p>Use of the platform by partner programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner users reported that using Tomat requires little additional work or effort, and that using Tomat facilitates their operations. 	<p>A participatory and autonomous committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The advisory committee model allows each member to contribute to decisions regarding the adaptation of the service and to help guide the sustainability of the project. <p>Member participation and voting rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee members participate in decision-making and have voting rights on recommendations to be submitted to Collectif Récolte. <p>Confidence in partner governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The partners unanimously expressed great confidence in the governance of the project, as well as in the efficiency and security of data management.





Ultimate impacts

Changes to the food system resulting from the partners' initiatives, with the guidance and support of Collectif Récolte/SALIM



More local production



Greater access to food

In the long term, with the support of SALIM, Tomat wishes to contribute to making food more accessible to all Montrealers. This change is already visible through the following results:

Greater access to local fruit and vegetables for people experiencing food insecurity

- **Approximately 19,500 people** experiencing food insecurity served.
- **Financial access: Approximately \$2,212,000 worth of food** has been distributed through the Tomat platform over the years.
- **Physical access**: In Montreal, merchants participating in the Carte proximité program cover a large area. During the 2024 season, participants had increased access to a participating merchant **within a 15-minute walk of their home on 13.6% of the territory of Laval and Montreal**, representing more than 107 km².

Support for local food systems and local supply chains

- Participating merchants (mostly solidarity markets, local producers, or small neighbourhood grocery stores) have seen **a slight increase in sales**.
- Our partners have stated that autonomy and convenience for participants can **increase consumer consumption of local products**.

Permanent shared governance

- The advisory committee will continue to meet after the end of SALIM to guide the strategy and sustainability of the project.
- New stakeholders may join the committee in the coming years.



Project learning review (2022-2025)

Cross-referenced sources: review workshops (*Carte Proximité* team and other user programs) and feedback from the Collectif Récolte project team.

Transversal facilitating factors

- **Strategic leadership and strong initial anchoring:** The project team's experience and links with Carrefour solidaire and *Carte Proximité* enabled a rapid, relevant and well-grounded start.
- **Initial alignment with SALIM guidelines:** The project fit naturally into the smart city approach and benefited from strong support from the outset.
- **Flexible and competent team:** Presence of hybrid profiles (IT and community), high adaptability and constant support from partners.
- **Intuitive and scalable platform:** Tomat has remained easy to use, while quickly integrating new features in response to expressed needs.
- **Collaboration with partners:** A climate of trust, fluid communication, an advisory committee and co-construction supported the relevance of the tool and enabled its adoption.
- **Common vision and shared culture:** Partners worked in a community-based approach focused on food security, strengthening the cohesion of the project.
- **Efforts to reduce costs:** The technical architecture was designed from the outset to limit recurring costs and ensure low-cost sustainability.

Challenges and obstacles encountered

- **Distinctive aspect of the project:** The development of a technological tool was a project unlike any other undertaken by Collectif Récolte, requiring special attention.
- **Heterogeneity of partners and users:** Variable integration rates and distinct and sometimes unforeseen needs complicated implementation.
- **Technological resistance:** Some partners in the user programs expressed reluctance towards new technologies, which led to a focus on interfaces that maximized ease of use.
- **Governance and funding:** Developing a financial model suitable for a non-profit project proved complex, revealing a mismatch between Tomat's funding needs as a platform/service and existing grant programs. User programs have easier access to funding by integrating it into their programs.

- **Cohesion within the ecosystem:** Several parallel initiatives are being developed within the ecosystem, indicating a need for collaboration and pooling of resources.

Summary of feedback

The Tomat project was perceived as **useful, innovative and promising** by both the project team and user partners. The tool is considered **intuitive, well supported both humanly and technically**, and **well integrated with the needs** of the food security support ecosystem. However, uncertainty about its future, dependence on key human resources and the complexity of sustaining a non-profit IT project raised concerns. **Human connection and a culture of collaboration were key drivers of success, much more so than the technology itself.**

Key learnings

- **Hybrid profiles make all the difference:** A joint understanding of community and technological realities allows for better translation of needs into concrete solutions.
- **Technical simplicity and human support are key to adoption:** A technically well-designed tool is only useful if it is supported by a relationship of trust and a proactive presence.
- **Co-construction from the outset is a powerful lever:** It promotes adaptability, ownership and territorial anchoring.
- **Operational leadership is essential:** Clear governance and a business model that allows for paid and legitimate coordination are necessary to ensure the continuity and development of the platform.
- **A community project has strong transformative potential:** Tomat acts as a strategic lever to demonstrate impact and support a national vision for food voucher programs.

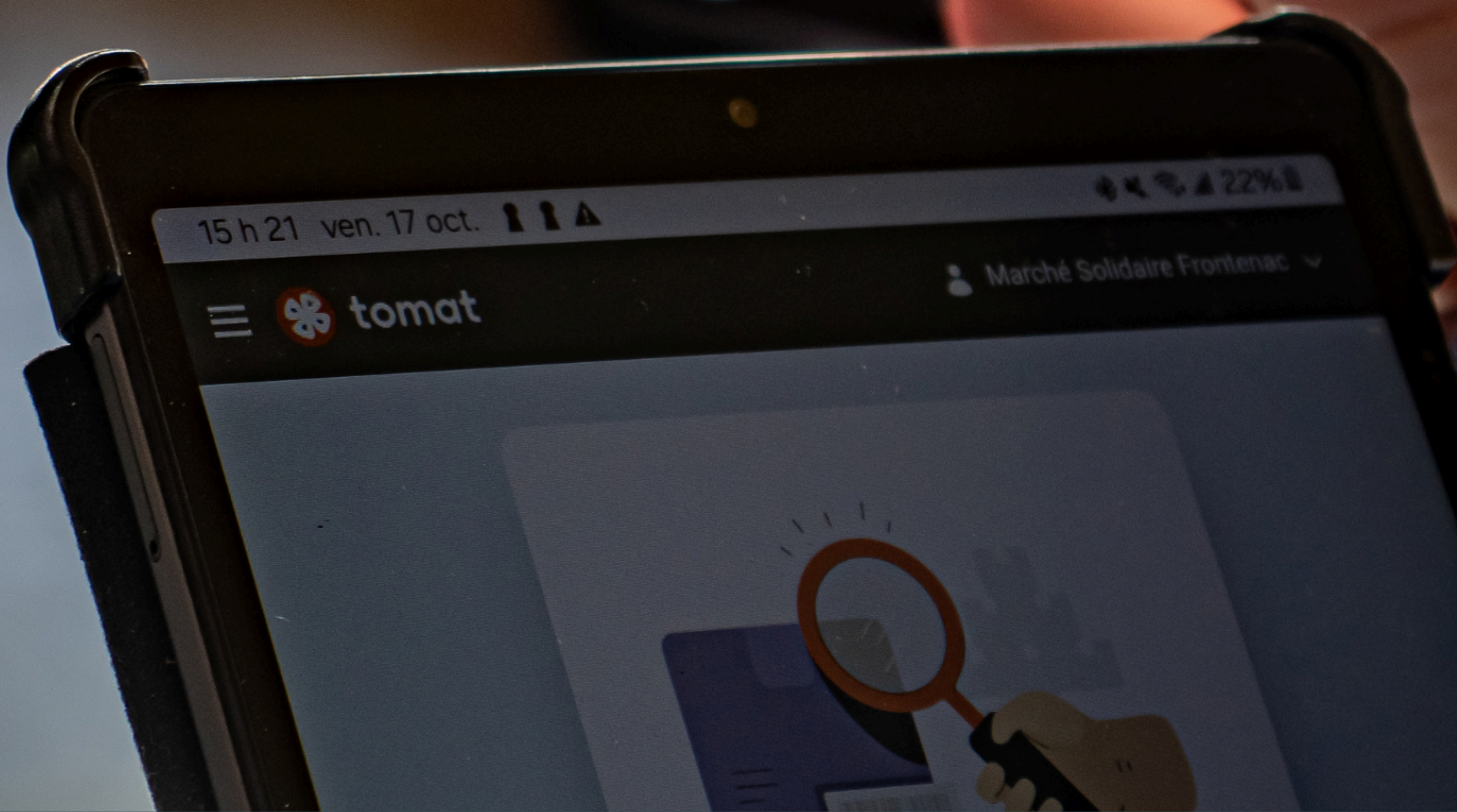
Key recommendations for sustainability

1. Ensure clear and remunerated leadership to steer the platform in the long term.
2. Define a business model and funding strategy from the early stages.
3. Allow for budgetary margins for unforeseen events related to technological projects.
4. Integrate hybrid profiles (IT and non-profit) from the outset to facilitate the translation of needs into concrete solutions.
5. Train several people per organization to ensure team resilience.
6. Strengthen initial training and produce a user guide to facilitate getting started.
7. Involve partners from the design stage to promote autonomy and buy-in.
8. Establish different roles on the platform with varying levels of access to combine security and flexibility.
9. Provide solutions adapted to remote or poorly connected partners.
10. Support dissemination by relying on current users as ambassadors.
11. Incorporate an analysis of relational dynamics to anticipate tensions between partners.
12. Maintain technical simplicity to ensure low-cost sustainability.
13. Develop features according to the emerging needs of user programs.
14. Strengthen ongoing communication with users to adjust the platform in real time.

Conclusion

The Tomat project can be considered a great success: It has established itself as a powerful, flexible platform that is appreciated by several food voucher programs across Canada. As a central tool for the *Carte Proximité* card, it has enabled the distribution of more than 2.2 million food items to households experiencing food insecurity, while supporting local economies. Developed efficiently thanks to the resources of Montreal in common and the commitment of a network of users, Tomat is now well positioned for the future. The next steps aim to consolidate a sustainable financial model, in particular by integrating user programs targeting other clientele capable of paying a solidarity price to support the entire project.

In the coming years, the Tomat platform will continue to evolve to accommodate a growing number of user programs and strengthen its impact on local food systems. To learn more about Tomat and follow the project's progress, visit info.allotomat.com or write to support@allotomat.com, and [subscribe](#) to the Collectif Récolte [newsletter](#).



**TOMAT | A review of lessons learned and impact measurement
since the project's inception**

2022-2025 - SALIM Program : Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal

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This document was produced thanks to the financial support of:

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