



COLLECTIF  
RÉCOLTE

February 2026

# Final report

## Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal (SALIM)

Project history, outcomes, and lessons learned

Produced as part of  
**Montreal in common**

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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](#).

## List of abbreviations

59-SP	59 Saint-Pierre
ANGP	All Nations Gathering Place
ASL	<i>Alimenter Saint-Léonard</i> – Feeding Saint-Léonard (formerly <i>Concertation en sécurité alimentaire de Saint-Léonard</i> – Saint-Léonard Food Security Coalition)
AU/LAB	<i>Laboratoire d'agriculture urbaine</i> – Urban Agriculture Laboratory
Conseil SAM	<i>Conseil du système alimentaire montréalais</i> – Montreal Food System Council
Coop CAUS	<i>Coopérative de solidarité Abondance Urbaine Solidaire</i> – Abondance Urbaine Solidaire Solidarity Cooperative
CPE	<i>Centre de la petite enfance</i> – Childcare centre
CQCM	<i>Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité</i> – Quebec Council for Cooperation and Mutual Aid
CSASL	<i>Concertation en sécurité alimentaire de Saint-Léonard</i> – Saint-Léonard Food Security Coalition (now <i>Alimenter Saint-Léonard</i> – Feeding Saint-Léonard)
CSMO-ÉSAC	<i>Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre de l'économie sociale et de l'action communautaire</i> – Sectoral Committee on Labour for the Social Economy and Community Action
EDI	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion
ÉSH	Épicentre Saint-Henri
FTE	Full-time equivalent
Forum SAT	<i>Forum des Systèmes alimentaires territoriaux</i> – Forum on Local Food Systems
FP	Project fund
GEMO-CRP	<i>Groupe d'entraide de Mercier-Ouest et le Chic Resto Pop</i> – Mercier-Ouest Mutual Aid Group and Chic Resto Pop
GHG	Greenhouse gases
IRIPII	<i>Institut de recherche sur l'immigration et les pratiques interculturelles et inclusives</i> – Institute for Research on Immigration and Intercultural and Inclusive Practices
LIUM	Montreal Urban Innovation Lab
LS	Solidarity Lever
MAMS	<i>Mutuelle d'approvisionnement des marchés solidaires</i> – Mutual Supply Cooperative for Solidarity Markets
MeC	<i>Montréal en commun</i> – Montreal in common
MSSAQ	<i>Mouvement pour la souveraineté alimentaire des Afro-Québécois.es</i> – Afro-Quebecers Food Sovereignty Movement
PRS	<i>Pôle régional solidaire</i> – Regional Solidarity Hub
RDVAALS	<i>Rendez-vous de l'approvisionnement local et solidaire</i> – Conversations on Montreal's Local and Solidarity Food Supply
SALADE	Local, Accessible, Sustainable, and Economical Food System

SALC	Local Community Procurement Specialist
SALIM	Local and integrated food system in Montreal
IT	Information technology
TISS	<i>Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire</i> – Innovative territories in social and solidarity economy
UQAM	<i>Université du Québec à Montréal</i> – Montréal campus of the University of Quebec

## Introduction

This document presents the findings and impact assessment of the Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal (SALIM, 2020-2025) program, part of Montréal en commun. This summary reviews the context in which the program was implemented, its objectives, the observed results, and the main lessons learned from this innovative support initiative.

The analyses presented in this report are based on data and insights gathered from SALIM partners and the Collectif Récolte team in the spring of 2023, 2024, and 2025. Data was collected using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including questionnaires, individual interviews, review workshops, and open discussions. Please note that, at the request of the partners involved, the data was collected according to a fiscal calendar (April to March) rather than calendar years. Further details on the data collection and learning methodology, can be found in the [Annexe méthodologique](#) and our [Guide pour l'évaluation, la mesure d'impact et la captation d'apprentissage](#) (both documents are only available in French).

**Collectif Récolte** is a social enterprise that leverages collective intelligence and community mobilization to catalyze solutions for local and sustainable food practices.

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

We support changemakers in a variety of initiatives and approaches across Quebec.

Discover our [range of services](#)!

## The roots of a name

The name **RÉ-COL-TE (Harvest)** stems from three words: **RÉ-unir (Unite)**, **COL-laborer (Collaborate)**, and **TE-rritorialiser (Localize)**.

**Uniting** all stakeholders to co-create solutions rooted in the realities on the ground, inviting all voices, creating connections and solidarity.

**Collaborating** with a multitude of partners in a complementary and intersectoral manner, listening and moving forward together for the common good.

**Localizing** by taking into account the specificities of each territory and each community, for human-scale solutions that support environmental and socioeconomic vitality.

Learn more about the foundations of our actions: [Manifesto for the Future of Food](#)

## What is SALIM?

The [Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal](#) (SALIM) is a program led by Collectif Récolte from 2020 to 2025, as part of [Montréal en commun](#), an initiative supported by [Canada's Smart Cities Challenge](#). This challenge, launched by the Government of Canada, aimed to encourage cities to improve the quality of life of their citizens through innovation, data, and connected technology. With the \$50 million prize won by the City of Montreal, the [Montreal Urban Innovation Lab](#) (LIUM) set up Montréal en commun: an urban innovation ecosystem composed of several structuring projects, led by numerous partners.

SALIM, a flagship project of the food component of Montréal en commun, aimed to improve access to healthy, locally grown food for Montrealers.

### Mission :

to reinforce the supply network for community food organizations in Montreal, while improving local producers' access to markets through a network of shared physical and digital infrastructure.

### Vision :

to make healthy, locally grown food accessible to all, especially to those experiencing food insecurity.

## SALIM's action levers

SALIM's approach is based on a rigorous **theory of change**, rooted in the recognition of the key role played by stakeholders in the field who work at all stages of the food cycle.

- **Ultimate goal: To improve Montrealers' access to healthy food from local agriculture.**
- Hypothesis 1: Logistical, financial, and organizational barriers limit the ability of local initiatives in the various links in the food chain to achieve **SALIM's ultimate goal**.
- Hypothesis 2: **Innovation and pooling of resources, collaboration, and access to knowledge** are levers that would help local initiatives overcome these barriers.
- Hypothesis 3: Through a **social innovation approach**, Collectif Récolte can **catalyze these levers through four means of action**:
  - co-creation with partners for change;
  - experimentation and knowledge transfer;
  - generating and disseminating knowledge and evidence;
  - support for the sustainability and integration of solutions.



## SALIM: a springboard for partner initiatives to increase their impact

Based on this theory of change, SALIM set itself the task of catalyzing access to knowledge and collaboration between ecosystem actors, as well as the implementation of innovative initiatives focused on resource pooling. These direct effects aim to **support partners who are leading innovative food initiatives, making them more effective and sustainable**, and helping them to amplify the positive impact of their work: improving access to healthy, locally sourced food for Montrealers.

### Logic chain of outcomes of the SALIM program



## 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.

An initial phase of collective ideation identified avenues for action that could bring about change. Thanks to the strategic support of Collectif Récolte and financial contributions through the SALIM program, partners were able to develop and experiment with these unique collaborative logistics solutions, which in turn facilitated market access for local producers and supplied community organizations and institutions that primarily serve vulnerable individuals or those experiencing food insecure individuals.

Designed as a **social innovation lab on a territorial scale**, SALIM has fostered the emergence of numerous social innovation initiatives and supported 15 pilot projects led or co-led by 147 partners in the Montreal ecosystem: projects to pool human resources, storage space, vehicles, marketing or procurement, and digital tools. Some of these experiments have been successful and are continuing today.

## The SALIM

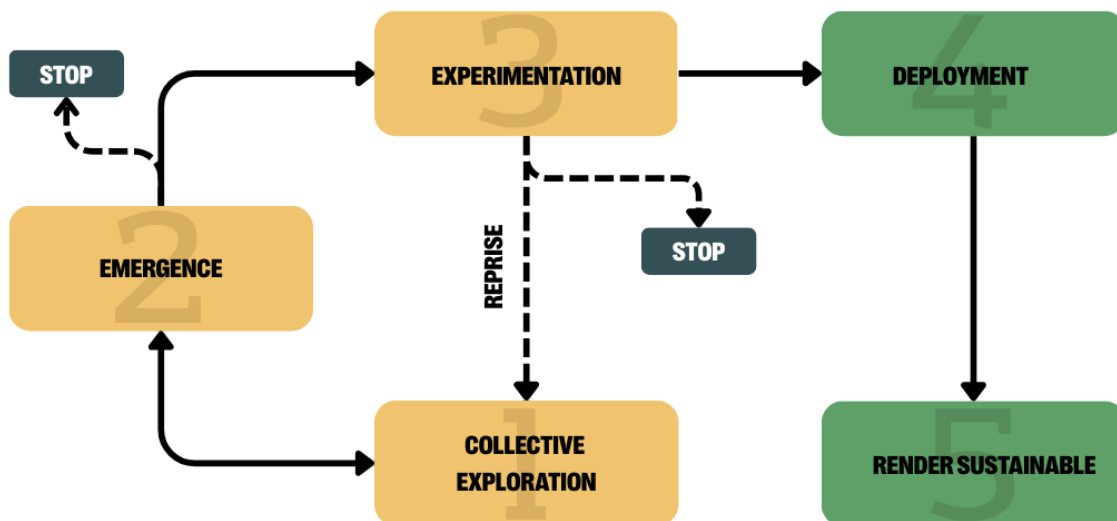
5 co-sponsored projects

15 other partner initiatives supported

147 partners leading or participating in pilot projects including 81 partners involved in pooling projects and more than 21 service provider partners

Others, despite their potential, did not succeed in their initial form. However, thanks to **the iterative cycle of experimentation and evaluation, impact measurement, and learning**, all of them have provided valuable insights into the conditions for success and the difficulties encountered in the collective transformation of the food system. Even when a project does not reach its goal, the process it sets in motion leaves its mark: tools developed, links forged, capacities strengthened, lessons learned.

# LIFE CYCLE OF A SOCIAL INNOVATION



SALIM leaves **behind a concrete knowledge base** for actors wishing to engage in collective pooling initiatives. These lessons—accessible in our [Resource Library](#) and [Praxis Notebook](#)—inform current and future efforts to transform procurement practices, strengthen local solidarity, and create food systems that are more consistent with community needs.

## SALIM projects

SALIM's work and experimental projects have been structured into three segments, in addition to supporting several other related initiatives whose mission contributes to SALIM's:

### 1. Production and marketing

- a. **L'Aube Food Hub** (project initially led by SALIM, currently in the process of becoming autonomous)
- b. **Regional Solidarity Hub (PRS)**: Co-design approach and alignment of hubs from a regional perspective

#### Food hub project on the island of Montreal, led by [L'Aube Food Hub](#)



Created in 2021, [L'Aube Food Hub](#) was born out of a desire to **strengthen the resilience of local farms** and **facilitate access to healthy, organic, and locally sourced food** on the island of Montreal. L'Aube pools key services for its member farms, such as marketing, delivery, and an ordering and billing platform.

With an offering aimed primarily at institutional customers (hospitals, childcare centres, universities, etc.) and community clients (community organizations, eco-friendly grocery stores, etc.), L'Aube forges strong links between producers and consumers. Initially supported by Collectif Récolte, the organization is currently in the process of becoming autonomous and sustainable.

#### Founding farms:



Initiating partners:



**KEY RESULTS from 2021 to November 2025:**

28 institutions served, 31 caterers, restaurants, and small businesses, and 10 community organizations and solidarity businesses.

**Meal equivalents:**

10,000+ for children in 15 childcare centres

40,000+ for patients in six hospitals

35,000+ for students in seven cafeterias in higher education institutions

Approximately 40 tons of fresh fruit and vegetables distributed

\$280,000 in sales


More than 21,000 km of transportation avoided and nearly 10 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided, representing five round trips by car from Montreal to Vancouver

For more information, see the [L'aube, pôle nourricier, retour sur les apprentissages et la mesure d'impact du projet](#) report (only available in French).

## The Pôle régional solidaire (PRS) project

# CO-DESIGN INITIATIVE

Working together to imagine and consolidate the local, sustainable and solidarity-based food supply cycle in Montreal



- Phase 1 : 2021-2024
  - Exploration of the Ateliers Cabot project – 2021-2022
  - Co-design process (phase 1) – 2023-2024
- Phase 2 : 2024-2025
  - Study on B2B solidarity marketing methods
  - Hubs alignment project

The Pôle régional solidaire (PRS) project aimed to test the feasibility of a regional solidarity hub that would centralize and pool resources to better connect producers and community organizations, with a view to logistical integration and collective optimization. In 2021, the project began an initial phase of co-creation of a regional hub within the “[Ateliers Cabot](#)” project, winner of the C40 – Reinventing Montreal 2021-2022 competition. As this architectural project in Pointe-Saint-Charles did not come to fruition, a second iteration was carried out in 2023. The [co-design initiative “Working together to imagine and consolidate the local, sustainable and solidarity-based food supply cycle in Montreal”](#) brought together actors in the food system to identify and prioritize avenues for collective action.

Two avenues were prioritized and pursued in 2024:

(1) A [project to link Montreal's food hubs](#), in which several hubs identified a common need for shared storage space. A co-development and feasibility study phase followed, but the project ended in May 2025 due to the withdrawal of a key partner and a timeline that was incompatible with the capacities of the other members.

(2) [The study of solidarity-based marketing and pricing policies between community organizations and local producers](#), conducted in collaboration with Bishop's University.

## 2. Neighbourhood-wide distribution

- a. **Local Community Procurement Specialist (SALC)**
- b. **Tomat**: platform for managing digital food voucher programs
- c. **Solidarity Lever** (formerly Project Fund, see below): support program for projects led by field partners. These partners receive funding and personalized support from Collectif Récolte.

### Project to pool the resources of a Local Community Procurement Specialist



Recognizing that community organizations in Montreal neighbourhoods do not have the necessary resources to hire someone dedicated to local procurement, a pilot project was launched to test the pooling of human resources for the benefit of several community organizations: the Local Community Procurement Specialist.

Funded by SALIM from 2021 to 2024, the SALC has:

- facilitated the purchase of healthy, locally sourced food for community organizations by establishing strong relationships with a variety of local producers and maintaining up-to-date information on various sources of supply;
- enabled local producers to access new customers through the connections established;
- strengthened the capacity of local procurement networks through collaborative activities, promoting knowledge sharing and the development of mutualization projects, in partnership with SALIM and other key players.

Although this position brought many benefits to the participating organizations, it could not be maintained due to a lack of funding. L'Aube Food Hub integrated the functions of a SALC into their sales manager position, whose mandate is to create supply relationships between member producers and institutional and community settings. The pilot project itself concluded in the fall of 2024, leaving many lessons learned in its wake.

## Transactional web platform dedicated to the management of food voucher programs



The [Tomat](#) project was initiated to address the challenges faced by several food voucher programs, which distribute vouchers with monetary value for the purchase of food to people experiencing food insecurity.

Before SALIM, these programs relied on paper vouchers (which were time-consuming and offered no means of tracking) and/or third-party tools and technologies (which were costly and limited in functionality). 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. Launched in the summer of 2023, the platform is now used by several partners across Canada.



### KEY RESULTS from 2021 to 2025:

- Five participating programs
- Over 63,000 transactions
- Over \$2.2 million in food distributed
- Over 8,100 cards used
- Approximately 19,500 people served
- Approximately 200 participating merchants

For more information, see the [Tomat – A review of lessons learned and impact measurement since the project's inception](#) report.

## The Solidarity Lever – Support program for social innovation initiatives in the agri-food sector



The Solidarity Lever, initially named the Project fund (FP), was launched in 2021. The support program for social innovation initiatives in the agri-food sector supports community projects that seek to develop concrete solutions to improve access to healthy, local, and affordable food, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized populations in Greater Montreal. The program aims to support projects designed and led by communities, recognizing the systemic barriers they face and supporting the collective intelligence within them. Projects focus on key issues such as pooling resources (transportation, storage, infrastructure), governance, procurement, and distribution.

By funding and supporting the leaders of these initiatives, SALIM hopes to catalyze their positive results and impacts.

The Solidarity Lever has supported and accompanied 10 initiatives during its two cohorts (2021-2023 and 2023-2025) and awarded a total of \$260,000 in funding to support them.

With the end of SALIM, Collectif Récolte is actively seeking new partners to continue offering this valuable support to community initiatives.

### Initiatives supported by Solidarity Lever as part of SALIM from 2021 to 2025

#### First cohort (2021-2023)

- **LS-MAMS:** Collective procurement project for solidarity markets, led by the [Mutuelle d'approvisionnement des marchés solidaires](#)
- **LS-59-SP:** Food Hub Project – Le [59 Saint-Pierre](#), led by [Concert'action Lachine](#)

- **LS-ASL:** [Solidarity Baskets](#) Project, led by the Concertation en sécurité alimentaire de Saint-Léonard, now [Alimenter Saint-Léonard](#)
- **LS-AU/LAB:** Feasibility study for an urban agriculture collective marketing group in Montreal, a project led by the [Laboratoire d'agriculture urbaine](#)
- **LS-SALADE:** "[La SALADE mobile](#)" project, a pooled delivery truck for neighbourhood organizations, led by the [Corporation de développement communautaire du Plateau-Mont-Royal](#) (CDC-PMR)

### Second cohort (2023-2025)

- **LS-MSAAQ:** Collective marketing project for Afro-Caribbean products, led by the [Mouvement pour la souveraineté alimentaire des Afro-Québécois.es](#)
- **LS-ANGP:** Indigenous community space project, led by [All Nations Gathering Place](#)
- **LS-ÉSH:** [ÉpiCamion](#) project, truck sharing among community organizations in the Saint-Henri neighbourhood, led by [Épicentre Saint-Henri](#)
- **LS-GEMO-CRP:** Project to share services between the [Groupe d'entraide de Mercier-Ouest](#) and [Le Chic Resto Pop](#)
- **LS-TiFrais:** Project to set up the [Ti frais](#) solidarity grocery store



laboratoire  
agriculture urbaine



### KEY RESULTS from 2021 to March 2025:

- 10 projects supported with more than 65 partners
- 2,948 hours of support provided free of charge
- \$260,000 in financial contributions to projects
- Six resource-sharing initiatives – including two shared trucks for food transportation
- Three solidarity basket projects targeting food deserts or marginalized communities
- More than 14,000 km of transportation avoided
- Nearly seven metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided

For more information, see the [Levier solidaire - Retour sur les apprentissages et la mesure d'impact du projet](#) report (only available in French).

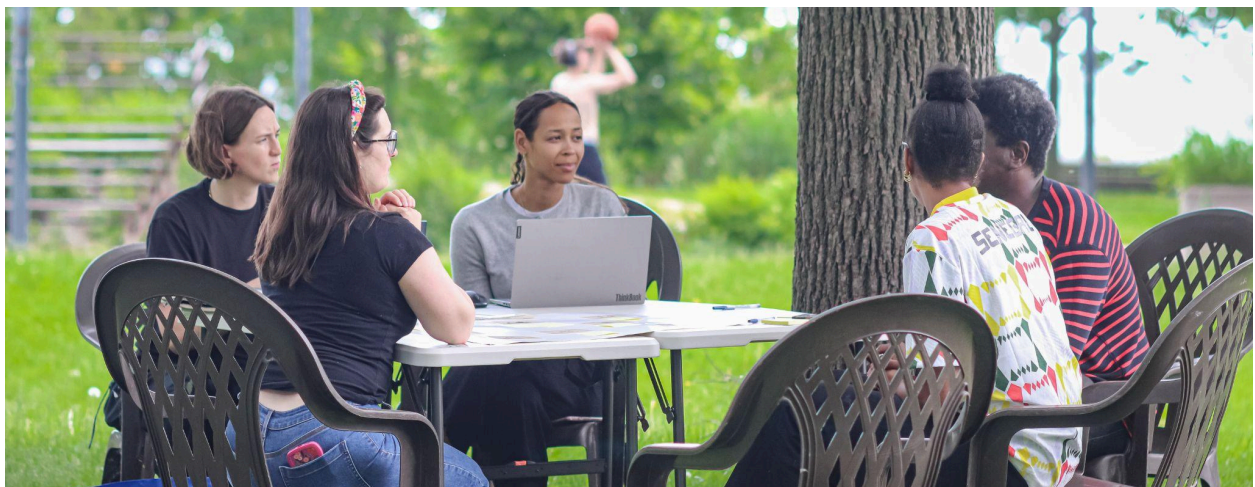
## 3. Learning

The learning component of SALIM focused on:

- evaluating, measuring the impact, and capturing lessons learned from the various experimental projects implemented, in collaboration with project teams and the partners leading the initiatives;
- generating data, analyzing and conducting studies to fill knowledge gaps, in collaboration with research partners and partners with complementary expertise;
- disseminating and sharing the lessons learned and knowledge generated through webinars, infographics, reports, and the creation of a [Resource Library](#).

### Measuring the impact of SALIM

*Evaluation and impact measurement plans carried out for 12 projects.*



The process for evaluating and measuring the impact of SALIMs based on a **participatory and progressive** approach, inspired by the principles of **results-based management**. It aims to document the changes generated by the projects supported, while promoting collective learning and continuous improvement.

Collectif Récolte also **supported the Évaluation en commun process** led by UQAM's Research Chair on Ecological Transition (2021-2024), notably through the **definition of indicators**, developing **theories of change**, and harmonizing monitoring tools to strengthen the consistency and comparability of evaluation approaches among the initiatives supported.

## Studies and webinars



- Four studies conducted to address the lack of knowledge
- Numerous studies conducted as part of the projects (market studies, opportunity studies, feasibility studies, etc.)
- 58 knowledge dissemination resources created as part of the program
- 46 partners involved in knowledge generation and dissemination

## Resource Library



A Resource Library has been developed as part of SALIM to render the knowledge acquired during the projects available and to provide tools to initiative leaders. It includes case studies, guides, reports, practical tools, and webinars.

- 76 resources available free of charge
  - 41 practical tools, publications, and documents
  - 11 annual and impact reports
  - 19 videos, including 12 webinars with several panelists
  - Five comic strips
- nearly 4,000 users worldwide in 2024-2025

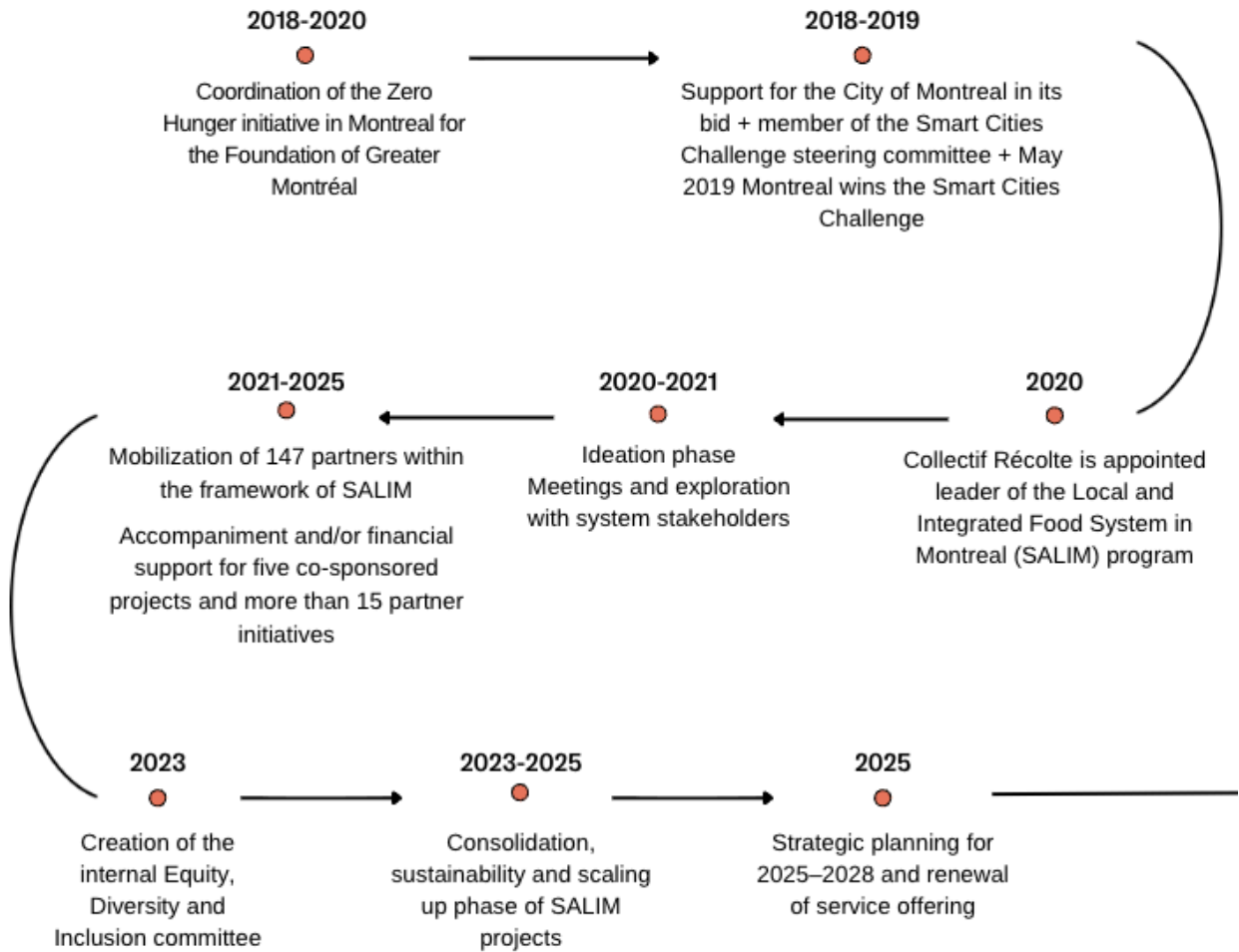
#### 4. Support for various related initiatives

In addition to its flagship projects, SALIM has also provided **financial and/or in-kind** support to several key initiatives led by partners in the field:

- Feasibility study for the Écoquartier Louvain Est, led by Solidarité Ahuntsic (2021);
- Project to support social economy agri-food logistics hubs, in partnership with the CQCM (2023-2025);
- 5th edition of A Taste for Change, food fair and panels (2022);
- CSMO-ÉSAC research project led by IRIPII: **Laboratoire sur l'inclusion de la diversité dans le mouvement de l'économie sociale au Québec** (2023-24);
- IRIPII research project “Évaluer l'impact des initiatives en faveur de l'équité et de l'inclusion : l'économie sociale comme laboratoire d'innovations méthodologiques et sociales” (2025-2026);
- Learning cohort on local and solidarity-based procurement offered to intersectoral roundtables on healthy lifestyles (TIR-SHV) as part of the Nourrir tous les milieux 2 project, a collaboration between Vivre en Ville and Collectif Récolte (2024-2025)
- Project to plan a transportation decision-making tool for a shared logistics network for the distribution of agri-food products, led by researchers at UQAM (2024-2026);
- Food Sharing Project: study and transfer tools on mutualization models (agricultural motels, food logistics hubs) supporting the development and sustainability of SATs (territorial food systems) – TIESS (2024)
- Carrefour solidaire Carte Proximité project (2023-2025)

A total of **\$38,000** in grants was awarded to these projects, in addition to **many hours** of contribution from the Collectif Récolte team.

# Program timeline



## Project schedule

<u>Long-term SALIM projects led by the Collectif Récolte</u>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Pre-launch and opportunity search	■						
L'Aube Food Hub		■					
Local Community Procurement Specialist			■	■			
Tomat			■				
The <i>Pôle régional solidaire</i> (PRS) project			Phase 1 - Ateliers Cabot project	Phase 2 - Co-design process	Phase 3 - Hub alignment project	■	
The Solidarity Lever		1st cohort		2nd cohort			
<u>Other supported projects</u>							
<i>Écoquartier Louvain Est - Solidarité Ahuntsic</i>			■				
<i>Évaluation en Commun</i>	■						
Support of social economy agri-food logistics hubs - CQCM				■			
Transportation decision-making tool					■	■	
IRIPII research project				■		■	
A Taste for Change			■				
Food Sharing Project - TIESS				■			
Carrefour solidaire Carte Proximité project				■		■	

# SALIM results, 2021–2025

The section below presents the results of SALIM, aggregated at the program level, according to the different levels of its results chain.



## Inputs

*What SALIM has invested in the various projects carried out and supported*

- A total budget of **nearly \$7.7 million**.
- A **dynamic, committed team with diverse expertise at Collectif Récolte**, which has contributed **over 100,000 hours of work** in program management, project support, evaluation, learning capture and impact measurement, communications, consultation, mobilization, partnership management, research, and administration.
- **Five interns** contributed to the program while completing their university education.
- **An Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee** was established within Collectif Récolte to promote the training of project managers and the consideration of EDI measures within SALIM.
- **Twenty-one service provider partners** contributed their expertise to the program, the projects carried out, and the initiatives of supported partners.
- The expertise and work of **113 change partners, leaders of innovative initiatives supported** by SALIM.
- **The expertise of ten partners from a broader ecosystem**, including **data governance support provided by Nord Ouvert**, and **knowledge sharing** within the “**Montréal en commun**” innovation community through the [Praxis](#) platform and the **community of practice on evaluation** led by Dynamo and TIESS.



## Activities and outputs

Activities carried out by the SALIM team to support change partners in the co-creation of initiatives, in experimentation, and in the sustainability of the initiatives

### ***Opportunity studies conducted to identify needs, opportunities, and change partners interested in co-creating experimental initiatives***

- These **meetings with field actors from different links in the Montreal food cycle** led to the structuring of SALIM projects.

### ***Implementation and management of a program to support neighbourhood food initiatives: The Solidarity Lever***

- Financial support and assistance for **10 initiatives involving 67 organizations**.
- Allocation of **financial support and flexible, personalized terms** to meet the needs of the initiatives.
- Implementation of **simplified application and reporting processes** adapted to the capacities of the organizations.
- Significant adjustment to the approach for selecting initiatives supported in the second cohort: **the call for projects was replaced by proactive targeting** aimed at selecting initiatives serving marginalized or underrepresented communities with limited access to traditional funding.

### ***Mobilization of potential partners, clients, and suppliers for projects***

- Conducting meetings, workshops, individual interviews, and studies to **facilitate the alignment of needs between initiatives and their future member partners**, clients, and/or food suppliers.
- As part of the Regional Solidarity Hub project: collaboration with six partners for the first phase of ideation for a regional hub at Ateliers Cabot (2021), consultation between 43 stakeholders in the ecosystem for the phase of identifying missing links in Montreal's procurement cycle (2023) and collaboration between seven food hubs to collectively reflect on how to align their work (2024-2025).
- Establishment of a shared human resource, the **Local Community Procurement Specialist (LCPS)**, to facilitate the **coordination between community organizations and local producers**.

### ***Support for change partners in implementing initiatives (by SALIM team members and 21 external service providers)***

- **Conducting studies** (market studies, feasibility studies, case studies, needs and opportunity studies, etc.).
- Facilitation of numerous **collective ideation workshops** with project partners, initiative members, and ecosystem actors in general.
- **Providing strategic support** in the development of business plans, the implementation of collaborative governance systems, etc.
- Support **for the structuring, testing, and scaling up** of community-based agri-food projects (collective ideation, partnership development, project visibility, studies, and tool creation).
- **Legal support.**
- **Facilitation of the acquisition of equipment adapted to project needs:** Support in choosing to rent and/or purchase vehicles, their layout (divisions, refrigeration units, etc.) and their visual identity; facilitation of the acquisition of various equipment (refrigerators, operational distribution equipment such as reusable boxes).
- **Co-construction of sustainability plans and supporting their implementation:** Co-construction of sustainability plans with project partners and with the support of TIESS. Financing of several activities within these plans and temporary financing of certain project human resources, with a view to their gradual autonomy. Establishment of a consolidated and operationalized organizational and strategic structure to ensure the governance, planning, and management of the L'Aube Food Hub.

### **Partners satisfied with the support received**

*Results obtained via an anonymous survey, based on a scale question*

- Throughout the project, the partners of L'aube Food Hub, were "very satisfied" with the support provided by Collectif Récolte (5/5).
- Throughout the project, Tomat's partners were "very satisfied" with the support provided by Collectif Récolte (5/5).
- The partners of the Solidarity Lever projects were "somewhat satisfied" to "very satisfied" with the support provided by Collectif Récolte (4.5/5).

"[I am] very satisfied with the support provided by Collectif Récolte, [for] the team's high availability, relevant expertise, and global vision."

Anne Fleury, General manager of L'Aube Food Hub

### ***Co-creation of management and technological tools tailored to the needs of partners and initiatives***

- **Facilitation of the development of IT tools by developers** to meet the needs of member partners ([Arrivage](#) for the implementation of a group ordering platform for L'Aube Food Hub; [Sigmund](#) for the development of the Tomat web platform, dedicated to the management of food voucher programs; the [Réactif](#) agency for the development of the Resource Library).
- **Co-development with Coop Carbone of a decision-making tool for planning routes and transportation prices** to optimize the distribution of orders by L'Aube Food Hub. Other management tools such as **forecasting, inventory, and cost analysis tools** were also co-developed for L'Aube.
- Establishment of a **database of Carte Proximité suppliers** to support solidarity market members.
- Development **of management and impact measurement tools** (LS-ANGP).

### ***Capturing and producing knowledge***

- Framing an evaluation and impact measurement approach, collecting and analyzing data for SALIM projects. **Collecting, documenting, and analyzing lessons learned, impacts, and innovative models deployed** by SALIM initiatives.
- Collaboration with research centres and **conducting four studies to address knowledge gaps** on targeted topics.
- Collaboration with UQAM's Research Chair on Ecological Transition to develop the **theory of change for the Food component of Montréal en commun**.
- Contribution to the ideation, determination of indicators, and measurement methods for **Évaluation en commun**, a participatory evaluation approach and platform for food projects, co-developed by UQAM's Research Chair on Ecological Transition, in collaboration with the Montreal Urban Innovation Lab (LIUM) and the Conseil du Système alimentaire montréalais (CSAM).

### ***Knowledge sharing***

- Organization of **spaces for dialogue, co-learning, and experience sharing** between initiatives.
- Co-organization of **eight webinars** to facilitate the sharing of knowledge generated by the program and to give a voice to SALIM project partners.
- Development of a **Resource Library** for knowledge dissemination, which was officially launched on March 14, 2024. The team then worked on continuously improving its features and publishing resources in French and English.

- Contribution to the organization of **knowledge dissemination events organized by partners**; roles as panelists, speakers, and workshop facilitators (CQCM, Forum SAT, Conseil SAM, Montréal en commun, etc.).

***Financial support for projects and initiatives***

SALIM provided **\$1,705,000 in direct financial support, investments, and external expertise** to organizations carrying out supported projects. In addition, SALIM covered several structural expenses in terms of internal and external expertise for the projects.

**Financial contributions to partners, investments, and external expertise:**

L'aube Food Hub	\$690,000
Regional Solidarity Hub	\$55,000
Tomat	\$471,000
SALC	\$136,000
Solidarity Lever	\$315,000
Other projects supported (financial contributions only)	\$38,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,705,000</b>



## Direct effects of SALIM

*Change in partners' knowledge, capacities, and resources*



More  
knowledge



More  
collaboration



Innovation and  
mutualization



More  
knowledge

**Outcome 1: Production and dissemination of knowledge and data about the local and integrated food system in Montreal**

### ***SALIM partners have access to knowledge and expertise for project implementation***

- Throughout SALIM, partners leading or co-leading initiatives supported by SALIM had **simplified access to key advice, resources, and expertise** to facilitate the implementation of their projects.
- New knowledge was generated through the **four research projects and numerous studies produced** in connection with the projects' needs.

### ***Stakeholders across Quebec have access to the knowledge generated***

- **Access to knowledge-sharing events throughout the SALIM program:**
  - Contribution to panels and conferences;
  - Co-organization with the CQCM of two knowledge transfer days related to the project to strengthen agri-food logistics hubs;
  - Five webinars in the Conversations on Local and Solidarity Food Supply Series, produced in collaboration with CSAM's Espace cuisine.
  - Several conferences and presentations as part of post-secondary courses (Bishop's University, CÉGEP de Victoriaville, Université de Montréal, etc.).

Conversations on Local and Solidarity Food Supply series – a collaboration between Espace cuisine and Collectif Récolte:

- **Five webinars** with an average of **75 participants** per webinar;
- **Four fact sheets** produced, as well as comic strips to illustrate the highlights;
- **13 partner organizations invited** as speakers to present their projects;
- sharing of **more than 20 complementary resources** from the ecosystem or previous work by Collectif Récolte.

- **Long-term access to knowledge generated by SALIM through the Resource Library and carnet Praxis:**

- The Resource Library has a total of 76 resources, 58 of which were created as part of the SALIM program.
- The SALIM carnet Praxis has 31 notes.

SALIM themes	Some key resources
<p><b>Mutualizing marketing efforts – Food hubs</b></p>	<p>Producing on the Island and for the Island: Montreal's essential West Island Food Shed - <a href="#">Study report</a> - <a href="#">Panel replay</a></p> <p>Local food supply chains and local institutional procurement models - <a href="#">Case study</a>, webinar, and <a href="#">lessons learned</a></p> <p>Summary of the feasibility study for a food logistics hub in the West Island - <a href="#">Feasibility study</a></p> <p>Collective marketing group in Montreal - Fact <a href="#">sheet</a></p> <p>L'Aube Food Hub: Connecting farms to institutions and communities - <a href="#">Webinar</a> and <a href="#">Review of lessons learned and impact measurement 2021-2025</a></p>
<p><b>Local and solidarity-based procurement to contribute to inclusion and food security</b></p>	<p>Pooling resources to optimize local and solidarity-based food supply - <a href="#">Fact sheet</a></p> <p>Mutualizing resources: A promising avenue to strengthen local and solidarity-based food supply? - <a href="#">Webinar</a> and <a href="#">comic strip</a></p> <p>Solidarity-based marketing and pricing methods between</p>

	<p>community organizations and local producers - <a href="#">Case study</a> and <a href="#">webinar</a></p> <p>The “missing link” in the local, sustainable, and solidarity-based food supply cycle in Montreal - <a href="#">Co-design progress report</a> and <a href="#">webinar</a></p> <p>Launching a collective food procurement project: <a href="#">Lessons learned</a> by the Mutuelle d’approvisionnement des marchés solidaires (MAMS)</p>
<b>Transportation pooling</b>	<p>Shared delivery vehicle: <a href="#">Results of the pilot project</a> in Montreal’s West Island</p> <p>Challenges and solutions for food transport pooling - <a href="#">Forum SAT 2023 webinar</a></p> <p>Transport mutualizing in food security - lessons learned - <a href="#">Webinar</a> and <a href="#">comic strip</a></p> <p>Decision Support Guide for Food Transport Vehicles - <a href="#">Five chapters</a></p>
<b>Sharing human resources</b>	<p>Local community procurement specialist - <a href="#">Learning sheets</a></p>
<b>Pooling IT solutions</b>	<p>IT and digital technologies for food security: Needs and tailored solutions - <a href="#">Webinar</a> and <a href="#">comic strip</a></p> <p>Managing food coupon programs with the Tomat platform - <a href="#">Webinar</a> and <a href="#">Review of lessons learned and impact assessment</a></p>
<b>Governance of collective initiatives</b>	<p>Shared governance for food security   Inspiring models and approaches - <a href="#">Webinar</a> and <a href="#">comic strip</a></p>
<b>Evaluation, impact measurement, and learning</b>	<p><a href="#">Guide pour l’évaluation, la mesure d’impact et la captation d’apprentissage</a> (document only available in French)</p> <p><a href="#">Evaluating the effects and impacts of a pooled transportation project</a> (Chapter 5 of the Decision Support Guide for Food Transport Vehicles)</p>

## A Resource Library with a reach beyond Quebec

Resources consulted mainly in the following three countries:

- Canada (85% of visitors)
- United States (8% of visitors)
- France (2% of visitors)

In total, since its launch, nearly 4,000 visitors worldwide have consulted our resources.



Outcome 2: Collaboration and development of strategic partnerships in the food security sector

### ***Easier access for initiative leaders to new members, customers, and procurement sources***

- **Facilitated consultation for the ideation of initiatives:** Relationships established within neighbourhoods for solidarity basket programs, needs clarified among members for all mutualization projects.
- **Increase in members using shared initiatives:** Thirteen new solidarity market partners for LS-MAMS; a truck committee of six partners for LS-SALADE and nine user partners for LS-ESH; L'Aube Food Hub, which started with four farms, had 18 member farms in 2025; Tomat started with a single user program (Carte Proximité) and now five programs across Canada are using this platform in 2025. The total number of active Tomat user businesses has grown from 48 in 2023 to more than 150 in 2025.
- The Local Community Procurement Specialist (LCPS) **facilitated networking between more than 20 community organizations and local and sustainable producers** between 2022 and 2024. These links are expected to continue over time.
- **A producer database was established for solidarity market** members of Carrefour solidaire to facilitate local sourcing over the long term.

“We could never have imagined scaling up without Tomat!”

Sylvie Chamberland, Carrefour solidaire, Carte Proximité project lead

### ***Strengthening of sustainable links between organizations, producers, and advisory services***

- **Diversity of stakeholders included in the dialogue spaces** of all our projects, facilitating long-term networking: members of community organizations, members of institutions, producers, funders, municipal representatives, etc.
- **SALIM's direct partners are better equipped to seek key expertise support in the future.** They have had access to advisory services and relationships have been established with more than 21 service provider partners.
- **Sustainable links and enhanced collaboration—outside SALIM—between partners:** L'Aube member producers located in the Outaouais region reported greater collaboration in their individual activities and marketing, thanks to the network established through SALIM; our support of the MSAAQ enabled them to collaborate with other relevant actors (L'Aube Food Hub, MAMS, Coop CAUS, Centrale agricole).

### ***Access to functional governance committees for several supported projects***

- **Access to knowledge, best practices, and tools** to ensure sound collective governance of initiatives, including, for example, the identification of a legal structure for the 59 Saint-Pierre project, supported by the Solidarity Lever.
- **Functional governance committees** for L'Aube Food Hub, Tomat, and a Solidarity Lever program project (LS-ESH). Members meet several times a year to coordinate initiatives based on their respective and collective needs.



## Outcome 3: Implementation of innovative initiatives and pooling of resources among actors in the Montreal food system

### **10 pilot initiatives for resource sharing led or supported**

- Three **transportation pooling** projects (LS-ESH, LS-SALADE, and L'Aube)
- Five **collective marketing** projects (L'Aube, LS-AU/LAB, LS-ASL, LS-MAMS, and LS-MSAAQ)
- Two **IT tool pooling** projects (L'Aube and Tomat)
- One **human resources pooling** project (SALC)
- One **food assistance pooling** project (LS-59-SP)

"The fact that Tomat is operated by a non-profit that's familiar with working with community organizations means that we didn't have to explain to someone from the private sector the details of our needs, or the importance of the dignity of our participants."

Testimonial from a program user

### **Access to resources and equipment needed for sustainable distribution or procurement**

- **Vehicles:** Support for L'Aube, LS-ESH, and LS-SALADE in choosing vehicles, leasing and/or purchasing trucks, and financing equipment for truck conversion (refrigeration, partitions, etc.).
- **Refrigerators and cold rooms:** refrigerated trailer for L'Aube and LS-MAMS and a refrigerator for LS-Tifrais.
- **Agricultural land:** agricultural space at Le Grand Potager for LS-MSAAQ.
- **Kitchen equipment** (LS-ANGP, LS-ASL).

### **Access to human resources to run the initiatives**

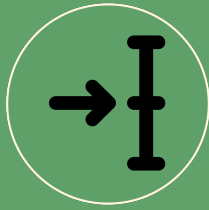
- More than **75 volunteers and 260 employees** have been involved in the operations of various projects over the years.
- In order to accelerate their growth, SALIM has **funded human resources for several projects**. For example, during L'Aube's early years of operation, the SALIM team was responsible for compiling orders, managing the staff of the fledgling NPO, and even handling day-to-day operational issues. A transitional resource was also funded to temporarily relieve the LS-GEMO-CRP team.

***Access to expertise and management tools to effectively manage and strategically plan projects***

- **Market studies** (L'Aube, LS-ASL, LS-MSAAQ, LS-59SP, LS-AU/LAB) to identify target customers or audiences and identify the needs and opinions of potential users or customers regarding the terms and conditions of service use.
- **Marketing strategies and promotional tools** (L'Aube and LS-ANGP).
- **A wide variety of** jointly developed **management tools** to meet the management needs of shared initiatives, including order management (LS-MAMS, L'Aube and LS-MSAAQ), food voucher program management (Tomat), route optimization, inventory management, sales forecasting and seasonal planning, comparative market price analysis (L'Aube, SALC, Tomat), etc.
- **Reliable data on project outcomes** and **data collection tools** to continue capturing them in the future (L'Aube, Tomat, and LS-ANGP)

***Sound data governance practices established for several initiatives***

- Nord Ouvert's support has helped to establish **effective and secure management of the data** collected within Collectif Récolte for its management of the SALIM program, as well as within L'Aube for customer information management and Tomat for user data management.
- In 2024 and 2025, our partners reported **high confidence (5/5) in data security** at Collectif Récolte.



## Intermediate impacts

*Changes in sustainability and performance of initiatives led by partner*



Greater operational efficiency



Less waste



Sustainable initiatives



Greater operational efficiency

**Outcome 4: Increase the operational efficiency of change-making initiatives to increase their impact**

<p><b>Pooling of food procurement and distribution</b></p>	<p><b>Variable effectiveness of pooling in terms of financial savings and time saved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most farms in L'Aube perceived that there were savings in terms of working time. No farm reported perceiving<sup>1</sup> any additional costs caused by pooling practices (equipment, vehicles, storage).</li> <li>- MAMS perceived that there were significant financial savings generated by pooling practices (HR, vehicles, procurement, and administration).</li> <li>- The MSAAQ perceived some financial savings from pooling practices in marketing, but this led to a significant additional workload in terms of time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase and diversification of the collective marketing offering:</b></p>
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<sup>1</sup> The perception of the efficiency of pooling was surveyed qualitatively using scales, through questionnaires sent to partners: "Do you feel that pooling (marketing) generates additional costs or cost reductions (\$)?" - Many additional costs / Some additional costs / No change / Some savings / Many savings / N/A

	<p>- More than 31,000 kg of food were marketed through these initiatives: L'Aube, LS-MAMS, LS-MSAAQ, and LS-ASL.</p> <p>- The increase in the number of farms participating in L'Aube has made it possible to diversify the range of products on offer from 64 to 112 different varieties of fruits and vegetables over the years.</p> <p><b>Increase in customers:</b> L'Aube's customer base has grown significantly over the years, from eight in 2022 to 54 customers in 2025. Between 2021 and 2022, 13 new solidarity-based partner businesses joined the LS-MAMS.</p> <p><b>Access to institutional customers:</b> It would be difficult for individual producers in L'Aube to access the institutional market. The 18 partner farms still active in November 2025 serve 13 childcare centres, six hospitals, 10 community organizations, and seven cafeterias at higher education institutions.</p> <p><b>Increased sales:</b> Collective marketing worth over \$367,000 from 55 SALIM partner producers through L'Aube, LS-MAMS, LS-MSAAQ, and LS-ASL.</p>
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"Farmers are like utility knives, we tend to do so many jobs. With the collective offer, it is taking some of those roles off our shoulders, (...) that lets us spend more time and focus more on growing the best food we can and taking care of the land."

Katherine McDowell, Ferme du Roulant

<p><b>Pooling of food transportation</b></p>	<p><b>Variable efficiency of pooling in financial terms:</b> LS-SALADE project partners saw neither financial gains nor losses as a result of pooling: The individual costs saved by pooling trucks corresponded to the maintenance costs of the pooled vehicle and driver, which were fully covered by the project. A perception of additional costs was generated by unforeseen events. LS-ESH perceived a slight additional cost related to administration. In the case of L'Aube, four of the seven farms surveyed estimated that pooling reduced transport costs.</p> <p><b>Time saved allowed staff to focus on other tasks:</b> Partner organizations using Épicamion (LS-ESH) estimate that they have saved more than two hours per week, which has been freed up for other activities. Two of the seven farms in L'Aube also maintain that grouped deliveries reduce their workload. In addition, three out of seven farms report a low or moderate overload, while the other two perceive neither overload nor gain.</p>
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	<p><b>Many kilometres on the road avoided:</b> Grouped deliveries significantly reduce the distances travelled. By pooling L’Aube’s, LS-ESH’s, and LS-SALADE’s trucks, the kilometres travelled for food collection and distribution has decreased by more than 32,000 km in just one year<sup>2</sup>. For the LS-ESH and LS-SALADE projects, this represents 57% and 45%, respectively, of kilometres avoided per year through consolidated delivery.</p> <p><b>L’Aube’s shared truck meets the needs of community organizations outside the agricultural season:</b> In the winter of 2023-2024, L’Aube’s truck and driver provided food collection services to Moisson Montréal at a cost of \$3.26/km. Six community organizations used this service, for a total of 24 grouped trips.</p>
<p><b>Sharing technological tools</b></p>	<p><b>Increased management efficiency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food voucher program managers are more autonomous and efficient in their operations thanks to the features offered by Tomat. The development of Tomat was relatively inexpensive, costing approximately \$24 per person experiencing food insecurity who used a card during this period. Participating businesses also reported that using Tomat requires little work or effort and that it facilitates their operations.</li> <li>- L’Aube’s partner farms spend less time managing orders thanks to the Arrivage platform. This time is used elsewhere on the farm.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase in transactions made on IT platforms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More than 8,100 cards were used by participating households through Tomat’s partner programs. Voucher programs managed 13,725 transactions through the Tomat platform in 2023-2024, and 23,831 transactions in 2024-2025, representing an <b>increase of 73.6%</b>.</li> <li>- For L’Aube, the number of orders processed through the Arrivage platform rose from 132 in 2022-2023 to more than 345 in 2024-2025, representing an <b>overall increase of 161%</b> over the period, corresponding to an <b>average annual growth rate of approximately 62%</b>.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Compared to hypothetical scenarios in which individual producers would have delivered the same volume of orders to their customers on a weekly basis from their respective production sites, and in which the LS-ESH and LS-SALADE organizations would have made their trips individually. See the [Annexe méthodologique](#) (only available in French) for more details.

“Tomat saves food voucher program managers a tremendous amount of time and gives our partners and participants greater autonomy. We have direct access to our data. Thanks to Tomat, we have a really solid argument for scaling up food voucher programs.”

A food voucher program manager

**Food security initiatives**

**Increased capacity to support vulnerable individuals:**

- GEMO and CRP services provide ongoing access to people living in eastern Montreal (LS-GEMO-CRP). The ANGP organization provides the Kahnawake Indigenous community with healthy and culturally appropriate products on a weekly basis. (LS-ANGP). Alimenter Saint-Léonard aims to improve physical access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables in the borough by offering an affordable basket service (LS-ASL). These three initiatives distributed more than 125 meals each week during the year they were supported by the Solidarity Lever program.
- A 300% increase in food donations to ANGP in one year, which received more than 40,000 kg of food in 2024 (LS-ANGP). The kitchen equipment purchased increases their capacity to transform these donations into meals for vulnerable people in their community.



**Outcome 5: Reduce losses and waste in Montreal’s food distribution and procurement cycle**

The reduction in food loss and waste **could not be reliably quantified**. Measuring food loss and waste at different links in a supply chain is highly complex and would have required a significant workload on the part of the partners. For example, they would have had to measure the weight or volume of food sent to composting or landfills each month throughout the project.

However, the partners were surveyed on this aspect:

- The **networks created** by SALC have facilitated food recovery. For example, the organization Aliment-Terre was able to recover more than 23,000 kg of food at La place des producteurs between 2022 and 2024.

- Among the six L'Aube producers surveyed, no improvement in waste was reported, which can be explained by L'Aube's **still limited marketing capacity**. In addition, the unpredictability of orders led in one case to a one-time increase in losses due to broken purchase promises. However, some producers pointed out that **during the high season**, the increase in sales generated by L'Aube helps them reduce their waste.
- The LS-ANGP team says it has **increased its capacity to transform food donations into meals**, thanks to improvements in the kitchen, thereby reducing food waste.
- Thanks to Épicamion, it has become easier for partners to collect unsold food from various stores.



Sustainable  
initiatives

## Outcome 6: Increase the sustainability of change-making initiatives

### ***Strengthened organizational structures and governance, facilitating the sustainability of projects***

- SALIM's support has resulted in **significant improvements in structure and governance**, as well as increased opportunities to support the sustainability of projects (LS-MAMS, LS-59 SP, LS-ESH, and LS-ANGP).
- The **advisory committees** created under SALIM for Tomat and LS-ESH will continue to meet after the end of our support to ensure the sustainability of the projects.

### ***Project sustainability plans established***

- A **business plan promoting the sustainability of the projects** has been developed for L'Aube, Tomat, LS-AU/LAB, LS-ESH, LS-MAMS, and LS-59 SP.
- Tomat, for its part, having already significantly increased the number of user programs since the start of SALIM, is seeking to offer its services to even more user programs in order to increase its impact while moving towards a self-sustaining financial model. The **operational costs of the solution are very low. Funding options are being explored to enable the platform to continue to be developed** to meet the needs of current and future partners.

### ***However, sustainability remains fragile***

It should be noted that despite the steps taken to strengthen the sustainability of the projects, they **remain fragile after only three years of external support**.

The ending of the SALIM program and the **lack of financial support in the** social innovation in the food **ecosystem** are putting the sustainability of the projects at risk.

- L'Aube has gradually consolidated its service offering, strengthened its partnerships with farms and institutions, increased its sales, and improved its internal governance. Despite this, its ability to cover its fixed costs and maintain its activities in the medium term remains limited. In 2024, nearly 80% of revenues came from grants, compared to only 20% from autonomous revenues. These proportions will have to be reversed to ensure the sustainability of the hub. According to current projections, L'Aube will need approximately \$250,000 per year in grants to maintain its activities. This remains **a challenge in a context where the available funding is mainly project-based grants rather than support for the overall mission. The social and environmental benefits of the project do not currently have the same value as economic benefits.**
- As for the Solidarity Lever, the program is currently on hold until other partnerships and financial support allow it to continue. Steps have been taken to create an advisory committee for the relaunch of the Solidarity Lever.



## Ultimate impacts

*Changes in the state of the food system generated by the numerous initiatives supported by SALIM*



## Outcome 7: Increased production of healthy, local products for the Montreal market

### ***More support for local production of healthy foods targeting the Montreal market***

- Collective procurement and marketing by L'Aube, LS-MAMS, LS-MsAAQ, and LS-ASL projects is **valued at more than \$367,000 from 55 SALIM partner producers**.

- **L'Aube Food Hub facilitates access to ultra-local food for Montrealers**. While, according to Équiterre, food travels an average of 2,500 km in Quebec, the average distance between the farms supplying L'Aube and its customers is only 95 km.

- It is too early to measure the impact of L'Aube's collective marketing on the **amount of land cultivated**. More than half of the L'Aube farms surveyed (3/5) say **they have increased their production** in response to the demand generated by the SALIM-integrated project. This result is significant because, due to a lack of market, three of the farms surveyed currently cultivate only one-third to two-thirds of their total available agricultural land (about 30 hectares in total).

### ***Grouped transport reduces the environmental impact of local food***

- According to an estimate based on a hypothetical scenario of trips made by individual cars or trucks, **grouped transportation would have saved more than 32,000 km, corresponding to**

**approximately 15 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided** annually<sup>3</sup>. This represents a distance equivalent to **7.5 round trips between Montreal and Vancouver**.



**Outcome 8: Increased distribution of healthy, fresh, and local products to populations experiencing food insecurity and, more broadly, to all Montrealers**

It is estimated that more than **195,000 meal equivalents have been made available** over the years through projects led and co-led by SALIM. Thanks to these initiatives, **more than 35,000 people have had access to fruits and vegetables, particularly vulnerable individuals** (children in childcare centres, medical centre patients, post-secondary students, and people experiencing food insecurity).

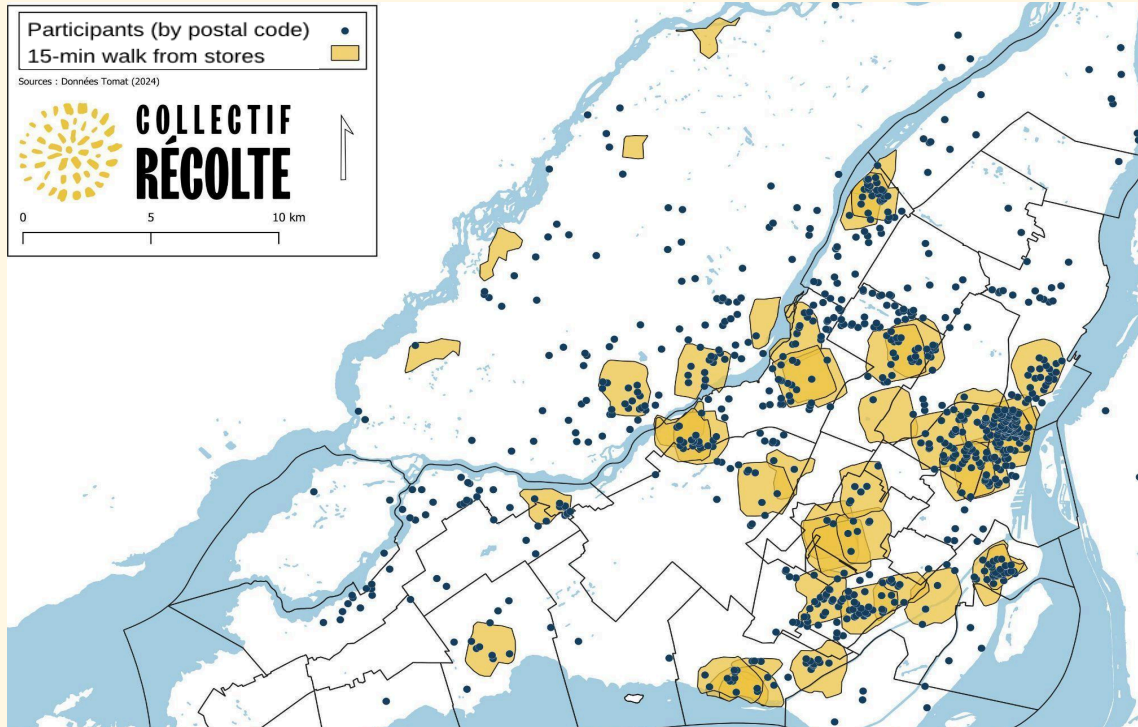
- **Financial access to food:** Approximately \$2,212,000 worth of food has been distributed through the Tomat platform over the years.
- **Social and cultural access to food:** The LS-MSAAQ project is laying the groundwork for a distribution network for Afro-Caribbean vegetables grown by Quebec farmers of African and Caribbean origin. The LS-ANGP project strengthens ties within Indigenous communities by revitalizing traditional cultures and improving access to healthy and cultural foods. The LS-59-SP project is a response to a food desert in the neighbourhood, meeting the needs of its diverse residents by involving them in the project's design.
- **Physical access to food** through a variety of solutions (solidarity baskets, solidarity grocery stores, organizations offering emergency food assistance, access in hospitals, childcare centres, and post-secondary cafeterias, etc.).

"We feel like we're making a difference, doing something really positive for the children and their families. The children appreciate it; you can see it in their eyes and in the empty plates that come back."

Lucie Valcourt, Bombardier Aéronautique Employee CPE

<sup>3</sup>The precise tonnage of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided is difficult to calculate, as it depends on several factors, such as the time spent waiting at red lights or in traffic jams, the type of vehicles that would have made the individual journeys in the fictional scenario without shared trucks, the distance travelled on highways versus small roads, etc.

Tomat has facilitated an increase in the number of businesses participating in the “Carte Proximité” program, allowing for hyper-proximity to participating businesses for a growing number of vulnerable people who use subsidized purchasing cards. By 2024, in an area of 107 km<sup>2</sup> ( plus ), representing 13.6% of the territory of Laval and Montreal, at least one participating business was located within a 15-minute walk of users’ homes.



# Summary of SALIM learnings

## Cross-sectional facilitating factors

- **High-quality collaboration and inclusive governance**  
⇒ Continuous engagement and communication with members and stakeholders - Commitment of project leaders - Establishment of user committees or advisory committees to facilitate everyone's participation and contribution to decision-making - Participatory governance and a clear business model to ensure program continuity and development.
- **Solid grounding in the field, based on consultation and the search for opportunities, to align actions with real needs**  
⇒ Co-generation of project ideas through an exploratory period, field meetings, and consultations at the neighbourhood or borough level in Montreal - Bring together and listen to producers, community organizations, neighbourhood roundtables, borough officials, and institutions.
- **A gradual approach, moving forward step by step**  
⇒ Start small, move forward in stages, through iterations and learning, and remain open to constant adaptation - Adjust marketing approaches to facilitate the gradual entry of institutions and then community organizations (L'Aube) - Be prepared to go back to the drawing board midway through (PRS, SALC, and Solidarity Lever).
- **Simplification, streamlining of processes, and agility to meet the needs of partners**  
⇒ Agility in management and activities in order to continuously adjust to needs in the field and remain responsive to changing contexts - Simplify administrative processes to allow projects to focus on their operations (Solidarity Lever) - Adjust impact measurement approaches to the realities of partners.
- **Resources invested in evaluation and impact measurement throughout the project**  
⇒ Formulating a theory of change helped to frame the actions to be taken and make strategic decisions regarding the scope and deployment of SALIM - Established evaluation and impact measurement practices also made it possible to capture and understand the results, in order to better reorient future iterations.
- **Multidisciplinary team and internal collaboration**  
⇒ Impact created by hiring a multidisciplinary team - Working in pairs within the internal team on different aspects of SALIM - Organizing work with dedicated time for collective reflection to find solutions to challenges encountered - The high level of collaboration within the SALIM internal team greatly facilitated the coordination of the entire program.

- **Strong, strategic, and diverse partnerships**  
 ⇒ Support from partners whose expertise played a decisive role: partners from Montréal en commun, external experts, project partners, members of project advisory committees or boards of directors, researchers, and key ecosystem players.

## Structural challenges and obstacles

- **Complex alignment between sustainable production and solidarity-based or institutional procurement**  
 ⇒ Little competitive cost of locally and sustainably produced products - Financial viability of collective marketing is fragile and generates little financial margin to offer solidarity prices - Organizations focused on food insecurity forced to prioritize price over sustainability - Price constraints in institutional procurement standards - Institutions seek pre-packaged foods, but profit margins are limited and pre-packaging infrastructure is lacking.
- **Operational capacity still limited for young organizations**  
 ⇒ Projects are still in their infancy and therefore not very autonomous. Despite SALIM subsidies, the lack of financial capacity continues to hamper operations and optimization in terms of efficiency (lack of equipment, management tools and procedures still maturing, lack of storage or processing space to grow or meet the needs of certain clientele, lack of human resources).
- **High staff turnover**  
 ⇒ High staff turnover among project partners has destabilized the progress and continuity of activities in several co-sponsored or supported projects - The experimental nature of the approach, a certain amount of uncertainty regarding the post-SALIM period, the current volatility in the labour market, and the general lack of resources in relation to the workload within the social economy in Quebec have also created staff turnover within Collectif Récolte's internal team.
- **Financial fragility, lack of recognition of the value of social and environmental benefits, and mismatch with existing financing solutions**  
 ⇒ Financial fragility of social innovation initiatives that are still in their infancy - SALIM grants have been a great help, but only for a short period of time - Underfunding, or funding that is too short-term, forces partner organizations to favour short-term solutions over long-term structural solutions (e.g., abandonment of the hub alignment project) - Without grants, SALIM projects struggle to survive - Context of imbalance between the lack of consideration for the externalities generated by the conventional food system and the lack of consideration for the social and environmental impacts of agri-food social

innovation projects as an incentive to fund them - Funding program standards often not adapted to agri-food social innovation projects, making existing funding inaccessible - Project-based funding rather than mission-based funding, concentrated at the start-up phase rather than on the continuity of projects, many of which will not achieve primary economic viability.

## Some key findings and recommendations for pooling resources

### **Physical infrastructure and digital tools**

We have often been confronted with the difficulty of financing shared physical infrastructure, a recurring need in agri-food social innovation sharing projects. Several regulatory obstacles will have to be overcome before these solutions can see the light of day.

Similarly, appropriate digital solutions must be made financially accessible to social economy organizations and enterprises, ensuring that technology is put at the service of citizens.

### **Governance, leadership, and human resources**

It is important to establish clear and stable leadership in mutualization projects, which means providing the means to remunerate coordination teams. It is essential to strengthen and stabilize teams by hiring qualified staff, offering better remuneration, and recognizing their work.

Inclusive and agile governance must involve partners from the design stage of projects and be open to external experts as needed.

### **Communication, transparency, and partnership relations**

It is important to document projects thoroughly, using work processes and templates, to facilitate team understanding and file transfers in the event of staff changes, thereby

building organizational resilience and ensuring continuity. Operational transparency is also essential in resource sharing; priorities and decisions must be communicated, and stakeholders consulted as much as possible.

With people and human relationships at the heart of our work, we have found that an empathetic, flexible, and attentive approach is best. We all have biases and blind spots, and it is important to take the time to understand others, existing knowledge, the specific characteristics of a territory or ecosystem, and the systemic barriers encountered by certain communities.

### **Risk management and timing**

A risk management plan should document project risks from the outset to facilitate anticipation and response, and enable better decision-making.

Respect for the long term: We must accept that structural changes require time, consistency, and an iterative approach—often incompatible with overly tight funding schedules; it is important to incorporate this reality into planning.

# Conclusion

## Six years of social innovation

In 2019, the City of Montreal won the Smart Cities Challenge, and we became one of the partner organizations to co-develop, test, and deploy innovative food solutions within the [Montréal en commun](#) community. Six years later, we are proud to see that many of these initiatives have proven their worth and are playing a key role in providing access to healthy, local food. Committed to remaining attentive to the needs of communities across Quebec, Collectif Récolte draws on the lessons learned from its internal Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, incorporating these concepts into the development of its projects and service offerings.

## After experimentation and emergence

For several months now, our team has been working to ensure that the social innovation projects developed in Montreal through SALIM can become sustainable and expand on a larger scale. This approach also incorporates the experience we have gained through our many projects and contracts since our founding, throughout Quebec and Canada. This is a long-term endeavour that must be carefully considered and carried out in collaboration with all the players in our ecosystem, and supported by new financial partnerships. The expertise we have acquired in recent years also allows us to update our service offering in order to continue supporting inspiring and transformative initiatives across the province.

## A fragile change of course for initiatives

The social economy and innovation sector is currently experiencing difficult times, with greater difficulty in accessing funding. Since the nature of projects in these ecosystems often requires ongoing financial support from the government, we and our partners are concerned about the future of our initiatives. However, these initiatives have many positive impacts that ultimately save our societies money by acting on social, environmental, AND economic levels. They require a holistic approach, rather than an expectation of a net return on investment. They enable structural and preventive improvements that enhance the long-term situation, creating more resilient communities. We believe that the way the social economy is financed needs to be rethought in order to overcome the structural challenges and obstacles mentioned above. We hope to see greater recognition in the near future of the importance of supporting an economy that serves the population and future generations.

## A new chapter for Collectif Récolte

As the important SALIM program comes to an end, it is time for Collectif Récolte to begin a new chapter in its history and transition to a new business model. Building on its accumulated experience, Collectif Récolte is continuing its efforts to sustain the various projects that emerged under SALIM and wishes to continue actively contributing to the development of promising solutions and initiatives for local food systems throughout Quebec. Enhanced expertise is now available to all those involved in collective initiatives aimed at making healthy food more accessible and transforming the future of local food. To learn more, discover our [range of services](#)!



**Final report | Local and Integrated Food System in Montreal (SALIM)**  
Project history, outcomes, and lessons learned

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