

# Evaluation of the effects of health impact assessment (HIA) practice in Montréal



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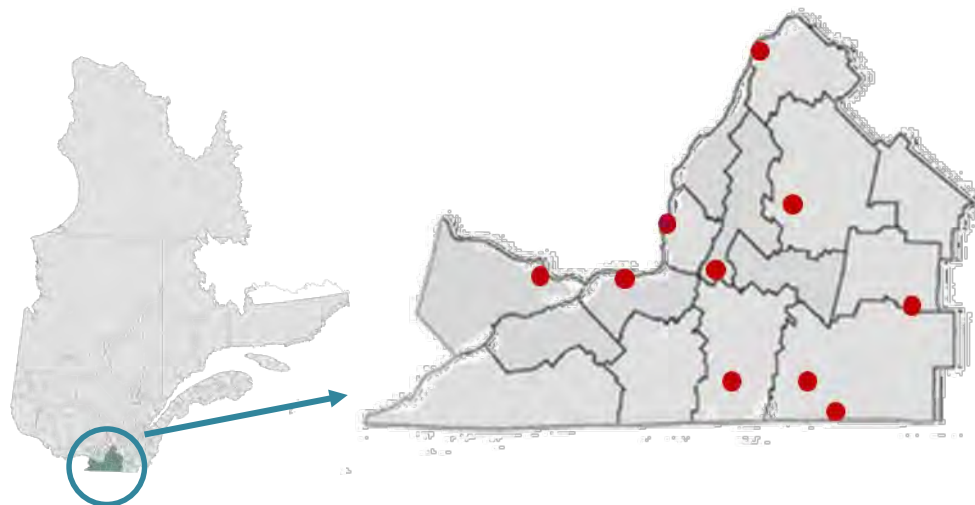
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# Area under study

## The Montérégie region

- 2<sup>nd</sup> most populous region in Québec
- 1.5 M inhabitants
- 177 municipalities



**9 territories** have participated in an HIA: 6 cities, 2 rural municipalities and a grouping of rural municipalities

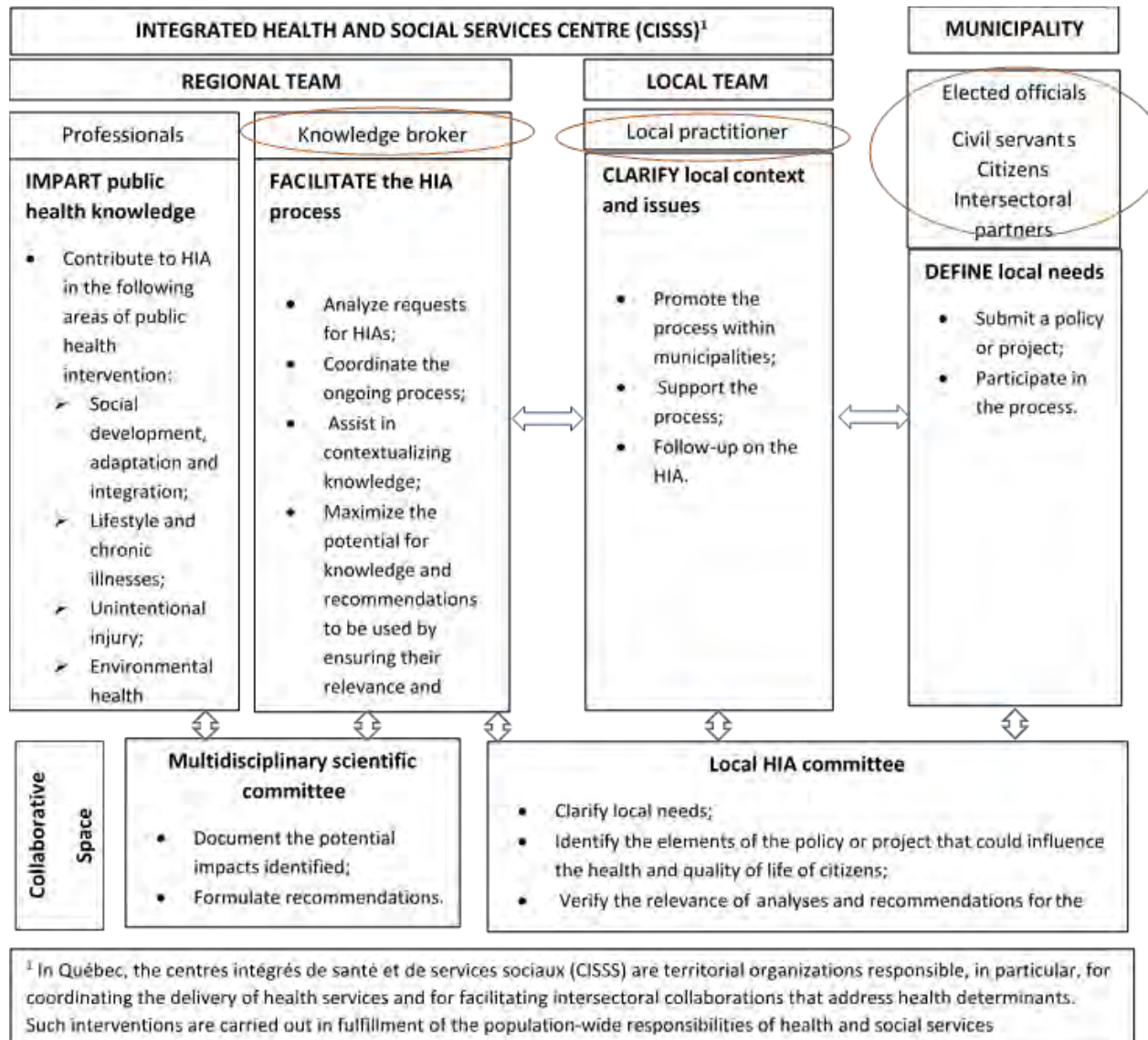
## HIAs under study

- **2 social policies**
- **7 land use development projects**
  - Residential neighbourhood development projects (2)
  - Revitalization projects (3)
  - Land use development master plans (2)

### Inclusion criteria

- **All processes** carried out since 2012
- **Completed (final report submitted)** at least 6 months prior

# Population under study



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Fonds de recherche  
Santé



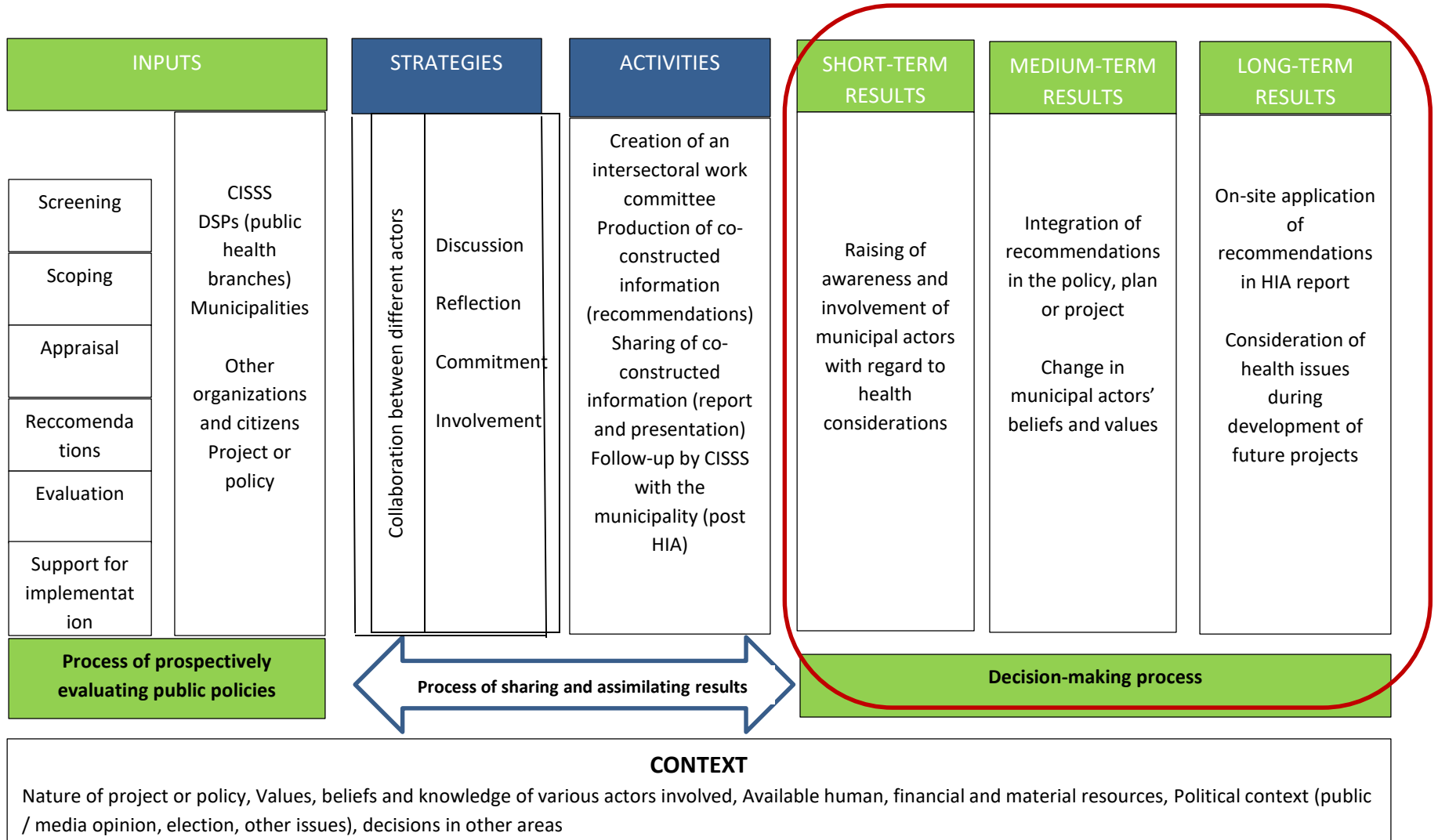
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# Research questions

1. How was **knowledge produced and shared** during the HIA **used** by municipal decision makers during their decision making process?
2. What **contextual factors** (political, economic) and **personal factors** (commitment, values, beliefs) **influenced** decision making?
3. To what extent can the **observed effects** on decision making be **attributed to the HIA conducted**?

# Logic model of an HIA



Inspired by Bourcier et al. and by the Advocacy Coalition Framework

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# Methodology

## Case study

- Identification of actors involved in collaboration with knowledge broker, then using “snowballing” strategy
- Individual interviews (in person)
- Examination of documents

## 36 people encountered during 44 interviews

- **26 municipal representatives** (elected and unelected)
  - ✓ 9 elected municipal officials
  - ✓ 12 municipal civil servants
  - ✓ 5 intersectoral partners
- **10 local public health practitioners**

# Methodology: contribution analysis (CA)

## What is it?

An evaluative approach that uses theoretical logic aimed at systematically establishing **causal relationships** between an intervention and an expected chain of results

## Characteristics of CA

- Allows you to identify and document **factors that contribute** to the intervention's effectiveness
- Helps clarify **how, why, and in what contexts** an intervention works

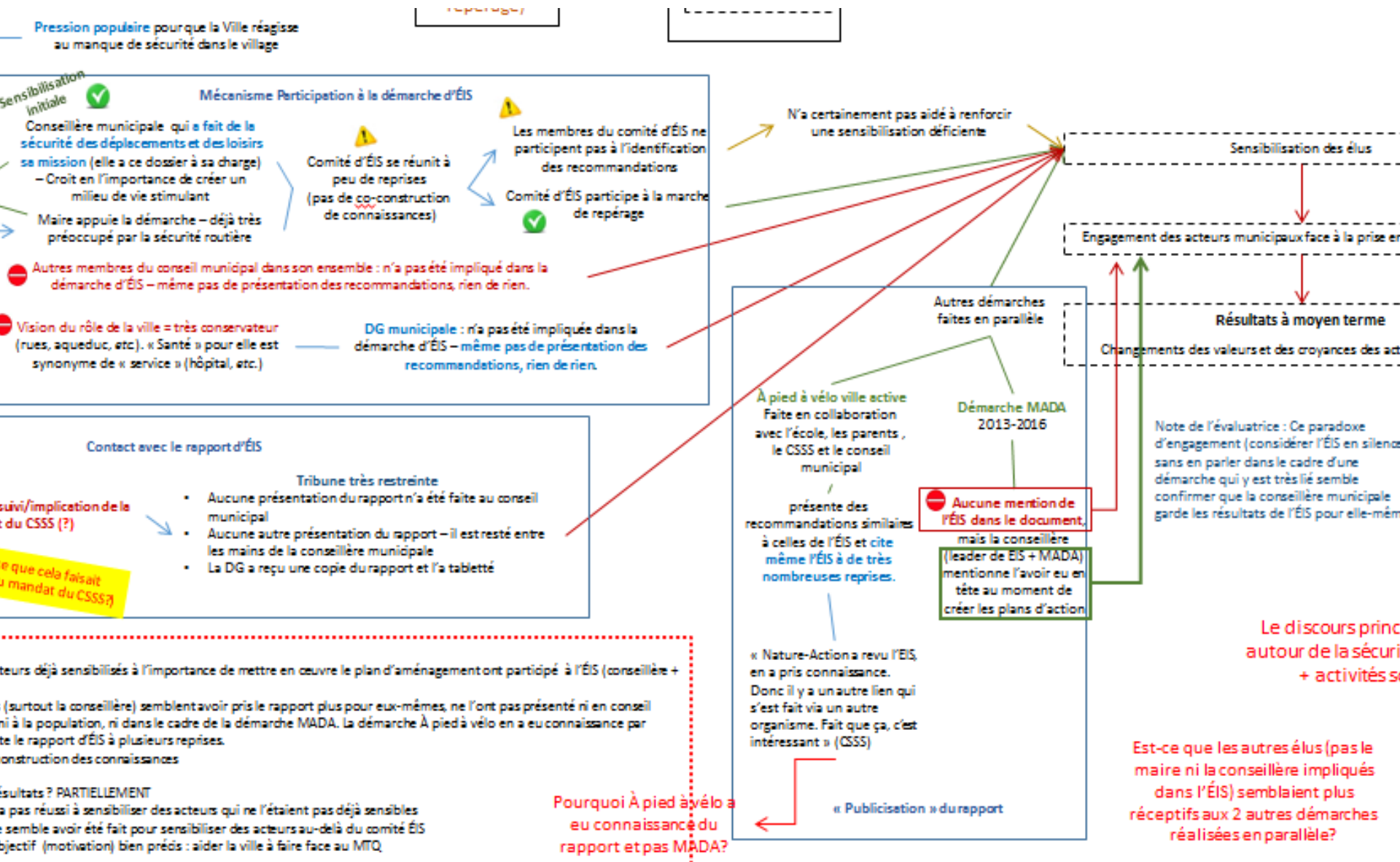
# Analysis



- Verbatim audio transcription
- **Double coding using Nvivo** interviews + selected documents
  - **Expected results** (logic model)
  - Contextual elements included in the **Advocacy Coalition Framework** which correspond to **influencing factors** affecting results (Sabatier)
- Construction of **diagrams of influencing factors**



# Example of an influence diagram



# Analysis



- For each influencing factor, **identification of alternative explanations** based on:
  - Redundancy (associated with more than half of the municipalities under study)
  - Theoretical relevance
  - Originality
- Use of the **Relevant Explanation Finder** (Lemire et al.) to assess the degree of influence of each of the factors in the chain of expected results

# Results

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# 1<sup>st</sup> research question












How was **knowledge produced and shared** during the HIA **used** by municipal decision makers (and other actors) during their decision making process?

- Tools for **convincing**
- **Complete implementation action plan**
- Integration into **municipal planning** (e.g.: land use development plan, family policy, MADA action plan, *etc.*)
- Data and information for completing **grant applications**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> research question



What **contextual factors** (political, economic) and **personal factors** (commitment, values, beliefs) **influenced** decision making?

1. Availability or **budgetary** restrictions  
2. Municipal actors concerned by / **aware of health issues** 
3. Presence of a **leader / champion of the HIA** 
4. Recommendations based on solid **theoretical foundation** (*evidence-based*) 
5. Presence of another **similar plan or policy**  
6. Absence of an **essential actor** during the process (e.g., real estate promoter, mayor) 
7. **Overloaded agendas** 

## 3<sup>rd</sup> research question

- To what extent can the observed effects on decision making be **attributed to the HIA conducted?**
- **Difficult to generalize conclusions** and draw a portrait depicting all 9 of the processes studied:
  - variable objectives were pursued by each actor / municipality
  - contexts and types of projects differed
- Nevertheless the project yielded **recommendations** for strengthening the HIA process and maximizing its benefits

## In conclusion...

- **A logic model proved useful / but some results were more difficult to measure** than others (especially in the absence of a before – after study design)
- **Contribution Analysis: a complex / difficult to apply** method
  - Municipal actors had little time for “Revise / strengthen” step
  - The research team and the person responsible for conducting the HIA performed this step
- It was possible to well document and classify influencing factors **using the Relevant Explanation Finder**