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CHAPTER 3

Presenting the 10 cases

2. Presenting the seven cases selected at sub-national level



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At sub-national level in Europe and North America, many MSMs are linked to the development and implementation of a holistic sustainable food systems policy. These groups are generally known as food policy councils (FPCs), but they also go by other names.

In contrast, such MSMs are difficult to find in the Global South. There are some cities leading the way in Latin America, but they are still at an early stage. Examples include La Paz, Quito, Lima and Medellín.

Some SFS MSMs are currently being formed in Asia and Oceania, and some of them are already engaged in the assessment of food systems and the definition of priority topics and actions. Examples include Surabaya and Melbourne.

In the case of African cities and towns, several SFS MSMs are promoted and supported by various international organizations and cooperation projects (with technical and financial support from organizations such as FAO, Rikolto, Hivos, Biovision, RUAF, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT). Levels of local ownership, government involvement and concrete achievements vary, depending on the mechanism.

The following section presents a summary of the seven SFS MSMs selected at sub-national level: London, Ghent, Los Angeles, Montreal, Quito, La Paz and Antananarivo. The most relevant features are compiled from a literature review and the results from both surveys.

2.3. Montreal (Canada): Montreal Food System Council (CSAM)¹⁰⁷



Image credit: Anne Marie Aubert, Coordinator at Montreal Food System Council

2.3.1. About the CSAM

In 2012, in the course of a public consultation on urban agriculture in Montreal,¹⁰⁸ the idea of creating a food policy council in the city was born. The seed of this vision took hold in 2014 and, following a public consultation process, the Executive Committee of the city of Montreal unanimously approved the creation of a food policy council. Four years later, as the result of a citizen-driven initiative coinciding with Montreal's signing of the MUFPP, the city council officially launched the Montreal Food System Council (CSAM) on World Food Day 2018.

The CSAM is the coordinating body of the Montreal Food System (Système alimentaire montréalais, SAM),¹⁰⁹ a group of stakeholders committed to ensuring that the organization of Montreal's food supply chain

meets the needs and aspirations of the population. It is supported by Montréal – Métropole en santé (literally: Montreal, healthy metropolis),¹¹⁰ a non-profit organization that has the mandate to act as the Table on Healthy Lifestyles (TIR-SHV)¹¹¹ for the region of Montreal.

The CSAM is an institutionalized SFS MSM, led by Montréal – Métropole en santé. It leads decision-making on food-related issues in the city of Montreal. In particular, it supports the implementation of collective actions and new innovative initiatives, provides expert advice, promotes networking and knowledge transfer, and participates in policy formulation processes. It plays a strong advocacy role through research, promoting coalitions among partners, building relationships with the media and influencing decision-makers. Its priorities

¹⁰⁷<https://csam.ca/> The acronym CSAM is based on the council's name in French: Conseil du Système alimentaire montréalais.

¹⁰⁸<https://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/agriculture-urbaine-montreal>

¹⁰⁹The Montreal Food System is a network of more than 200 partners working to ensure that the city's food system meets the needs and aspirations of the population. It is supported by Montréal – Métropole en santé, a member of Collectif des TIR-SHV (Table intersectorielle régionale sur les saines habitudes de vie). <https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/home>

¹¹⁰Montréal – Métropole en santé brings together public, institutional, private and community partners, and members of Montreal Physically Active and the CSAM to launch regional and local initiatives that promote the adoption of healthy habits by the people of Montreal. It is managed by a steering committee co-chaired by the city of Montreal and the Regional Directorate of Public Health. <https://montrealmetropoleensante.ca/>

¹¹¹<https://collectiftir-shv.ca/nous-joindre/>

so far have been food security and poverty, local food production, (peri-)urban agriculture, sustainable diets, food diversification and food environments.

Its geographical scope of action is the city-region level. However, it establishes connections with organizations at international level, national level, sub-national level, city level and city-region level, within the framework of MUFPP and by participating in different networks such as Food Secure Canada, the Food Communities Network, the Collectif of regional tables to foster healthy lifestyles,¹¹² and the Réseau alimentaire de l'est de Montréal.¹¹³

The CSAM's framework for action is based on the food systems approach. Since its conception, the council has focused primarily on the creation of an enabling environment for healthy eating (public health approach) and on addressing food insecurity. The vision has been gradually broadening to include economic (buying local) and ecological (waste reduction, sustainable diets) aspects.

The CSAM has a budget of about CAD 500,000 (EUR 336,872) a year that comes from local and national public funds, and from some other specific sources. These funds are managed by Montréal – Métropole en santé and allocated by the Board of Directors. To foster transparency and accountability, the members

of the CSAM have established a protocol for the provision of funds. The budget is used to cover project implementation and the SFS MSM's costs for coordination expenses (salaries), meeting logistics, learning exchange activities, consultancies, studies and communication materials.

2.3.2. Structure and governance

Structure

The CSAM draws on the experience gained by the Montreal Food System. It is composed of a maximum of 24 members, including statutory and non-statutory members. Statutory members (no more than 50 per cent) are appointed by institutional partners such as the city of Montreal, the Regional Directorate of Public Health and the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The selected stakeholders (no less than 50 per cent) represent civil society, communities, business groups, researchers and the environmental movement, and have been nominated by the organization they represent.¹¹⁴

Figures 55, 56 and 57 illustrate the representativeness and inclusiveness of the CSAM, showing the diversity of participating stakeholders in terms of types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented.



Figure 55. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented in the CSAM (in red)

¹¹²<https://collectiftir-shv.ca/>

¹¹³<https://www.reseaualimentaire-est.org/>

¹¹⁴CSAM members, second cohort, October 2020 [https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/uploads/resources/Documents_officiels_CSAM/Membres_du_Conseil_SAM_2e_cohorte_\(Fevrier_2021\).pdf](https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/uploads/resources/Documents_officiels_CSAM/Membres_du_Conseil_SAM_2e_cohorte_(Fevrier_2021).pdf)

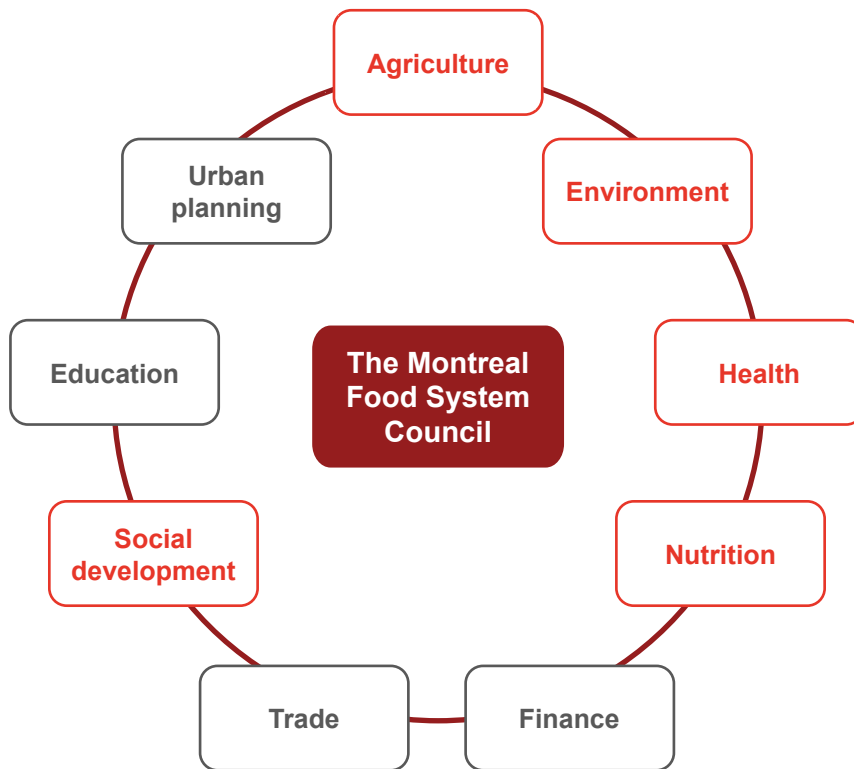


Figure 56. Sectors represented in the CSAM (in red)

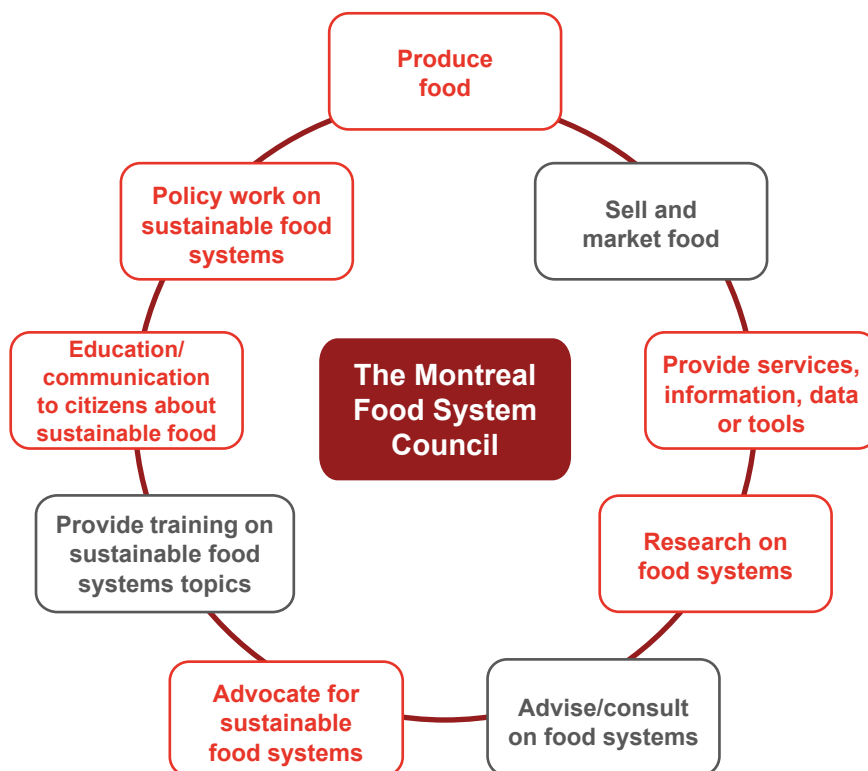


Figure 57. Activities represented in the CSAM (in red)

Governance

A written document available to all participants lays out the CSAM’s strategic vision¹¹⁵ and its principles of good governance (shown in Figure 58), which have been defined and agreed upon by all stakeholders.

The council has established internal procedures to put these principles into practice. These include mechanisms to manage conflicts between stakeholders, to involve stakeholders from outside the SFS MSM when necessary, to manage power relations, to foster collaborative learning processes, and to develop the capacities of its members.

To improve performance, the CSAM has set up several specialized committees with different tasks and responsibilities (e.g. preparing meetings, preparing proposals). It usually holds five meetings a year, which follow a predefined calendar. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of stakeholders surveyed indicated that they attend all meetings; 44 per cent dedicate more than 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM and 56 per cent dedicate 1 to 4 hours. In all the cases, members’ participation is sponsored by the organizations they represent.

The agenda for CSAM meetings is defined by a five-member coordinating committee. The objectives and issues to be addressed are defined ahead of the meeting. Invitations are sent one week in advance, along with the necessary documents (e.g. agenda, report of the previous meeting). During the meeting, a designated facilitator is in charge of ensuring constructive and inclusive dialogue. The CSAM aims for consensus when it comes to decision-making but adopts resolutions based on the vote of a simple majority, except for decisions regarding governance, which require two-thirds approval. A note-taker and rapporteur are appointed and members participate in the presentation of results obtained from the discussions. In addition to regular meetings, members also communicate via emails and letters, and through verbal exchanges.

2.3.3. Policy formulation and implementation

SFS policy formulation

A diagnosis of the city of Montreal was carried out using participatory methods. This provided a starting point, which made it possible to identify the food system’s

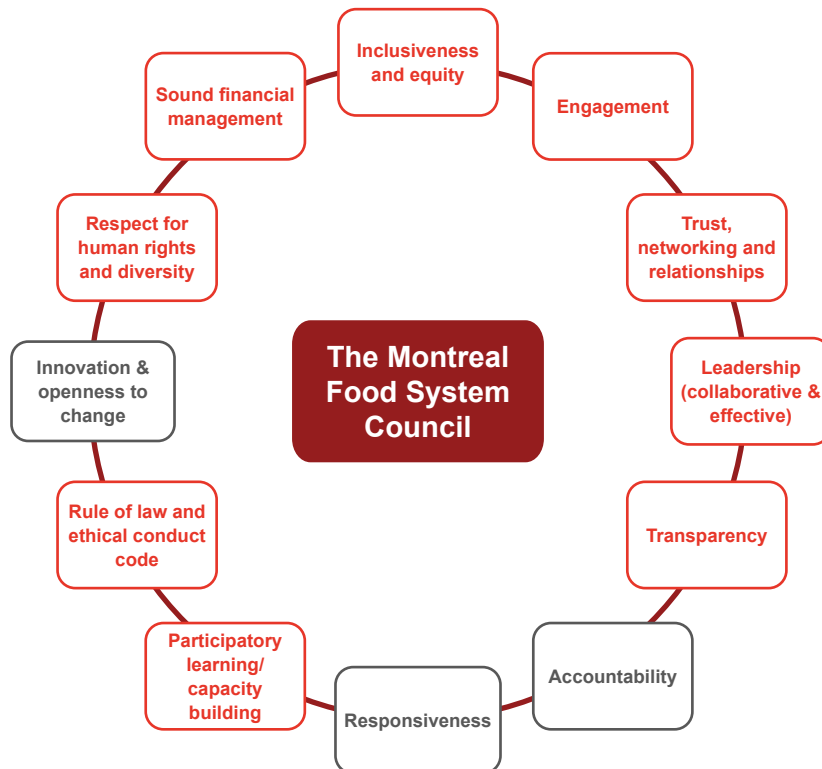


Figure 58. Good governance principles practised by the Gent en Garde FPC (in red)

¹¹⁵[https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/uploads/resources/files/Gouvernance_CSAM/Guide_de_gouvernance_CSAM_\(2020-09\).pdf](https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/uploads/resources/files/Gouvernance_CSAM/Guide_de_gouvernance_CSAM_(2020-09).pdf)

landscape and the current trends and challenges. The resulting report includes both a mapping of food-related stakeholders and policies, and places special emphasis on socially disadvantaged groups.

The formulation of the SFS policy for Montreal, the Integrated Action Plan 2020-2022,¹¹⁶ began immediately after the council was officially launched. It was carried out using a highly participatory process consisting of three phases. First, working groups composed of CSAM members and other invited experts were created. The objective of these groups was to collect data and build a portrait of Montreal's food system landscape, captured in the aforementioned diagnosis. After identifying potential actions, there was a second phase during which the SAM Forum 2019¹¹⁷ was launched. It convened 170 partners to prioritize the most promising interventions. In the third phase, the working groups defined the guidelines and objectives of the action plan, which was finally adopted by the CSAM. A call for proposals was issued to all food system stakeholders, resulting in 92 projects supported by more than 50 multi-sectoral partners.

In sum, the Integrated Action Plan 2020-2022 takes into account the food systems diagnosis, the priorities of the government, and the views and interests of the stakeholders over-represented and engaged in the process. It adopts a systemic and holistic approach, mainstreaming environmental sustainability into all key lines of action.

The action plan has a multi-level strategy and is consistent with other pre-existing food policies. It has monitoring mechanisms in place to assess progress and, if necessary, make corrections. The focus is on five key areas of action:

- Improve market access for local products;
- Reduce the ecological footprint of the food system;
- Reduce food insecurity for vulnerable people;
- Improve the nutritional quality of food;
- Work toward the consolidation of key projects and intersectoral collaboration within the Montreal food system.

In addition to formulating the action plan, the CSAM has also provided valuable input to (and promoted) other sustainable food-related policy initiatives. Examples include the proposal presented to the Montreal City

Council to tax sugar-sweetened beverages and a contribution to the city's social development and inclusion action plan. The SFS MSM was also involved in the enactment of the Health Protocol for Community Gardens,¹¹⁸ adopted in the context of COVID-19 by Montreal's Public Health Regional Directorate.

SFS policy implementation

To implement the Integrated Action Plan 2020-2022, the CSAM has an allocated budget of about CAD 500,000 (EUR 336,872) and collaborates with different partners. This collaboration is crucial in taking into account pre-existing plans, programmes and related activities in order to integrate them and thus improve effectiveness and efficiency. The CSAM plays a decisive role in terms of obtaining and allocating funds, coordinating and executing activities, managing projects, communicating and following up on evaluations and any necessary corrective measures.

2.3.4. Reported achievements and challenges

Achievements

Given that the CSAM is currently in its early years of existence, its main reported achievement to date has been the formulation of the Integrated Action Plan 2020-2022. The action plan is currently being implemented through 92 projects with five main lines of action, outlined in the CSAM's Projects Directory.¹¹⁹ Some of these projects are focused on capacity building, such as *Rendez-vous des agricultures montréalaises*,¹²⁰ which seeks to promote access to local food through a series of training and knowledge exchanges in agriculture. On the consumer side, the online course on sustainable food¹²¹ aims to provide consumers with the necessary knowledge and know-how to reduce their ecological impact through sustainable food consumption.

Additionally, the project entitled *Surveillance des indicateurs de la pauvreté et de l'insécurité alimentaire à Montréal* is intended to make key poverty and food insecurity monitoring indicators available to decision-makers. In particular, it periodically monitors the percentage of Montreal's population that is food insecure, and the proportion of tenant households that spend more than 30 per cent and 50 per cent of their income on rental costs.

¹¹⁶https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/uploads/resources/files/Plan_d_action_SAM/Plan_d_action_integre_20-22_Conseil_SAM.pdf

¹¹⁷<https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/fr/actualite/forum-sam-2019-planification-strategique>

¹¹⁸http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ARROND_PMR_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/PROTOCOLE%20SANITAIRE%20PMR.PDF

¹¹⁹<https://csam.ca/repertoire-de-projets/#access-au-marche>

¹²⁰<https://www.cultivermontreal.ca/les-rendez-vous-des-agricultures-montrealaises/>

¹²¹<https://atelierdugout.ca/>



Image credit: Anne Marie Aubert Coordinator at Montreal Food System Council

The CSAM is also supporting initiatives to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration, such as the initiative entitled *Démarche pour une relance durable et la résilience du système alimentaire*.¹²² This project seeks to identify courses of action for sustainable economic recovery, taking stock of the impact of the health and economic crisis in the food system on the population of Montreal and identifying indicators and data sources to monitor changes in the resilience of the food system.

The above-mentioned projects illustrate why all the stakeholders agreed that the CSAM's main achievement has been the creation of networks among food systems actors, and 56 per cent reported that it has resulted in concrete collaborations and projects.

In addition, stakeholders mentioned that their organizations have benefited from the mechanism by getting news and information related to their food system and to other stakeholders' projects and government initiatives.

Challenges

According to 67 per cent of the participants surveyed, the main challenge facing the CSAM is that it is

still a relatively new mechanism, and thus needs time to consolidate and show concrete results in terms of achieving a more sustainable food system. Furthermore, 44 per cent of respondents think that stakeholders lack the time to participate in additional initiatives that go beyond the core mission of their organizations.

Some stakeholders also indicated that governance in the CSAM could be improved if the council was more open to accepting more input from stakeholders in public consultations and to having wider and more collaborative participation. Another opportunity for improvement identified in the stakeholder survey relates to how clearly the SFS MSM identifies and articulates its vision, mission and goals among the members of the council, as only 32 per cent of respondents perceive this is done properly.

Finally, the respondents identified a need to step up responsiveness to urgent issues, such as COVID-19-related food emergencies. In fact, less than half of them (44 per cent) consider the council to have shown a high level of responsiveness in supporting effective decisions in the context of the pandemic.

¹²²<https://sam.montrealmetropoleensante.ca/fr/actions/demarche-pour-une-relance-durable-et-la-resilience-de-notre-systeme-alimentaire>

2.3.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for the CSAM

The CSAM is an MSM, which, despite its young age, has managed to bring together a wide range of stakeholders representing the Montreal food system and to formulate the Integrated Action Plan 2020-2022. Moreover, it has also provided valuable input to important food-related policy proposals.

The members of the CSAM work together toward a common vision. Their aim is to ensure access to healthy food for all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status, and to guarantee that it comes mainly from local products, minimizing the impact on the environment. The SFS MSM encourages the participation of all stakeholders concerned by the challenges facing the local food system. It promotes a panoply of initiatives to build capacity and to produce data to help explain the evolution of the food system and its challenges, for example.

According to the stakeholder survey, a number of factors have shaped the CSAM's journey, thereby contributing to its important milestones and achievements.

Regarding the diversity of its stakeholders, over half (56 per cent) of the respondents concur that the CSAM represents the existing variety of actors in Montreal's food system, and that this balanced representation is one of the strongest drivers of collaboration.

Another key success factor is the level of stakeholder involvement, which ranges from medium to very high according to all respondents. The most heavily involved group is the public sector; this sector's engagement is perceived to range from medium to very high according to 78 per cent of respondents, followed by civil society (67 per cent). At the other end of the scale, only 22 per cent of respondents consider the level of engagement of the private sector and farmers to be medium to high. In terms of motivations for participating in the CSAM, 89 per cent indicated learning as the primary reason, and 78 per cent cited networking and staying informed about current food issues in the city.

Consistent with the perceived high level of public sector involvement, all stakeholders consider the level of government buy-in, including the support of high-level representatives, to be medium to high.

Having governance principles that are both acknowledged and respected by all stakeholders is a core feature of the CSAM. Overall, all respondents consider that all stakeholders in the council respect the governance principles that have been agreed upon. Additionally, 89 per cent perceive that the meetings are well organized and that the CSAM's



Image credit: Marcos Paulo Prado by Unsplash

structure and processes provide the means for equitable representation and participation of all stakeholders. Furthermore, more than half (67 per cent) of the respondents believe that the majority of formal members are actively involved in the SFS MSM's work, that communication is transparent, clear and effective, and that participatory learning processes are conducive to the capacity building of its members.

Undoubtedly, the strong leadership that has guided the CSAM's journey has been fundamental to the success achieved. In this regard, all the stakeholders surveyed consider that the leadership shares power with the members in decision-making, and that it reflects the contributions of all the stakeholders in the documents produced by the CSAM. Furthermore, 89 per cent of respondents believe that the leadership is receptive to new ideas, that it encourages all members to participate, and that it actively welcomes new members. Most of them also feel that the CSAM has good mechanisms in place to manage conflicts of interest (according to 78 per cent of respondents), but responses are more balanced when it comes to resolving disagreements (56 per cent) and managing power relations (56 per cent). Overall, 67 per cent of respondents report that the SFS MSM provides opportunities for members to build leadership skills within the mechanism.

All stakeholders responding to the survey state that the CSAM has a good understanding of the overall policy environment related to its priorities. Moreover, 89 per cent of respondents believe that it has a good understanding of its policy subject matter. As a result, the SFS MSM has well-defined policy priorities as part of an overall strategy (according to 89 per cent of respondents). Furthermore, the majority of participants (78 per cent) think that the food systems approach used for policy formulation and implementation is understood by most of the stakeholders that make up the CSAM.

Effectiveness has been another critical factor reinforcing the CSAM's consolidation and achievements. All stakeholders acknowledge that the council has been effective in including a food systems approach and an environmental sustainability component in its work. Moreover, they consider that it successfully meets the nutrition and health needs of the most vulnerable, fostering inclusive and constructive dialogue and promoting collaborative and coordinated action among all food system stakeholders (according to 89 per cent of respondents).

Looking ahead, respondents believe that the CSAM's priorities should be sustainable food production (67 per cent of respondents), climate mitigation (56 per cent) and local markets and food environments (56 per cent).