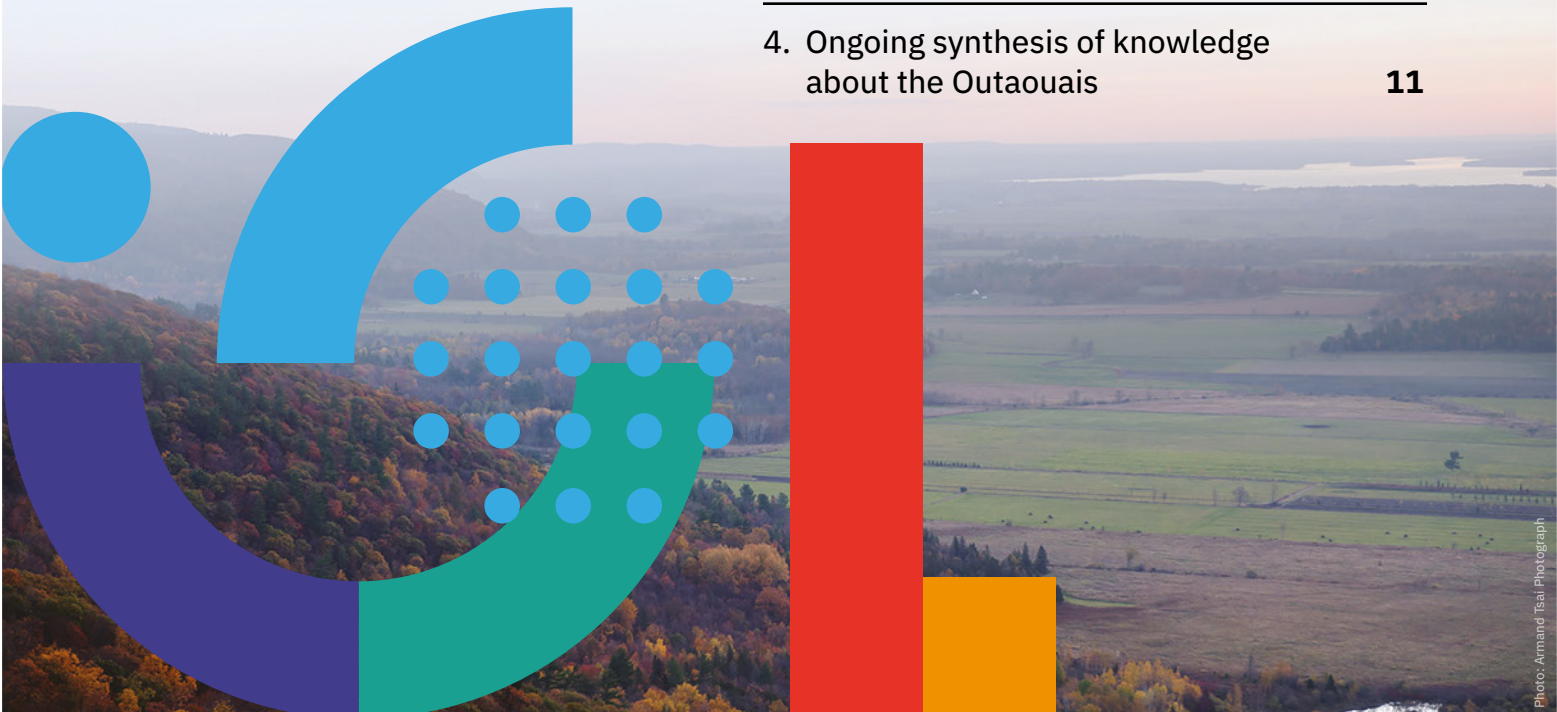




OBSERVATOIRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'OUTAOUAIS: AN ADDED VALUE FOR THE REGION AND ITS TERRITORIES

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Avec la participation financière de :

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CREATED IN 2018, THE OBSERVATOIRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'OUTAOUAIS (“OBSERVATORY”) EMERGED FROM A MOBILIZATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCHERS AND STAKEHOLDERS EAGER TO PROVIDE THE OUTAOUAIS WITH A COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT. THE OBSERVATORY IS THUS A FUSION OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE ALIGNED WITH THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND ITS TERRITORIES. THE TWOFOLD OBJECTIVE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO DEMONSTRATE THE OBSERVATORY’S ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE REGION’S DEVELOPMENT AND TO STIMULATE INCREASED USE OF IT AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE ITS CONTINUITY.

Mission

Built on a partnership basis, the Observatory is a forum for exchanging information, conducting research and mobilizing knowledge and practices concerning the region’s development in order to meet the information needs of decision makers, community organizations, stakeholders, entrepreneurs and citizens.

1.

A LEARNING COMMUNITY FOCUSED ON THE OUTAOUAIS

The Observatory is first and foremost a place that encourages stakeholders to talk with each other, build together and share their know-how and knowledge on every facet of development in the Outaouais.

The Observatory plays an active role in the community by establishing close ties and sustained interaction with development stakeholders in the field. These exchanges take place mainly within the framework of the Observatory's various governance bodies, notably the steering and monitoring committee set up for each specific project.

The stakeholders forming the Observatory's entourage are thus key sources of information, given their expertise in the many spheres of development and their representation of actual practice across the region. Their knowledge and hands-on experience contribute essential added-value to the Observatory's work. Their involvement facilitates the creation of tools that in turn help them, as users of the Observatory's services, to better understand territorial dynamics and development-related issues and thus improve practice.

Over time, these exchanges among stakeholders with diverse interests help to develop a collective culture, a multisectoral vision and a stronger regional identity.



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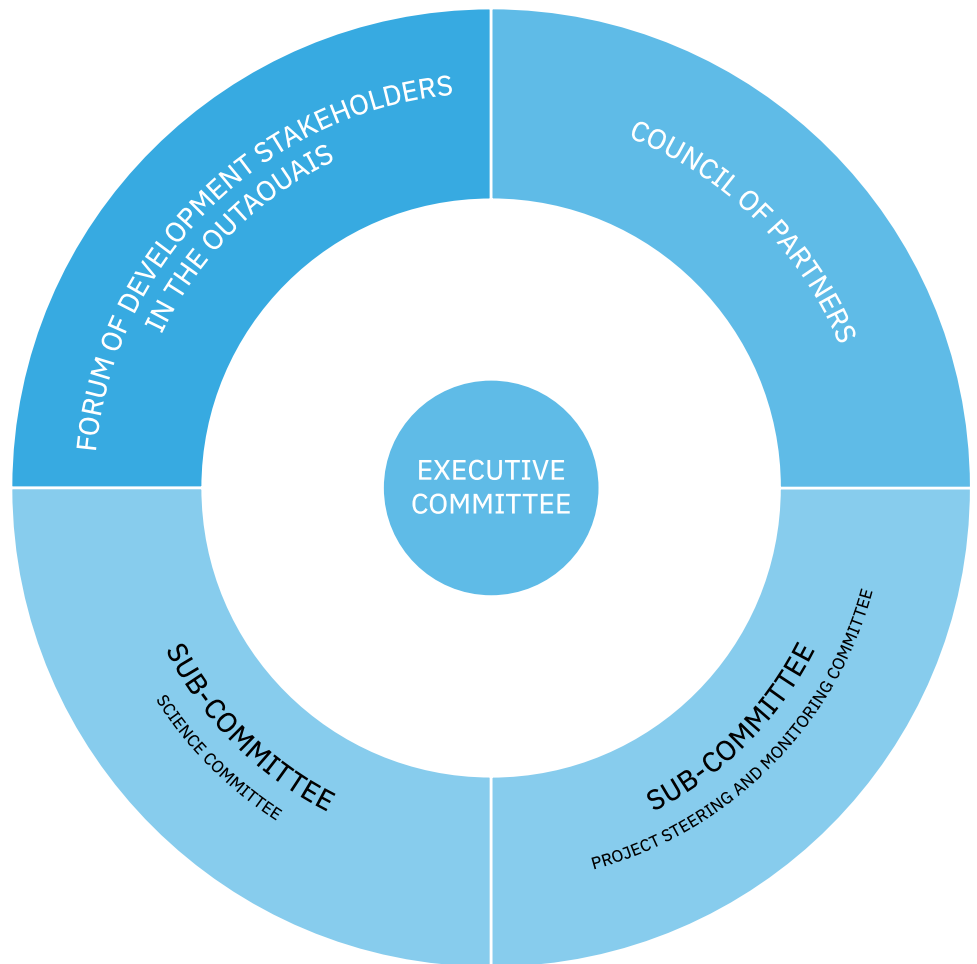
The group of stakeholders formed around an observatory can be likened to a learning community, or even a research community. The members of a learning community share the same values and visions and come together to acquire knowledge from each other (Brown, Collins et al. 1989).”

”

(Lemoisson et coll., 2008).



The Observatory's governance: a participative decision-making process with sectoral and territorial representation



42 ORGANIZATIONS AND 66 DELEGATES ARE INVOLVED IN THE COMMITTEES

2

NEW FORMS OF PRODUCTION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE USEFUL FOR DECISION-MAKING AND ACTION

“

At the moment we find that with our aging population and with our youth, too many people are leaving Pontiac. We need to encourage people to stay. And with this information, we are going to be able to do that. It is very important for us to have this information because, although we were aware of some of the issues, we didn't have the statistics to back it up. And as we are planning the next 10 years, this [Portrait] will be very important for those plans.

”

Jane Toller,

Warden, MRC Pontiac, 2020

The Observatory's primary function is to enrich and deepen the knowledge base on the dynamics of development in the Outaouais. As an organization affiliated with the Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO), the foundations of the Observatory's work are quality data and the principles of scientific rigour and relevance, with a concern for neutrality and objectivity.

Yet the Observatory is also a partnership, whose members choose and direct its projects in response to the issues raised by development stakeholders in the Outaouais.

Accordingly, the Observatory differs from conventional research mechanisms, for its raison d'être is to produce knowledge that will guide decision-makers and influence the actions taken in the territories concerned.

Simply put, the Observatory is a meeting point between research and practice.



Concrete examples of how the Portrait des communautés can be used in the Outaouais

LEVERAGE DATA TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS

- In a business plan, use the data to show the relevance of opening a dental office in a given sector and to draw up a profile of clients in the vicinity.
- Use the data to identify needs for adapted housing in vulnerable communities.
- Use the data to facilitate consultations and mobilization projects.

GUIDE ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE FIELD

- Raise awareness among real-estate developers of a population's housing needs in order to influence the supply of new residences.
- Subdivide a territory to facilitate management of home-care resources.
- Evaluate and foster the representativeness and participation of culturally diverse residents in public consultations.

KNOW WHERE TO TAKE ACTION

- Plan the location of kindergartens for 4-year-olds and day camps.
- Identify the optimal location of a social pediatrics centre.
- Enhance prevention among vulnerable clientele and adapt policing strategies based on each community's profile.
- Enrich the municipal activities being offered and develop public spaces and infrastructure (e.g., skating rinks, swimming pools and community gardens) based on the profile of the host community.
- Identify priority communities for introducing an automated call system to raise the awareness of seniors to the risks of COVID-19.
- Study, justify and prioritize arteries for public transit with a high level of service.
- Improve the safety of pedestrian and bicycle corridors near schools and other sites visited by young people and vulnerable persons.
- Establish a structuring greening plan and prioritize the communities most vulnerable to climate change.

OBTAIN RESOURCES FOR ACTION

- Back up funding requests with concrete data demonstrating unmet needs.
- Identify indicators for assessing the effectiveness of adopted strategies.



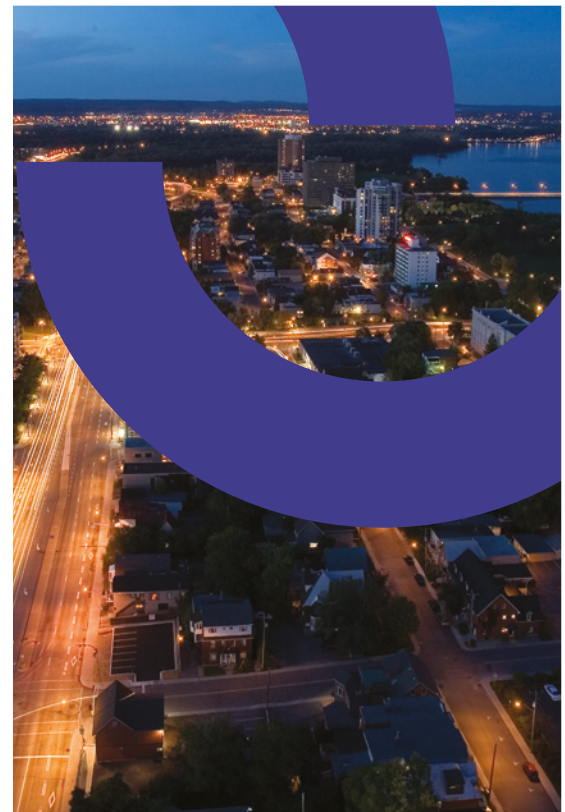
3.

CREATION OF TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES FACILITATING THE APPLICATION OF ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

Simply disseminating research findings is not enough for users to take ownership of the knowledge. Stakeholders in the field often need support to more fully understand the information and see how it can serve them in practice. The Observatory, in addition to offering users support tailored to their needs and expectations, also has various means for ensuring that the information disseminated is accessible and easily used. These means include:

- ① Gathering data from various sources, organizing it and presenting it in a way that clearly communicates the status, challenges and potential of the territories.
- ① Repackaging this knowledge in various forms based on users' expectations and needs: summary statements, workshops, monitoring and evaluation grids, targeted presentations, exchanges, forums, newsletters, digital platforms, databases, etc.
- ① Facilitating the interpretation and analysis of complex statistical data by leveraging its expertise in cartographic and geomatics analyses.

While they are useful for development stakeholders in the Outaouais, these tools also help, in some cases, to strengthen the Outaouais' influence beyond its borders and raise the awareness of external stakeholders to the region's manifold and still little-known realities.




“

I'm delighted to see the interest generated by this new tool. With the realization of this project, the Observatory is providing the region's development stakeholders and decision-makers with a reliable, comprehensive socio-economic portrait drawn up not only by collating multiple data sources but also by incorporating the knowledge of experts in the field. The tool will definitely inform the orientations and action strategies adopted by the region's stakeholders, yet it will also serve to raise the awareness of elected officials at higher levels of government to the often unacknowledged realities and specificities of the Outaouais.

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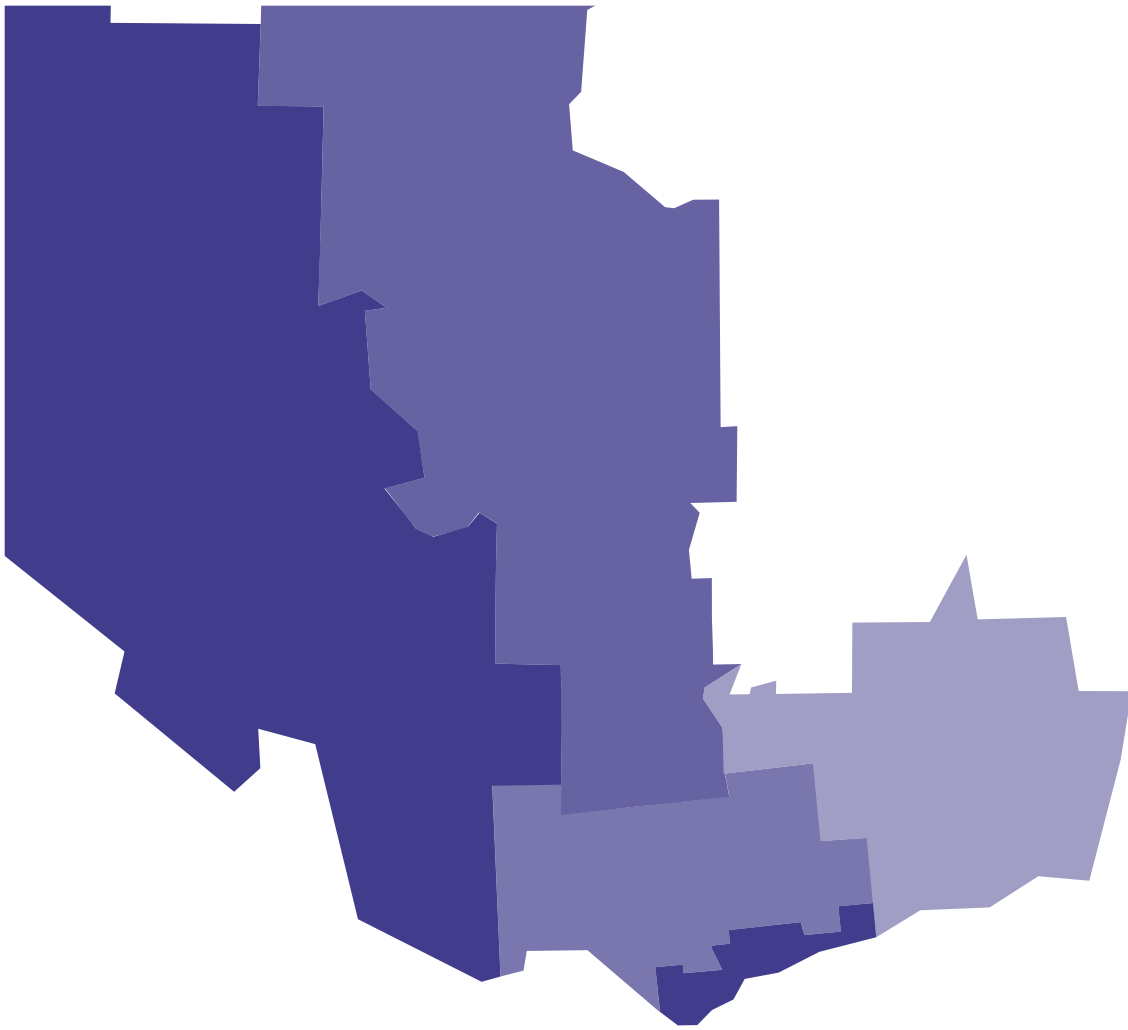
Martin Robitaille,
specialist in Outaouais development and former director of the Observatory, on the occasion of the launch of the *État de situation socioéconomique* in December 2020.



Projects tailored to needs for better application of knowledge



| PROJECT | <i>PORTRAIT DES COMMUNAUTÉS DE L'OUTAOUAIS</i> | <i>ÉTAT DE SITUATION SOCIOÉCONOMIQUE DE L'OUTAOUAIS ET DE SES TERRITOIRES</i> | COMPETITIVE POSITION OF THE OUTAOUAIS AS A BORDER REGION |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| TERRITORIES TARGETED | Communities (lived space) | Administrative territories: Outaouais region, MRCs and Municipalities | Territories on both sides of the border: the Outaouais and Eastern Ontario |
| OBJECTIVES | Develop a collective tool showcasing in-depth knowledge of community realities and accurate portraits on a small scale | Describe the socio-economic status of the region and of each of its regional county municipalities based on the most recent data available | Enhance our knowledge of the issues and opportunities faced by the Outaouais because of its unique border status |
| | Accompany users to improve their understanding of the socio-economic issues in their area of intervention and strengthen their capacity for action | Build an information tool that is easy to consult, use and keep up to date | Strengthen the competitive position of the Outaouais |
| MEANS | Mobilize knowledge and stakeholders | | |
| TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES | 109 portraits and dashboards (in French only) illustrating various components of community development | 23 summary documents (in French only) including 18 overviews of various economic sectors and indicators and 5 territorial summaries. | A Forum that mobilized 180 stakeholders and facilitated knowledge sharing |
| | The data is available in Ville de Gatineau's Infoterritoire (in French only). | Each topic has a Web page devoted to it, with highlights, a summary of strengths and weaknesses, and key charts and graphs. | Diagnostic tools zeroing in on strengths, issues and knowledge gaps |
| | Some twenty workshops on using the Portrait tools, through which 230 participants have gained a better understanding of their communities to improve their intervention | The project launch and knowledge transfer activity was attended by 140 stakeholders. | Awareness-raising tools for decision-makers, for making known the strategic situation shared by the Outaouais and Eastern Ontario and to exploit this potential more fully |



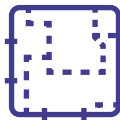
Geomatics gives the Observatory a world of possibilities for documenting, depicting and popularizing data

“**Geomatics** encompasses all the knowledge and technologies required to produce and process the digital data describing a territory, its resources and any other aspect or phenomenon with a geographical position.” (Hélicéo, 2021) Geomatics adds value to the Observatory’s various areas of expertise.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS THE OBSERVATORY USES GEOMATICS.



Training



Foundational data for a land use planning and development plan



Data on property ownership



Informing decisions; land performance



Cartographic modelling of spring flooding



Cartographic analysis for Observatory projects

4.

ONGOING SYNTHESIS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE OUTAOUAIS

The Observatory represents a fusion of knowledge about the Outaouais, combining a variety of quantifiable resources (reports, syntheses, activities, etc.) and incalculable strengths (methodology, know-how and expertise). The Observatory analyzes the dynamics of the Outaouais' development from various perspectives, across multiple sectors, and at different scales, and this analysis is continued over time. The astute, robust expertise on the Outaouais developed at the Observatory acts as a collective memory.

The Observatory's added value is derived from this continuity of research and perpetuation of knowledge. Unlike research carried out on an ad hoc basis, the Observatory's projects feed into each other and become levers permitting deeper insights.



MIRADOR

Bibliothèque virtuelle sur le
développement de l'Outaouais



Mirador is an online library through which the Observatory builds and disseminates the inventory of information it gathers while continuously monitoring for new studies, statistics, research and publications on the Outaouais' development.

Through its user-friendly, interactive interface, Mirador gives users access to more than 1,200 (and counting) documentary resources organized by field, territory and topic. For stakeholders in the field who often do not have the means to dig up existing information or stay abreast of data being made available by other organizations, this single-window access to documentation is a valuable tool enabling them to zero in quickly on useful references from a variety of angles.

IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, THE OBSERVATOIRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'OUTAOUAIS HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN ESSENTIAL PARTNER FOR THE REGION'S MAIN DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS AND DECISION-MAKERS. A FUSION OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE, THE OBSERVATORY IS DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND DISTINCTION OF THE OUTAOUAIS AS A REGION WITH MULTIPLE REALITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES. IT IS A UNIQUE KIND OF OBSERVATORY AND IS AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL OF QUÉBEC.

LONG LIVE OUR OBSERVATOIRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'OUTAOUAIS!



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References

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