

Optimizing Evidence Uptake in Municipal Climate Policy

The Case of the Halifax Regional Municipality

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ACCESS/BoFEP Conference (June 5, 2024), Saint Andrews, NB

1 Context

Municipalities are critical actors in climate action because they are directly impacted by the effects of climate change. Municipal authority to create and implement policies is bound by provincial legislation. Little research has been conducted on what enables and restricts the uptake of evidence in municipal decision-making. Informing climate policy at the municipal level is a significant challenge.

2 Purpose

This project seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How are urban coastal municipalities considering evidence in the development of policy to respond and adapt to climate change?
2. What are the key enablers and barriers in the uptake of research in these contexts?
3. How can enablers be enhanced for policy-makers and researchers?
4. How can barriers be mitigated for policy-makers and researchers?

3 Case study

Three coastal municipalities in Atlantic Canada will be used as case studies: the Halifax Regional Municipality, the City of St. John's, and the Ville de Rimouski. The Halifax Regional Municipality case study is the first to be conducted (Figure 1).

4 Literature review

An initial literature review was performed in Spring of 2024. Deductive and inductive approaches were used to identify relevant references. In the deductive phase, repositories and keywords were selected *a priori*. References were then screened using Covidence. In the inductive phase, references were discovered using keywords identified *a posteriori*. In total, 170 references have been retained.



Figure 1. Coastal urban centres such as Halifax are vulnerable to sea-level rise. (Build Nova Scotia, 2016)

5 Preliminary results

Preliminary results suggest that the literature on evidence uptake in municipal contexts is limited. Potential barriers and enablers vary and are context-specific (Figure 2).

Potential barriers

Lack of expertise

Lack of capacity to seek evidence

Poor information management systems

Inaccessibility of research and evidence

Potential enablers

Funding for research on knowledge use

Collaborative research and knowledge coproduction

Embedded expertise

Increasing evidence accessibility

Figure 2. Potential barriers and enablers to evidence uptake in municipal contexts.

6 Next steps

Interviews with local and municipal decision-makers, observations of meetings, and document analysis will be conducted.

7 Acknowledgements

The authors thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for its support (Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's).

8 Selected references

