



**RESILIENT BUILDINGS,  
HEALTHY AND  
WELCOMING HOUSING**

*Solutions Lab*

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Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

April 2021



Écobâtiment is a Québec-based non-profit organization (NPO) whose mission is to promote sustainable building practices in order to contribute to the creation of healthy, comfortable, functional and green living spaces.

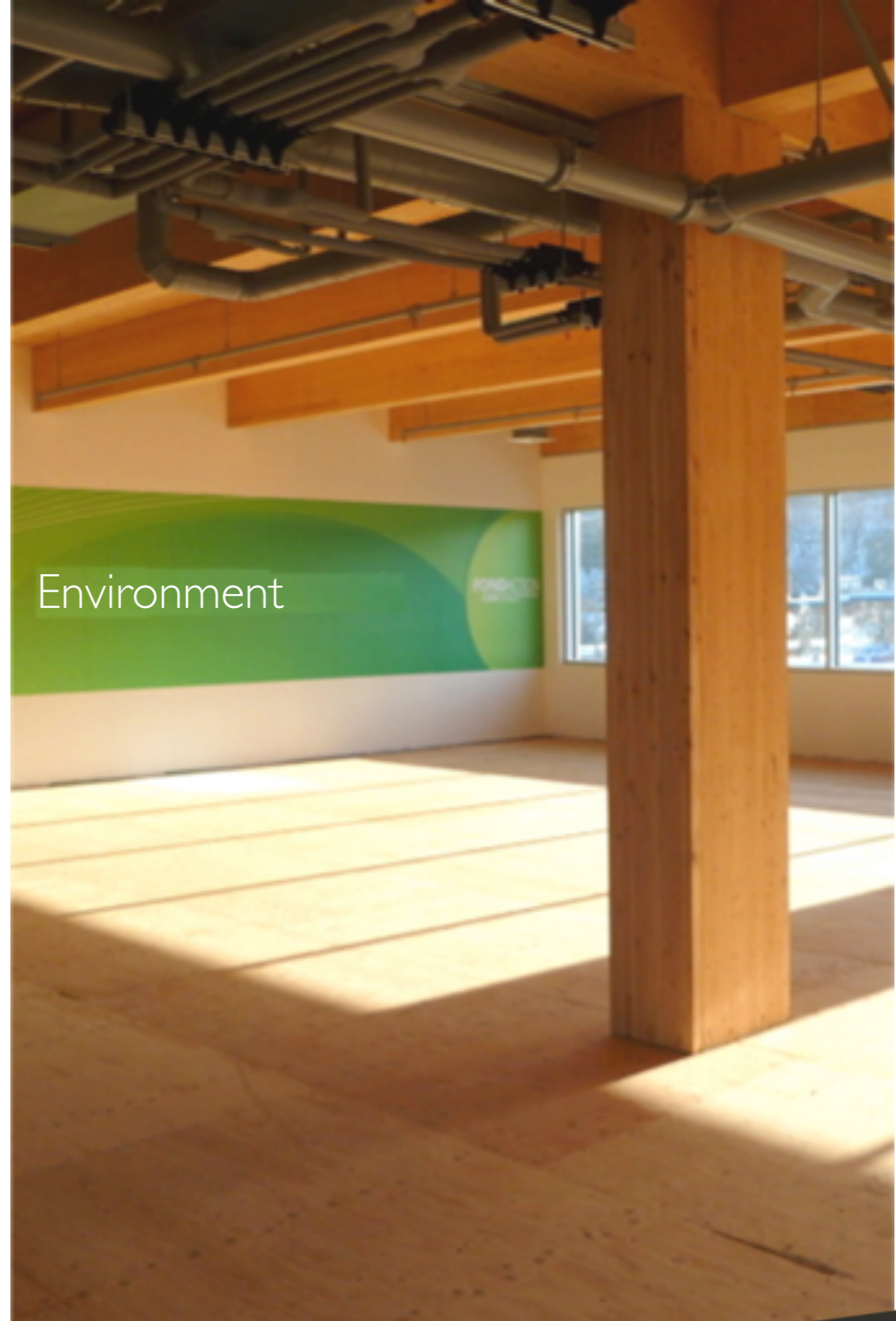


Photo credit: Écobâtiment

ÉCOBÂTIMENT



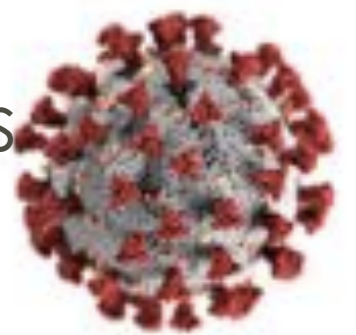
Presenting the **process** and **results** of the



# **RESILIENT BUILDINGS, HEALTHY AND WELCOMING HOUSING**

*Solutions Lab*

A social innovation project led under Covid 19 restrictions



Crédit photo: Écobâtiment

## **OBJECTIVE**



Once upon a time,  
a very long time ago...



**ÉCONO**  
LOGIS program



Québec 

ORIGIN OF THE IDEA



Select a target group:

CMHC REQUEST



Select a target group:



CMHC REQUEST



# Select a target group:

In the course of the first five years spent in Canada, a quarter of immigrant households declares having lived in adverse housing conditions.

This includes housing that is:

- Too expensive
  - Too small
  - In need of major repairs
- ... or a combination of these situations.

CMHC REQUEST



# RESEARCH REPORT

Contributing factors:

- Low income
- No credit history
- Distrust of immigrants and prejudice against them
- Quebec rent control regulations that benefit long-term occupants
- Communication problems
- Ineligibility to public housing



A new territory for our organization

# WORKSHOP 1: DISCOVERY




Dealing with a loaded topic

# WORKSHOP 1: DISCOVERY

**Newcomers' path to resilient, healthy and welcoming housing | Écobâtiment Solution Lab | Deloitte**

**NEWCOMERS**




**Arrival in Quebec, Canada**

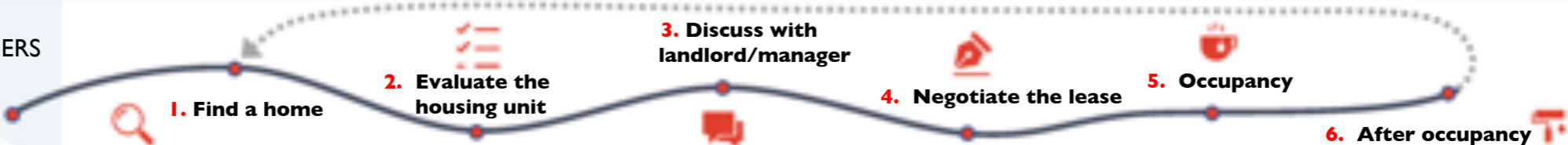
An important life transition

A new country, new culture and new climates

**Challenges**

- Emotional
- Financial
- Lifestyle
- Communication
- Integration
- Healthy, welcoming and affordable housing





	1. Find a home	2. Evaluate the housing unit	3. Discuss with landlord/manager	4. Negotiate the lease	5. Occupancy	6. After occupancy
<b>Step</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Search for healthy housing that fits the family size and budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schedule a visit</li> <li>○ Inspect the unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make contact</li> <li>○ Meet the application terms and conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Obtain the document</li> <li>○ Fill it out correctly</li> <li>○ Get it signed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain temperature and humidity at healthy levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Notify landlord of any necessary repairs</li> </ul>
<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>Newcomers</b></p> <p>How to search for healthy housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit types</li> <li>• Unit sizes</li> <li>• Housing prices</li> </ul> <p><b>Landlords</b></p> <p>How do they promote healthy and affordable housing?</p>	<p><b>Newcomers</b></p> <p>What items should be assessed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment condition</li> <li>• Traces of mould</li> <li>• Condition of ventilation system</li> <li>• Natural lighting</li> <li>• Access to public transit</li> </ul>	<p><b>Newcomers</b></p> <p>What should they discuss?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items included in the rent</li> <li>• Cost of electricity</li> <li>• Cost of parking</li> </ul> <p><b>Landlords</b></p> <p>Is the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to pay?</li> <li>• Able to take care of the housing unit?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Newcomers and landlords</b></p> <p>What issues need to be clarified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Items included in the lease</li> <li>• Common area cleaning (winter)</li> <li>• Renewal, transfer or cancellation of lease</li> <li>• Rent increase</li> </ul>	<p><b>Newcomers</b></p> <p>How to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment?</li> <li>• Ventilation and heating systems?</li> </ul> <p><b>Landlords</b></p> <p>Will the tenant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take care of the housing unit?</li> <li>• Follow housing unit rules and respect neighbours' rights?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Landlords</b></p> <p>In what condition will I find the housing unit? Can I keep this housing unit healthy and affordable with little maintenance?</p>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites such as Kijiji</li> <li>• Romel:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of housing units without information on their hygienic condition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No information on what should be inspected in a building during a housing unit visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General information from the City of Montréal, CMHC, non-profit organizations that help newcomers, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General information from the City of Montréal, CMHC, non-profit organizations that help newcomers, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infographic – Guide: City of Montréal:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature and humidity control standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>• City of Montréal inspector service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Montréal inspector service</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database of healthy, welcoming and affordable housing with feedback from settled immigrants</li> <li>• Identification criteria for healthy housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Knowledge in order to recognize adequate, healthy housing</li> <li>• Ability to assess:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Building condition</li> <li>– Maintenance requirements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Suitability for budget, size and lifestyle</li> <li>• Knowledge of equipment and building operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Knowledge of roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Are landlords equipped to take in newcomers and maintain buildings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance requirements</li> <li>• Occupancy behaviours in northern environments (tenants and landlords)</li> <li>• Problem or conflict resolution tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance requirements</li> <li>• Occupancy behaviours in northern environments (tenants and landlords)</li> <li>• Problem or conflict resolution tools</li> </ul>

**NOTES**

Only resources providing newcomers with direct assistance at specific stages along this path have been presented (see the preparatory material for the complete list of resources reviewed by Écobâtiment).

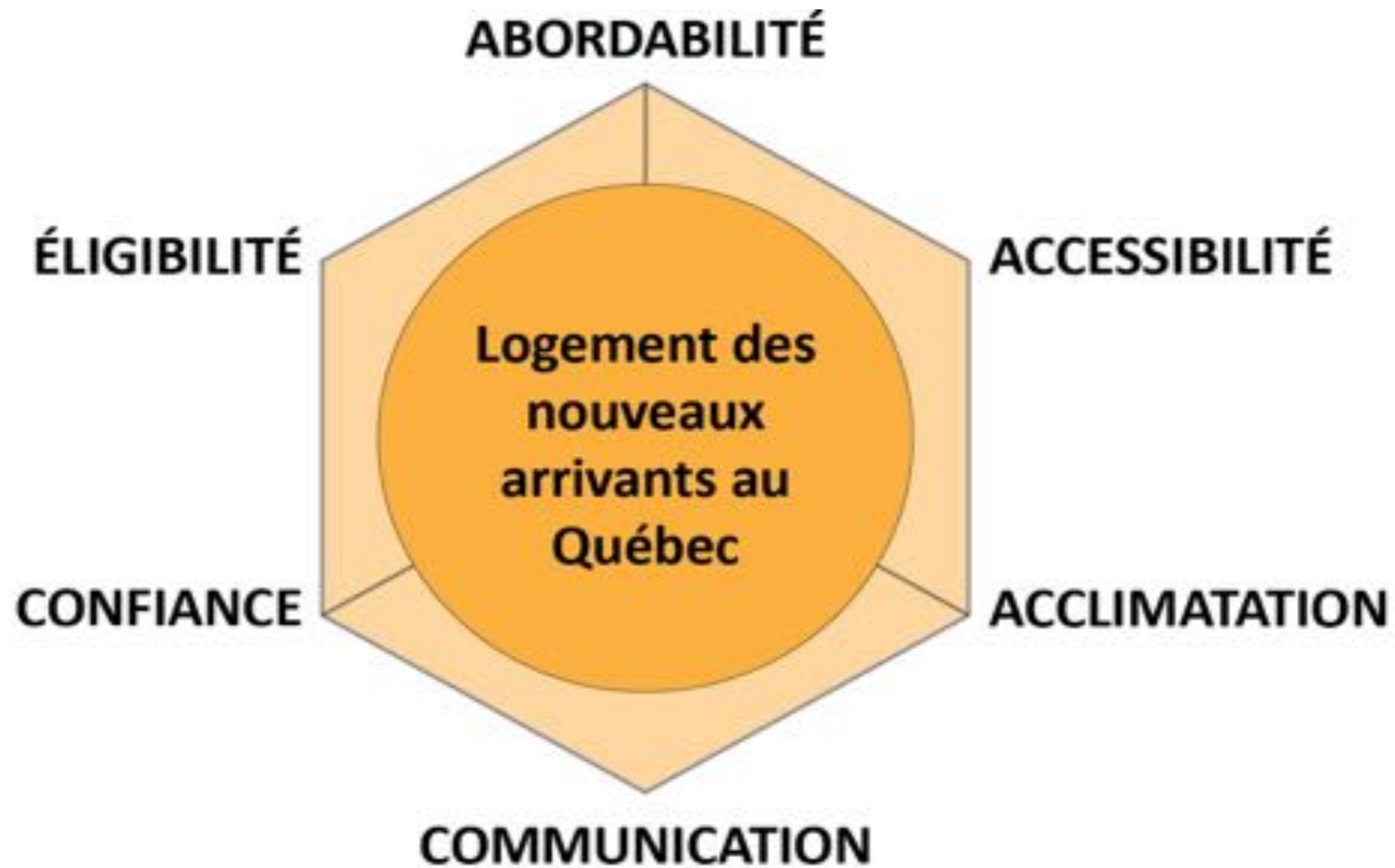
Documenting the immigrant path

# WORKSHOP 1: DISCOVERY



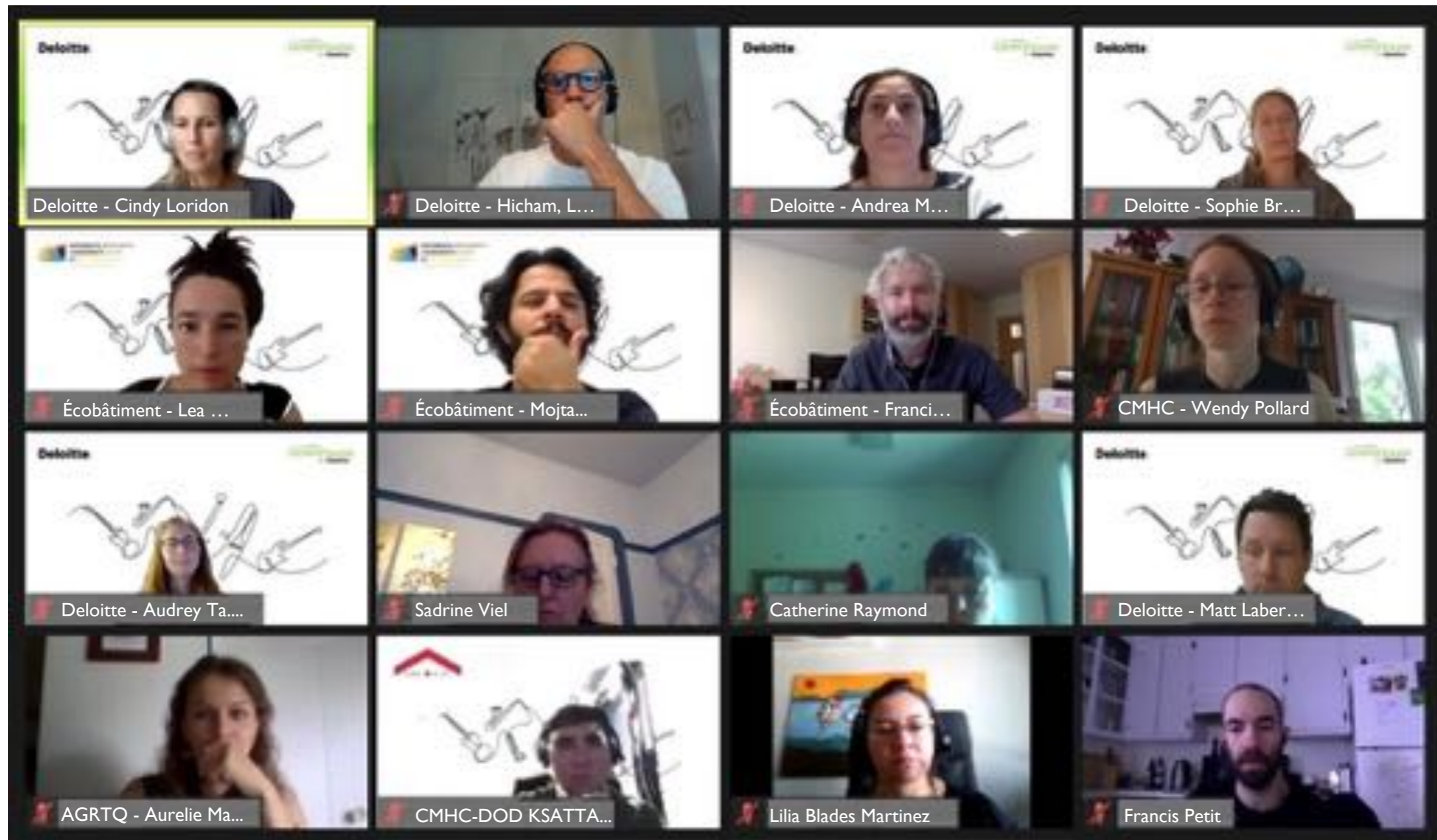
Define potential action areas

# ATELIER 1: DÉCOUVERTE



BALISER LE CHAMPS DES INTERVENTIONS POSSIBLES

# WORKSHOP 2: DEVELOPMENT



Holding a consensus-building workshop online

# WORKSHOP 2: DEVELOPMENT

## Brainstorming rules

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Solutions must be consistent with the specific housing needs of the targeted priority population, i.e. **newcomers to Canada.**



Submitted proposals must contribute to the **targeted and timely creation**" of solutions that are "**practical, replicable, achievable and deliverable within a realistic time frame.**"



Solutions to broader issues such as financial insecurity or access to employment, while undeniably linked to housing conditions, are not the focus of this lab.



# WORKSHOP 2: DEVELOPMENT



Come up with a unifying idea



RESILIENT BUILDINGS,  
HEALTHY AND  
WELCOMING HOUSING

Proposed program framework  
Summary version for feedback

February 2021

Set up  
**stepping-stone housing**  
for refugee households  
in privately owned and  
NPO rental projects.

Come up with a unifying idea



This idea incorporates many of the claims and possible solutions put forward by participants, including:

- Support for the provision of affordable housing in attractive, mixed and diverse environments
- Support for the provision of materially sustainable housing
- Provision of support for the acclimatization and integration of the most vulnerable newcomers
- Facilitation of good tenant-landlord relationships in intercultural settings
- Support and the provision of tools to facilitate learning about Quebec's housing practices

Come up with a unifying idea



# STEPPING-STONE HOUSING PROGRAM

PRIVATE OR NPO LANDLORD

IMMIGRANT-FOCUSSED  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

FINANCEMENT DÉDIÉ AUX  
RÉNOVATIONS ET ACCOMPAGNEMENTS

HOUSING

**STEPPING-STONE**

SUPPORT

Design a program



# WORKSHOP 3: OPTIMIZATION



Validate the idea



To support occupant safety, comfort and integration, the renovated units will:

- Be located in projects that promote exchanges and inclusion
- Be of sturdy design and fitted up with good quality materials
- Be equipped with robust, energy-efficient and high-performance mechanical systems
- Have simple and intuitive controls



Develop a program

The support agency will:

- Coordinate the program with the partner landlord
- Select and welcome tenants and get them settled in
- Provide orientation on the neighbourhood, the site and the building
- Show how various building systems and appliances are used and maintained
- Provide instruction on the effects of the Canadian climate on housing operations (heating and humidity management)
- Raise awareness of good neighbour and cohabitation standards
- Prevent and settle potential conflicts with neighbours or landlords
- Take other actions requested by the occupant
- Finding the next home and providing support for the move
- Accountability reporting to the granting agency

Develop a program



# STEPPING-STONE HOUSING PROGRAM

PRIVATE OR NPO LANDLORD

IMMIGRANT-FOCUSSED  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

JOINT FINANCING APPLICATION

Up to \$27,000 per unit:

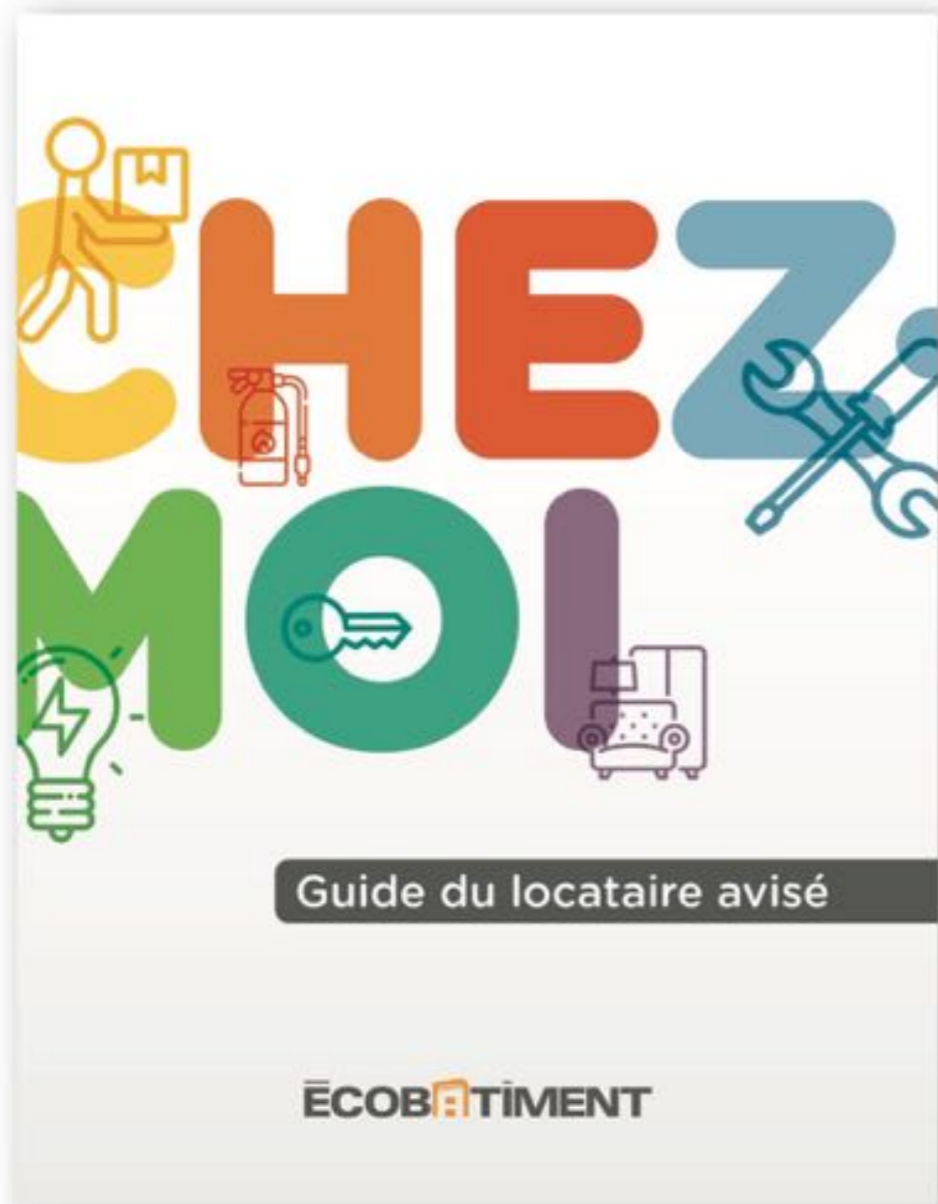
- For quality renovations
- Size, configuration and location criteria
- Rented as stepping-stone housing for six years
- Rent less than or equal to median rent

\$12,000 per unit:

- Selection, welcome and settling in of eligible households
- Support over a 12- to 30-month period
- Program coordination

Develop a program

# WORKSHOP 3: OPTIMIZATION

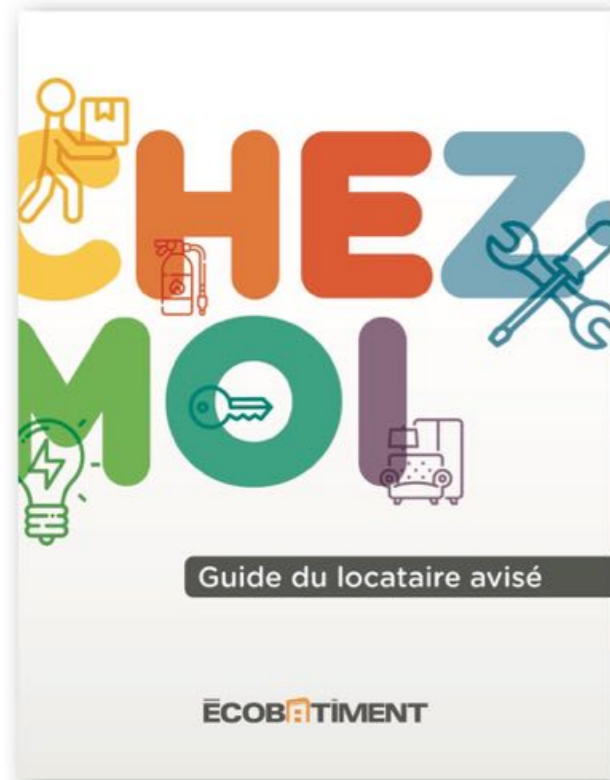


A guide explaining simply with illustrations the basic best usage practices for Quebec homes that ensure the comfort, health and safety of occupants.

Develop tools



# EXPERIMENTATION



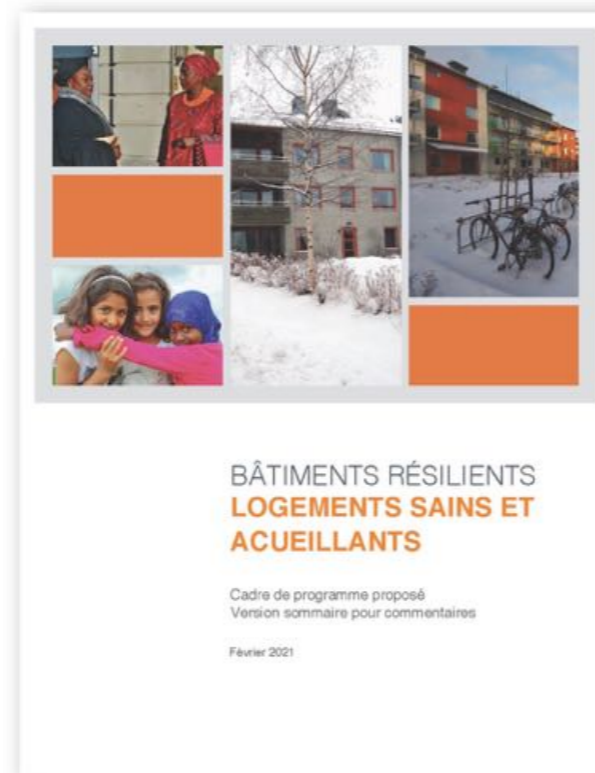
Review by project collaborators

Validation of program terms and conditions with:

10 government agencies  
(for government-assisted  
refugees)

9 private landlords and  
NPOs for a total of 12,000 units  
in Quebec

SHQ for legal aspects

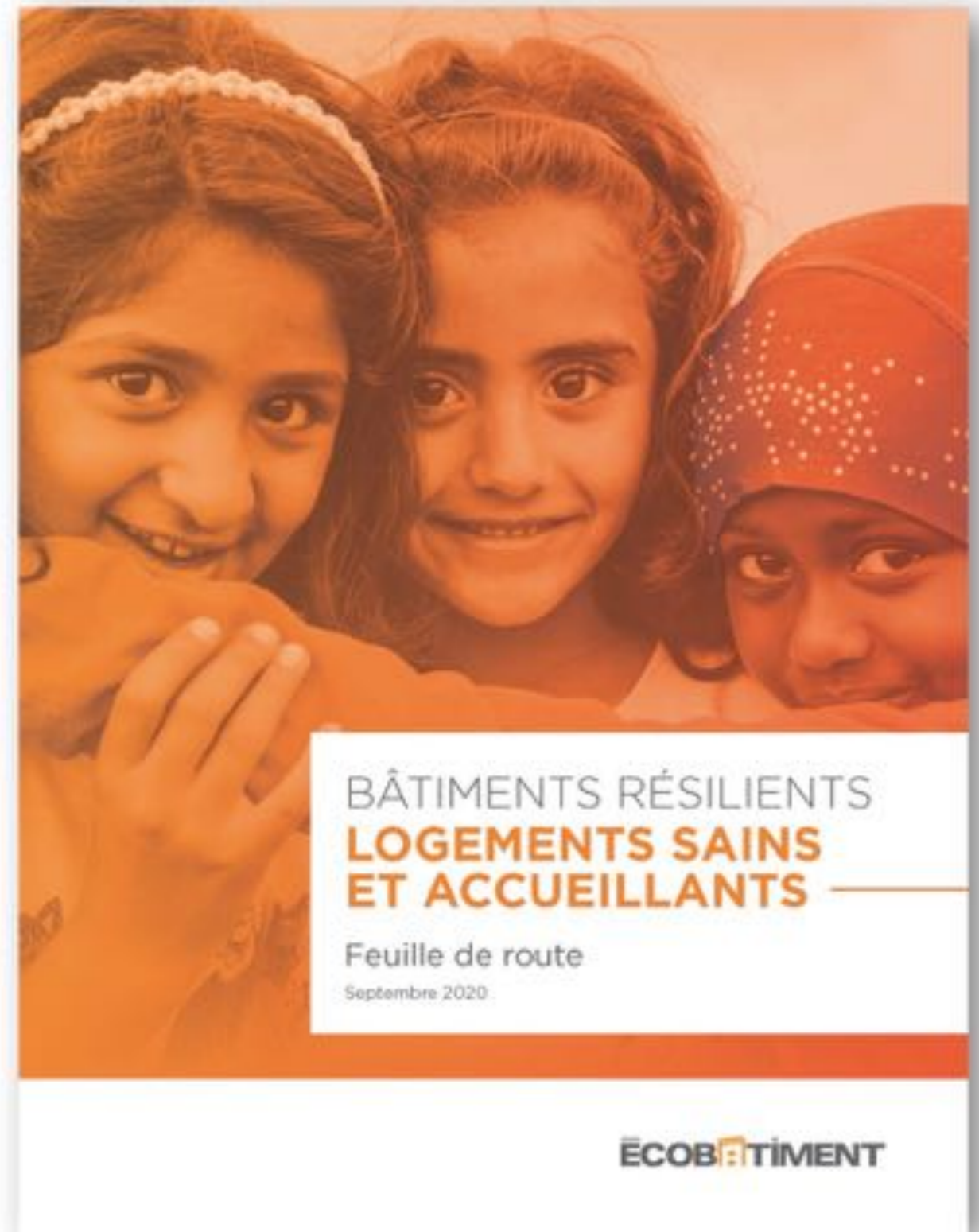


Testing interest and feasibility

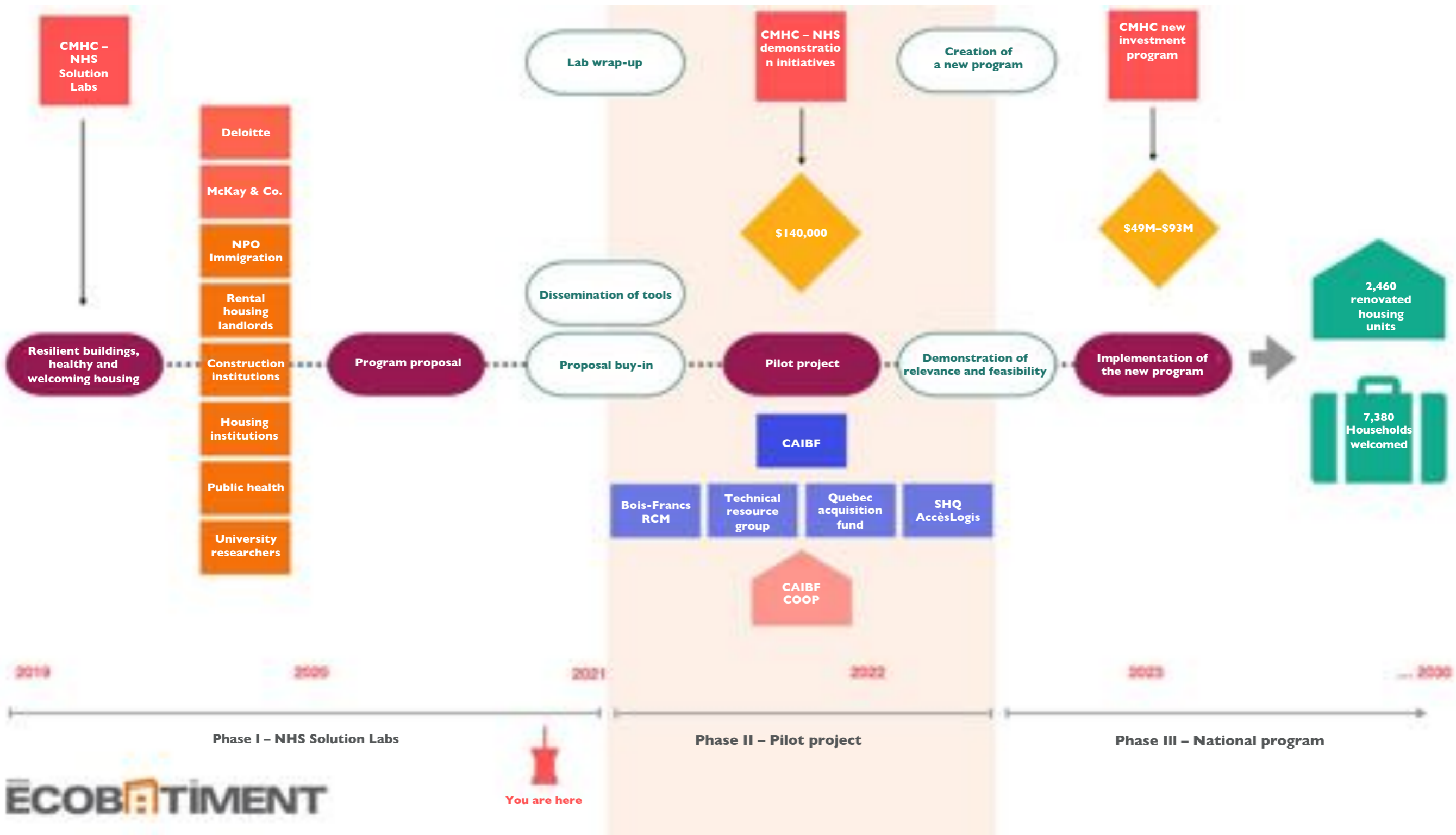
# ROADMAP

To accommodate 50% of refugee households that settle in Quebec in a stepping-stone housing unit.

The total allocation to the program would be between \$49 million and \$93 million over seven years.



Lab follow-up



**ECOBA TIMENT**

# Lab follow-up



# KEY ELEMENTS TO TAKE HOME

As real-estate dynamics keep on marginalising fragile and low-income households, public investment in construction (federal, provincial and municipal) can, and should, be leveraged to direct resources towards vulnerable groups.

Read the full proposition and signal your support at:  
[www.unlogementsain.org](http://www.unlogementsain.org)

Download the tenant's guide Chez-moi on Ecobatiment's website: [www.ecobatiment.org](http://www.ecobatiment.org)



## Contact

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**THANK YOU!**

