

**Gander – New
Wes Valley
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council**



**Activity Report
2008-09**

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Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2008-09 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of the council's accountability for the results achieved.

As a result of the work council has completed to date and in response to the changing socio-economic climate of the region, the council will continue to further redefine and develop its vision for sustainability and to re-examine identified priorities resulting from our evidence based research. The council is committed to identifying priorities, policies and programs which either advance or negatively impact the development of public policy or that need to be developed to contribute to regional sustainability, considering economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

This is a time of unprecedented change in our region and province, but with challenge and change come opportunities for future growth. With sustainability as the goal and necessity as the mother of invention, communities are currently in the process of redefining our rural community governance structures. There is a renewed commitment to social and economic development activities and there is a positive shift in community stakeholder cooperation and collaboration. As such, Council will focus on aiding this continuing process of community and regional capacity building, providing continuity to the communication and planning process.

Through continued partnership developments and other effective communications processes, the council will act as a catalyst in fostering this ongoing grassroots, bottom-up process of community engagement and development with stakeholders; community, industry, government departments and Provincial Government leaders. It is in this visionary spirit of cooperation and trust, ingenuity, empowerment and transparency that we will move forward to forge a sustainable region that meets and balances the socio-economic needs of its residents, contributing to the strength and viability of the region and the province as a whole.

Members of council are truly committed to this process and are pleased with the work of the council. We would like to thank all stakeholders for their participation in this process to date. With renewed commitment we look forward to continuing this positive working relationship with all partners as we shape the landscape of our changing communities, region and province, aiding the preservation of this wonderful region and province we are privileged to call home.

Best Regards,



Nadine Decker, Chairperson
Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region



The population of the Gander - New-Wes-Valley region is estimated to be 46,515, or about 9.2 percent of the total provincial population. This share is expected to decrease to approximately 8.5 percent over the next 15 years.

Employment in the Gander - New-Wes-Valley region is estimated at 23,460 according to Census 2006, or 8.8 percent of total provincial employment. Employment in the region decreased by less than 1 percent over the past five years, but has decreased by 6.4 percent over the past ten years.

Goods-producing industries, including primary activity, mining and oil extraction, construction, utilities and manufacturing accounted for 32.9 percent of employment in the region in 2006. This sector accounted for 26.8 percent of provincial employment. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 1.

Private sector services, excluding private education and health services, accounted for 43 percent of employment compared to 46.3 percent for the province as a whole.

Last, employment in public administration and services that are largely funded or delivered by the public sector, such as education, health care and social assistance, totalled 5,645 in 2005, or 24.1 percent of employment. This compares to 27.1 percent for the province as a whole.

Within the broad public administration and related services group, health care and social assistance services employment totalled 2,785 and educational services totalled 1,245. Federal, provincial, municipal and aboriginal public administration, including defence services, totalled

Chart 1
Employment by Industry, 2005

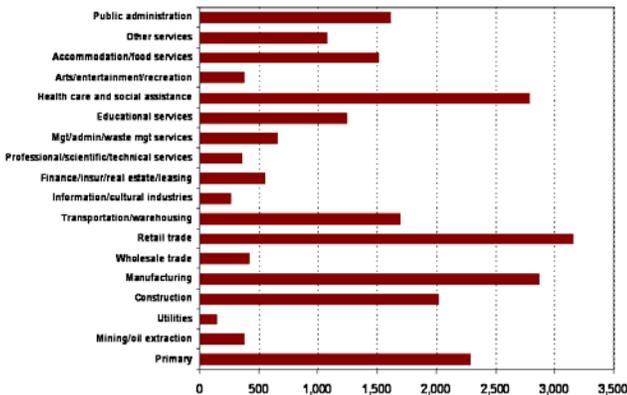
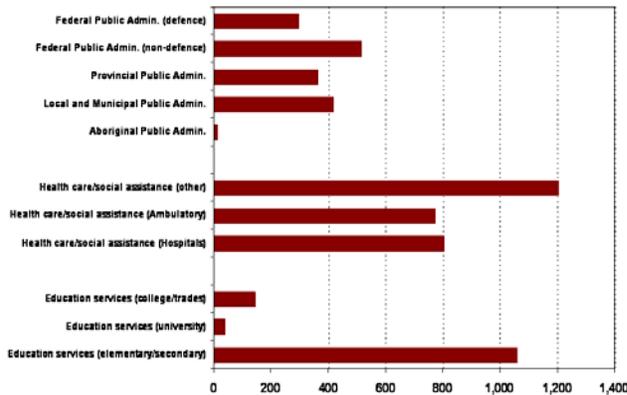


Chart 2
Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



1,615. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 2.

There were 120.5 persons employed in public administration and related services in 2005 per 1,000 persons in the region in 2005. This compares to 142.7 persons per every 1,000 residents for the province as a whole. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 3.

This relatively low ratio is impacted by a relatively low federal presence and the fact that Memorial University has no campus in the region. After adjusting for these factors, the region's ratio was

120.5 persons compared to 116.5 for the province as a whole.

The profile of employment in the region is also changing. In 2005, 80.6 percent of employment was considered full-time (30 or more hours per week) and 34.7 percent of employment was considered full-year (50 or more weeks worked per year). By comparison, 79.5 percent of employment was considered full-time in 1995, and 34.4 percent was considered full-year.

The potential labour supply is declining faster than the employment rate. The labour force population (ages 15-64) was estimated at 38,290 in 1995 and 33,144 in 2005, a decline of 13.5 percent over the ten year period.

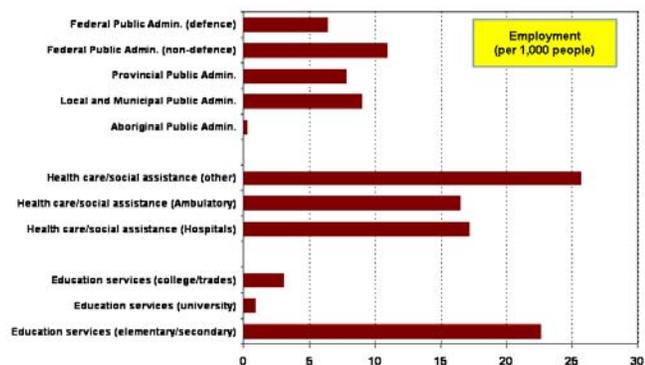
Faster decline in labour supply relative to employment resulted in a lower unemployment rate and higher incomes, and indirectly resulted in lower reliance on income support.

The regional unemployment rate declined from about 20 percent in 1995 to 10.5 percent in 2005, and personal income per capita, after adjusting for inflation and personal taxes grew by 19.8 percent.

Total incidence of income support, or the percentage of people that received income support at some point during the year, declined from 18.9 percent in 1995 to 10.8 percent in 2005.

One of the key long term labour market challenges facing the region relates to how to meet

Chart 3
Per Capita Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



employment demand as the labour supply ages and declines over the next decade. Today, about 37 percent of those ages 15-64 are in the 50-64 age bracket. This is expected to increase to about 45 percent by 2020. Over the same period, the labour force age population is expected to decline by about 16.5 percent from about 32,000 to just under 26,500 persons.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural

2. Regional Council Overview

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is comprised of nine members; two female and seven male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region. The council met 4 times in 2008-09. Members also participated in engagement sessions, learning events and sub-committee work.

The council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat. Below is a summary of the expenditures for the region including both planner and council costs:

	<i>Gander- New- Wes-Valley Budget 2008-09</i>	<i>Gander- New- Wes-Valley Expenditures</i>
Transportation & Communication	15,000.00	18,504.03
Supplies	2,500.00	1,550.74
Purchased Services	6,400.00	6,018.42
Total Budgeted	23,900.00	26,073.19

The Rural Secretariat also funds a Regional Partnership Planner position in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the council and facilitates the work of the council. The Planner for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley region is Tanya Noble. Her office is located in New-Wes-Valley.

Regional Council members	Community
Nadine Decker (Chairperson)	Joe Batt's Arm
Victor Cassell	Cottlesville
Edythe Goodridge	Salvage
David King	Twillingate
Rick Lackey	Twillingate
Wayne Perry	Newtown
David Regular	Summerford
James Snow	Lewisporte
Ryan Vincent	Newtown

* For an updated listing of council members please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp>

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- To review key regional economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five-year period.
- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. Lines of Business

The council supports the Rural Secretariat's two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development.** The Rural Secretariat engages citizens and coordinates the development of partnerships to focus on sustainable regional development and provide direct consideration of regional issues in the development of public policy.
- **Regional Impact Awareness and Action.** The Rural Secretariat conducts research and analysis, and provides informed advice on opportunities and challenges in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

5. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. These values are paramount to the mandate and activities of the council and are as follows:

Collaboration	to commit to working together effectively
Creativity	to seek and support new ideas and approaches
Empowerment	to assume responsibility for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions
Inclusion	to acknowledge others' views and perspectives and exercise the right and opportunity to express their own
Recognition	to recognize and value the skills that each bring
Transparency	to share open and objective advice based on sound information and principles
Trust	to be open and supportive when partnering and to follow through on requests and commitments

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the provincial government, among others.

The council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. Vision

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

Through its work, the council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the council. It represents the key long-term objective that the council will be striving towards as they move forward with their work. The priority focus areas support the strategic directions of the Provincial Government. The statement also identifies the indicators that will assist both the council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. The council will report on its mission statement in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

The mission statement of the council is as follows:

By 2011, the council will have participated in an ongoing community engagement process that will demonstrate the value of two-way communication between the provincial government and citizens.

9. Report on Performance

In its 2008-11 Activity Plan the council identified two goals. This section outlines each of these goals, its measure and indicators, and describes activities undertaken by the council to advance its achievement.

The activities and performance of the council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the provincial government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the council's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various stakeholders at the regional level, and provided a new regional forum to discuss citizens' perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. The council recognizes that these strategic directions are long term in nature and believes that its activities in 2008-09 and beyond will further support these directions.

9.1 Issue 1: Advancement of Key Elements for Regional Sustainability

The council has compiled an inventory of issues they feel are critical to long-term regional sustainability. Many of these issues have been highlighted and incorporated in the vision document. Each of these issues have to be understood, evaluated and improved upon in order to ensure long-term regional sustainability. In an attempt to focus the learning and work of members, council identities at a minimum one issue to address each year. As a result of this work, an informed perspective on the issue at hand is shared with government in an attempt to improve public policy, outlining why this issue is important to regional sustainability

Goal:

By 2011, the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have initiated a process to communicate regional perspectives on the issues and opportunities impacting the region's sustainability and advised the provincial government in the development and implementation of public policy.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have developed a perspective on the issues of governance and rural education delivery as it relates to regional sustainability with the intent to inform the development of public policy.

Measure:

Communication to the Provincial Government of an informed regional perspective on the issues of governance and rural education delivery.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Research and data collected and reviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance understanding on the issue of governance and education council considered the following documents, presentations and websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President’s Task Force on Municipal Sustainability, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador Discussion Paper • Task Force on Municipal Regionalization Final Report and Reforming Municipal Government in NL: The Time for Regionalization, Municipal Affairs. • A Review of Rural and Regional Development Policies and Programs, Mark Goldenberg, CPRN Research Report, 2008. • Presentations: Rural-Urban Interaction in Newfoundland and Labrador: Understanding and Managing Functional Regions. Kelly Vodden and Alvin Simms, Department of Geography, Memorial University • Foundation For Success, White Paper on Public Post Secondary Education, Department of Education, 2005. • Framework Document for Restructuring School Systems, Nova Central School District, 2005. • Saskatchewan Community Schools Website. • The council collected and reviewed the following regional and Provincial statistical data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of population with university degrees, trades or certificate, high school completion and less than high school. • Identified towns that were incorporated municipalities or local service districts. • Municipal financial data; total revenue, long term debt, municipal operating grants, taxes, etc. • The council partnered with other regional councils and Memorial University’s Harris Centre to host two forums on governance and rural education delivery. The forums brought together regional council members, community stakeholders, regional and provincial organizations (Central Nova School Board and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador), government (Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development), and researchers from Memorial University. A report resulted from each session.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Council identified and engaged citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens, parents, teachers, school administrators, researchers and Central Nova School Board were identified and invited to respond with respect to the future of education in Newfoundland and Labrador. • Citizens, municipalities, local service districts, researchers and Municipalities Newfoundland Labrador were identified and invited to respond to Council with respect to the future of municipal governance in Newfoundland and Labrador. • Engagements included one-on-one sessions with individuals and group sessions. Individuals and groups also responded to Councils vision document, which considered education and municipal governance, as well as, an education document and municipal governance document.
Consensus developed on advice to the provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council drafted education and municipal governance advice documents. The council arrived at consensus regarding the content of these documents.
Advice submitted to the provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advice document titled “Education: An Inherent Right”, submitted to Minister of Education on March 27th, 2009 • Policy advice document titled “Municipal Governance” submitted to Minister of Municipal Affairs on March 13, 2009

Based on these accomplishments, the council will focus specifically on marine resources in 2009-10 as a key element for regional sustainability. It will work toward the following measure and indicators for its 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have identified additional issues or opportunities as they relate to regional sustainability and will have developed a regional perspective with the intent to inform the development of public policy.

2009-10 Measure:

- Additional issues or opportunities identified as they relate to regional sustainability and regional perspective developed with the intent to inform the development of public policy.

2009-10 Indicators:

- Research and data collected and reviewed
- The council engaged citizens
- Advice submitted to the provincial government

9.2 Issue 2: The Process of Community Engagement

The council utilizes the vision, as well as other means (discussion documents, presentations, forums, etc.) to engage citizens and government on topics as they relate to regional sustainability. The vision is being shared with citizens with an invitation to share feedback to Council. Highlighting and communicating the issues and opportunities will lay a foundation for regional partners and government departments to work together to advance these priorities.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011 the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have expanded its communication (engagement) process and refined its long-term vision for sustainable development of the region.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009 Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have identified and engaged with citizens regarding the vision document.

Measure:

Vision document is communicated to citizens throughout the region for feedback

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Identified and engaged with individuals and groups on the vision document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision document was circulated to citizens and organizations in various ways. The vision document is a working document intended to provide an overview of issues and opportunities that have been the focus of council's deliberations. Its purpose is to stimulate discussion and debate regarding the future sustainability of the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document was provided to citizens selected by council members, as well as various regional groups such as; Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation, municipalities, development associations, Primary Health Care Advisory Committee, etc. • The document was also distributed via email to individuals in the region who participated in past engagement sessions with the Rural Secretariat. • Regional Partnership Planner circulated the document at regional meetings and forums. • The vision is also available on the Rural Secretariat website. • All recipients of the document were invited to respond in writing or to meet with a council member or the Regional Partnership Planner to collect their views.
Feedback received from the engagement sessions informed the vision document and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council collected and recorded feedback. Responses were collected from groups and individuals in writing or by meeting with council members and/or the Regional Partnership Planner. Feedback is used to support and inform priorities. The council intends to report on the refined long-term vision in 2009-10.
Improved communications with community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with the community started around the Vision Document in 2007-08 by way of circulating the Vision Document and receiving feedback from citizens. • Communications with the community around the Vision Document was continued in 2008-09 through the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Document posted on the Rural Secretariat Website • One-on-one informal discussions by council members with citizens.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email distribution of Vision Document. • Regional Partnership Planner attending meetings and forums with the intent to circulate and communicate councils work. • Mail outs to municipalities of the Municipal Governance document and the vision document with an invitation to respond • In partnership with two other councils and Memorial University Council hosted two forums on governance and rural education delivery. • Through engagement in both the vision development and key elements for sustainability work, the council believes that it has created awareness of their work, and opened themselves to the community for consultation and discussion.

Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010 Gander- New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have refined its long-term vision for regional sustainability.

2009-10 Measure:

- Long-term vision for regional sustainability refined to reflect what the council has heard and learned.

2009-10 Indicators:

- Review feedback
- Revised long-term vision for regional sustainability.

10. Additional Highlights

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is seeking to broaden public dialogue on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region. It aims to provide input and advice to the provincial government on these opportunities and challenges. This is a long term process that will require ongoing collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in the region.

The council feels that its performance in 2008-09 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. It is providing an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities,

opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and differing expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues.

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, other highlights are worthy of mention. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the work of the council in 2009-10 and 2010-11. These highlights include:

- The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council developed and submitted an advice document to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment with respect to the Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy. In its submission, the council included a collection of responses to the questions posed in the strategy.
- The council developed and submitted an advice document to the Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat in response to the Transportation/Communication Priority Area Recommendation Document, December, 2008, submitted by the St. Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council. It recommends that the provincial government conduct a study of the impact to the province when the Trans-Labrador Highway is completed.
- Regional Council members attended a learning event hosted by the Rural Secretariat in October, 2008. Building on the annual Dialogue Day events from 2004 to 2007, this event was facilitated by Dr. Rupert Downey of the University of Victoria and focused on community-based research. This learning event was followed by the *Knowledge in Motion '08* conference hosted by the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Development of Memorial University. This conference focused on the importance of linking university research to community development needs and priorities and how to translate knowledge to inform public policy and decision making.
- Members attended the Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Labour initiative “Labour’s Way – Sharing the Wealth” in Twillingate, September 2008. Focus was to obtain the views of individuals on ways and means of improving the rural regional economies and various quality of life issues.
- Chairperson attended and spoke at a reception hosted by the Community Services Council to celebrate volunteer week in Gander during April 2008. Focus was the role of a Rural Secretariat Volunteer.
- Chairperson attended a learning event hosted by Memorial University’s Harris Centre–Community Research Partnerships: Resource Management in Marine & Freshwater Environments, Beaches Heritage Centre, Eastport, NL August 21-22, 2008. The event brought together faculty and staff of MUN, government and community members to discuss the issues and opportunities surrounding the Indian Bay watershed and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the council remain fairly similar from year to year. The council feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

The council's mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for the council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

The council's mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for the council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for the council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and provide advice to government to advance efforts to provide such supports.

Regional communications

The council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, such as and among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for the council is to openly and positively communicate its mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for the council, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as it identifies regional priorities, provides advice to government and fosters collaboration.

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

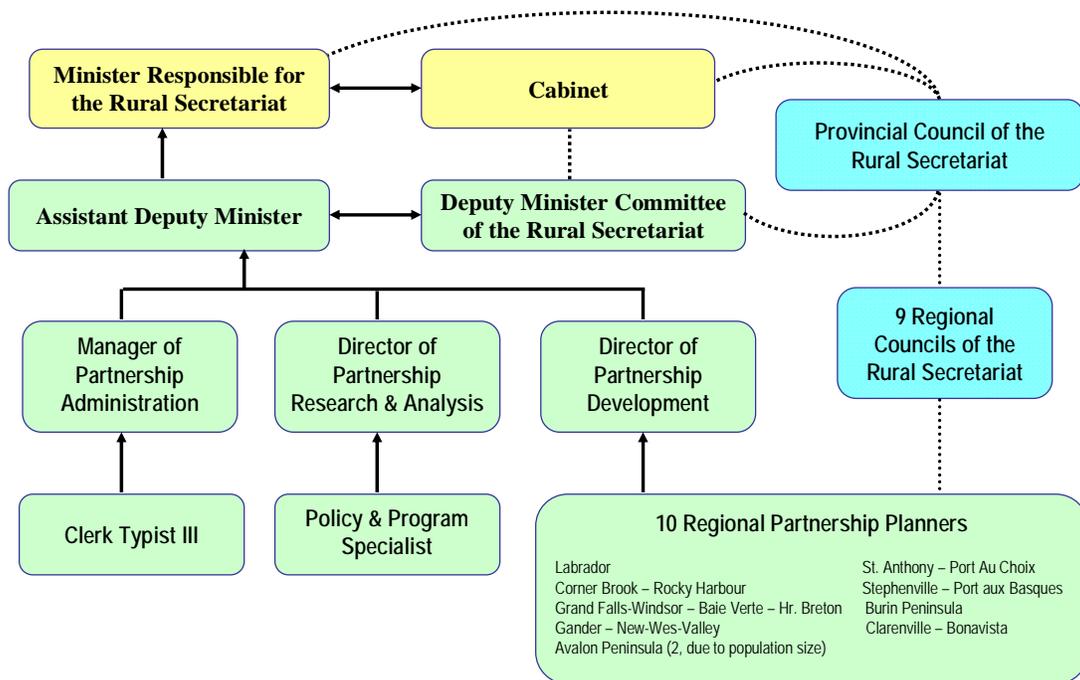
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

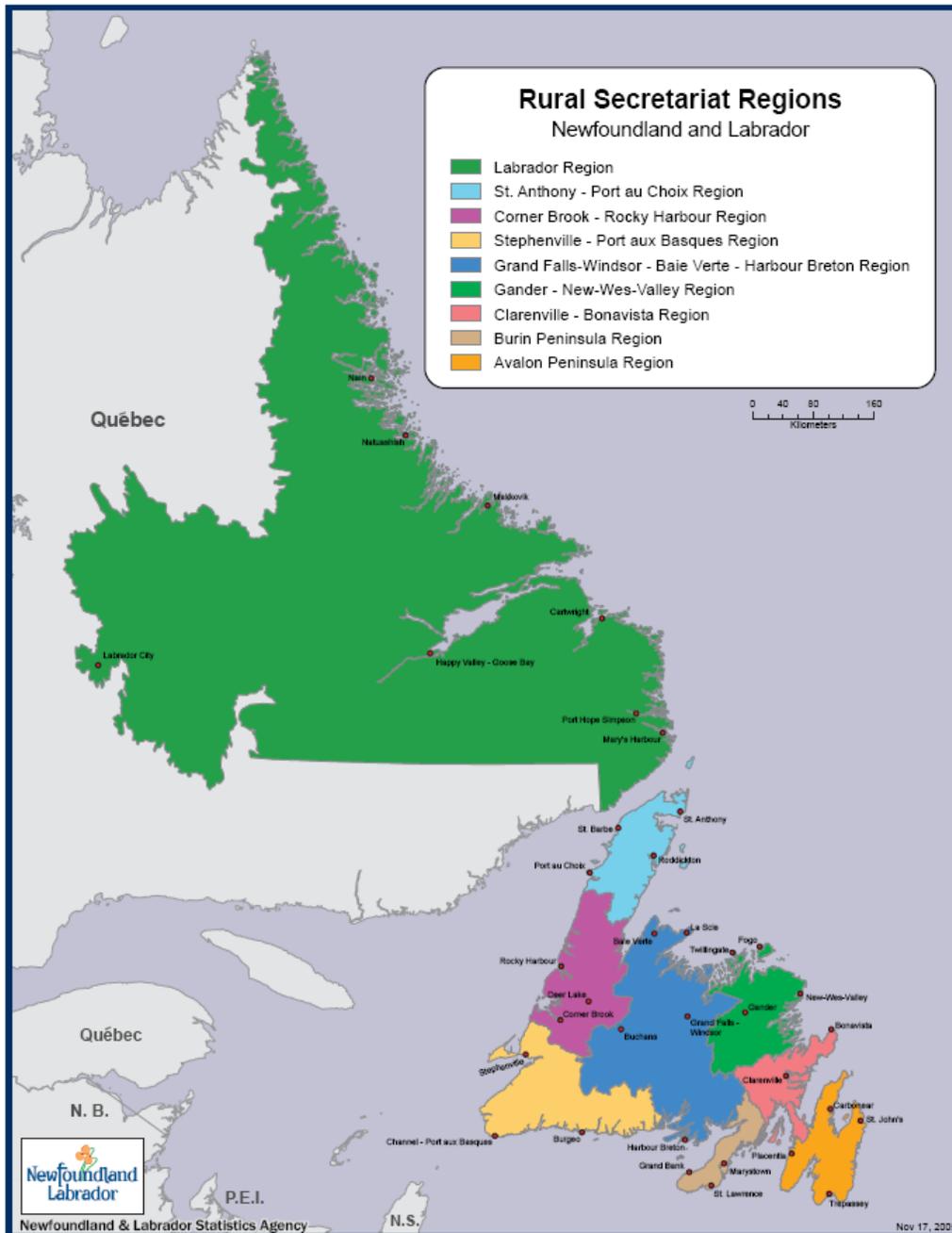
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional development.
- Act as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic regions and communities.
- Ensure that regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- Review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- Identify and advise government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- Advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- Meet twice annually with the provincial Cabinet and deputy ministers to advance regional development priorities.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

Photo Credit:



"Iceburg", Moreton's Harbour, Photo Courtesy of: Ed Vincent



"Fog", Wareham, Photo Courtesy of: Dion Rogers



"Boats", Salvage, Photo Courtesy of: Joyce Matchim

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