

Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat Executive Council



Activity Report 2008-09

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Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Provincial 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.

In the past year, Provincial Council has begun the process of identifying key priority issues that they would like to address in their work. Two of these issues in particular, regionalism and land use planning, have been the focus of Provincial Council. For both issues, subcommittees were formed to develop the background and frame the issue for Provincial Council to consider.

In the case of regionalism, the subcommittee identified regional collaboration as the crux of their interest – namely how to engender, understand and promote it as a means of increasing sustainability in the province. The council hired consultants to conduct some research on the issue to help develop their position on the issue. The subcommittee is working now to develop a position paper based on the information presented in the consultants' report, to be submitted in the 2009-10 year.

The second issue of land use planning saw a subcommittee develop a position and background paper on the issue themselves, which is currently being vetted through Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat for feedback. Provincial Council will also be working to deliver an advice document around this piece in the coming year.

The development of a methodology to approach issues within Provincial Council in the past year has allowed Provincial Council to begin a process of delivering advice to provincial government. The council looks forward to further opportunities to identify and address key issues affecting sustainability in the Province, as well as working with Regional Councils.

Sincerely,



Sheila Kelly-Blackmore
Chair
Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Provincial Overview

The population of the province is estimated to be 510,173 in 2009. The population of Newfoundland and Labrador is expected to decrease by about 2 percent over the next 15 years.

Employment is estimated at 267,175 according to Census 2006. Employment in the province increased by almost 4.4 percent since Census 2001, and by 9.5 percent since census 1996.

Goods-producing industries, including primary activity, mining and oil extraction, construction, utilities and manufacturing accounted for 26.8 percent of employment in the province in 2006. Private sector services, excluding private education and health services, accounted for 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, and totalled 27.1 percent for the province as a whole.

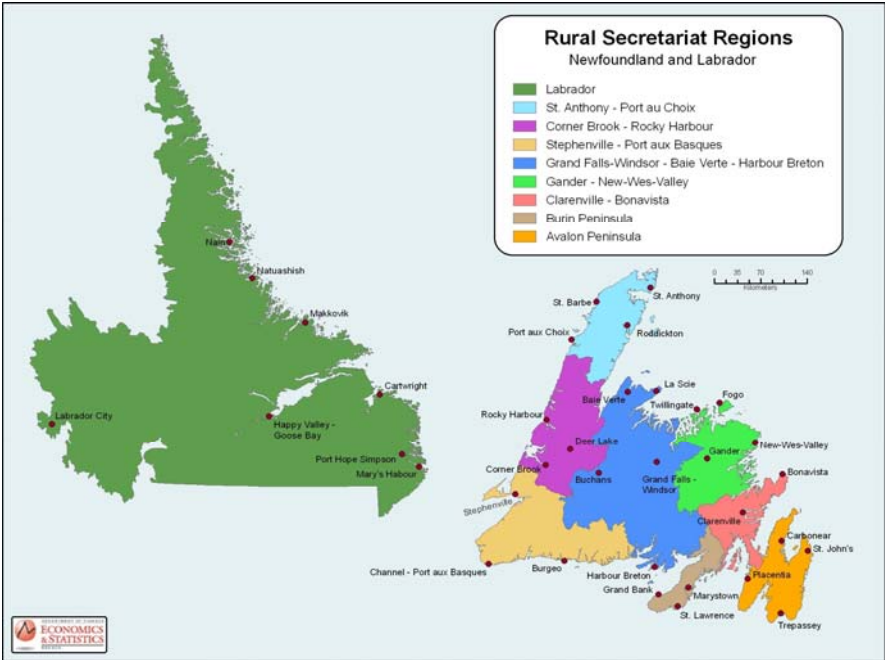
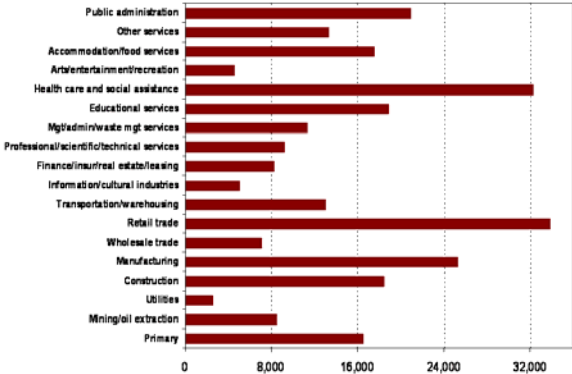
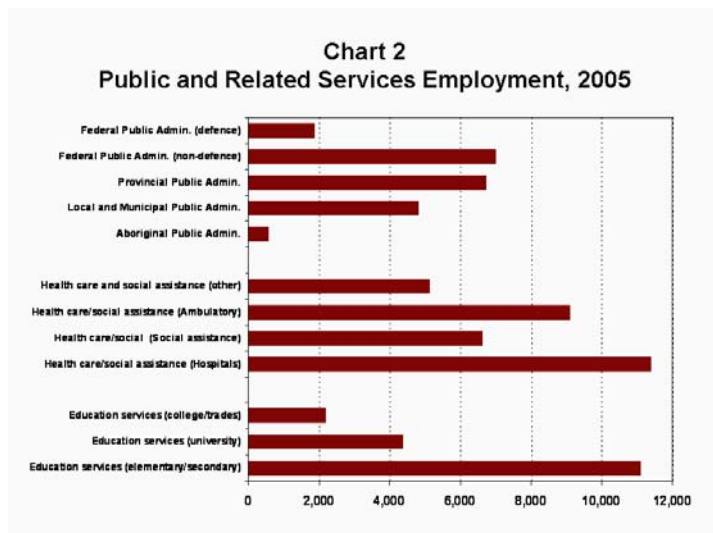


Chart 1
Employment by Industry, 2005



Within the broad public administration and related services group, health care and social assistance services employment totalled 32,295 and educational services totalled 18,880. Federal, provincial, municipal and aboriginal public administration, including defence services, totalled 20,975. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 2.

There were 142.7 persons employed in public administration and related services in 2005 per 1,000 people residing in the province. Public administration and related service industry level detail is provided in Chart 3.



The profile of employment in the province is also changing. In 2005, 80.4 percent of employment was considered full-time (30 or more hours per week) and 47.3 percent of employment was considered full-year (50 or more weeks worked per year). By comparison, 78.8 percent of employment was considered full-time in 1995, and 44.2 percent was considered full-year.

The potential labour supply is declining at a faster rate than employment. The labour force population (ages 15-64) was estimated at 394,000 in 1995 and

366,000 in 2005, representing a decline of about 7.1 percent over the ten year period.

Employment growth relative to the declining labour supply 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 25 percent in 1995 to 16.3 percent in 2005, and personal income per capita, after adjusting for inflation and personal taxes, grew by 22.7 percent.

Total incidence of income support, or the percentage of people that received income support at some point during the year, declined from 18.4 percent in 1995 to 11.9 percent in 2005.

Chart 3
Per Capita Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



One of the key long term labour market challenges facing the region relates to how to meet employment demand as the labour supply ages and declines over the next decade. Today, about 29 percent of those ages 15-64 are ages 50-64. This is expected to increase to about 38 percent by 2020. Over the same period, the labour force age population is expected to decline by about 12 percent from about 366,000 to just over 321,000 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. Provincial Council Overview

The Provincial Council is comprised of 13 members; nine female and four male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the province, including ten members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The council met twice in 2008-09.

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 Provincial Council:

	<i>Rural Secretariat Provincial Council Budget 2008-09</i>	<i>Rural Secretariat Provincial Council Expenditures</i>
Transportation & Communication	15,000.00	10,467.62
Professional Services	0	19,987.50
Purchased Services	10,000.00	3,313.29
Total Budgeted	25,000.00	33,768.41

Provincial Council required research to be conducted on an area of work around Regionalism. This resulted in a call for proposals and the hiring of a consultant to complete the work. Funds were made available from the existing provincial office budget.

Provincial Council members	Community
Chair	
Sheila Kelly-Blackmore	Sandy Cove
At-Large Members	
Donna Butt	Trinity
Penelope Rowe	St. John's
Kara Snow	St. Anthony
Regional Representatives	
Deborah Armstrong (Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton) Alternate: David Hayashida	Grand Falls-Windsor King's Point
James Farrell (Labrador)	Wabush
Nadine Decker (Gander-NewWesValley)	Fogo Island

Alternate: David Regular	Summerford
Pamela Ghent (Burin Peninsula) Alternate: Michael Graham	Harbour Mille Burin
Colleen Kennedy (Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour) Alternate: Don Downer	Rocky Harbour Corner Brook
Ted Lewis (St. Anthony-Port au Choix) Alternate: Gloria Toope	Croque Plum Point
Kerry Murray (Avalon Peninsula) Alternate: Maureen Sullivan	Conception Bay South Calvert
Michelle Skinner (Stephenville-Port aux Basques) Alternate: Calvin White	St. George's Flat Bay
Merv Wiseman (Clareville-Bonavista) Alternate: Marilyn Coles-Hayley	North Harbour Elliston

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

3. Mandate

The Provincial Council mandate is:

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

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	Each person is committed to working together effectively.
Creativity	Each person seeks and supports new ideas and approaches.
Empowerment	Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions.
Inclusion	Each person acknowledges others' views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own.
Learning Culture	Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn.
Transparency	Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles.
Trust	Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments.

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Provincial Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat, Cabinet and Deputy Ministers.

The council also engages with officials of departments and agencies of the provincial government as well as individuals, groups and organizations in the province.

7. Vision

The Provincial 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 longer-term result 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 Provincial Council will have reviewed the work of each Regional Council in order to have developed a common understanding of the province's economic, social, cultural and environmental realities, as well as regional commonalities and differences.

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: Regionalism and Partnership Development

In advance of submitting input to government regarding how best to advance and support *regional collaboration* in this province, the Provincial Council wants to better understand: how groups, agencies, businesses, and government departments currently collaborate; how this experience compares to experiences in other jurisdictions; impediments to effective collaboration; factors underpinning effective collaboration (i.e., best practices); and regional or rural development stakeholder perceptions about appropriate roles for government(s) in terms of advancing and supporting effective collaboration practice. On the basis of this and other available information, the Provincial Council will develop and submit policy advice to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Goal:

By 2011, the Provincial Council will have provided input and advice to the provincial government and worked with community stakeholders to advance regionalism and partnership development in the province.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Provincial Council will have developed a position paper on the concept of regionalism and partnership development

Measure:

Position paper developed

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Policies that advance or negatively impact regionalism and partnership development, or that need to be developed, are identified</p> <p>Information is requested from Regional Councils and other stakeholders</p> <p>Provincial departments and agencies are engaged</p> <p>Regionalism and partnership development statement is developed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council discussed this issue at length in 2008-09. It reviewed recently completed provincial research and other work on regionalization and related topics. This included, among other work, research by the MUN Harris Centre and the report of the regionalization forum hosted by the Clarendville-Bonavista, Gander-New-Wes-Valley and Burin Peninsula Regional Councils. • Through this work, it felt that the issue was too broad and complex to be addressed according to its planned work schedule, and did not feel it was in a position to engage departments and submit a report to government that would meet the test of the indicators put forward in its 2008-11 Activity Plan. • It felt that it required a better understanding of the issue, including the commonalities and differences among regionalism-related terms such as regional governance, regional collaboration, regionalization, before engaging departments and developing a position paper for submission to government. • The council developed a working definition of Regionalism • To advance its timelines for discussion, the council contracted an external consultant to review regional collaboration experiences and practices in the province, and to conduct a jurisdictional review to begin to determine how other jurisdictions approach and support regional collaboration. Through this work, the council felt it would be in a better position to identify policy issues that impact regionalism and partnership development. The consultant conducted approximately 40 interviews with a range of economic, municipal, social and municipal stakeholders and held four regional roundtables. A partial jurisdictional review was completed, using information from four Canadian provinces. The report also described the status of regionalism in the province and highlighted areas that need to be addressed. • The council received the report of the consultant at the end of the reporting period for this report (March 31, 2009). It has had insufficient time to review and consider the report, to determine next steps and to develop a position paper. The Council expects to meet its 2008-09 commitments for this issue in 2009-10.

As a result of its work in 2008-09, council wishes to alter the timing, but not the context or integrity, of its stated work schedule for this strategic issue. The council anticipates completing its review of the consultant's report and identifying next steps to be completed by June 2009. It then intends to engage departments and begin to develop a position paper beginning Fall 2009. The council will work toward the following measure and indicators for its 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Provincial Council will have engaged with government to advance a regionalism and partnership development agenda.

2009-10 Measure:

- Provincial departments are engaged

2009-10 Indicators:

- Position paper developed and submitted to government
- Meetings are held with government to discuss potential policy responses

9.2 Issue 2: Focused dialogue with government, in the context of Regional Council work on specific regional and rural policy and developmental priorities

Provincial council is comprised of representatives of Regional Councils' as well as sector representatives. Through the identification of the importance of Regionalism, Provincial Council has recognized that the voice of regional councils can be strengthened through the work of the Provincial Council.

Goal:

By 2011, the Provincial Council, in the context of a regionalism and partnership development agenda as well as Regional Council priorities, will have engaged with the provincial government to advance specific common regional and rural priorities.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Provincial Council, in the context of a regionalism and partnership development agenda, will have worked with Regional Councils and government to identify specific common regional and rural priorities.

Measure:

Specific common regional and rural priorities are identified

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Common regional and rural policies and developmental issues that impact regional sustainability, or that may need to be developed, are identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's intent was to ensure that a wide range of cross-cutting regional policy issues are brought forward for consideration by government. The council felt that these issues should build on the work of the Regional Councils. It also felt that these issues should be linked back to its regionalism and partnership development issue. • The council reviewed the 2008-11 Activity Plans for each Regional Council with a view to identifying issues that, while important to regional sustainability, have not been specifically identified by Regional Councils. Through its work in understanding regionalism and partnership development, the council also considered rural policy issues raised by other stakeholders for consideration by government. • The council identified seven broad policy areas for discussion with government. Of these, five were not specifically identified by Regional Councils. The sixth issue, transportation infrastructure and access, expands on the transportation infrastructure issue identified by four Regional Councils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionalism • Land use planning • Transportation – access and infrastructure • Food security/green issues • Access to capital – Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and voluntary sector/non-profit • Seniors/health care • Citizen engagement in community adjustment processes
<p>Provincial departments and agencies are engaged</p> <p>Position papers are developed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council established working group for each topic to determine specific policy issues it wishes to address with the provincial government. Two of these working groups were active in 2008-09 (regionalism and land use planning) with a view to identifying specific issues to consider and timelines to complete the work. • The council notes that government established a Community Development Committee in Grand Falls-Windsor on March 11, 2009. Ms. Debbie Armstrong, a member of the Provincial Council and Chair of the Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council, is a member of this Committee. While this

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
	<p>Committee is in the early stages of its work, Council feels that the structure and work of this Committee may also inform the sixth issue noted above (i.e., citizen engagement in community adjustment processes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council were not able engage with provincial government departments in 2008-09, nor did it complete position papers on the issues identified. The council felt that it required a better understanding of each issue prior to engaging government, and felt that the working groups should complete their work prior to this step being undertaken. The council expects to meet its 2008-09 commitments in 2009-10.

As a result of its work in 2008-09, it wishes to alter the timing, but not the context or integrity, of its stated work schedule for this strategic issue. The council anticipates that its active working groups will be in a position to report to government during the first half of 2009-10. It is anticipated, for example, that work related to integrated land use planning will be submitted to the council within the coming months. Based on the working groups' findings, the council intends to engage departments and begin to develop position papers beginning Fall 2009. Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for its 2009-10 objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Provincial Council will have commenced engagement with government on specific regional and rural priorities which are informed by its work on regionalism and partnership development.

2009-10 Measure:

- Provincial departments are engaged

2009-10 Indicators:

- Position papers developed and submitted to government
- Meetings are held with government to discuss potential policy responses

10. Additional Highlights

The Provincial 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. The council 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, two additional 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.

The Provincial 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 focused on education, jobs and wages, and newcomer and family attraction. It recommended enhanced cooperative and apprenticeship training, working to offer equal k-12 education delivery throughout the province, family friendly and flexible workplaces, maximizing federal employment programs to fill labour gaps, reducing bureaucracy for immigrants, and development of a family attraction and retention program.

Three Provincial 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 Rupert Downing 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.

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 the 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

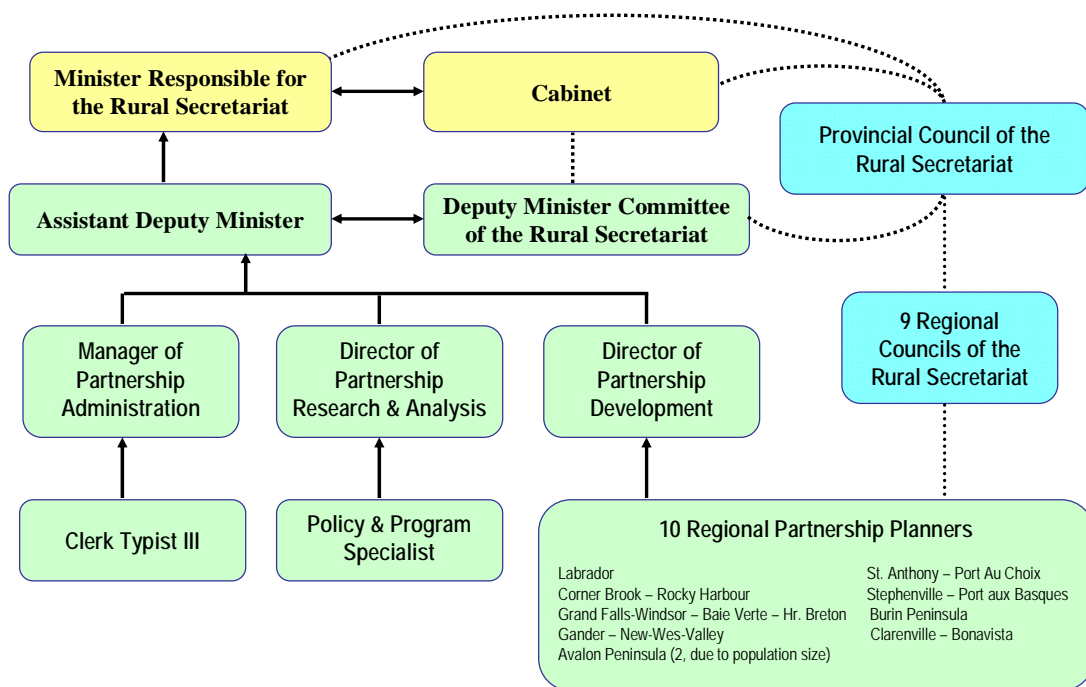
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

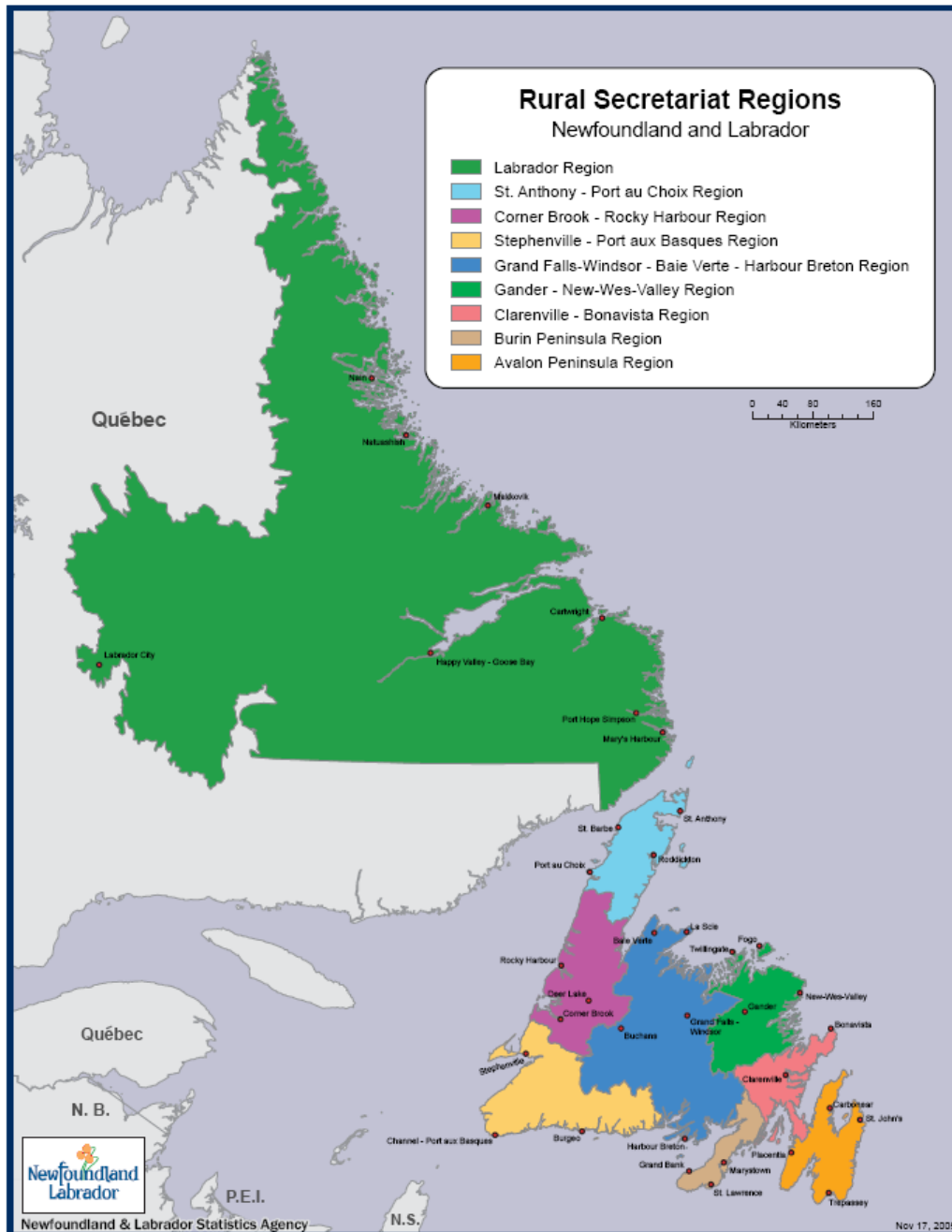
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

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 Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat

The Regional Council's mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- 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.
- Identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- 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.
- Nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

Photo Credit:



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



Caribou on the Flat Hills, Indian Lookout Trail, Parson's Pond
Photo Courtesy of IATNL



Photo Courtesy of: Sam Organ

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