

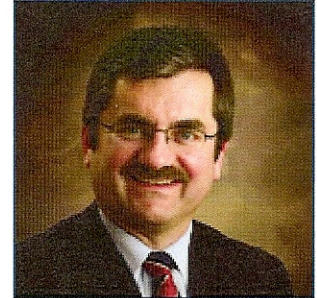


*Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Activity Report 2009-10*



Message from the Minister

As Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat and in accordance with the Provincial Government's commitment to accountability, I hereby submit the 2009-10 Activity Report of the Rural Secretariat. This report details the activities of the Secretariat from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010. It was prepared under my direction and I am accountable for the actual results reported.



In the past year, the Rural Secretariat made significant progress towards addressing the two strategic issues identified in its 2008-11 Activity Plan: supporting the work of the Rural Secretariat Regional Councils and provincial Council; and promoting regional and rural considerations in policy development.

Regarding the former, the Rural Secretariat Councils received support from regional partnership planners, provincial office staff and community partners to host a variety of forums and meetings whereby policy issues affecting rural regions were identified and discussed. A number of policy advice documents were developed and submitted to the Provincial Government in 2009-10 as a result of this work. Themes explored included, education, transportation, retention of skilled labour and aquaculture. This constructive process of deliberation served to engage Council members, citizens, and oftentimes Provincial Government officials in informed dialogue about what is required for regional and rural sustainability. While most of the policy themes and questions addressed emerged from the Councils themselves, there were also a number of instances where a Provincial Government department requested advice from Councils on a specific policy theme or question of special importance to that department. For instance, the Deputy Minister of Government Programs requested that Regional Councils provide feedback on programs and services in their areas.

Regarding the strategic issue relating to regional and rural considerations in policy development, in April 2008 the Provincial Government's Rural Lens became a mandatory decision making support tool for all departments of the Provincial Government. The development and implementation of this tool is an important step in ensuring that regional and rural considerations are fully taken into account by officials when developing policy. The Rural Secretariat was instrumental in developing the Rural Lens. Rural Secretariat staff continues to provide support to departments regarding how best to utilize this decision making support instrument.

In closing, over the past year the Rural Secretariat has made great strides towards addressing the two key strategic issues identified in its 2008-11 Activity Plan. Although the efforts of the Rural Secretariat and its Councils often go unheralded – primarily due to the largely invisible nature of government policy development processes – suffice to say that I am delighted with progress made over this past year. Due to the efforts of the Rural Secretariat and its Councils to bring citizens and officials together to contemplate how best to enhance policy decisions affecting rural Newfoundland and Labrador, the overall policy development process in this province has been strengthened. Over the next year I expect and anticipate that the Rural Secretariat will continue to make important contributions to our province.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shawn Skinner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Shawn Skinner
Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat
Minister of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development
MHA, St. John's Centre

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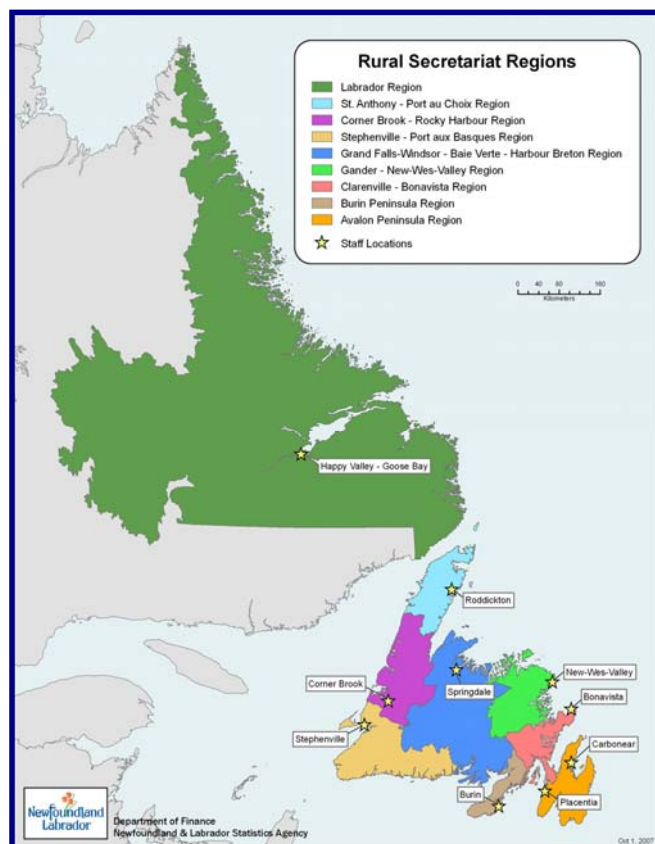
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1. Organizational Overview

The Rural Secretariat works to advance the sustainability of rural Newfoundland and Labrador communities and regions. Working with and through its nine citizen-based Regional Councils and one Provincial Council, the secretariat engages citizens, stakeholders, and communities in dialogue about the future of rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

To achieve this, the secretariat works to ensure that citizen and stakeholder voices are considered by the Provincial Government in its decision-making and policy development deliberations.

The secretariat works with its Councils to convene learning events, and implement community-based research projects, both of which inform the advice which councils develop and submit to government. The Councils' activity plans and annual reports can be found at: www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp



More broadly, the secretariat also strives to advance collaboration within and between rural communities and regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. It supports and initiates collaboration between and among government departments and rural development stakeholders.

Within the Provincial Government, the Rural Secretariat raises awareness of rural issues among departments, participates on inter-departmental policy development committees that are addressing issues of importance to rural areas, supports implementation of a Rural Lens policy assessment tool, participates in a range of research exercises, and works with industry, community and special interest groups on matters that impact regions and rural areas.

The work of the secretariat is coordinated by a permanent staff complement of sixteen. As of March 31, 2009, there were 10 female and four male staff, with two vacancies. Staff included:

- Assistant Deputy Minister;
- Director of Regional Partnership Development;
- Director of Partnership Research and Analysis;
- Manager of Partnership Administration;
- 10 Regional Partnership Planners;
- Policy and Program Specialist; and

- Clerk Typist III.

An organization chart is included as Appendix B.

Ten positions are located in regional offices aligned with the nine regions of the Rural Secretariat. Regional offices are located in Carbonear, Placentia, Bonavista, Burin, New-Wes-Valley, Springdale, Corner Brook, Stephenville, Roddickton and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Most offices are co-located with the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development or the College of the North Atlantic.

To accomplish its mandate, the Rural Secretariat spent almost \$1.66 million in 2009-10 (see Section 12 for details). In 2009-10, the secretariat's budget funded:

- Salary and operating costs for the Rural Secretariat Provincial Office, Confederation Building;
- Salary and operating costs for Regional Partnership Planners and their offices;
- Operating costs for nine regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat; and
- Operating costs for the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

2. Mandate

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 the Provincial 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.

3. Lines of Business

The Rural Secretariat's two lines of business, as outlined in its 2008-11 Activity Plan, correlate with its strategic directions (see Appendix A):

- **Partnership Development:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates the development of partnerships that focus on sustainable regional development and provides direct consideration of citizens' and stakeholders' priorities, perspectives and expectations in the development of public policy, infrastructure and other financial decisions, and other provincial government action that impacts regions and rural areas.
- **Formulation and provision of policy advice and analysis with respect to regions and rural areas:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates research and analysis on regional and rural socio-economic issues, provides advice and analysis on legislative, financial, policy, program and service delivery matters that impact regions and rural areas. It also influences and informs cross-departmental analysis and evidence-based decision making with respect to regional and rural challenges and opportunities.

4. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Rural Secretariat 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.

5. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Rural Secretariat include its citizen-based Regional and Provincial Councils, community organizations, stakeholders such as Regional Economic Development Boards, organized youth, federal departments and agencies, and departments and agencies within the Provincial Government. On a broader basis, the client base of the Rural Secretariat includes all the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador. Within the Provincial Government the Rural Secretariat also works with all departments as it seeks to fulfill its mandate and achieve its vision.

6. Vision

The vision of the Rural Secretariat is of sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

7. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Minister for the current and previous planning cycles. It represents the key long-term objective that the Minister and the Rural Secretariat will be working towards as they move forward on the strategic directions of the Provincial Government.

By 2011, the Rural Secretariat will have implemented effective tools and processes required to ensure the consistent and formalized consideration of regional impacts in the development of public policy.

The Secretariat will report on the achievement of the mission in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

8. Shared Commitments

In establishing the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Government structured a formal mechanism to ensure matters impacting regions and rural areas are considered in decision making processes. In this context, the secretariat shares a range of commitments within the Provincial Government and plays a coordinating and advisory role within the Provincial Government structure. It does not deliver programs and services.

The Rural Secretariat introduced the Rural Lens in 2008-09 to better ensure that regional and rural considerations are accounted for in government decision-making processes. At that time the Rural Secretariat held training sessions for officials on how to use the Rural Lens. The Rural Secretariat also developed a guide on how to use the Rural Lens. Currently, the Rural Secretariat reviews policy proposals to ensure all rural impacts have been considered.

Additionally, the Rural Secretariat understands that its regional sustainability goals can only be achieved through collaboration with departments and agencies that have the mandates to implement policies, programs, services and investments that impact rural areas. Thus the secretariat works with a host of government departments and agencies such as:

- **Innovation, Trade and Rural Development (INTRD)** on matters related to regional economic development, telecommunications development, and more recently, on the design of a regional collaboration pilot project on the Northern Peninsula;
- **Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE)** and **Education (EDU)** on matters related to educational services, skills development, youth, labour market development and immigration;
- **Fisheries and Aquaculture (FA), Natural Resources (NR), Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR)** and INTRD on matters related to resource management, regional development and industry renewal;
- **Health and Community Services (HCS)** on matters related to wellness, aging and seniors;
- **Environment and Conservation (ENVC)** on matters related to environmental adaptation, community planning and adaptation;
- **Municipal Affairs (MA)** and **Transportation and Works (TW)** with respect to matters such as major infrastructure decisions and municipal services;
- **Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs (LAA)**, the **Women's Policy Office (WPO)** and the **Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat (VNPS)** on matters related to their mandate as well as the Violence Prevention Initiative and the Northern Strategic Plan; and
- **Finance (FIN)** and **HRLE** on matters related to the development and provision of statistical data and other information to assist departments as well as Regional Councils, citizens and other stakeholders to plan and make informed decisions.

9. Report on Performance

The activities and performance of the Rural Secretariat with respect to each of the goals outlined below are in support of the Provincial Government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). Within the various regions of the province, the secretariat's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with other Provincial Government departments, stakeholders and citizens. At the regional level the Rural Secretariat supported the development of initiatives that allowed citizens to share their perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. Within the Provincial Government, the Rural Secretariat is increasingly viewed as a valuable resource with respect to departments obtaining informed regional and rural perspectives on how proposed policy directions may impact rural areas. The secretariat recognizes that the above noted sustainability-building efforts are long-term in nature and thus expect that its activities in 2009-10 and beyond will further support these directions.

Issue One: Support to Provincial and Regional Councils

The Provincial Government established nine Regional Councils in 2005 and a Provincial Council in 2006 to ensure citizens' and stakeholders' priorities, perspectives and expectations are identified and considered in decision making processes that impact regions and rural areas. Each Council has identified its main development priorities for discussion with the provincial government, and each is engaging with citizens and stakeholders to inform, validate and challenge its directions. The Rural Secretariat is responsible for supporting the work of the Provincial and Regional Councils. More particularly, it seeks to ensure that mechanisms are developed and implemented to build knowledge and capacity among citizens and stakeholders, to allow for focused and informed interaction among citizens, stakeholders, the Councils and the provincial government, and to allow for the provision of citizens' and stakeholders' input and advice.

Goal: By 2011, the Rural Secretariat will have developed and implemented effective mechanisms which will have allowed the Provincial and Regional Councils to fulfill their mandates

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Rural Secretariat will have worked with provincial departments, based on information provided by Councils, to advance identified regional and rural development priorities

Measure:

- Rural Secretariat worked with departments to advance priorities

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Regional forums, workshops and related events organized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ On March 10th the Provincial Office held a workshop for officials as part of the Building Capacity Together Project. The workshop was facilitated by the Public Policy Forum. The purpose of the event was to deliberate the opportunities and challenges of government initiated public engagement. Departments in attendance included: Finance, Natural Resources, Government Services, Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE), Intergovernmental Affairs, Women's Policy Office, MA, Transportation and Works, Child, Youth and Family Services, Justice, Education, Cabinet Secretariat, Business, Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Climate Change, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, Centre for Learning and Development, Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Transparency and Accountability. ✓ Regional Council forums were supported by Provincial Office (i.e. helped organize; provided facilitation; prepared and led voter keypad sessions; etc.). Some examples included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In March 2010, the St. Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council held a forestry forum to discuss the future of forestry in the region and what needs to happen next for sustainability to become a reality. Natural Resources were a key participant in this forum. ○ In October 2009 the Labrador Regional Council, in collaboration with regional partners, held an Innovation and Collaboration conference. Seven priority areas were identified as being important for regional sustainability; (1) a healthy food system, (2) opportunities for youth, (3) fully resourced health centres, (4) care for the environment, (5) transportation, (6) affordable accessible child care, and (7) affordable, safe and accessible housing. ○ In May 2009 the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council along with the Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council held a conference which brought educators, health authorities, citizens and government officials together to discuss regional sustainability.
Regional forums, workshops and related events organized (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Other related events included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Rural Secretariat's Provincial Office helped organize a dialogue session in support of the Provincial Council's advice development process regarding food security. The Department of Natural Resources was in attendance. ○ The Provincial Office also led discussions with HRLE in four HRLE regions around the province on how regional planners can better support HRLE.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Research projects participated on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provincial Office staff worked with and supported Regional Partnership Planners in carrying out a number of community-based research projects across the province. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Burin Peninsula Region - Project focused on how partners can work regionally to achieve shared regional and community-level economic goals. The team explored lessons from other jurisdictions, analyzed critical success factors emerging from other locales, and considered the relevance for the region. Council engaged INTRD and MA in this effort. ○ Avalon Region - The project team worked with the Youth Protocol Committee to develop a youth at risk profile for the area. This information will be used to help all partners move forward with their individual and shared goals related to youth at risk. Partners included HRLE, College of the North Atlantic and the Youth Protocol Committee for the Trinity Conception area. ○ Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region – The project team reviewed 7 strategic planning initiatives from the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Region and examined how well strategies and recommendations emerging from them were implemented. Partners included MUN, INTRD, Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation, New World Island Development Association, Gander Bay, New-Wes-Valley, Service Canada, Shorefast Foundation.
Collaborative processes initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regional Collaboration Pilot Project - Through this initiative, regional stakeholders are working together to create a new and innovative way of engaging government in infrastructure and economic development decision-making. Specifically, stakeholders are having the opportunity to provide advice to senior decision-makers regarding how best to better invest funds in the region. Partners include INTRD, MA, TCR and TW. ✓ Social Networking Analysis - This initiative will utilize social networking analysis software to give an overview of the relationships between and among stakeholders within a region. It will illustrate the strength of collaboration within a region and show potential gaps and opportunities for new partnerships. The software is currently being piloted on the Northern Peninsula through the Regional Collaboration Pilot project. ✓ Aside from those initiatives that the Provincial Office initiates itself it also supports Regional Partnership Planners and/or Councils in their collaboration efforts. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Region – Enhancement of a Partners

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	<p>Council -- a learning network that brings together those working in the areas of social, economic, and community development, from across the region, with goal of enhancing their individual and collective abilities to excel in their respective development work (e.g., through sharing of best practices; joint-training; learning events; etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Burin Peninsula Region – Regional Council and partners are attempting to seed potential partnerships and other collaborative relationships between and among communities, stakeholder groups and citizens by creating opportunities for dialogue on the theme ‘strengthening regionalism and collaborative relationships within the region’. Thus far INTRD and MA have been engaged in this effort.
Collaborative processes initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Labrador Region – The Innovation and Collaboration conference noted above focused on the theme 'innovation and communication for better regional cooperation'. Partners including the Rural Secretariat, Labrador Grenfell Health, Violence Prevention and Primary Health are currently following up on sustainability-building ideas and proposed actions identified during this event. ○ Stephenville – Port aux Basques – Agrifoods Working Group - The Agrifoods working group identified issues and opportunities common to those involved in the agricultural sector within the region. It is now striving to build collaborative relationships among key stakeholders including Agrifoods, INTRD, REDBs and the private sector.

Based on its accomplishments in 2010-11 the Rural Secretariat will work toward the following measure and indicators for its 2010-11 objective.

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011, the Rural Secretariat will have advanced learning and development opportunities with Councils to build their capacity to provide input and advice to the Provincial Government to inform its decision making processes with respect to regions and rural areas.

2010-11 Measure:

- Learning and Development opportunities organized with councils to build their capacity to provide input and advice to the provincial government to inform its decision making processes with respect to regions and rural areas.

2010-11 Indicators:

- Learning and Development opportunities for councils organized
- Learning and Development opportunities organized with councils for other stakeholders in the regions

Issue 2: Regional and Rural Considerations in Policy Development

Rural areas throughout the province are adapting to a complex mix of economic, labour market, demographic, environmental and social-cultural changes. The Rural Secretariat works to support Provincial Government departments as they strive to assist regions and communities to adapt and respond to such changes. One important way in which the Rural Secretariat supports departments in this important task, is by ensuring that the ideas and perspectives of citizens from the regions inform the policy- and decision-making processes of the Provincial Government.

Goal: By 2011, the Rural Secretariat will have supported enhancements to Provincial Government decision making processes pertaining to the consideration of regional issues and trend information.

Objective: By March 31, 2010, the Rural Secretariat will have delivered general and focused information and education sessions with Provincial Government departments and agencies pertaining to the importance of economic, labour market, demographic, social, cultural and environmental trends

Measure: Information and education sessions will have been held.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Number of information sessions held with Provincial Government departments and agencies	<p>✓ The Rural Secretariat has worked with numerous departments to deliver formal and informal information and education sessions to Councils and regional stakeholders related to economic, labour market, demographic, social-cultural and environmental trends. Such sessions serve to enhance the ability of Councils to develop quality advice for submission to Government. Overall, this advice enhances the policy- and decision-making processes of government. Some examples where Rural Secretariat Regional Partnership Planners have arranged sessions in conjunction with Councils are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region - The Department of MA met with Council in September 2009 to discuss the recommendations in the “Municipal Governance” document submitted to the Minister of MA in March 2009. ○ Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region – The Chairperson and Regional Partnership Planner met with the Department of Education in August 2009 to discuss the recommendations in the document “Education: An Inherent Right” that was submitted to the Minister in March 2009. ○ Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Region – Council members invited the ADM of Education, a Director from Education, to a Regional Council meeting, where participants deliberated on topics such as: the need to connect students to full educational opportunities; the merits of multi-age/multi-grade schooling; and the

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	<p>challenges of distance education for high school students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Region - Minister Sullivan and her staff met with Council representatives focusing on strategies that remove barriers to training adults ○ Stephenville – Port aux Basques Region – The Deputy Minister of Transportation and Works met with Regional Council and discussed the Department’s role and responsibilities with respect to roads and bridges, and the Vessel Replacement Strategy ○ Stephenville – Port aux Basques Region - a representative of the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, presented on and discussed the provincial broadband initiative

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011, the Rural Secretariat will have implemented further initiatives to proactively support provincial government departments and agencies to assess regional and rural impacts in the development of policies, programs and services, strategies and plans, and infrastructure and related investments.

2010-11 Measure:

- Further initiatives implemented to proactively support provincial government departments and agencies to assess the possible rural impacts, positive and/or negative, direct and/or indirect, of decisions they may make

2010-11 Indicators:

- Land Use Planning Forum held in collaboration with Provincial Council and results shared with departments
- Results and Process and Technology related to Social Networking Analysis and Network Weaving Project shared with department(s).
- Shared learning events held with department(s) through the Building Capacity Together Project (stage 2)

10. Additional Highlights and Accomplishments

In addition to the points raised in Section 8, the following additional highlights and accomplishments 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 secretariat during the 2008-11 period.

Regional Collaboration Pilot Project

In 2008-09, work commenced on a new regional collaboration Pilot project that brought together regional stakeholders to explore how best to develop collaborative processes and practices that

advance regional sustainability. The Pilot builds upon and complements the work of existing stakeholder groups working in the Pilot region (St. Anthony – Port au Choix Region). It does not duplicate or replace the existing mandates, roles or work of agencies, groups or stakeholders involved.

The Pilot - announced in the Speech from the Throne on March 25, 2009 - is being implemented in the St. Anthony - Port au Choix Rural Secretariat region because many stakeholders working in this region have considerable experience with various forms of collaboration. It was hoped that this experience could be harnessed to advance the work of the Pilot. Through this innovative initiative, it is intended that regional stakeholders will work together to create a new and innovative way of engaging government in infrastructure and economic development decision-making. Specifically, stakeholders are being given an opportunity to provide advice to senior decision-makers regarding how best to better invest funds in the region. Over the past year they have been working together to identify regional development initiatives and priorities. On the basis of their Pilot experiences, stakeholders are also preparing advice for the Provincial Government regarding how best to develop and support innovative regional collaboration across the province. They are thus being provided with an opportunity to influence the future direction of government's overall approach to regional development in this province. It is intended that the Pilot will operate for a two-year period (2009-10 and 2010-11) with the possibility of an extension.

In its first year the Pilot stakeholders have met seven times and have had four teleconferences. The committee has met with the Departments of INTRD, MA, TCR and TW. Through these meetings the committee has been able to provide advice to government on how spending decisions should be made in the region. Not only have members had the opportunity to comment on the spending decisions of government but they have also learned how spending decisions are made by various Government departments. The Pilot committee will continue its work into 2010-11.

Regional Partnership Planner Initiatives

As previously noted, the Rural Secretariat has 10 Regional Partnership Planners located in nine regions across the province. Regional Partnership Planners carry out work for both Councils and the Provincial Office. They also dedicate time to support departments working in their respective regions. Regional Partnership Planners have been involved in public engagement initiatives including forums, meetings and workshops. Content themes explored in such sessions include: youth; homelessness; tourism; forestry; and fisheries. Public engagement sessions are opportunities for sharing learning involving both officials and citizens. They are also opportunities for constructive deliberative dialogue on important sustainability issues affecting the rural regions of this province.

Regional Partnership Planners also seek to advance collaboration within and between the Rural Secretariat regions. They work to develop and improve collaborative relationships involving community groups, businesses, researchers, and provincial government departments. Sometimes Regional Partnership Planners help to support pre-existing collaborative efforts, while at other times they attempt to seed collaboration in areas where positive collaborative working relationships between regional and rural stakeholders are absent. For instance, Regional Partnership Planners have worked with and supported the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development and the College of the North Atlantic in the development of business networks relating to agri-foods and manufacturing.

Some specific Regional Partnership Planner led initiatives other than those reported on in the performance section include:

Collaborative Initiatives

Avalon Regional Partnership Planners - Cape Shore Regional Communications Collaborative. This was a community radio event that focused on examining the social, cultural, economic development opportunities along the Cape Shore. Activities included: interviews and panel discussions with community group leaders, municipal leaders, youth, and cultural workers; entertainment; dialogue on a host of topics including the history of the region. The event was webcast and listened to from various parts of the Canada, US and Ireland.

Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Partnership Planner – Agrifoods Working Group. The AWG identified common issues/opportunities in the agricultural sector within the region. It built collaborative relationships among key stakeholders including Agrifoods, INTRD, REDBs and the private sector.

Community Based Research

Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Partnership Planner - Is strategic planning a worthwhile investment? The planning team reviewed 7 strategic planning initiatives from the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Region and examined how well strategies and recommendations which emerged from them were implemented. Partners included: MUN, INTRD, Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation, New World Island Development Association, Gander Bay, New-Wes-Valley, Service Canada, Shorefast Foundation, Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council.

Citizen Engagement Initiatives

Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Partnership Planner – The Regional Partnership Planner partnered with the Town of King’s Point and helped them to host community consultations session related to the development of their Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Partnership Planner – The Regional Partnership Planner partnered with the Central Housing and Homelessness Network to help develop and conduct municipal engagement sessions to build awareness of issues related to homelessness and housing in the region.

11. Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges

The Rural Secretariat (RS) is a unique and innovative provincial government entity that strives to advance the sustainability of rural Newfoundland and Labrador communities and regions. It does this by: supporting the development of citizen-based policy advice; engaging the public in the future of their province; supporting collaboration between and among rural stakeholders including governments; and by collaborating with regional partners on a host of research endeavors that shed light on the realities facing rural communities and regions.

The RS works in a dynamic rural and regional development environment. Numerous socio-political, cultural, environmental and economic forces - many of which the RS has no ability to control - directly affect the regions and communities in which RS staff operate. The rural and regional development field in which the RS operates is also relatively crowded. Simply put, there

are numerous governmental and non-governmental entities operating in rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and many of these also engage in activities that are similar to those undertaken by the RS. Many of these entities are also dynamic in that they regularly evolve their goals and activities in order to meet changing circumstances. In this context, a key challenge facing the RS relates to its ability to clearly articulate - both to the public and to other departments - how its work differs from work undertaken by others working in rural and regional development (i.e., how to establish and maintain a needed niche in the medium- and long-term).

Additionally, the RS has been and will continue to be challenged by the sometimes ambiguous and long-term nature of the work it has been mandated to undertake. Specifically, the RS is constantly challenged to explain what it is doing, and why its public engagement, community-based research and collaboration-brokering is of value to rural regions.

Finally, the RS experiences additional challenges related to the task of 'advancing sustainability' in a large province, with finite human and financial resources. Despite the fact that it does do a lot with the resources provided to it, it can sometimes appear to some that the RS is not doing enough to assist rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador. Moreover, with a rural staff team of only ten people, the RS cannot be or work everywhere at once. This too can create an impression among some living in areas where there are no RS activities that the RS is not active enough.

Opportunities

While these challenges continue to impact our work, there are also new opportunities for the Rural Secretariat related to public engagement, community-based research and collaboration-brokering. Over the past several years our organization has received advanced and specialized training in these three areas from leading international experts (e.g., US-based AmericaSpeaks; UK-based International Business Leaders Forum). This has led to an increased level of confidence in our collective ability to effectively collaborate with regional partners and government departments around public engagement, community-based research and partnership brokering activities. The following examples outline new opportunities for the Rural Secretariat in this regard:

Public engagement

- Increasing number of requests from departments for the RS to support departmental public engagement activities (e.g., HRLE, TCR);
- Increasing interest among RS Councils to undertake public engagement on issues of both a regional (i.e., on numerous themes including fisheries, regional collaboration, food security, youth retention) and provincial nature (e.g., forthcoming Provincial Council-initiated land-use planning public engagement event);

Community-based research

- Numerous requests emerging from within the academic community for the RS to partner on research projects (e.g., a recent project focused on food security emanating from the University of Victoria; a MUN-initiated research project addressing issues related to rural resource recovery in rural Newfoundland and Labrador);
- Numerous requests emerging from Regional Councils for the Rural Secretariat to support community-driven research activities that bring together academic institutions,

community groups, citizens, and government departments to study matters of regional concern;

Collaboration-brokering

- Numerous opportunities emerging whereby RS employees are encouraged/asked to act as “honest brokers” of regional partnerships, largely due to their recent skill development in this regard;
- Potential opportunities emerging for the RS to take lessons-learned from the Northern Peninsula-based Regional Collaboration Pilot and to apply them to/in other regions of this province;

In summary, the Rural Secretariat understands the challenges facing a government–entity tasked to work in the broad areas of public engagement, community-based research and collaboration-brokering, especially when the regional development environment is dynamic. It is also fully aware that there are many new opportunities emerging for the RS to positively impact regions and the departments and regional partners working to advance sustainability in them.

12. Financial Summary

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are un-audited and based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Year End 31 March 2010. Audited financial statements are a requirement at the government level and are made public through the Public Accounts process; however the Rural Secretariat is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

RURAL SECRETARIAT	Department Original Budget 2009-10	GL Operating Budget 2009-10	Actual YTD 2009-10
Salaries	\$1,240,100	\$1,200,000	\$1,180,749
Employee Benefits	\$7,400	\$7,400	\$2,615
Travel & Communication	\$294,900	\$294,900	\$272,286
Supplies	\$41,300	\$31,300	\$31,222
Professional Services	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$75,257
Purchased Services	\$91,700	\$91,700	\$80,813
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	\$7,500	\$17,500	\$17,951
Total Expenditure	\$1,762,900	\$1,722,800	\$1,660,893

Financial Breakdown by Region:

	Avalon Budget 2009-10	Avalon Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	30,000.00	36,768.70
Supplies	5,000.00	5,039.07
Purchased Services	4,000.00	8,778.59
Total Budgeted	39,000.00	50,586.36

	Burin Peninsula Budget 2009-10	Burin Peninsula Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	14,400.00	13,326.40
Supplies	2,500.00	134.78
Purchased Services	4,000.00	208.17
Total Budgeted	20,900.00	13,669.35

	Clareville- Bonavista Budget 2009-10	Clareville- Bonavista Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	14,400.00	11,361.90
Supplies	2,500.00	926.10
Purchased Services	4,000.00	1,135.08
Total Budgeted	20,900.00	13,423.08

	Gander- New- Wes-Valley Budget 2009-10	Gander- New- Wes-Valley Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	17,000.00	16,335.82
Supplies	2,500.00	2,104.84
Purchased Services	7,900.00	5,541.90
Total Budgeted	27,400.00	23,982.56

	Grand Falls- Windsor - Baie Verte - Hr Breton Budget 2009-10	Grand Falls- Windsor - Baie Verte - Hr Breton Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	31,500.00	23,991.78
Supplies	2,500.00	1,606.10
Purchased Services	6,400.00	8,636.09
Total Budgeted	40,400.00	34,233.97

	Stephenville - Port aux Basques Budget 2009-10	Stephenville -Port aux Basques Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	24,000.00	12,226.29
Supplies	2,500.00	2,000.23
Purchased Services	4,000.00	8,038.69
TOTAL	30,500.00	22,265.21

	Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Budget 2009-10	Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	24,000.00	6,595.26
Supplies	2,500.00	823.69
Purchased Services	4,000.00	1,153.99
TOTAL	30,500.00	8,572.94

	St. Anthony - Port au Choix Budget 2009-10	St. Anthony - Port au Choix Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	23,500.00	12,985.02
Supplies	2,500.00	387.04
Purchased Services	10,000.00	9,261.70
TOTAL	36,000.00	22,633.76

	Labrador Budget 2009-10	Labrador Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	50,000.00	28,421.28
Supplies	2,500.00	170.26
Purchased Services	4,000.00	1,300.70
TOTAL	56,500.00	29,892.24

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The Transparency and Accountability Act requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments. The directions related to the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

1. Title: **Regional Partnership Development**

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Components of Strategic Directions:

- Partnership Development:
 - Within Regions
 - Between Government and Regions (i.e. Regional Councils)
 - Inter-Departmental (e.g., Deputy Ministers' Council)
 - Inter-Governmental (e.g. ACOA, Federal Rural Secretariat)
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability
- Research and indicator development (e.g. Community Accounts)

2. Title: **Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability**

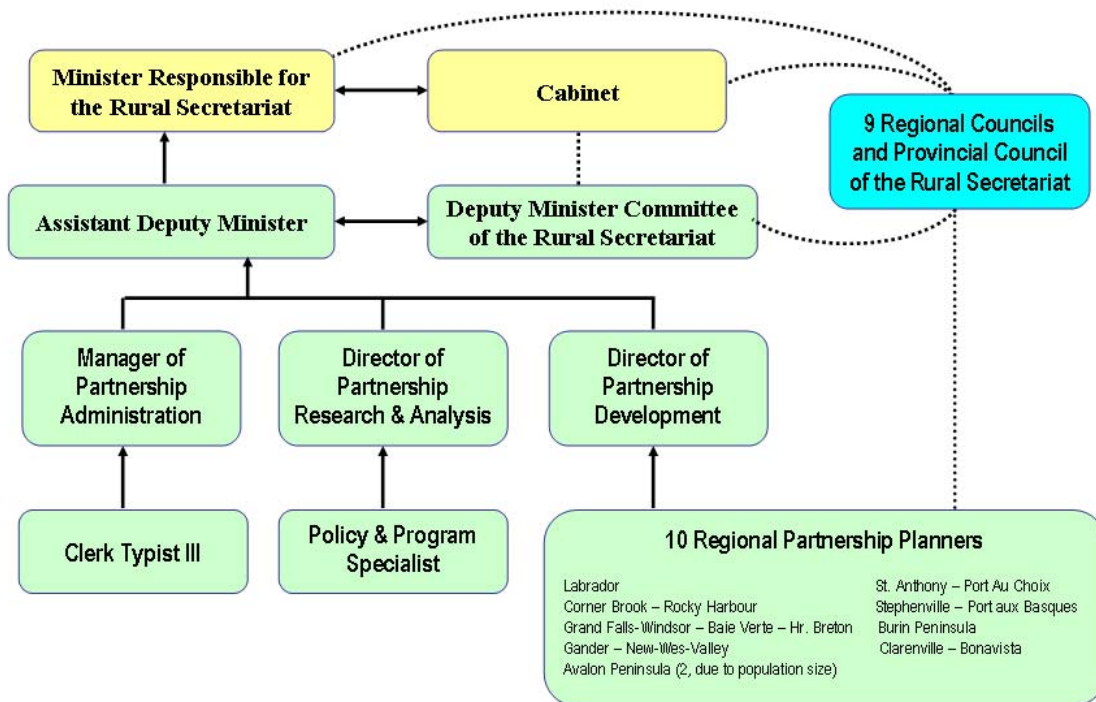
Outcome Statement: Improved government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

Components of Strategic Directions:

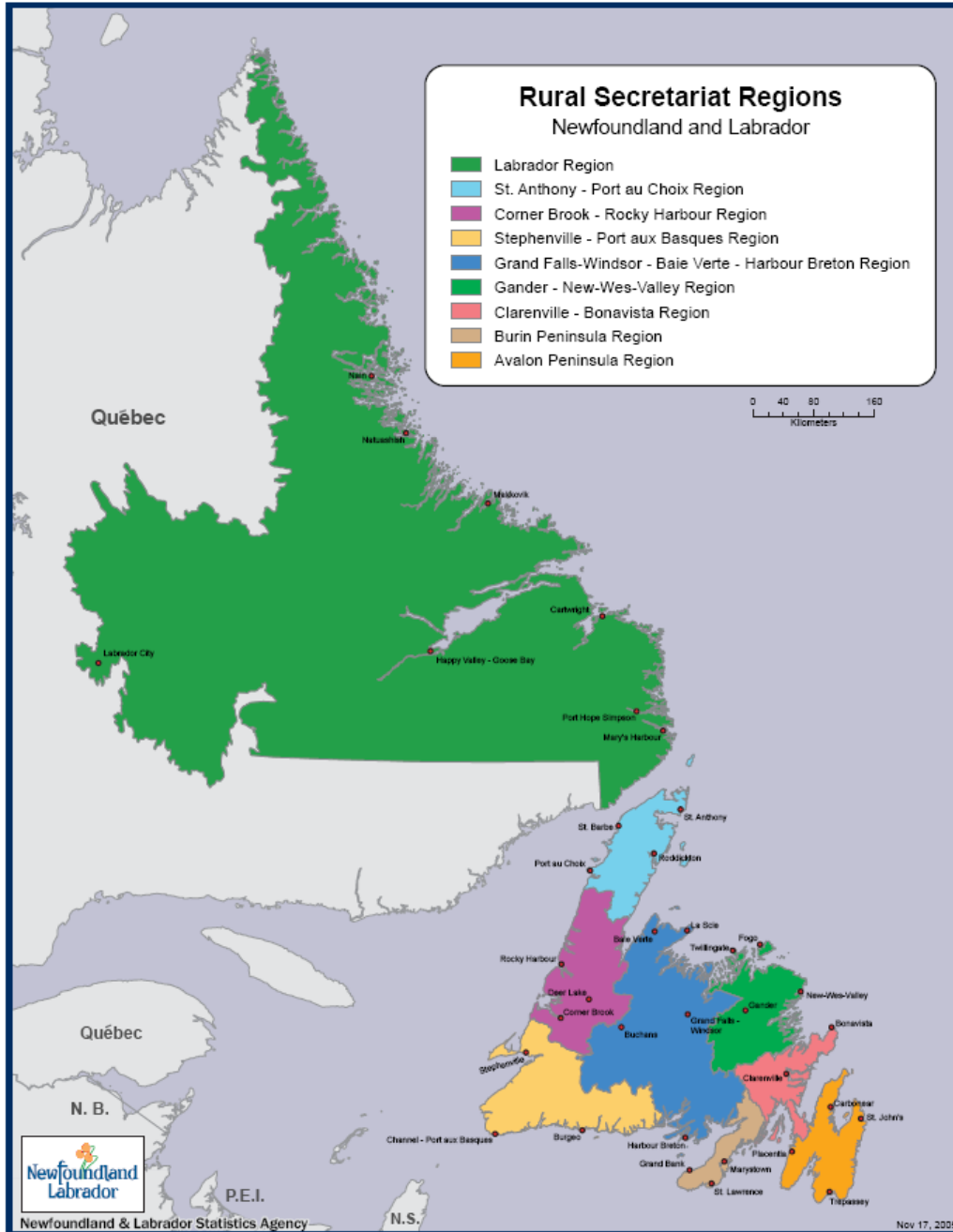
- Public policy responsiveness
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy
- Rural Lens implementation

Appendix B

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C



Appendix D

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.

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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:



Photo Courtesy of Mary Snow



Photo Courtesy of Greg Wood



Photo Courtesy of Cyril Kerby



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