



# Rural Secretariat Executive Council

Annual Activity Report 2011-12



# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

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As Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat and in accordance with the Provincial Government's commitment to accountability, I hereby submit the 2011-12 Activity Report of the Rural Secretariat. This report details the activities of the Rural Secretariat from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012. I am accountable for the actual results reported.

Over the past year, the Rural Secretariat has made considerable progress towards addressing the strategic directions of government as highlighted in its 2011-14 Activity Plan: citizen-based policy advice; public dialogue and engagement; research; and collaboration.

The Provincial and Regional Councils received support from Rural Secretariat staff to host a number of activities and initiatives including forums, meetings, dialogue sessions and workshops where policy issues affecting regions were considered and explored. Sixteen policy advice documents were developed and submitted to the Provincial Government in 2011-12 as a result of these efforts. Themes explored included: land use planning, the government appointment process for agencies, boards and commissions, health care, the fishery, community engagement, education, tourism-fisheries synergies, seniors' transportation, and the protection of rural culture, identity and place. The deliberative dialogue approach employed by the Rural Secretariat, and on which most council activities are based, fully engaged council members, citizens, community group leaders, and often representatives from Provincial Government departments in productive solution-oriented discussion about regional and rural sustainability matters.

During 2011-12 the Rural Secretariat also provided support to a number of Provincial Government departments interested in advancing their own departmental public dialogue and engagement efforts. Rural Secretariat staff collaborated with departments such as Advanced Skills and Education, to design and deliver a number of interactive, technology-enhanced deliberative dialogue forums, workshops and events that creatively ensured the voices and ideas of the public were captured and considered in policy- and decision-making processes.

Also over the past year the Rural Secretariat supported a number of councils, often in partnership with other agencies including departments, to undertake community- or regionally-based research projects which helped to inform the advice documents that councils ultimately developed and submitted to government. The documents, *Analysis of Literature and Secondary Data for Recommendations Related to Transportation Models on the Avalon Peninsula* (Avalon Regional Council) and *Developing Innovative Approaches for Community Engagement* (Central West Regional Council) are examples of documents supported by research. In a number of cases, preliminary research results were presented at public dialogue and engagement sessions so as to ensure insights and lessons emerging were widely shared within the communities in question, and to ensure additional data-analysis and



interpretation opportunities were made available to interested publics. During this period the Rural Secretariat also worked collaboratively with academic partners from this province including Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic on relevant research activities that will also eventually help to inform policy and decision making processes of government.

During 2011-12 Rural Secretariat staff supported a host of partners to enhance the regional inter-agency cooperation and communication that is essential for effective regional collaboration. Using skills developed through their participation in advanced partnership-brokering training offered by the United Kingdom-based Partnership Brokers Association, Rural Secretariat staff acting as 'neutral brokers' assisted groups interested in enhanced regional collaboration to design and build new appropriate partnership structures. (e.g., staff supported the development of Network 11, an informal collaboration of communities and community groups employing participatory communications technologies such as small-scale FM radio, to enhance dialogue and regional collaboration). Staff also supported leaders of existing collaborative processes to diagnose partnership problems and to devise best solutions to ongoing challenges being experienced.

In closing, over the past year the Rural Secretariat has made steady and impressive progress towards addressing government's strategic directions as identified in its 2011-14 Activity Plan. Due to the efforts of the Rural Secretariat and its partners the overall policy-development and decision-making processes in this province have been enhanced. Over the next reporting period, the Rural Secretariat will continue to increase its profile provincially and nationally as a unique, innovative and leading-edge government entity that strives to advance the sustainability of rural Newfoundland and Labrador communities and regions through effective public engagement, collaboration, and research in support of government policy and decision-making.

Sincerely,



**KEITH HUTCHINGS**  
Minister

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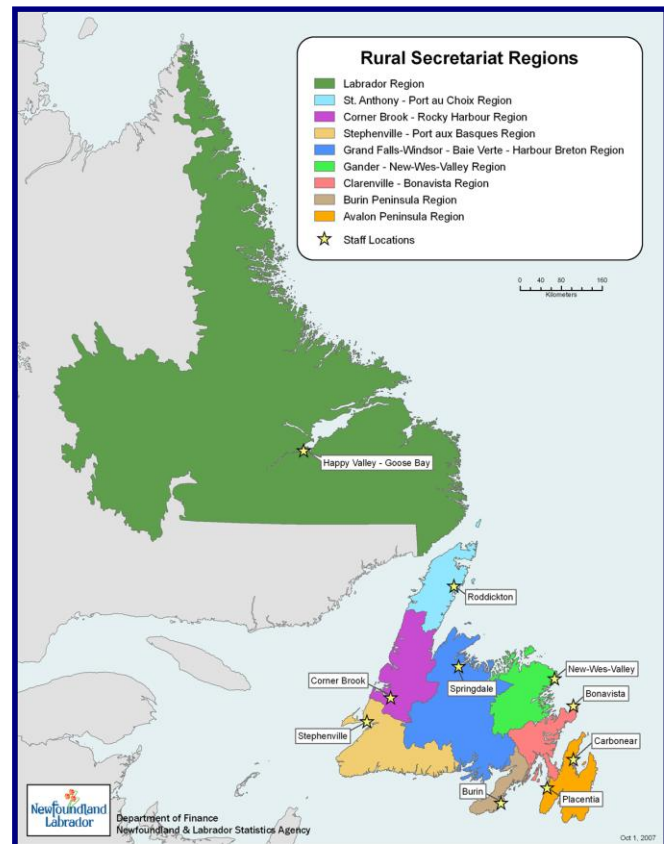
# 1. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

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 regions.

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 the Provincial government. The councils' activity plans and annual reports can be found at: [www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp](http://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 helps raise 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. For more detail on this work, see the Mission and Report on Performance sections below.

The work of the Secretariat is coordinated by a permanent staff complement of 16 individuals. As of March 31, 2012, there were 12 female and four male staff. 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 organizational 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, Business and Rural Development or the College of the North Atlantic.

To accomplish its mandate, the Rural Secretariat spent almost \$1.8 million in 2011-12 (see Section 12 for details). In 2011-12, 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;
- Operating costs for the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat; and
- Funds to support the work of the Rural Secretariat/councils related to public engagement, community-based research and collaboration.

## 2. MANDATE

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The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of rural Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach aimed at integrating economic, social, cultural aspects of rural and 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 rural concerns are considered throughout the Provincial Government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.
- Promote awareness of provincial and federal programs and services regarding rural communities.

## 3. LINES OF BUSINESS

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The Rural Secretariat's four lines of business are:

**Citizen-based policy advice:** The Rural Secretariat supports nine citizen-based Regional Councils, and one stakeholder-based Provincial Council, to develop policy and decision-making advice for submission to government. Typically, councils, with the support of Rural Secretariat staff, hold public engagement sessions involving citizens and/or stakeholder group representatives, and conduct community-based research activities, to inform the development of advice documents.

**Collaboration:** The Rural Secretariat understands that collaboration is critical for sustainability in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The Rural Secretariat works to support existing rural collaborative processes such as partnerships. Other times they work to help convene new regional collaborative processes such as networks or alliances. The broad goal is to help build a strengthened 'culture of collaboration' in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Research:** The Rural Secretariat collaborates with provincial partners on a number of formal research endeavors that help to improve understanding of the challenges facing, and opportunities available to, rural regions of this province. The Rural Secretariat also works directly with regional partners and councils on a host of community-based research initiatives: small regional-level data-gathering efforts that give those involved the information and knowledge they need to effectively advise the Provincial Government on regional and rural policy issues.

**Public dialogue and engagement:** In addition to supporting councils to conduct public engagement efforts, the Rural Secretariat also is available to assist other Provincial Government departments to design and deliver their own public engagement initiatives. The Rural Secretariat also periodically convenes special deliberative dialogue initiatives on themes deemed to be of particular importance to the rural sustainability of this province, often in partnership with rural stakeholder groups and other government departments.

## 4. VALUES

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The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

**Collaboration:** We are committed to building a culture of collaboration within Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond

<b>Creativity/innovation:</b>	We strive to transcend traditional ideas, rules, and patterns, and to work together to create new ideas, relationships, and approaches
<b>Inclusion:</b>	We acknowledge difference and cherish the views and perspectives of all. We take steps to ensure all have an opportunity to express their views
<b>Learning culture:</b>	We accept that we have a lot to learn and relish the opportunity to learn more
<b>Participation/engagement:</b>	We believe citizen/stakeholder/community engagement is essential to the development of good public policy
<b>Teamwork:</b>	We provide support to one another, work co-operatively, respect differing views and strive to make our work environments safe and enjoyable
<b>Honesty:</b>	We are open and honest in all our dealings and maintain the highest integrity at all times
<b>Excellence:</b>	We strive for excellence and quality in everything we do

## 5. PRIMARY CLIENTS

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The Rural Secretariat has two primary client groups: clients external to government (citizens, nine Regional Councils, one Provincial Council, community and regional organizations, and stakeholder groups) and clients within the Provincial Government (departments and agencies). It supports and brokers collaborative relationships within and between each of these primary client groups.

## 6. VISION

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**Vibrant rural regions and communities where collaborative organizations and engaged and informed citizens work closely with government to advance rural sustainability.**



## 7. MISSION

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**By March 31, 2017, the Rural Secretariat will have worked with regional and departmental partners to improve the sustainability prospects of rural communities and regions.**

**Measure:**

Work with partners to improve rural sustainability prospects

**Indicators:**

1. Supported partners to develop policy and decision making advice;
2. Supported partners in their use of innovative public engagement, collaboration and/or research methods/approaches.

The Rural Secretariat’s continued collaboration and partnerships with individuals, groups and organizations, both internal and external to the Provincial Government, assists in the improvement and advancement of the sustainability of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. In keeping with our mandate and applicable strategic directions of government, we support our partners’ innovative use of public engagement, collaboration, and research. In addition, we support the work of our nine regional councils and Provincial Council in their efforts to provide well-informed policy advice to Provincial Government departments.

## 8. SHARED COMMITMENTS

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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 understands that its regional sustainability goals can best be achieved through collaboration with departments and agencies that have the mandates to implement policies, programs, services and investments that impact rural areas. The staff of the Rural Secretariat sit on various committees and interdepartmental working groups. Additionally, the Secretariat works with a host of government departments and agencies such as:

Government Departments/Organizations	Issue/Project
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network (NLHHN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rural Secretariat staff worked with NLHHN to design and deliver “Celebrating Innovation &amp; Collaboration”, the NLHHN Provincial Housing and Homelessness Conference (October 2011).</li></ul>

Government Departments/Organizations	Issue/Project
Human Resources, Labour and Employment (now Advanced Education and Skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Secretariat staff provided upfront design advice, technology and onsite support for the department's Employer Services Gap Analysis Sessions across the province.</li> </ul>
Advanced Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Secretariat staff worked with Advanced Education and Skills to design and deliver the Apprenticeship Forum (March 2012), an interactive, technology-assisted session designed to engage stakeholders as identified by the department.</li> </ul>
Newfoundland and Labrador Lumber Producers' Association (NLLPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Secretariat staff worked with NLLPA to design and deliver an interactive, technology-assisted engagement process for (and activity sessions at) the conference "Making Wood Work: Strengthening Wood Industry Partnerships" (May 2011). A steering committee was formed as a result of this conference to explore the potential of a new provincial organization to represent the forest products industry. RS staff assisted in the design and facilitation of the first meeting of the steering committee.</li> <li>Rural Secretariat staff continue to support the efforts of the steering committee and participate in their meetings.</li> </ul>
Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rural Secretariat worked with FES-NL to design and deliver an interactive, technology-assisted engagement session with approximately 60 regional council members on the issue of a province-wide 911 system (January 2012).</li> </ul>
The Strategic Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Secretariat staff co-ordinated a learning session with the Strategic Partnership Initiative and provided an expert speaker for the event.</li> <li>The Rural Secretariat also facilitated a two-part workshop on family-friendly public policy in January 2012.</li> </ul>

Government Departments/Organizations	Issue/Project
Innovation, Business and Rural Development (IBRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rural Secretariat supported community-based research projects (e.g. active labour markets in the Placentia region and Fishery-Tourism Synergies in the Bonne Bay region).</li> <li>• In March 2012, the RS, in partnership with IBRD, began designing five Artic Opportunities interactive engagement sessions. These sessions aim to engage appropriate stakeholders to discuss potential business opportunities in the North.</li> </ul>
Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff developed and delivered an interactive learning event for senior managers of TCR at their annual Winter Management Retreat entitled “Public engagement, collaboration and collaborative synergy: Ideas and insights that can inform our work”.</li> </ul>
Health and Community Services (HCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff worked with representatives from Central Health to design and deliver an interactive, technology-assisted engagement event, <i>CentralSpeaks: Building Connections in Long-Term Care</i> (May 2011). RS and Central Health also conducted eight focus groups throughout the region to inform the development of this interactive town-hall engagement exercise.</li> <li>• The Rural Secretariat supported community-based research projects (e.g. Labrador Grenfell Health engaged in community-based research regarding access to health care in Labrador).</li> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff supported the design and delivery of public engagement activities throughout the Building Healthy Communities conference (November 2011).</li> </ul>
Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat (VNPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rural Secretariat collaborated with the VNPS to create a shared position through the Graduate Opportunities Program, a Provincial Government program for recruiting recent graduates.</li> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff supported the VNPS Community Summit in Corner Brook</li> </ul>

Government Departments/Organizations	Issue/Project
	(February 2012) by providing engagement design ideas and by facilitating tables discussions.
Memorial University (MUN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rural Secretariat partnered with Memorial University on numerous community-based research projects (e.g., The Future of the Fisheries).</li> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff designed and delivered an interactive engagement session to assist MUN's Office of Engagement with the development of engagement plan for the institution.</li> <li>• The Rural Secretariat presented at and moderated a stakeholder engagement session for MUN 's Office of Engagement entitled Technology and Public Engagement</li> </ul>
The Harris Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rural Secretariat partnered with the Harris Centre, "Memorial University's hub for public policy and regional development issues", on several community-based research projects (e.g., An Analysis of Municipal Readiness for Socio-Economic Development Opportunities in the Isthmus of Avalon Region).</li> <li>• The Rural Secretariat partnered with the Harris Centre on four Harris Centre Regional Workshops.</li> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff supported the Harris Centre in the design and delivery of an interactive technology-assisted session for 130 conference delegates as part of the North Atlantic Forum (October 2011), an event that brought 200 delegates from around the world to examine the relationship between the arts, cultural heritage and regional development in islands and rural and remote regions.</li> <li>• Rural Secretariat staff supported the Harris Centre in the design and delivery of a two-day engagement session with Nordic delegates from NORA/ NordRegio (October 2011) that explored demographic change in the North Atlantic Rim.</li> </ul>

Government Departments/Organizations	Issue/Project
City of St. John's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Secretariat staff worked with City of St. John's staff to design and deliver the Mayor's Symposium on the Municipal Plan (February 2012).</li> </ul>
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Secretariat staff worked with senior officials at NLHC to design an innovative stakeholder engagement session which helped to affirm the direction of NLHC's 10 Year Social Housing Plan, "Secure Foundations" (November 2011).</li> </ul>
Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rural Secretariat worked with various Regional Economic Development Boards on public engagement sessions and community-based research initiatives (e.g., Accounting for Branch Cultural &amp; Heritage (June 2011) – a project that aimed to collect and document elements of Branch culture and heritage.)</li> </ul>

# 9. REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

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## 9.1 Issue 1: Building Internal Capacity

Ongoing capacity building is critical to achieving the mission and strategic directions of the Rural Secretariat. In our 2011-14 activity plan, the Rural Secretariat committed to invest in staff training and skill development to improve our overall capacity to initiate, design and deliver innovative collaboration, community-based research and public engagement initiatives, processes and projects. Over the past year, the Rural Secretariat has focused on training staff and providing opportunities to participate in skill development activities related to community-based research. Community-based research by definition is initiated and situated in a community, is collaborative and action-oriented (CCBR, no date). By strengthening community-based research skills, the Rural Secretariat is better equipped to encourage and support citizens, partners and stakeholders to work together to find innovative, evidence-based solutions to issues that affect rural sustainability.

In 2012-13, as identified in our 2011-14 Activity Plan, the Rural Secretariat will continue to build internal capacity by training staff and providing opportunities for skill development in the area of collaboration brokering.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, the Rural Secretariat will have undertaken initiatives to improve internal capacity.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2012, Regional Partnership Planners and provincial office staff will have completed training and/or participated in skill development initiatives related to community-based research.

**Measure:** Staff trained/participated in skill developed activities related to community-based research methods, design and implementation.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Training event held for regional planners and provincial office staff related to community-based research methods, design and implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A full-day of community-based research training was held for Rural Secretariat staff on June 16, 2011. Training was provided by Joanna Ochocka and Rich Jansen of the Waterloo-based Centre for Community Based Research. This event included a detailed presentation on community-based research, roundtable discussions and case study presentations including a video presentation of community theatre being used to disseminate community-based research findings.</li> </ul>
<p>Staff coached and mentored by experts in the community-based research field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dr. Kelly Vodden (Memorial University of Newfoundland) and Dr. Sean Markey (Simon Fraser University) delivered interactive presentations to Rural Secretariat provincial office staff and regional staff on community-based research. Planners were given the opportunity to discuss community-based research projects they were involved in and receive advice from Dr. Vodden and Dr. Markey. This training session was held at the provincial office in April 2011.</li> <li>● A full day of community-based research training was held for RS staff on June 16, 2011. Training was provided by Joanna Ochocka and Rich Jansen of the Waterloo-based Centre for Community Based Research (See indicator one above for more detail).</li> <li>● Several Rural Secretariat staff involved in an upcoming community-based research project on housing and homelessness in</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>rural Newfoundland participated in a community-based research training session led by Joanna Ochocka and Rich Jansen of the Centre for Community Based Research (February 2012). This is an on-going project in which the CCBR is providing support, mentoring and expertise in the field of community-based research.</p>
<p>Staff supplied with current literature/documents related to the community-based research field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff were provided with presentation slide decks and related literature on community-based research, including web links (e.g., Rural Communities Impacting Policy found at <a href="http://www.ruralnovascotia.ca">www.ruralnovascotia.ca</a>)</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:**

The Rural Secretariat fulfilled the indicators as outlined in the 2011-14 Activity Plan and therefore its 2011-12 objective. The Rural Secretariat continues to explore opportunities for training and professional development in this area and is incorporating the learnings from the past year in its ongoing community-based research work.

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2013, Regional Partnership Planners and provincial office staff will have completed training and/or participated in skill development initiatives related to collaboration-brokering.

**Measure:**

Trained and/or participated in development initiatives related to collaboration-brokering

**Indicators:**

1. New staff trained in collaboration brokering (Partnership Brokering Accreditation Scheme (PBAS) Level 1)
2. Staff completed “Train the Trainer” (Partnership Brokering Accreditation Scheme (PBAS) Level 2)
3. Staff participated in webinars delivered through the Partnership Brokering Network Canada (PBNC)

## 9.2 Issue 2: Communications

The Rural Secretariat recognizes the importance of effective internal/external communication. Over the past several years the Rural Secretariat has made major strides in revamping and focusing its vision for the organization and its role in supporting regional and rural sustainability. We have enhanced our ability to engage and partner with regional and provincial community-based organizations. However, we recognized that more needed to be done to enhance our visibility. In 2011-12, the Rural Secretariat hosted and/or supported a number of regional and/or partner events. This provided us with several opportunities to present information about our lines of business, thereby, enhancing visibility and increasing awareness of the Rural Secretariat. Promoting the Rural Secretariat at such events encourages the development of new partnerships and opportunities to work with groups to advance rural and regional sustainability, as outlined in our strategic directions.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, the Rural Secretariat will have improved internal/external communications.

### Objective 1:

By March 31, 2012, the Rural Secretariat will have improved its communication through participation in regional partner events.

### Measure:

Improved communication through participation in regional partner events.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Participation in regional partner events where information about the Rural Secretariat can be presented, and where discussions related to its role, values, process, offerings and areas of emphasis can be held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="773 1209 1323 1732">• In December 2011, government appointed new council members to the Rural Secretariat's voluntary regional councils. A multi-site council orientation and engagement event (Regional Council Renewal 2012!) was held in January 2012 in St. John's, Gander and Corner Brook. The three sites were linked through Skype. New council members were introduced to the role councils' play as well as the work, values and offerings of the Rural Secretariat. They were also engaged in dialogue related to a proposed province-wide 911 service and priority setting for the Provincial Council.</li><li data-bbox="773 1749 1323 1837">• The Rural Secretariat has representatives on the Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Rural Team (hosted by the Federal Rural</li></ul>



Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>and Co-Operatives Secretariat). At the September 2011 NL Rural Team meeting, Rural Secretariat staff delivered a presentation on the role of the Rural Secretariat, lines of business, offerings and examples of community-based research projects and engagement events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the fall of 2011, the Rural Secretariat began developing a series of sessions related to the Rural Secretariat and its four lines of business to be delivered to policy directors within the Provincial Government. The first session, held in December 2011, provided an introduction to the Rural Secretariat and its work. Community-based research was the topic of the second session held in February 2012. The final two sessions are in development and are planned for the 2012-13 fiscal year.</li> <li>• The Rural Secretariat has worked with its partners to develop approximately 30 dialogue and engagement events over the past year (see Section 8: Shared Commitments for examples). It has also made numerous presentations to partners and outside groups at such events. Partnering in the design and delivery of engagement sessions provides the Rural Secretariat with opportunities to market and promote itself. It also allows the Rural Secretariat to demonstrate its lines of business to various audiences. Presentations delivered at such events serve to introduce the Rural Secretariat to a wider audience, and to elaborate on its role, lines of business and offerings.</li> <li>• The Rural Secretariat developed marketing and promotional materials (i.e., brochures; display boards) which were showcased and/or distributed at various partner events (see Section 8: Shared Commitments). These materials further supported the Rural Secretariat in conveying its role, values and processes.</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Participation in regional partner events where workshops/learning sessions demonstrating the knowledge/expertise of the Rural Secretariat - and which generate discussion about the Rural Secretariat - are held</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In collaboration with Grenfell Campus, Memorial University and the Centre for Community Based Research, the Rural Secretariat co-led and co-facilitated a nine-site community-based research training event in Corner Brook on February 22, 2012. The event was webcast to seven satellite sites across the province which were also hosted by Rural Secretariat regional staff. In addition, a virtual site was created whereby participants from across Newfoundland and Labrador were engaged via conference call in the broader training event. Although linked, each site was also a stand-alone regional event. Approximately 55 people attended the session in Corner Brook and 75 participated in the satellite sessions.</li> <li>● The Rural Secretariat partnered with the Harris Centre on a number of Harris Centre Regional Workshops. At the Harris Centre Regional Workshop in Port Blandford (March 2012) the Rural Secretariat held a two hour lunchtime dialogue session on assessing the social impacts of industrial development. In Port Hope Simpson (November 2011), the Rural Secretariat facilitated a similar dialogue session on creating Smart Networks. Approximately 42 participants used tools to analyze networks and get a sense of what the Rural Secretariat has to offer. These sessions showcase the public engagement and collaboration skills, knowledge and expertise of the Rural Secretariat.</li> <li>● Many of the events as listed in Section 8: Shared Commitments demonstrated the Rural Secretariat's expertise in public engagement, collaboration and community-based research.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:**

The Rural Secretariat has fulfilled the indicators as outlined in its 2011-14 Activity Plan and therefore the 2011-12 objective.

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2013 the Rural Secretariat will have improved its communication through expanded use of technology-driven participatory communication tools/approaches.

**Measure:**

Improved communication through expanded use of technology-driven participatory communication tools/approaches.

**Indicators:**

1. Multi-site events enriched and enabled through the expanded use of technology.
2. Explored innovative ways of using audience response/polling keypads and software.
3. Continued and increased use of communications technology to improve internal and external communications and communications among our community partners and stakeholders.

### **9.3 Issue 3: Innovation and Best Practices**

The Rural Secretariat is continually striving to find new and effective ways of supporting regional partners, stakeholders and citizens committed to rural sustainability. In keeping with the Strategic Directions (Appendix A), the Rural Secretariat 2011-14 Activity plan committed to hosting and/or supporting events that model innovation and best practices in three areas: community-based research, public engagement and collaboration. This past year, the Rural Secretariat focused on innovation and best practices in community-based research and hosted/co-hosted a number of training events. These events provided an opportunity for regional partners to highlight and share community-based research projects undertaken with support from the Rural Secretariat.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, the Rural Secretariat will have hosted and/or supported activities that model innovation and best practices in community-based research, public engagement and collaboration.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2012 the Rural Secretariat will have hosted and/or supported activities that model innovation and best practices in community-based research with emphasis on participatory-action approaches.

**Measure:**

Hosted and/or supported activities that modeled innovation and best practices in community-based research with emphasis on participatory-action approaches.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Informed and educated partners about innovative and creative community-based research approaches and activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Rural Secretariat organized and led a community-based research event for staff and partners. This event, held at the Capital Hotel on June 17, 2011, brought together approximately, 40 people representing: the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, MUN, Stella Burry Community Services, Community Sector Council, Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre, Regional Economic Development Boards, City of St. John’s, Town of Wabana, and Rural Secretariat Regional Councils. Presentations were delivered by Rich Jansen and Joanna Ochocka of the Waterloo-based Centre for Community Based Research. This event also included roundtable dialogues and a video presentation on how to use theatre to disseminate community-based research findings.</li> <li>● A Rural Secretariat-led and facilitated nine-site community-based research training event was held in Corner Brook in partnership with the Centre for Community Based Research on February 22, 2012 (See Issue 2, indicator # above) who presented creative approaches to community-based research. Approximately 55 people attended the session in Corner Brook and 75 participated in the satellite sessions including representation from Regional Economic Development Boards, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University, City of Corner Brook, Regional Health Authorities, regional councils, etc.</li> <li>● On February 23, 2011, Joanna Ochocka and Rich Jansen travelled to Clarenville where they led a training event for Rural Secretariat staff and members of four housing and homelessness Community Advisory Boards (CABs). Participants (25) from the following CABs attended: Burin Peninsula Housing and Homelessness Committee; Gander and Area Advisory Board on Housing and Homelessness; Regional Action Committee on Housing (REACH Inc.); and Central Housing and Homelessness Network. This session was conducted to encourage CABs to pursue community-based research projects in the area of housing and homelessness in rural Newfoundland.</li> <li>● The Rural Secretariat hosted a full-day training session for a group of researchers involved in an intangible cultural heritage project. Dr. Kelly Vodden</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	(MUN) led the session. Additionally, Rural Secretariat staff presented examples of community-based research projects it has supported.
Modeled or demonstrated community-based research activities in conjunction with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rural Secretariat has worked on a number of community-based research projects in collaboration with its partners. For examples of RS supported community-based research projects go to: <a href="http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/whatweredoing/research.html">www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/whatweredoing/research.html</a>. These projects served to model and/or demonstrate to participants, partners and community members the value and potential of community-based research. In addition to building awareness and capacity of those involved, the RS provided opportunities for partners to showcase these projects and to discuss how the communities involved benefited from the research.</li> <li>• For instance, during the community-based research training event on June 17, 2011, Lousie McGillis (Grenfell), Michael Mooney (REDB) and Joan Simmonds (St. Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council member) presented on the following community-based research projects: Networks for Innovation, Accounting for Branch Culture and Heritage; and Textile Traditions on the Great Northern Peninsula: Craft Creativity and Life Stages. These presentations demonstrated community-based research projects undertaken in partnership with or supported by the Rural Secretariat.</li> <li>• During the community-based research training event in Corner Brook (February 2012) Joanie Cranston (Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council member) delivered a presentation on a Fisheries-Tourism Synergies project at the Corner Brook CBR event. This project was in partnership with the Rural Secretariat.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:**

The Rural Secretariat fulfilled the 2011-12 indicators and therefore its objective for this year.

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2013 the Rural Secretariat will have hosted and/or supported activities that model innovation and best practices in public engagement with emphasis on interactive technology-enhanced town hall meetings.

**Measure:**

Hosted and/or supported activities that model innovation and best practices in public engagement.

**Indicators:**

1. Informed and educated partners about innovative and creative public engagement approaches and activities
2. Modeled or demonstrated public engagement activities/events in conjunction with partners

## 10. ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

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In addition to the points raised in Section 8, the following additional highlight is worthy of mention and is consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate.

- **Building and Sustaining Effective Partnerships (May 19-20, 2011)**

As part of our ongoing staff training activities related to collaboration, the Rural Secretariat brought internationally-recognized cross-sector partnership expert Ms. Ros Tennyson to St John's. Ros has been pioneering and promoting partnerships for sustainable development for nearly 20 years and is widely regarded as a leading trainer in partnering skills and partnership brokering.

During this session Ros examined the core principles of partnerships and explored common challenges and how to overcome them. Participants included representatives from the following departments and organizations: Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Community Sector Council, Food Security Network, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network, Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network, St. John's Board of Trade and Mercy Centre for Ecology and Justice.

# 11. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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## **Challenges**

The Rural Secretariat (RS) is a unique and innovative government entity that strives to advance the sustainability of rural Newfoundland and Labrador regions and communities. It does this by: engaging the public in dialogue about sustainability issues and challenges; supporting collaboration between and among rural stakeholders including governments; facilitating and conducting research that helps inform government policy- and decision-making; and assisting ten volunteer, advisory councils to develop policy-advice for submission to the Provincial Government.

The Rural Secretariat works in a dynamic rural environment. Numerous forces directly and indirectly affect the regions and communities in which Rural Secretariat staff work. There are also numerous governmental and non-governmental entities operating in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and some of these also engage in activities that are somewhat similar to those undertaken by the Rural Secretariat. In this context, a key challenge continuing to face the Rural Secretariat relates to its ability to clearly articulate - both to these entities and the general public - how the work of the Rural Secretariat is unique and of value.

## **Opportunities**

While the challenges noted above continue to impact the work of the Rural Secretariat, there are also new opportunities for the Rural Secretariat related to public engagement, community-based research and collaboration-brokering. Over the past several years, the Rural Secretariat has received advanced and specialized training in these three areas from leading experts. This has led to a high level of confidence among staff regarding the Rural Secretariat's ability to effectively work with partners, including departments, on public engagement, community-based research and collaboration-brokering activities. The following examples outline new opportunities for the Rural Secretariat in this regard:

### Public engagement

- The number of requests from departments for the Rural Secretariat to support their public engagement activities continues to increase as evidenced by recent requests from the departments of Advanced Education and Skills, Innovation, Business and Rural Development and Environment and Conservation.
  
- The interest among council members to undertake, initiate or support public engagement activities related to issues such as waste management, fisheries, regional infrastructure, long-term care, land-use planning, and forestry is also increasing.

### Community-based research

- Numerous requests continue to emerge from councils for the Rural Secretariat to support research activities that bring together academic institutions, community groups, citizens, and government departments to study matters of regional concern (e.g., seniors transportation on the Avalon Peninsula). A list of community-based research projects is on the RS website:  
<http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/whatweredoing/research.html>
- Requests are also regularly emerging from partners for the Rural Secretariat to collaborate on research projects (e.g., International Business Leaders Forum (United Kingdom) is interested in joint-research activities related to understanding the importance of brokers to partnering activities; the Centre for Community Based Research (Kitchener) is interested in a joint project regarding the application of community-based research approaches to rural housing and homelessness issues).

### Collaboration-brokering

- Numerous opportunities continue to emerge whereby Rural Secretariat employees are asked to be 'honest collaboration brokers' (i.e., neutral supporters, designers and/or facilitators of partnership processes) (e.g., request from Community University Resource Recovery Alliance (CURRA) to broker a provincial partnership around fisheries-tourism synergies).
- Network 11 - a three-day event designed to enhance collaboration among communities interested/involved in rural regional or community radio is an example of Rural Secretariat collaboration brokering activity.
- Potential opportunities for the Rural Secretariat to apply lessons-learned from the Regional Collaboration Pilot to other regions of this province continue to emerge.



## 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 2012. 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.

<b>RURAL SECRETARIAT</b>	<b>Department Original Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>GL Operating Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Actual 2011-12</b>
Salaries	1,291,500	1,216,500	1,208,135.86
Employee Benefits	7,400	9,900	8,009.88
Travel & Communication	309,900	305,500	268,426.23
Supplies	41,300	43,800	41,554.62
Professional Services	150,000	53,400	153,376.00
Purchased Services	115,100	111,100	81,242.34
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	7,500	7,500	7,323.46
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,922,700</b>	<b>1,847,700</b>	<b>1,768,068</b>

### Financial Breakdown by Region:

	<b>Avalon Peninsula Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Avalon Peninsula Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	30,000.00	32,357.13
Supplies	5,000.00	2,377.15
Purchased Services	4,000.00	1,366.95
<b>Total Budgeted</b>	<b>39,000.00</b>	<b>36,101.23</b>

	<b>Burin Peninsula Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Burin Peninsula Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	16,400.00	18,717.02
Supplies	2,500.00	216.56
Purchased Services	4,000.00	188.00
<b>Total Budgeted</b>	<b>22,900.00</b>	<b>19,121.58</b>

	<b>Clarenville - Bonavista Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Clarenville - Bonavista Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	16,400.00	17,256.37
Supplies	2,500.00	3,316.44
Purchased Services	4,000.00	410.95
<b>Total Budgeted</b>	<b>22,900.00</b>	<b>20,983.76</b>

	<b>Gander – New-Wes-Valley Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Gander – New-Wes-Valley Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	20,000.00	12,486.51
Supplies	2,500.00	1,624.63
Purchased Services	7,900.00	5,578.07
Total Budgeted	30,400.00	19,689.21

	<b>Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Hr Breton Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Hr Breton Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	32,000.00	24,330.81
Supplies	2,500.00	3,129.75
Purchased Services	10,240.00	8,168.16
Total Budgeted	44,740.00	35,628.72

<i>Note: New Regional Planner started January 2012</i>	<b>Stephenville – Port aux Basques Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Stephenville – Port aux Basques Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	20,400.00	16,854.10
Supplies	2,500.00	1,025.32
Purchased Services	8,350.00	5,680.95
Total Budgeted	31,250.00	23,560.37

	<b>Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	22,000.00	15,993.25
Supplies	2,500.00	3,189.94
Purchased Services	4,000.00	1,508.14
Total Budgeted	28,500.00	20,691.33

	<b>St. Anthony – Port au Choix Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>St. Anthony – Port au Choix Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	19,900.00	19,787.23
Supplies	2,500.00	2,359.49
Purchased Services	10,000.00	8,173.34
Total Budgeted	32,400.00	30,320.06

	<b>Labrador Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>Labrador Expenditures</b>
Transportation & Communication	47,000.00	30,558.65
Supplies	2,500.00	159.39
Purchased Services	4,000.00	50.00
Total Budgeted	53,500.00	30,768.04

# APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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## Strategic Directions

### 1. Title: Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

**Outcome Statement:** A sustainable rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Clarifying Statement:** This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Rural Secretariat in the areas of:

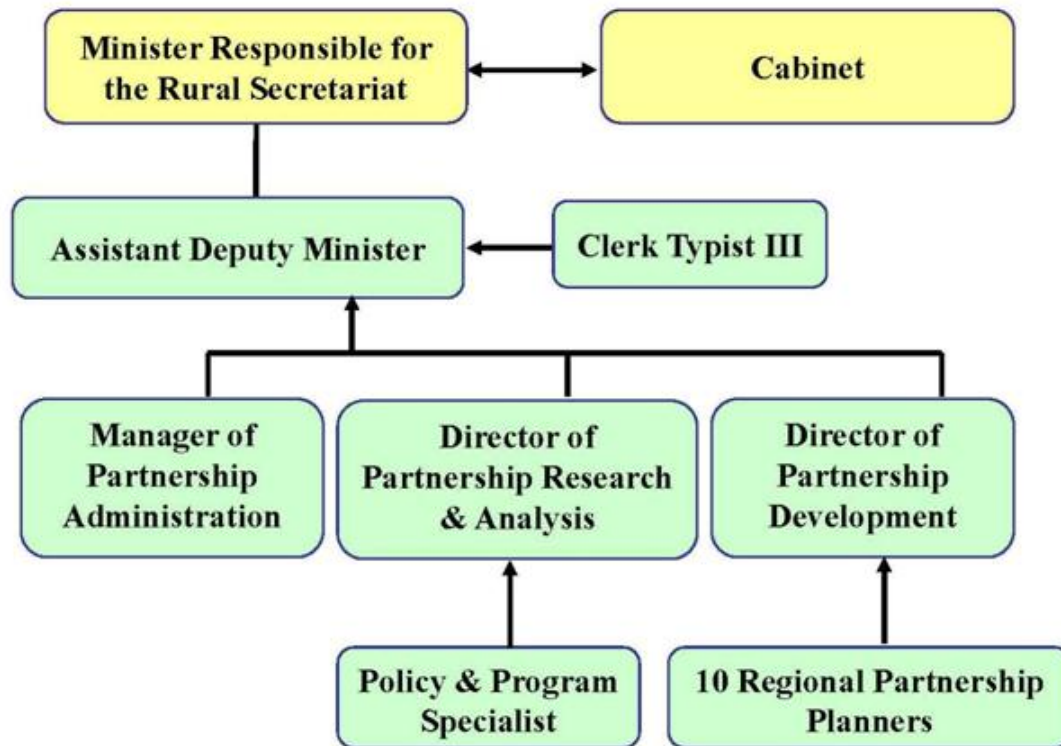
- Citizen-based policy advice
- Public dialogue and engagement
- Collaboration
- Research

Focus Areas/Components of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is:			
	to be addressed by entities reporting to the department	addressed in the department's activity plan	addressed in the department's operational plan	addressed in the branch/divisional work plans of the entity
1. Citizen-based policy advice		X		
2. Public dialogue and engagement		X		
3. Collaboration		X		
4. Research		X		

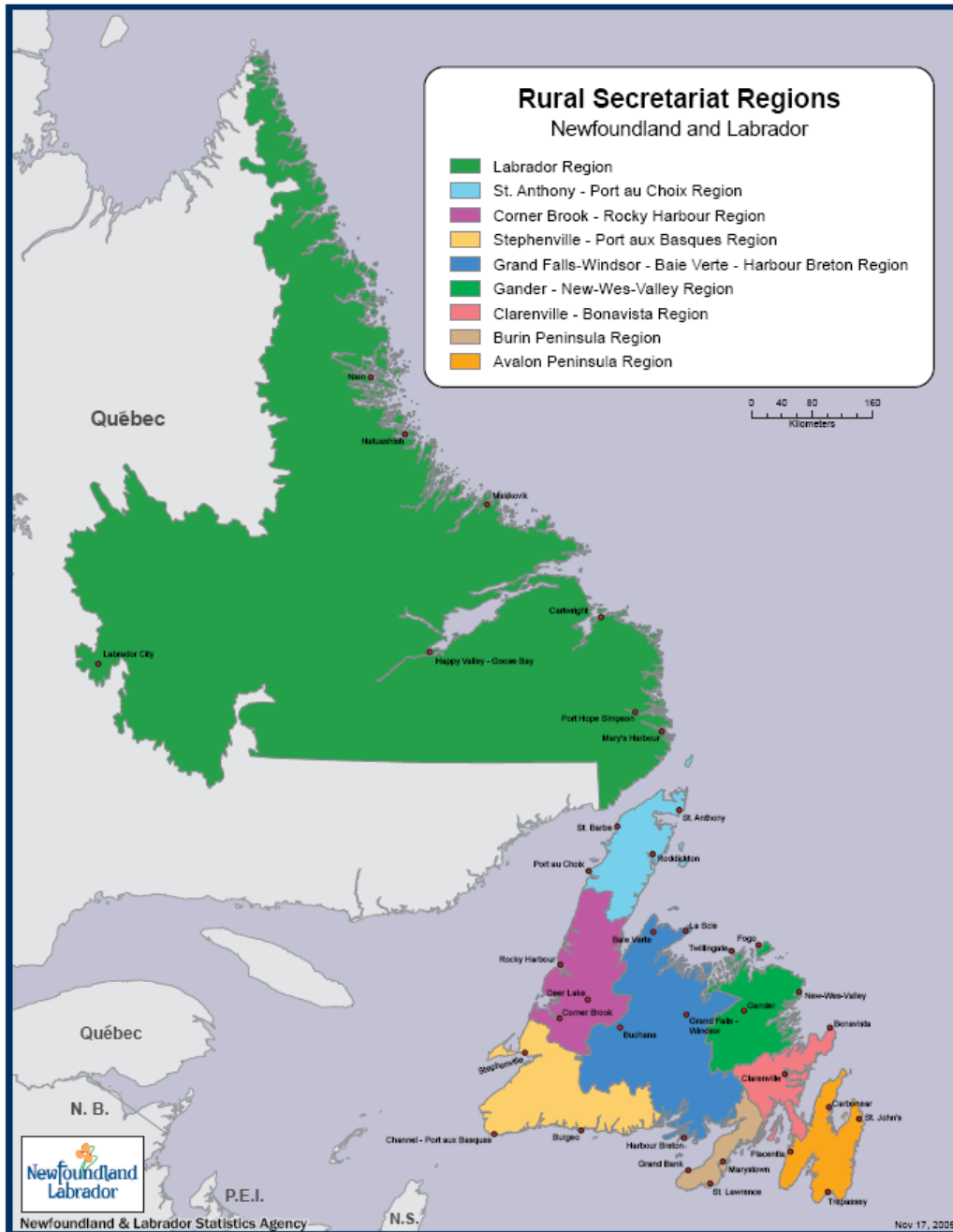
# APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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## Rural Secretariat Organizational Chart



# APPENDIX C: MAP OF RURAL SECRETARIAT REGIONS



# APPENDIX D: MANDATES OF REGIONAL COUNCILS AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

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## **Mandate of the Regional Councils**

The Regional Council's mandate is to:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing a region.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity, etc.) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either a) advance b) negatively impact or c) 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 the economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To serve as a sounding board in their region for new or proposed initiatives.
- To select 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 mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing Province.
- To review key 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 a) advance, b) negatively impact or c) need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- To advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about the economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To 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 Credits:



Courtesy of the Rural Secretariat



Courtesy of Edward Vincent



Courtesy of the Rural Secretariat



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