



*Stephenville-Port aux Basques
Regional Council of the
Rural Secretariat,
Executive Council*

*Annual Activity Report
2007-08*



Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2007-08 fiscal year. On behalf of the Council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results achieved.

The work of Council members with support of the Regional Partnership Planner has been focused very much around these commitments. The vision document has been refined and circulated within the region both electronically and hard copy; citizen engagement continues and is being broadened in various manners; and, the priority areas have been refined and modified over time. The changes have been incorporated into the Council's Activity Plan for 2008-11.

The Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council members are currently working toward a process of submitting advice to the provincial government around priorities – advice that brings a community and citizen perspective. The advice will be based upon input from a variety of sources such as citizens, industry, the college and university, government departments, and so on.

It is the hope of this Regional Council that we will be helping to influence and affect positive change in the future.

Sincerely,



Robin Davis
Chair, Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

The Stephenville – Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat region encompasses the Stephenville, Bay St. George South and Port au Port Peninsula areas extending to Codroy Valley and Port aux Basques in the south. It also includes communities along the south coast from Isle aux Morts and extending as far east as the community of Francois.

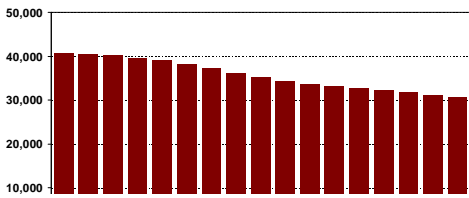
While the region faces challenges not unlike other regions in the province, such as an aging population, out-migration, fisheries adjustment and so on, there are an abundance of strengths and opportunities upon which to build. The region is a gateway vis-à-vis the Marine Atlantic Gulf ferry. There is an airport in the region and a second airport within a two hour drive. The region has a strong presence of heritage and cultural activities and facilities. There is strong leadership that continues to actively look for new ideas and/or ways to diversify the local economies.



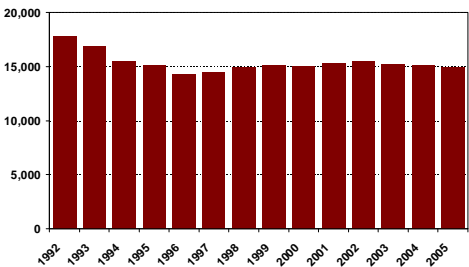
Ultimately, the residents value both the natural and cultural assets of the region as a whole, as evidenced in part by Aboriginal and Francophone activities, the Stephenville Theatre Festival, various other festivals and the growing interest amongst people for the stewardship of such things as the fishery, rivers, ecological areas, natural resources, cultural heritage and an overall sense that it is no longer acceptable for jobs to be created at any cost to the environment.

The Stephenville-Port aux Basques region was reported as having a population of about 30,600 in 2007. The largest towns and main regional service centres in the region are Stephenville (population of about 6,600 in 2006) and Port aux Basques (population of about 4,300). Additional regional demographic information can be found in *Regional Demographic Profiles*:

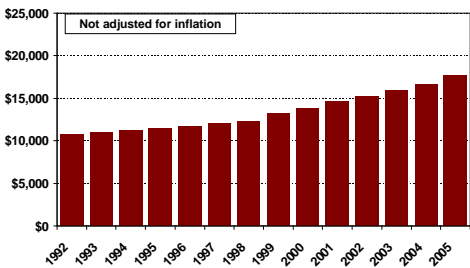
Population Estimates
Stephenville-Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region



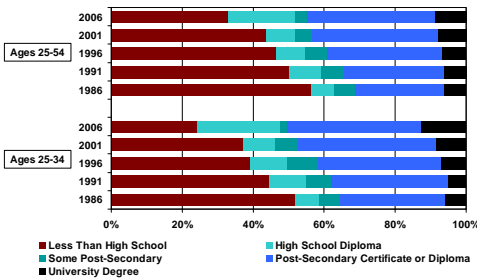
Employed and Self-Employed
Stephenville-Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region



Personal Income per Capita
Stephenville-Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region



Educational Attainment
Stephenville-Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region



Newfoundland and Labrador (www.economics.gov.nl.ca/population/regionaldemographicprofiles.asp).

The region's labour market has been stable over the past 14 years. The number of persons employed (including self-employed) averaged about 15,400 between 1992 and 2005.

While employment has remained stable, incomes have increased. Per capita income in the region in 2005 was \$17,700. This is an increase of about 21% from 2001 and 51% from 1996.

Over this period, incomes have also been impacted by inflation and by changes to personal tax rates. Adjusting for these factors, after-inflation, after-tax personal income per capita in 2005 was about 13% higher than 2001 and 31% higher than 1996.

Formal educational attainment is increasing in the region. Among those of prime labour force age (ages 25-54), 34% had completed a college level program or university degree in 1991. By 2006, this rate had grown to 45%. Among younger workers (ages 25-34), the rate of post-secondary completion grew from 38% to 50% over the same period.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.lmiworks.ca

2. Regional Council Overview

The Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council is comprised of 10 members; five female and five male. The Council has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region. The Council met four times in 2007-08.

The Council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of the Council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat.

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource and facilitates of the work of the Council. The staff person for the Stephenville-Port aux Basques region is Sam Organ. Sam works from the W.E. Cormack Center in Stephenville.

Regional Council members	Community
Allister Hann	Burgeo
Eric Legge	Cartyville
Kelly Tompkins	St. Andrews
Audrey Gracie	Kippens
Margaret Gaudon	Port au Port
Ruth Forsey-Gale	Robinsons
Calvin White	Flat Bay
Michelle Skinner	St. Georges
Susan Fowlow	Stephenville
Robin Davis	Stephenville Crossing

** Additional members were appointed in September 2008. For an updated listing of council members please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp> .*

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

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

4. Lines of Business

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

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

5. *Values*

The core values explain the character of the organization. The Council supports the Rural Secretariat's core values, listed as follows:

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

6. *Primary Clients*

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

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

7. *Vision*

The Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

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

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

8. *Mission*

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

The mission statement of the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat, as written in its 2007-08 Activity Plan, is as follows:

By 2011 the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have participated in annual forums and annual dialogue with Government and within regions that will show the value of two-way conversations between citizens and Government.

Based on its work in 2007-08, the Council modified its Mission Statement in its 2008-11 Activity Plan. The new Mission statement, while largely similar, focuses more broadly on community engagement processes. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

9. *Report on Performance*

In its 2007-08 Activity Plan the Council identified three goals. This section outlines each of these goals, its measure and indicators, and describes activities undertaken by the Council to advance its achievement.

The Council's goals, objectives, measures and indicators for future years are identified in its Activity Plan for 2008-11. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

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

GOAL 1: Vision

- 1. By March 31, 2008 the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have refined its long-term vision for the sustainable development of the region.**

Measure:

Refinement of long-term regional vision for sustainable development

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
Completion of a working document that is shared with regions and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft working document developed in 2006-07• Four regional council meetings in 2007-08 included discussions that were focussed around the vision document• Draft vision document was revised to reflect discussions• Vision presented to Minister Taylor and posted to the web• Vision shared with regional partners electronically and by way of hard copies• A copy of the Stephenville – Port aux Basques vision document is available on the Rural Secretariat's website (www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp#2)

GOAL 2: Regional Priorities

2. By March 31, 2008 the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have clarified regional priorities that have been identified as key elements in attaining the vision.

Measure: Clarification of identified regional priorities

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed information and discussion related to identified regional priorities • Initiation of the development of a framework to further guide discussion within the community and government to advance regional priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council, in partnership with the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, initiated the development of a conceptual framework by which it could develop regional priorities. • Regional Council identified a draft set of priorities in 2006-07. These priorities are consistent with the conceptual framework noted above. • Refinement of the Council’s priorities via discussions around the Council table and feedback through the engagement process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tourism – Council engaged and sought input from industry operators and other stakeholders. As a result, Council decided that there is considerable ongoing activity by the operators and stakeholders themselves. Council felt that, as long as the provincial government continues to support the industry via its marketing investments, it should focus its energies on other priorities. ➤ Agrifoods – Council has engaged with industry persons and others including further exploration of the sector with the MUN Harris Centre. Council plans to prepare a document in Fall of 2008 for submission to the Minister responsible for the Rural Secretariat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of provincial government departments and the MUN Harris Centre around priorities to gain a better understanding of the provincial government’s priorities and academic research findings and perspectives • The priorities are outlined in the Council’s 2008-11 plan (www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp)

GOAL 3: Citizen Engagement

3. By March 31, 2008 the citizen engagement process initiated in December 2006 is broadened to more citizens.

Measure:

Citizen engagement process is broadened

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of individuals or small groups within regions • Engagement of community groups, e.g., church groups, student councils, senior’s groups, etc. • Engagement of formal groups, e.g., health boards, school boards, economic development organizations, etc. • Engagement of mixed groups that include representation from community and formal groups, as well as individuals within regions who have participated in previous engagement sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The citizen engagement process was initiated in December 2006. Initial sessions held between December 2006 and March 2007 allowed for an orderly expansion of the process in 2007-08. • There were 16 community engagement sessions conducted. More than 100 people participated. (It should be noted that some individuals may have attended more than one engagement session in 2006-07 and 2007-08.) • The sessions included one-on-one discussions, groups such as town councillors, economic development organizations, and social groups • The engagement sessions were conducted by the Regional Planner and Regional Council members • Council members found it informative and beneficial to have engagement sessions as a part of their regular meetings • Key results from the sessions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People do not think about long-term planning and are tired of discussing community planning, however, most begin to understand the need for long term planning when there is a link made to family and the future ➤ Size and location of the community people live in impact how people think

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There were significant differences in the views and opinions of the younger people with regard to a regional perspective and how they see the future ➤ While most people were aware of the challenges that face rural communities the engagement process does help to foster a better understanding ➤ Not all citizens understood the trade-offs associated with provincial government budgets but when prompted they began to see the challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the citizen engagement process informs the vision document and key priorities of the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the sessions helped to validate the discussions of regional council members as well as to refine the vision document

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

The Council feels that its performance in 2007-08 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. Council is providing an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and differing expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues. The Council feels that its achievements in 2007-08 will strengthen its performance in 2008-09.

10. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is all-encompassing and long-term in nature, the opportunities and challenges faced by the Council remain fairly similar from year to year. However, it is these opportunities and challenges that guide the Council members in their work and provide them with the drive to move their agenda forward over the course of the year.

Collaboration

Collaboration requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to work together for mutual gain. It requires citizens, stakeholders and interests to step out of their 'comfort zones' and to look at issues through multiple perspectives and lenses. While the Council is committed to regional collaboration, it is aware that this is a long term project.

Long-term thinking

Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the Council, is necessary if regional sustainability is to be achieved. Thinking long-term will be challenging for citizens, stakeholders and interests given that there are immediate issues to be addressed within the region.

Citizen Engagement

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens, stakeholders and interests throughout the region to inform public policy development. The success of this process will hinge on the ability of participants to listen to each other, and discuss issues in an open, informed and respectful manner. Continued citizen engagement is key in achieving its vision.

Vision Development

The vision statement for the Council is not intended to achieve a final form. It is intended to be an organic document that seeks to identify what the Council wants to achieve over the long term. As regional circumstances change over time, so too will regional priorities.

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

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

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

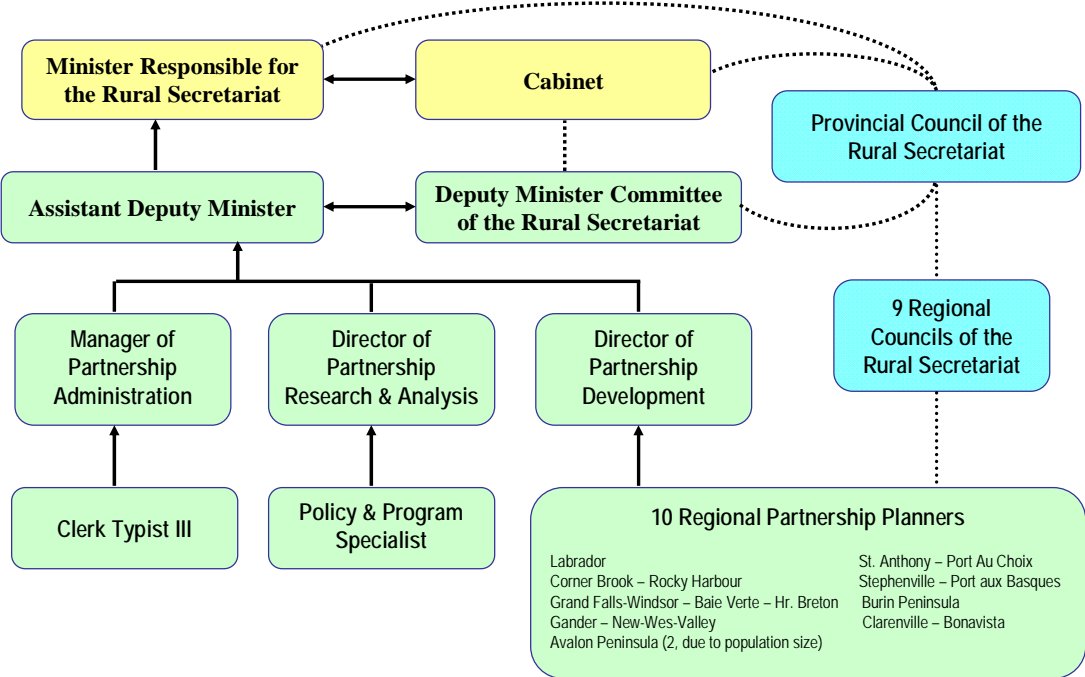
2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

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

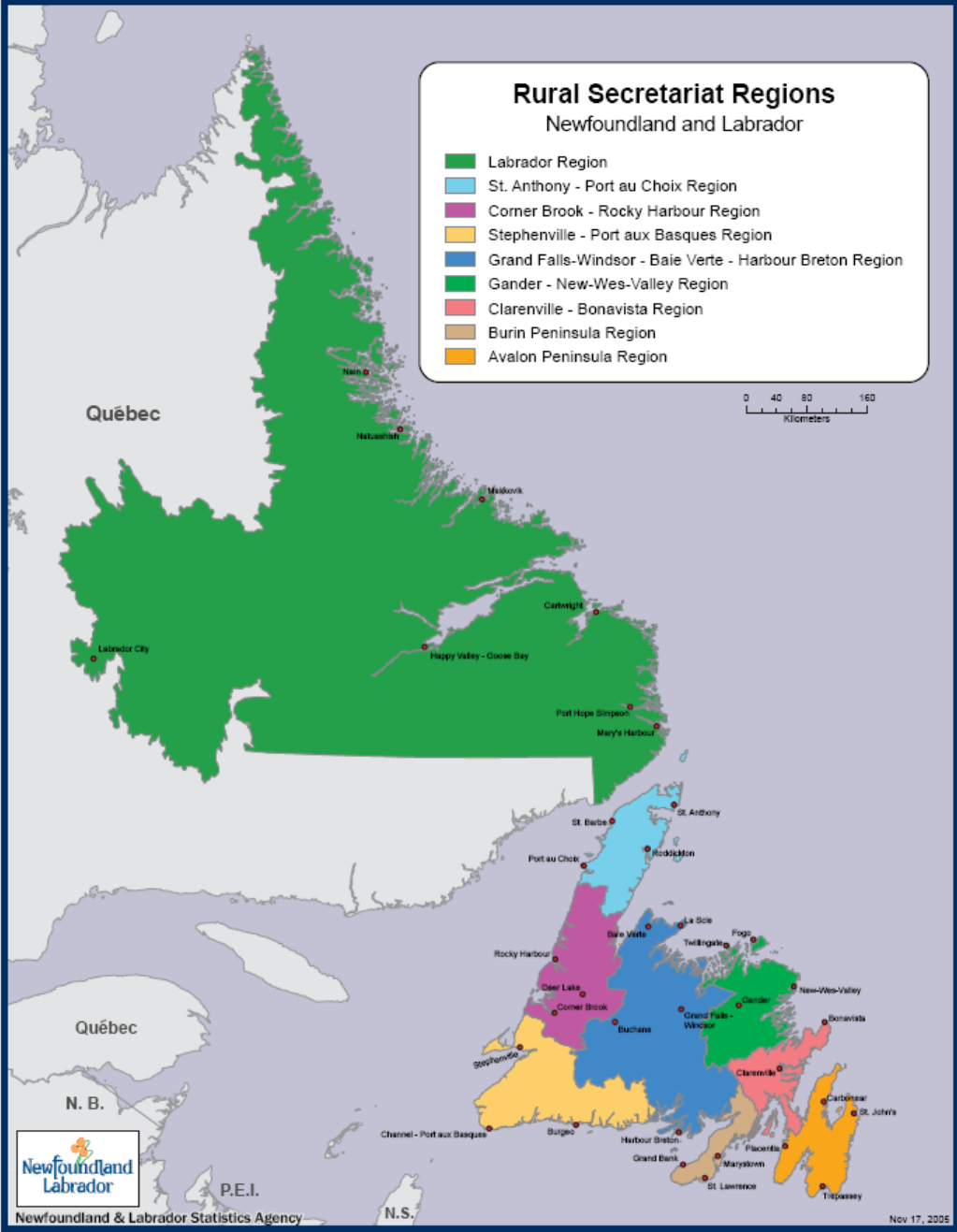
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

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

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C



Appendix D

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

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

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's Mandate is to:

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

Photo Credits:



Little Codroy River

Photo Compliments of Marine and Mountain Zone Corporation



Ramea

Photo Compliments of Sam Organ



Port au Port Peninsula

Photo Compliments of Sam Organ



Rural Secretariat

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