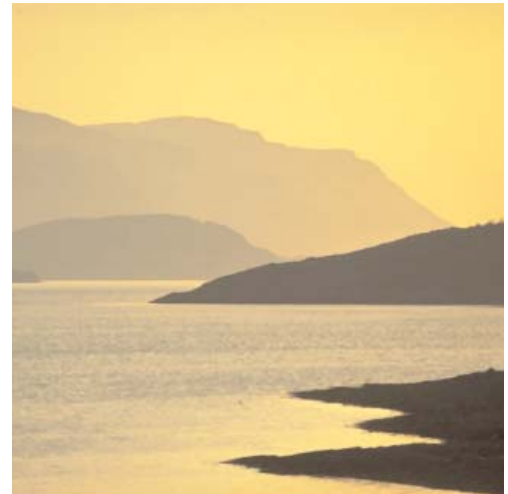


Sustainable Development



Discussion Document on
A Proposed *Sustainable Development Act*

For additional copies, please contact
Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6
Telephone: (709) 729-0027 or toll free 1-800-563-6181
Fax: (709) 729-1930

This document is also available electronically at www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/

Printed on paper with recycled content.

On the Cover:

All photos are courtesy of Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, with the exception of the photo of fishing vessels on the far left, which is courtesy of J. Drover.

Table of Contents

Message from the Premier	i
Message from the Minister	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Introduction	
What is Sustainable Development?	1
Why is Sustainable Development Important for Newfoundland and Labrador?	3
A Brief History of the Sustainable Development Concept	5
Sustainable Development in Canada	6
Sustainable Development in the Provinces and Territories	7
Principles of Sustainable Development	9
Government's Commitment	
<i>Sustainable Development Act</i>	12
Sustainable Development Round Table	13
Strategic Environmental Management Plan	13
Progress to Date	15
Sustainability and Economic Development	16
Conclusion	
A Path Forward	20
How to Participate	21
References	22
Appendix - Tools for Sustainable Development	23



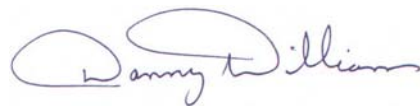
Message from the Premier

Newfoundland and Labrador is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. We want to maximize the wealth and opportunities that our natural resources can provide, but we also want to ensure that we preserve our natural heritage for enjoyment for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Sustainable Development will help us achieve that goal.

Recognizing the ties between environment, economy and culture is at the heart of our government's *Sustainable Development Act*. It will require consideration of social and cultural needs, and a more integrated decision making approach within government, and between government, industry and communities.

Sustainable Development is about balance. For renewable resources this will require development strategies that do not exceed the biological capacity for renewal. In the case of non-renewable resources it will necessitate measured approaches that extend economic activity to the longest term reasonable, a much greater investment in value-added products, and investing royalties to maximize benefits to all our citizens.

Your views are critical to establishing effective Sustainable Development policies and legislation for Newfoundland and Labrador. The very basis of this initiative is centered on maximizing life style and resource benefits to ourselves, our children, and the generations to come. We want a shared vision for Sustainable Development and I encourage you to participate and make your views known.



Honourable Danny Williams
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador



Message from the Minister

Integrating social, economic and environmental factors in our day-to-day decision making presents opportunities and challenges for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Sustainable Development legislation will signify government's continued commitment to economic improvement and diversification, and ensure that such economic progress be measured by long-term standards which safeguard our culture, sustain our communities and protect our environment. However, to establish this process, we must collectively recognize that only by first ensuring environmental sustainability can we make real and lasting contributions to economic development and social prosperity.

While this process will be a demanding one, as Minister of Environment and Conservation I am honoured to have the responsibility for leading the process. We want to foster a common and collective approach and that is why we are consulting with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about our new *Sustainable Development Act*.

This discussion document will guide our consultation process and outline for you government's vision for Sustainable Development. The document presents ideas that link economic development, environmental conservation and social inclusion. We explore Sustainable Development principles and present case studies which show how other regions of the world have grappled with issues similar to our own. We want to hear your views and ideas on this information and on government's vision, so that together we can develop the Sustainable Development legislation and policies best suited to Newfoundland and Labrador.



Honourable Clyde Jackman
Minister of Environment and Conservation



Executive Summary

Sustainable Development is recognized internationally as the means by which healthy economies, environments and societies can be achieved, both for individual nations and the global community. It is the process by which economic, environmental and social factors are integrated within development strategies so that the benefits of each of these factors is maximized for present and future generations.

Through international cooperation, action plans and strategies have been developed to provide guidance for achieving Sustainable Development in regional and local settings. In response, the Government of Canada has taken an active role to promote Sustainable Development through various federal initiatives. In addition, provinces and territories, although varied in their approaches and extent of implementation, now integrate Sustainable Development principles and guidelines in their approaches to resource use and conservation.

The economic and social prosperity of Newfoundland and Labrador is inextricably tied to its abundant natural resources. Although we currently have a variety of government processes and legislation that provide environmental protection, encourage economic activity and/or promote social well-being, we lack a comprehensive strategy that provides balance and long-term vision for to all these objectives.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador intends to introduce a *Sustainable Development Act*. The purpose of this *Act* will be to ensure that this province's renewable and non-renewable natural resources are developed in ways that maximize benefits for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, while protecting and conserving our natural environment. The *Act* will further ensure that Sustainable Development values are incorporated within all government policies, programs and activities.

Government is proposing 14 principles to provide a foundation on which to build the *Sustainable Development Act*. In addition to ensuring sustainable resource management, the *Act* will provide for a Round Table for Sustainable Development and be the legislative framework for a Strategic Environmental Management Plan. The Round Table will promote Sustainable Development and strengthen government's capacity for wise and cooperative stewardship of the province's natural resources, while the Strategic Environmental Management Plan will have the long-term goal of achieving environmental and



economic sustainability and a high quality of life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Taking a Sustainable Development approach does not unnecessarily restrict economic development. In fact, it can generate new opportunities. There are many examples within this province's private and public sectors that demonstrate the economic and social benefits of protecting the environment, using resources more efficiently and producing less waste. Implementing a *Sustainable Development Act* will ensure that the quantity and scale of these successes will improve.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has outlined a potential course of action for integrating economic, environmental and social factors into its decisions and ensuring that our renewable and non-renewable resources are sustainably managed. This discussion paper is intended to inform the public and all stakeholders of the rationale for, and the goals of, a provincial *Sustainable Development Act*. It is to form a basis of understanding from which citizens can make meaningful contributions to help structure and guide the Sustainable Development process.

Introduction

In the 2004 and 2005 Throne Speeches, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has stated its intention to introduce a *Sustainable Development Act*. The purpose of this Act is to ensure that the renewable and non-renewable natural resources of Newfoundland and Labrador are developed in ways that maximize benefits for all people of the province while protecting and conserving our natural environment.

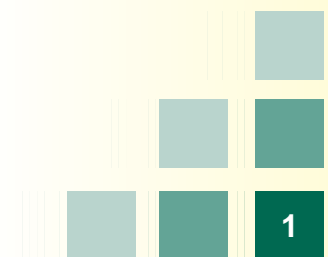
Before the *Sustainable Development Act* is developed, government has prepared this summary of what Sustainable Development is and what it can mean to the province. This document also outlines a general course of action for government to take, the principles it can use and the tools it has available to guide this legislation.

Your thoughts and views are critical to the successful development of the *Sustainable Development Act*. Therefore, government would like feedback and input from all stakeholders with respect to its efforts to date and to help shape the provincial Sustainable Development legislation. Some questions and concepts are provided throughout this document to assist your evaluation of government's approach.

What is Sustainable Development?

The most widely accepted definition of Sustainable Development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This definition arose from the World Commission on Environment and Development 1987 report entitled *Our Common Future*.¹

More specifically, Sustainable Development is about developing and growing an economy that integrates environmental and social considerations when making decisions. It is the recognition that our economy, environment and society are inseparable and are vital components for the maintenance and improvement of human health and standards of living. Sustainable Development is not simply a strategy for environmental conservation. Although the protection of our natural environment is essential for our existence, Sustainable Development recognizes that the use of the environment and its resources is crucial for improving the quality of life for all people.



Resource development generates wealth that supports health, social, educational and environmental programs for the benefit of all residents of the province. Therefore, renewable resources such as fisheries and forests must be managed to ensure that these assets continue to remain available for our generation and those that follow. With non-renewable resources such as minerals and oil, we have a responsibility to develop and use these natural resources productively, efficiently and in a socially responsible manner. As stewards of these resources we must ensure that they are used and managed in line with the principles of Sustainable Development.

Sustainable Development is about balance. Development need not occur at a rate that exceeds the earth's ecological capacity to replenish itself. Likewise, securing a healthy environment need not hinder economic potential. Growing an economy that generates long-term, meaningful employment, protecting the health and integrity of our environment and creating societies with quality lifestyles and standards of living for all people is the goal of Sustainable Development.



Courtesy: J. Brazil

Nakvak Lake, Labrador

Why is Sustainable Development Important for Newfoundland and Labrador?

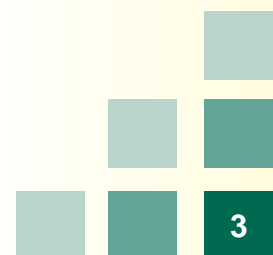
In Newfoundland and Labrador we currently have a variety of government processes and legislation that assist in safeguarding the environment, help facilitate industrial and economic activity and promote social well-being. Such efforts, however, deal with one or the other of these issues rather than in an encompassing or inclusive way. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador believes the province will have a more prosperous present and future by ensuring that economic, environmental and social factors are integrated into its decisions. As a result, it has committed to implementing a *Sustainable Development Act*. This *Act* will ensure that Sustainable Development values are incorporated into government's policies, programs and activities and will ultimately serve to:

Protect Our Future

The natural environment is the foundation for the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. Billions of dollars are generated annually from our fisheries, forests, soil, wildlife, water resources, petroleum and minerals.² Our culture and our natural beauty draw thousands of visitors every year and tourism has become a major contributor to the wealth, income and employment in this Province. Our connection with the natural environment is such an essential part of our character. By securing a sustainable natural environment, we ensure a prosperous, growing economy that builds community capacity and creates a healthy and vibrant people, culture and society for both the present and future generations.

Provide Leadership

Government, as the resource steward for all citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, must lead by example and promote sustainability as a priority. It must also set the standards for how our resources are used by individuals, communities, businesses and industry.



Enhance Our Role and Responsibility as Global Citizens

As part of the global community and environment, we should make every effort to ensure that our actions as a Province contribute to meeting the targets set by national and international agendas such as climate change, water quality and biodiversity.



Courtesy: F. Shuhood

Cape St. Mary's

A Brief History of the Sustainable Development Concept

Sustainable Development is not a novel concept but its recognition and application on a global scale is relatively contemporary. Numerous events have taken place on the international stage that have assisted in our understanding of the link between economic, environmental and social factors and the necessity of integrating these factors into all forms of development.

1972

The United Nations Conference on Human Development

The conference recognized that human development was adversely affecting the global environment and it identified 26 principles to ensure Sustainable Development.

1983

The UN Commission on the Environment and Development.

The Commission was established to analyze environmental and economic development issues in a global context and conceive possible solutions.

The 1987 report of this commission, "Our Common Future" assigned and documented over 75 studies and created a globally accepted definition for Sustainable Development - "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

1992

The UN Conference on the Environment and Development

Developed Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action to achieve Sustainable Development.

This plan called for the integration of economic, social and environmental factors in decision making.

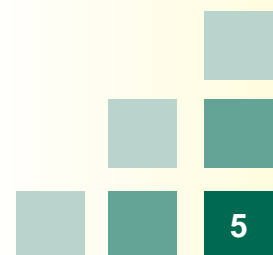
Produced the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development which lists 27 principles to guide Sustainable Development.

2002

The World Summit on Sustainable Development

This summit reaffirmed and strengthened the concept of Sustainable Development and set new targets, timetables and commitments to take action.

All States were urged to take immediate action to make progress in the development of their national Sustainable Development strategies and to begin implementation by 2005.



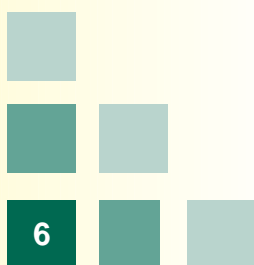
Sustainable Development in Canada

In response to the commitments of the Rio Earth Summit, the Government of Canada has taken an active role to promote Sustainable Development through several federal initiatives.

In 1994, A National Round Table on the Environment and Economy was legislated by Parliament to provide advice and recommendations for promoting Sustainable Development. Canada decided to take a departmental approach as a precursor for its effort in the development of a national strategy. In 1995, amendments were made to the *Auditor General Act* (AGA) which required all federal departments and agencies to devise Sustainable Development strategies and action plans and to update these every three years. These initiatives are developed under AA Guide to Green Government, a policy statement that directs and sets priority areas for the departmental strategies. In addition, the amendments to the AGA established the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development which reports on the performance and progress of each of the departmental Sustainable Development implementation strategies. As well, the Commissioner receives public requests on matters of Sustainable Development and directs them to the appropriate department.

Canada has a committee of Deputy Ministers (co-chaired by the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources) that coordinates federal Sustainable Development efforts. Moreover, there is a Sustainable Development in Government Operations Initiative, which is responsible for coordinating information relating to Sustainable Development strategies among departments and supporting green government operations.

For Canada, moving towards a national Sustainable Development Strategy is particularly challenging because of shared jurisdiction between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Responsibilities such as environmental protection and conservation are often shared between federal and provincial departments. Provinces, for the most part, also own their resources. Therefore, any national strategy will be enhanced by provincial and territorial approaches to Sustainable Development.



Courtesy: Wildlife Division, Dept. of Environment and Conservation



Humber River in Autumn

Sustainable Development in the Provinces and Territories

When creating a *Sustainable Development Act* for Newfoundland and Labrador, we can learn and benefit from how other Canadian jurisdictions manage Sustainable Development policy. The provinces and territories take varied approaches to integrating Sustainable Development into their programs. However, they can be generalized into four themes.

1. Legislation

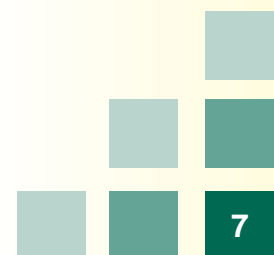
Manitoba is the only province that currently has a *Sustainable Development Act*. The main focus of the legislation is to create a framework through which Sustainable Development will be implemented in the public sector and promoted in private industry and society in general. This is accomplished through a Round Table that provides advice and recommendations to the provincial government. The legislation also contains principles and guidelines for Sustainable Development.

Quebec has recently tabled a draft *Sustainable Development Act*. Its purpose is to define a new management framework to ensure that the pursuit of Sustainable Development is better integrated into the policies, programs and actions of the government. In addition, the proposed bill amends other acts and adds a new right to the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Quebec has also created a Department of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks.

Ontario is unique in that it has an Environmental Bill of Rights that protects, conserves and provides for the sustainability of the environment. This legislation requires all its ministries (departments) to prepare a Statement of Environmental Values which includes how the business of the ministry affects the environment and how decisions are integrated with social, economic and scientific considerations. In addition, the Ministry of Natural Resources has released a policy document entitled "Our Sustainable Future" that outlines strategic directions to guide the ministry's pursuit of sustainable resource development and environmental protection.

2. Designation of a Government Ministry

Alberta has a Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development. Its goal is to ensure a balance between the economic, environmental and social values of Albertans, and mainly encompasses the natural resource sectors (i.e. Forestry, Wildlife, Public Lands, Parks, etc.).



3. Principles and Policies within Environmental Legislation

Both Nova Scotia and Yukon Territory manage Sustainable Development in a similar fashion. Both have *Environment Acts* which specifically outline their definitions and principles of Sustainable Development. Nova Scotia also maintains an Integrated Resource Management Policy within their Department of Natural Resources and partners with the Sustainable Communities Initiative through The Department of Economic Development.

4. Policy included in the mandate of Environment and/or Natural Resource Departments

The governments of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories and Nunavut generally incorporate Sustainable Development principles and policies into the mandates of their various departments that deal with natural resources and the environment. New Brunswick has a Sustainable Planning Branch within the Department of Environment and Local Government. Northwest Territories and Prince Edward Island have a Sustainable Development Policy and a Sustainable Resource Policy, respectively.

Although Newfoundland and Labrador has programs in place that address aspects of Sustainable Development, the province can build on the work of the other jurisdictions when creating its own *Sustainable Development Act*.



L'Anse-aux-Meadows

Principles of Sustainable Development

Having a set of standards and values to fairly and objectively guide Sustainable Development issues is important for Newfoundland and Labrador. The Rio Declaration presented a list of 27 principles for Sustainable Development, which can be adapted to provide direction for initiatives in this Province. In accordance with these, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador proposes the following principles for consideration when designing and implementing a *Sustainable Development Act*.

1) *Necessity of Economic Development*

Actively increasing the development of economic wealth for the material well-being of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is a fundamental objective. Economic Development provides for social well-being and facilitates human health, educational and environmental programs that improve the quality of life for all residents of the province.

2) *Maintaining a Healthy Environment*

The intrinsic value of a healthy natural environment is sufficient to justify preservation. The environment maintains the ecological processes that provide us with natural resources and biological diversity, and perform vital functions necessary for human health and survival. It must be recognized that the environment has a limited capacity to absorb human activities without permanent damage.

3) *Protection of Human Values and Quality of Life*

Sustainable Development should recognize the importance of people and their health,

education, quality of life and social well being. There must also be respect for social equity, gender equity and the equity of present and future generations.

4) *Integration and Balance*

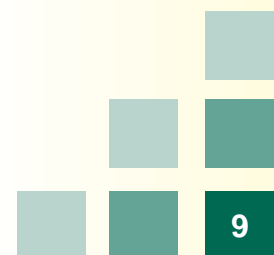
Principles 1, 2 and 3 are linked and should not be considered separately from each other. Sustainable Development decisions must respect all three principles, with the goal of optimizing the benefits for all.

5) *Personal and Public Responsibility*

Sustainable Development is not the responsibility of government alone. Individuals, communities and industries have a duty to act as stewards of the natural environment and take responsibility for the resources they use, the energy they consume and the waste that they produce.

6) *Protection of Culture and Heritage*

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including aboriginal peoples, have developed a rich cultural heritage that has been shaped by our ability to carve out a living from the land and sea. Our unique cultural identity must be protected, not only for its economic benefits from tourism, but for its intrinsic value to our own people.



7) Responsible Focus on Rural Communities

Rural communities are particularly tied to natural resources. These communities require special consideration when resources are developed.

8) Efficiency, Waste Minimization and Innovation

Resource use must occur with the maximum of benefits and the minimum of waste. To this end, innovation and the continued development of new technologies is advantageous.

9) Education

Education is critical for promoting Sustainable Development and improving the ability of people to address economic, environmental and social issues.

10) Science and Research

Sustainable Development requires that decisions are based on sound scientific information. Research must be on-going and the results must be made available to all decision-making participants.

11) Precautionary Approach

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation. Similarly, a lack of scientific certainty should not be used to impede reasonable industrial initiative.

12) Consistency of Approach

As far as possible, provincial laws and policies with respect to Sustainable Development should be consistent with national and international objectives.

13) Polluter Pays

Polluters should bear the cost of pollution and restoration where necessary. In addition, all residents, including governments, industry and the public, have responsibility to actively prevent pollution.

14) Monitoring and Accountability

Actions taken to achieve Sustainable Development should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that these actions are effective and obtain the desired results.



Questions

Are there additional principles that can assist the guidance and development of Sustainable Development Legislation?

Which principles are most important?

Should any of these principles not be included? Why or why not?

Government's Commitments

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has a vision of an economically self-reliant Province. Our abundant natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, afford us the opportunity to achieve this goal. Although a challenging process, the wise and strategic management of these resources will allow us to enhance our economy, protect the life supporting capacity of our natural environment and provide social benefits and quality lives for our people. Government has already made progress on this agenda by creating two new departments: the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources. These departments are working cooperatively for the protection, management and realization of the full potential and benefits of our natural environment and resources.

Government will build on its efforts by establishing a comprehensive plan that will ensure that economic, environmental and social factors are considered in all government decisions. This plan consists of:

A *Sustainable Development Act* that will call for:

- A Sustainable Development Round Table
- A Strategic Environmental Management Plan



Courtesy: T. Coffey

Scene from Brigus

Sustainable Development Act

Responsible and sustainable development of the natural environment is the necessary foundation for long-term economic growth. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to introduce a *Sustainable Development Act* that will:

- Establish sustainable management of the province's natural environment as a central policy objective.
- Recognize the full range of uses and values of natural resources, including resource industries, habitat for wildlife, parks and wilderness, tourism and recreation.
- Safeguard the life supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems.
- Provide for the sustainable development of renewable resources in a way that enables people to provide for their economic, social and cultural needs, while preserving the integrity of ecosystems and meeting the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations.
- Ensure nonrenewable resource developments benefit future as well as present generations by controlling the pace of development, promoting value-added product manufacturing and spending royalties in ways that have long-term benefits across generations.
- Direct resource departments and related agencies to harmonize resource policies, which will make them more consistent and efficient in their pursuit of a healthy economy, environment and society for present and future generations.
- Ensure that workers, environmentalists, industry, communities, aboriginal peoples and others have a say in how our resources are managed.

Questions

Are there any gaps in the proposed *Sustainable Development Act* to ensure sustainable development? If so, how can the gaps be filled?

What factors should we consider when meeting the requirements of today while still providing for the future?

How do we compromise if needs conflict?

Sustainable Development Round Table

The *Sustainable Development Act* will provide for the establishment of a Newfoundland and Labrador Round Table for Sustainable Development to promote Sustainable Development in the province and strengthen its capacity for wise and cooperative stewardship of natural resources. Members of the Round Table will represent a broad range of interests, including industry, labour, government, community, aboriginal groups and the general public, and will include scientists, economists, sociologists, management specialists and other types of researchers and professionals.

Questions

Are all interests represented in the Round Table?

How should the members be chosen?

Should the functions of the Round Table be mandated by legislation?

How frequently should the Round Table meet?

Strategic Environmental Management Plan

The *Sustainable Development Act* will be the legislative framework for a Strategic Environmental Management Plan, which will have the long-term goal of achieving environmental and economic sustainability and a high quality of life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The Plan will incorporate management systems that:

- Integrate environmental considerations into all government decision-making processes.
- Involve all sectors of the province in identifying common values and working towards a shared vision of a sustainable and prosperous future.
- Utilize a variety of experts to ensure that management decisions are guided by reliable information.
- Provide a framework to coordinate activities across federal, provincial and

municipal jurisdictions, and cooperation among various government departments and agencies.

- Create a stable and predictable regulatory environment that will benefit all interests.
- Promote the use of environmentally-friendly technology to meet the objective of sustainable, responsible resource development.
- Promote private sector investment in recycling, heritage conservation, eco-tourism and other business opportunities in the environment sector.
- Make use of environmental resources to create new wealth and generate employment in rural areas of the province.



Courtesy: J. Drover

Upper Island Cove

Questions

What additional goals could be achieved with a Strategic Environmental Management plan?

When identifying common values and creating benefits for all interests, how should conflicts be resolved?

What factors should be considered when developing priorities?

Should the experts used to provide information for decision-making come from the private or public sector?

Should the Round Table be involved when making management decisions?

What indicators can we use to measure and monitor progress of sustainable development?

Progress to Date

To begin the process of creating a *Sustainable Development Act*, the provincial government has established an Interdepartmental Deputy Ministers Committee on Sustainable Development which provides direction and guidance to a Working Committee that reports directly to it. These committees involve the Departments of Environment and Conservation, Natural Resources, Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs and the Executive Council.

The Committees have:

1. Reviewed and summarized international and national agendas and protocols regarding Sustainable Development policy and its implementation.
2. Reviewed how Canadian jurisdictions have addressed and implemented Sustainable Development policy.
3. Provided a review of potential options for implementing Sustainable Development within Newfoundland and Labrador.
4. Developed a discussion paper to inform all stakeholders about government's plan and seek input on how to best develop the legislation.

Courtesy: Newfoundland and
Labrador Tourism



Moose

Sustainability and Economic Development

Resource conservation, protection and sustainability may, at first, seem to be counterproductive to economic development. However, consumers are becoming better educated about the need for the sustainable use of resources and are demanding that products and services be produced in a sustainable manner. For example, timber certification was introduced in order to give consumers the ability to trace the origins of and buy timber products that have been prepared sustainably.³ Similarly, the Marine Stewardship Council, an international organization that promotes environmentally responsible stewardship of the world's fisheries, produces and maintains a fisheries certification standard. Products that display their logo demonstrate to the consumer that the item comes from a well-managed and sustainable fishery. Industries and businesses that apply sustainable practices can result in greater efficiencies, increased investment and a greater competitive advantage. In addition, applying sustainable practices is a requirement for gaining access to some international markets.⁴

Integrating the concept of sustainability into economic development means finding ways to reduce society's negative environmental impacts. Although not exhaustive, the following examples show that it is possible to maintain economic initiative and capacity while using resources more efficiently and producing less waste. Government anticipates that the

implementation of a *Sustainable Development Act* will assure many more of these successes in the public and private sectors.

Forestry in Labrador

In 2001, the Department of Natural Resources embarked on a new approach to forest management planning in central Labrador. It followed years of uncertainty in the



Courtesy: M. Moroni

Forest harvesting

region over the ecological limits of northern ecosystems, overcoming the challenges of developing a forest industry in a region disconnected from outside markets and needed to be developed during a time of ongoing aboriginal land claims negotiations. Resources were committed that ensured full input of the aboriginal people in the area and the department implemented a partnership approach in developing a forest management plan that utilized the knowledge and expertise of all the stakeholders.

The process resulted in a management plan for central Labrador that has received national recognition as a model for stakeholder consultation and ecosystem protection while at the same time offering nearly a four-fold increase over current forest harvest returns and industry development potential. It has created partnerships which have spawned an international forest research program, opened the door for forestry industry certification in

Labrador and provides the capacity to some of the local stakeholders to start building their own forest industry enterprises. It is considered to be a model for sustainability, not only economically, but ecologically and culturally as well.

Sustainable Aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador

With an export value of 22 million dollars in 2004, aquaculture of shellfish, salmonids and cod presents significant economic and job opportunities, especially for rural areas of the province. The provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture is committed to ensuring that this industry is economically and environmentally sustainable.

With respect to the economic aspects of aquaculture, a challenge to growth is access to working capital financing because of the up-front costs and risks associated with a developing industry. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is funding an Aquaculture Working Capital Loan Initiative for qualified companies in order to facilitate development within the salmonid aquaculture sector. Initiatives such as these will enhance economic development both within the industry and in rural communities.

Aquaculture is also dependent on a healthy environment for success and measures are in place to ensure environmental sustainability. The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has a mandatory site following (leaving areas uncultivated) policy to allow site conditions to return to baseline levels. Sites are also subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*

which requires site monitoring before and during operations as well as throughout the following periods. The industry has also developed a Code of Practice to ensure methods respect safety and minimize waste and environmental effects. These and other programs safeguard environmental quality for the success of both cultured and wild species.

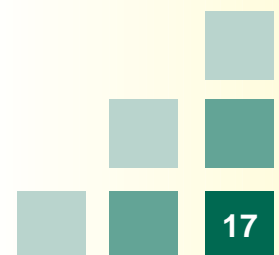


Mussel farming

Courtesy: Dept. Fisheries and Aquaculture

Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Industry

The development of the petroleum industry has had tremendous socio-economic impacts for Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to the value of oil production, numerous direct and indirect benefits from exploration and development have diversified our economy. The requirement for state-of-the-art infrastructure, education, training and research has enhanced economic activity in other goods and services sectors and positioned oil related businesses within the province to compete nationally and internationally. This creates long-term employment and wealth for Newfoundland and Labrador.



The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is a federal/provincial authority responsible for management of the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore petroleum resources. Responsible to the federal and provincial energy ministers, the board oversees operational, regulatory and environmental aspects of the industry and also ensures that benefits make a lasting contribution to the sustainable development of the province's economy.

Eastport Peninsula Lobster Protection Committee

Low lobster catch rates and reports of low egg production and non-compliance with proper fishing methods, encouraged a group of lobster harvesters from Bonavista Bay to form the Eastport Peninsula Lobster Protection Committee. Their goal was to revive and enhance lobster catches through conservation and enforcement measures, and collect data to track their progress.

In addition to completely closing some areas to fishing, traditional lobster areas were open only to harvesters participating in the conservation project. Illegal numbers of pots were eliminated and egg-bearing and undersized lobsters were voluntarily released. To provide good data from this project, scientists were recruited from Memorial University, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Parks Canada. The participants in this project believe that the

economic impacts have been substantial. The size of landed lobsters has increased resulting in improved earnings. As well, catches have been less variable than in areas without these measures in place. Long-term planning, conservation and science have successfully been used to increase the sustainability and economic value of this natural resource.

The Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is a significant contributor to the province's economy. Therefore, the quality of the tourism product must be preserved and protected in order to enrich and improve tourism opportunities. Sustainable tourism is responsible tourism that focuses on minimizing impacts on the environment and culture while creating economic and employment benefits for the destination. The Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism, located in Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland, was established by Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Tourism Atlantic, the Canadian Tourism Commission and Parks Canada. Its mission is to lead a consortium of tourism industry players to provide developmental training programs to enhance the quality and sustainability of tourism practices and services.

Provincial Environmental Management Strategies

Newfoundland and Labrador has made significant progress in waste management. The Province's Waste Management Strategy will divert 50 per cent of waste from our landfills by 2010. To reach this goal, the cities of Corner

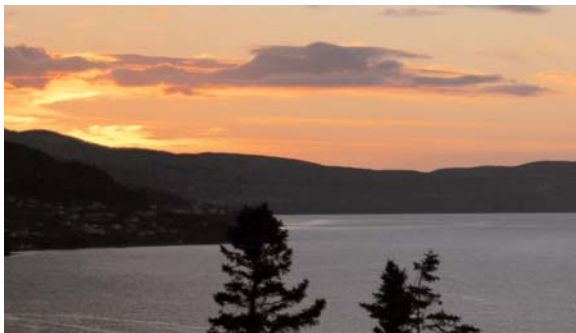
Brook and Mount Pearl are implementing residential curbside recycling of paper, cardboard and other fibre waste products. In addition, the cities of St. John's and Mount Pearl and the towns of Paradise and Conception Bay South are implementing a mandatory paper recycling program for industrial, commercial and institutional facilities. The Town of Lewisporte has also developed a plan to require businesses and institutions to divert their corrugated cardboard in addition to recycling residential cardboard and paper waste. Towns in the Exploits Valley Region - Bishop's Falls, Grand Falls-Windsor, Botwood and Northern Arm - are also recycling commercial cardboard waste. Diverting waste from landfills creates a cleaner environment, encourages increased economic and employment opportunities in the recycling sector, and results in healthier, more sustainable communities.

By developing the Climate Change Action Plan, government has committed to mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. Climate change goals, such as the development of clean energy sources and increased efficiency in the use of natural resources, coincide with those of Sustainable Development. These goals not only lessen our impact on climate change, but can also

stimulate economic growth. For example, the requirement for new technologies and more efficient industrial infrastructure necessary to address climate change is anticipated to spur economic growth in the environmental and engineering sectors.

Provincial Government Investments that Combine Economic Development and Sustainability

The provincial government, through the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, is supporting through financial investment, projects that provide long-term economic stimulation while simultaneously preserving natural and cultural heritage. Projects such as the Labrador Straits Rare Plant Initiative, Torrent River Fishway, Fortune Head Interpretation Centre and the Carmanville Wetlands Habitat Area promote awareness and stewardship of the natural environment. Funding for Blueberry Farm Development encourages efficient use of our natural resources. Investment in the Woody Point Waterfront Development, Corner Brook Stream Plan, Sir William Coaker Property Development, Baccalieu Island Tourism Strategy and Colony of Avalon Long Term Plan enhances the products for our tourism industry. All of these initiatives will develop and strengthen rural economies while protecting our natural and cultural resources for the future.



Courtesy: K. Morgan

Bay of Islands sunset

Conclusion



Winter scene on the West Coast
of Newfoundland

Courtesy: K. Morgan

Considering economic, environmental and social factors when making decisions is fundamental to Sustainable Development. While growing and developing our economy to obtain a healthy society with quality lifestyles, we must protect and preserve our natural environment and resources. By adopting a sustainable approach we can achieve this goal for present and future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has outlined a potential course of action to ensure that Sustainable Development in general, and sustainable resource management in particular, will be effectively implemented in this Province. Sustainable Development is a continual process of planning, action, evaluation and revision. This process cannot succeed without the cooperative efforts and input from all stakeholders. Your contribution will help government design a *Sustainable Development Act* that works effectively for Newfoundland and Labrador. We look forward to your participation.

A Path Forward

- Although much has been accomplished, much remains to be done. The following are government's continued efforts:
- Ongoing research and synthesis of Sustainable Development literature and programs.
- Consultations with Departments, Industry, NGOs, Aboriginal groups and the general public.
- Synthesis and summary report on public and stakeholder consultations - developing a "What We Heard" document.
- Drafting of the *Sustainable Development Act*.
- Approval of the *Sustainable Development Act*.
- Establish Sustainable Development Round Table.
- Implement the Strategic Environmental Management Plan.

How to Participate

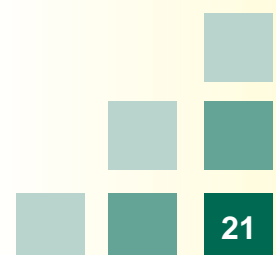
The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will be holding public consultation sessions throughout the province to provide opportunities for input, discuss issues and answer questions related to the Sustainable Development Initiative.

To submit written comments or request additional information, please contact:

Sustainable Development Initiative
Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Telephone: (709) 729-0027 or toll free 1-800-563-6181
Fax: (709) 729-1930

E-mail: SustainableDevelopment@gov.nl.ca
Website: www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/



References

1. Brundtland, G. (ed.), 1987, "Our common future: The World Commission on Environment and Development," Oxford, Oxford University Press.
2. The Economic Review, Department of Finance, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. November 2005.
3. For more information see http://www.fsc.org/en/about/about_fsc/certification
4. For more information see http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/cfs-scf/national/what-quoi/po-govresp_e.html

Appendix: Tools for Sustainable Development

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador currently has various policy and legislative tools in place to assist the preparation of a Sustainable Development strategy. Many of the concepts are reflected in provincial acts, strategies and policies that deal with environmental, social and economic issues. Some examples are provided below. We can look to elements of these existing tools to guide the new strategy.

The Environmental Element

Preservation and Protection

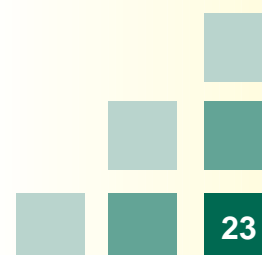
- *Environmental Protection Act*
- *Provincial Parks Act*
- *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*
- *Wildlife Act*
- *Endangered Species Act*
- Strategic Environmental Review of Policies and Programs
- Climate Change Discussion Paper and Action Plan
- Water Quality Strategy
- Waste Management Strategy
- Multi-Materials Stewardship Board
- Agricultural Policy Framework
- *Historic Resources Act*

Management and Use of Natural Resources

- *Forestry Act*
- *Minerals Act*
- *Mining Act*
- *Petroleum and Natural Gas Act*
- *Fisheries Act*
- *Fish Inspection Act*
- *Professional Fish Harvesters Act*
- *Aquaculture Act*
- *Water Resources Act*
- *Lands Act*
- Energy Plan Discussion Paper
- Sustainable Forest Management Strategy
- Aquaculture Strategic Plan
- Cod Recovery Plan

The Socio-Economic Element

- *Tourist Establishment Act*
- Land Claims Agreements
- Rural Secretariat
- Blueprint for Sustainable Economic Growth Through Innovation



Although these measures are in place, we now require a specific strategy that will:

- 1) Identify and address missing components.
- 2) Provide guidance for all government activities to ensure a coordinated, effective and consistent approach to Sustainable Development.



GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
Department of Environment and Conservation