



Purpose ■

1. Purpose

1.1 What is a Strategic Plan?

Strategic planning can be described as a continuous systematic process used to identify and implement change. At a very high level, strategic planning involves the formulation of key priorities and the allocation of resources to achieve these priorities. In this sense, strategic planning serves as a guide for thinking and decision-making, as well as a tool that the public can use to evaluate progress on specific and time-limited commitments.

Strategic planning is often viewed as a process of renewal as it improves performance and serves as the foundation for future actions. It strengthens the decision making process by recognizing and addressing key internal and external factors. Strategic planning is also a means to adapt services and activities to meet changing needs of any organization.

1.2 Government's Commitment

Government recognizes that Labrador will play an important role in shaping the province's future which is why Our Blueprint for the Future recognized that "for far too long, the people, resources and potential of Labrador have been ignored and excluded from the decision making processes of the province." Government committed to ensuring that this sense of exclusion would no longer exist, and recognizes the pivotal role that Labrador plays in the future success of this province. In so doing, opportunities will be created for meaningful employment, optimization of resource benefits and development of infrastructure which, in turn, results in a stronger, more vibrant economy.

The provincial government has made strong commitments and developed a clear vision for Labrador as demonstrated through meaningful initiatives and financial investments throughout the region. Much progress has been made; however, there is more work to be done.

In the 2005 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to securing a brighter future for Labrador. Government recognized that "the barriers to development are pronounced in Labrador; yet, nowhere are the opportunities for growth greater." The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs was mandated to develop this Northern Strategic Plan to address Labrador's social and economic needs, remove barriers to development and advance Labrador's tremendous potential for growth. Government is willing to be accountable and measured on the progress made in Labrador through the commitments made in this document.

1.3 Why a Strategic Plan?

The Northern Strategic Plan will outline Government's vision, objectives and priorities for Labrador for the next five years. By doing so, the Plan will establish priorities for Labrador, develop a focused approach to Government's service delivery in Labrador and demonstrate Government's commitment to support Labrador issues through programs and policies. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes the need for further economic and social development in Labrador and is responding with the Northern Strategic Plan.



Other provinces in Canada have developed northern strategies to address priorities and issues relevant to the north, particularly as they relate to social and economic development. These strategies emphasize the importance of coordination and advocacy for northern departments, as well as the importance of dedicated programs and services that demonstrate Government's commitment to support northern issues. The success of these plans reflects clearly defined mandates that emphasize the progression of northern issues and government structures that provide a focused approach to service delivery in the region. It is suggested that some of these mandates may be achieved through increased skills development, awareness of the north, increased local involvement, public accountability and transparency and strategic planning.

1.4 Role of Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs coordinates and facilitates all Government activities relating to Labrador affairs and Aboriginal issues. Virtually all of the Department's activities involve close collaboration with one or more other provincial public entities, Aboriginal groups/governments and the federal government. In light of these realities, the Department plays a role similar to a central agency, as a coordinating and advisory body, rather than a delivery agent.

The priorities for the Department are to ensure that programs and services within the Labrador region are effective; that the Labrador region benefits from social and economic initiatives; that resource development occurs in a manner that maximizes benefits and is respectful of Aboriginal land claims and that the needs of Aboriginal groups in the province are met as fully as possible. This is clearly demonstrated through the development of this Northern Strategic Plan.

The Department is leading this strategic planning process in coordination with other government departments and agencies. It will also be responsible to monitor the progress of the Northern Strategic Plan and to ensure the effective implementation of the goals and objectives outlined in this document.

1.5 A Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador

In developing this Northern Strategic Plan, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs has been cognizant of the uniqueness of Labrador and the strength of its people. Government is aware of the importance of consultation and the need to consider the Labrador perspective in provincial decision making and program and service delivery. The provincial government is committed to working closely with the people of Labrador to obtain their views on the Northern Strategic Plan.

Government developed this strategy based on research, feedback received, expert opinion, and most importantly, the thoughts of the many stakeholders that participated in consultations held throughout Labrador. The following sections outline the process of consultation and the methodology used in the development of this Northern Strategic Plan.

1.5.1 Feedback

As indicated, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to developing this plan in consultation with all Labradorians. Through the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Government provided many opportunities for input into the process.





In June 2006, Government released A Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador, A Public Discussion Paper to stimulate discussion for the consultation process.

Beginning in July 2006, briefings were held with various groups to inform them of the purpose of the Northern Strategic Plan and to promote the process to all regions of Labrador. Briefings were held with the following groups:

- Rural Secretariat Regional Council for Labrador
- Labrador Regional Senior Management Council
- Ministerial Advisory Group for Labrador Transportation
- Federal Management Representatives in Labrador
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Innu Nation/Innu Band Councils
- Northern Strategic Plan Advisory Working Group

At the same time, stakeholder consultations were scheduled for all of Labrador. A total of six facilitated sessions, each with 15-40 participants and led by the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs were delivered:

- Central Labrador, July 17
- Western Labrador, July 18
- South Eastern Labrador, August 15
- Labrador Straits, August 16
- Northern Labrador, August 28
- Churchill Falls, September 25

In addition to stakeholder consultations, one-on-one sessions were arranged with industry (major employers within the various regions), the local Chambers of Commerce, Regional Economic Development Boards, the Labrador Metis Nation and other organizations that had not previously been consulted. In total, more than 300 individuals and organizations participated in the consultation process. Questions at the consultation and one-on-one sessions focused on social and economic development. While it is impossible to consult with everyone, the Department was very specific in targeting certain industries and organizations within Labrador to ensure adequate feedback was received on both an economic and a social level.

Stakeholders and the general public were encouraged to submit their thoughts to the Department on the priorities for Labrador and what they would like Government to do over the next five years. The Department provided a number of ways to submit comments which included a prepared feedback form, a toll-free telephone number, a Northern Strategic Plan email address; a mailing address, and finally through the many consultation sessions. All feedback received assisted in determining the priorities that are outlined in this document. The quality and quantity of feedback received was significant. It should be noted that it is impossible to reflect all that was heard in this document; however, the Plan will target the key themes as presented. There are other topics that were raised and will be addressed in other provincial initiatives such as the Energy Plan and the Labrador Transportation Plan.

1.5.2 Research

Over the past three years, the provincial government has been very proactive in developing plans for many aspects of its lines of business within the province. This gives the Northern Strategic Plan a large body of secondary sources from which to draw knowledge and data. As a coordinating body for the province within Labrador, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs reviewed and provided input into these plans to offer the Labrador perspective.

In the development of this plan, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs also considered recommendations from Aboriginal Women's Conferences that were held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Stephenville.

1.5.3 A Collective Approach

The entire planning process has been a collaborative effort from many individuals, organizations and government entities within the province.

Collaboration within the provincial government involved the Rural Secretariat, the Office of the Provincial Development Plan and other relevant departments. The Rural Secretariat and Northern Strategic Plan will set out jointly agreed upon priorities for Labrador of a social and economic nature. The intent of each is clearly defined – the Rural Secretariat promotes information sharing, informed dialogue and collaboration within government and between government and communities. It facilitates horizontal thinking on regional issues, engages citizens to enhance the consideration of these issues in public policy development and is focused on the long-term sustainability of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Northern Strategic Plan will further Government's commitments on programs and activities for the short-term over the next five years.

The Northern Strategic Plan has been closely coordinated with the Provincial Development Plan, which was established to ensure that the various provincial development strategies and initiatives are being carried out in an integrated, coordinated fashion, in line with Government's goals. This initiative will examine these strategies, identify any gaps and areas that need further attention and make a determination about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the approach for meeting Newfoundland and Labrador's needs. In addition, the Plan will be consistent with the Comprehensive Regional Diversification Strategy under the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs was directed by Cabinet to establish an Advisory Working Group to oversee the development of the Plan. The Advisory Working Group was comprised of the following departments/agencies: Human Resources, Labour and Employment; Natural Resources (Mines, Energy, Forestry and Agrifoods Agency Branches); Transportation and Works; Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Tourism, Culture and Recreation; Women's Policy Office; Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation; Office of the Provincial Development Plan and the Rural Secretariat.



The role of the Advisory Working Group was to provide advice and assistance in developing the Northern Strategic Plan while receiving feedback from departmental Executive. The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs consulted with and received input from the other provincial departments and agencies that were not represented on the working group.

