

An Action Plan for Self-Sufficiency in Northern New Brunswick



Message from the Premier



Northern New Brunswick is about to embark on a period of change that will lead to growth and new opportunities to become self-reliant. We need to transform the economy, the workforce and relationships between governments and people.

We begin by building on our existing strengths – our people, our communities and our natural resources. Indeed, it is these strengths and the commitment of all of us that will build the more prosperous future we want to realize.

Government has taken a first step on the road to self-sufficiency. The Plan for Lower Taxes will result in lower taxes at a time when people and businesses are especially eager to reduce costs, and our proposed energy agreement with Hydro-Québec will significantly reduce energy costs for our people and our companies. Lower energy costs will secure existing jobs in our manufacturing and forest industries, benefiting thousands of workers and their families.

The people of northern New Brunswick have many reasons to be excited about this plan for the north. Combined with our aggressive actions to lower taxes and energy costs, the targeted initiatives in this action plan will lead the way to a period of long-term sustainable growth and development. And, for the first time, a fully staffed and resourced office will be dedicated to northern New Brunswick. A record level of investment has been committed to stimulating and sustaining economic activity.

Government can help to lay the foundation for growth in northern New Brunswick, but ultimately it is the people of the region, the leaders, thinkers and doers, who will build on that foundation and make the north a driving force for self-sufficiency throughout New Brunswick.

Together, we can make it happen.

Shawn Graham
Premier

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Executive Summary



Northern New Brunswick encompasses all of the area from the Grand Falls region to the Miramichi region, following the boundaries of the Northern Community Economic Development Agencies, including Enterprise Grand Falls, Enterprise Madawaska, Enterprise Restigouche, Enterprise Chaleur, Enterprise Peninsula and Enterprise Miramichi representing almost 30 per cent of the province's population. The economy is mainly dominated by resource-based industries, many of which are world-class. To ensure that these industries remain an economic force and a viable way of life for northern communities, we must take action to ensure that they have the competitive environment and skilled workforce necessary to sustain them well into the future.

This action plan for self-sufficiency in northern New Brunswick is driven by the emergence of new opportunities for the people of the region. The focus is on the specific actions that government will take to improve the capacity for northern New Brunswick to prosper. The plan ensures cross-government co-ordination of initiatives, and identifies specific actions to be undertaken in the next three years, with expected outcomes for tracking success. It also puts in place a process to engage and co-ordinate the efforts of other partners and stakeholders outside of government.

The goal of the plan is to create an environment that will enable northern New Brunswick industry to grow and create 2,700 permanent jobs during the next three years.

Northern New Brunswick is on the leading edge of new global opportunities that will change the dynamics of the region for many years to come. The three major opportunities for growth are in the areas of:

- modular fabrication and component construction industries;
- industrial development; and
- resource-based industries.

The region is well-positioned to capture these opportunities. To help fast-track this, government will focus its resources on the assets of the region by:

- investing in our people, our companies and our communities;
- branding the northern industrial corridor;
- promoting northern New Brunswick as a modular fabrication destination;
- identifying ambassadors for the north;
- targeting national and international firms to invest in the north;
- identifying and supporting anchor industrial projects that would benefit from a strong local supply chain; and
- investing in the certification, productivity and competitiveness of regional companies.

To prepare for the future, we must also invest in actions now that may yield measurable results only in the longer term. We need to entice business startups and expand existing businesses, increase our population and expand our workforce for the future. Expanding the existing community asset base and building on the advantages we have will help to create a more sustainable future:

- We must create a competitive business environment that will encourage entrepreneurial activity, investment, innovation and growth.
- We must harness the skills and resources of all our people, including our First Nations communities, and match these with the opportunities.
- We must take aggressive steps to stem the out-migration of people from the area, and begin the process of increasing our population through retention, repatriation and immigration, so that we have the people to work in our growing economy.
- We must focus on the education of all of our people, from kindergarten through high school and post-secondary education.
- We must invest in strategic infrastructure that will drive and transform economic development in northern New Brunswick.

The northern industrial corridor, defined by the national highway system running through northern New Brunswick (encompassing routes 2, 17, 11 and 8), and its anchor developments, will be our first priority. Economic growth requires that we make smart investments in the structures that support our economy, including highways, wireless communications, energy, ports, airports, railways and public infrastructure.

Implementation of the plan will be led by the Minister responsible for the Northern New Brunswick Initiative. The Regional Development Corporation will co-ordinate implementation of the plan and track results. At the regional level, an economic development office under the direction of Business New Brunswick will provide a team of dedicated professionals working in the region. Regional Development Corporation staff will work closely with all government departments to build interdepartmental working teams that can fast-track initiatives and maximize results.

An advisory board will be established to oversee implementation of the plan, and a northern regional forum will champion the plan and provide input and feedback to the northern economic development team.

A marketing and communications plan will be developed to brand the northern industrial corridor and to maintain critical communications among all stakeholders and partners with regards to the plan's progress and results.

Once the plan is implemented, it will be continuously monitored and adjusted to respond to new challenges and opportunities that may arise, with input from regional stakeholders.

The vision of a vibrant northern industrial corridor with strong anchor developments, employing 2,700 new, skilled people, including a growing immigrant population, can be a reality – the result of all levels of government, business, education, volunteers and other stakeholders working together to make the north, and all of New Brunswick, a better place to live and work.

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Introduction



This action plan is driven by the emergence of new opportunities for growth and prosperity for the people of northern New Brunswick. The focus of the plan is government's role in creating growth – what specific actions will the government take to improve the capacity for northern New Brunswick to prosper? Our Action Plan to be Self-Sufficient in New Brunswick, the Plan for Lower Taxes, and our proposed energy agreement with Hydro-Québec, will establish the framework for the Action Plan for Self-Sufficiency in Northern New Brunswick.

This plan, while developed by government and focused on government action, will require the support and participation of regional stakeholders and other government partners in order to be successful. Government is challenging communities and regional companies to play a strong leadership role in realizing the anticipated outcomes.

The plan facilitates cross-government co-ordination of initiatives, and identifies specific actions to be undertaken by government in the next three years that will lead to growth in northern New Brunswick, with expected outcomes for tracking success.

Under the leadership of the northern community, together we can build on the plan with initiatives and activities that will lead the way to a period of long-term sustainable growth and development.



Northern Highlights

Northern New Brunswick encompasses the area from Grand Falls to Miramichi, following the boundaries of the northern community economic development agencies, including Enterprise Grand Falls, Enterprise Madawaska, Enterprise Restigouche, Enterprise Chaleur, Enterprise Peninsula and Enterprise Miramichi. This region covers almost half the province.

The northern industrial corridor is defined by the national highway system running through northern New Brunswick, encompassing routes 2, 17, 11 and 8. Regional industrial activity and anchor developments feed into or from this system. Anchor developments are the major infrastructure assets of the region, and form the foundation for growth opportunities. They include assets such as the ports of Belledune, Dalhousie and Bas-Caraquet, as well as airports and other infrastructure that is critical to long-term development. Industrial operations that have a huge impact on communities, such as Brunswick Mines and Fraser Paper, are also considered anchors, due to their critical role in supply-chain development, similar to the role of anchor stores in a retail mall.

There are six First Nation communities in Northern New Brunswick: five Mi'maq (Eel River Bar, Pabineau, Burnt Church, Eel Ground and Red Bank) and one Maliseet (Madawaska).

Northern New Brunswick represents almost 30 per cent of New Brunswick's population, yet 48 per cent of the provincial labour force in the mining, oil and gas sector, 43 per cent in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sectors, and 37 per cent in the manufacturing sector, are found in this region.

The north is well-known for its vibrant Acadian culture. The region has a healthy, stimulating, and unique cultural environment expressed through numerous heritage and artistic activities that contribute significantly to sustaining and enhancing the social, educational, economic, and cultural fabric of the region and the province. Bilingualism is one of the greatest strengths in attracting business to the region.

The region is experiencing an out-migration of its young, educated people. Youth perceive that there is a lack of job opportunities. Conversely, the region faces a shortage of skilled workers in some areas of the economy. This creates the challenge of better matching skills of the region's young people with job opportunities in the region. In addition, young, talented immigrants can be drawn to the natural amenities of the region and the job opportunities available. The actions outlined in this plan are aimed at reversing the out-migration trend.

The economy of the region is mainly dominated by resource-based industries that have put New Brunswick on the national and international stage as a leader in the production of forestry products, minerals and peat, blueberries, potatoes, maple syrup, crab and other seafood products. While some of the region's resource-based industries are currently facing serious challenges, addressing these challenges and capitalizing on new opportunities will ensure that these industries remain a strong economic force in the future.

The region's industrial history and culture lend themselves well to growth and diversification in the new economy.

Building on the region's strengths and facing its challenges head-on, in partnership with its people and companies, will ensure sustainability for the future.

Transforming the Northern New Brunswick Economy

Economic growth is affected by many factors, including population size; education levels and proximity to higher education institutions; access to transportation networks; industrial mix; and cost competitiveness. Businesses favour locations that have the right people, suppliers and business services in one area. These factors are both our opportunities and our challenges in creating a self-sufficient economy in northern New Brunswick.

Northern New Brunswick has some world-class research facilities, from potato and bio-energy research in the west to fisheries byproducts in the east, that create opportunities to transfer knowledge and products to local companies. Existing infrastructure assets, such as the Port of Belledune, are a foundation for business expansion and new jobs for the people of the region. And the abundance of natural treasures, from Miscou to Madawaska, offer significant potential for additional tourism growth.

To help address the challenges, government recently introduced a \$50-million Northern Economic Development Fund and a \$100-million Northern New Brunswick Infrastructure Initiative. The new funds will help to develop, diversify and expand the economy and communities of northern New Brunswick. They will enhance community-driven initiatives in support of investment; economic development and diversification; and community capacity-



building. They will prepare the people of the region for the jobs of the future. Government will also realign departmental budgets, policies and programs to maximize the use of existing resources by refocusing efforts toward action plan priorities.

Collaboration provincewide will help businesses capitalize fully on the region's many assets, such as education facilities, ports, telecommunications, and other resources. It will build on the knowledge and expertise of the people and companies of the region, and provide them with new growth opportunities while fostering new business development and investment.

The Goal:

- *create a business environment that will enable northern New Brunswick industry to grow, transform itself and create 2,700 permanent jobs during the next three years.*

In the context of our job creation targets for New Brunswick, our goal is to see that more than 30 per cent of all new jobs created in the province are created in northern New Brunswick.

Capturing New Opportunities

Northern New Brunswick is on the leading edge of new global opportunities that will change the dynamics of the region for many years to come. The three major opportunities for growth are in the areas of:

- modular fabrication and component construction industries;
- industrial development; and
- resource-based industries.

The region is well-positioned to capture these opportunities. To help this, government will focus its resources on the assets of the region by:

- investing in our people, our companies and our communities;
- branding the northern industrial corridor;
- promoting northern New Brunswick as a modular fabrication destination;
- identifying ambassadors for the north;
- targeting national and international firms to invest in the north;
- identifying and supporting anchor industrial projects that would benefit from a strong local supply chain; and
- investing in the certification, productivity and competitiveness of regional companies.

Modular Fabrication and Component Construction Industries

The global trend in the construction industry is toward preassembled products and building components. Modularization is replacing the traditional stick-construction method. Major projects are assembled on-site from components that have been constructed, fabricated or manufactured at plants around the world. The modules are then transported to site by sea barge, rail or road. There is currently a global shortfall of advanced modular facilities adjacent to deep-water ports, identified by such prominent companies as General Electric, Westinghouse, Babcock and Wilcox, and Hitachi.

New Brunswick is quickly becoming a hub for major industrial and construction projects, which will provide at-home opportunities for modular fabrication. Northern New Brunswick possesses the critical factors to position itself as a leading international modular fabrication centre, with the ports of Dalhousie, Belledune and Bas-Caraquet, readily accessible skilled tradespeople, and cost advantages.

An evaluation of the modular fabrication and construction industry, undertaken by ROC Consulting Group last year, has validated the fact that New Brunswick possesses the critical success factors to position itself as a leading international modular fabrication centre. Northeastern New Brunswick, with its ports from Dalhousie to Miramichi, and the Northwest with its access to central Canada, and tradespeople, holds the potential of what ROC calls ground zero in the next major economic development initiative in New Brunswick: becoming and selling New Brunswick as Canada's international modular fabrication centre, partnering with some of the largest companies in the world.

ROC believes that the initiative could achieve several economic development objectives, including attracting investment to the region and providing increased business to New Brunswick's existing manufacturers through supply-chain activity.

Added to this, the University of New Brunswick is a centre of excellence in modular construction with its collaboration lab in civil engineering -- one of only four in North America. Université de Moncton's Edmundston Campus and the Woodworking Centre of Excellence in Campbellton are well-positioned to support wood product fabrication. The Université de Moncton's Shippagan campus and the School of Fisheries of the CCNB campus de la Péninsule acadienne are strategically focused to support marine fabrication.

Modular fabrication and component construction have numerous benefits that lend themselves well to what northern New Brunswick has to offer:

- controlled environment for fabrication;
- experienced staff and reduced turnover;
- improved quality and material control;
- reduced material waste and disposal costs;
- timely access to material sources;
- lower cost and higher productivity;
- significantly reduced construction time;
- reduced risk and improved safety performance; and
- better schedule control.



The government currently has investments of more than \$85 million in supply-chain companies in northern New Brunswick that will support the modular fabrication and component construction industry. In addition, more than \$60 million is now being invested in building the capacity for modular fabrication at the Port of Belledune.

The Potential

The potential to develop northern New Brunswick as a hub for modular fabrication and component construction activity is enormous, and presents huge opportunities to establish new directions in growth for the entire region. People and companies throughout the region are already recognizing the opportunities that this industry represents, and are taking the necessary steps to make the vision of a global industry player into a reality. Government can help to realize the vision by maintaining a focus on the three areas where the region has its greatest strengths:

- metal fabrication;
- wood-product fabrication; and
- marine fabrication.

Modular fabrication is a large-scale initiative that can provide the economic renaissance necessary to rejuvenate the economy of northern New Brunswick. Not only does the concept fit well into the existing industrial structure for metal fabrication, the modular concept also applies to the wood and marine sectors that currently exist, providing significant opportunity for a cluster of modular activity.

Government intends to invest substantial resources during the next three years to establish a world-class modular fabrication and component construction industry in northern New Brunswick. Potential projects valued at more than \$80 million have already been identified.

Metal Fabrication



Northern New Brunswick has a real opportunity to position itself as a leading international modular fabrication centre in the metal sector.

The anchor development for this opportunity is a modular fabrication centre at the Port of Belledune, providing a world-class, multi-purpose facility for fabrication, assembly and lay-out of pre-assembled steel units for local, national and international projects. These modular components would then be barged, trucked or delivered by rail to sites for final assembly.

Ports in Dalhousie and Bas-Caraquet can be used to stage this project and provide added capacity to this initiative. A dedicated barge will be required in Belledune to meet the transportation criteria for seagoing shipment of large components. This new barge will allow Belledune to be fully integrated and control its own transportation system from its facility. This requirement provides a unique opportunity for Bas-Caraquet's entry into the marine-product fabrication industry.

Other regional ports have the opportunity to be key players in modular construction. Dalhousie, for example, has rail access to the port, a long history of skilled people, and experience in loading and unloading ships. Dalhousie's lengthy history with the wood industry is an additional bonus for wood-product fabrication.

A new research and development focus will be required to support this project and to transfer technology to industry in the region. Our community colleges already have the research facilities and training programs needed to address this opportunity. In addition, technology transfer centres for metal, wood and composite will be established at NBCC Bathurst, Campbellton and the Acadian Peninsula, respectively, to enhance existing research and move it forward more quickly into local companies. In addition, other research organizations, such as the National Research Council and its flagship Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), will be able to contribute to this effort.

Regional training and education institutions will refocus their curriculum to ensure that both young people and experienced workers in the region have the proper training to gain meaningful employment in this industry.

A recent announcement by the Government of Canada has confirmed that DEW Engineering & Development from Miramichi has been awarded a major \$130-million contract for the Department of National Defence to design and manufacture 895 military shelters. This demonstrates the local talent in the metal sector, and recognition of the capabilities of northern New Brunswick companies.

Northern New Brunswick's value proposition to firms in this industry is especially compelling, given the province's Plan For Lower Taxes and the anticipated reductions in industrial electricity rates.

The Goals:

- *attract investment to New Brunswick; and*
- *provide increased business to New Brunswick's existing manufacturers and service providers through supply-chain activity;*
- *enhance training and attract skilled workers to northern New Brunswick.*

Objective: attract investment.

- Partner with world-class companies to become a critical link to a worldwide supply chain for modular fabrication.
- Actively seek investment in the modular fabrication industry worldwide.
- Work with national and multinational firms now established in New Brunswick to expand their presence in the province.
- Provide support to help communities increase investment readiness.
- Explore tax-free zones, centred on the port areas of Belledune, Dalhousie and Bas-Caraquet, to attract investment in modular fabrication and component construction.

Objective: provide increased business to New Brunswick's existing manufacturers and service providers.

- Realign the centre of excellence at CCNB Bathurst to create a technology transfer centre modular fabrication of metal products.
- Invest in the certification, productivity and competitiveness of regional companies that can be part of the supply chain.
- Support strategic projects that will enhance the local supply chain for the modular fabrication and component construction industries.
- Support the establishment of business consortiums for joint bidding on larger projects.
- Aggressively pursue contracts available through the federal Industrial Regional Benefits Program.



Objective: enhance training and attract skilled workers to northern New Brunswick.

- Establish partnerships between the community college system, universities, research centres, the federal government and private sector, particularly the UNB Centre of Excellence in Modular Construction and the Centre of Excellence in Steel Fabrication, to address industry needs and opportunities.
- Add additional community college seats for training programs that are in high demand, and add new programs to address current and future needs.
- Invest in distance education to meet training needs.
- Collaborate with employers to help them meet their workforce training needs through program- and seat-purchase partnerships.
- Collaborate with employers to help them meet their skill-shortage needs through immigration programs and initiatives.
- Support internship programs that will bring expertise to companies and experience to students.

Anticipated Outcomes

- An anchor company is established in the modular fabrication and component construction industry, and has served as a catalyst to attract additional investment interest.
- Three modular fabrication projects under construction in Belledune.
- Supply-chain activity at ports in Dalhousie and Bas-Caraquet.
- Northern New Brunswick companies are integrated into the supply chains of major projects.
- Increased number of skilled workers to meet demand.
- Creation of more than 1,000 jobs.

Wood Product Fabrication

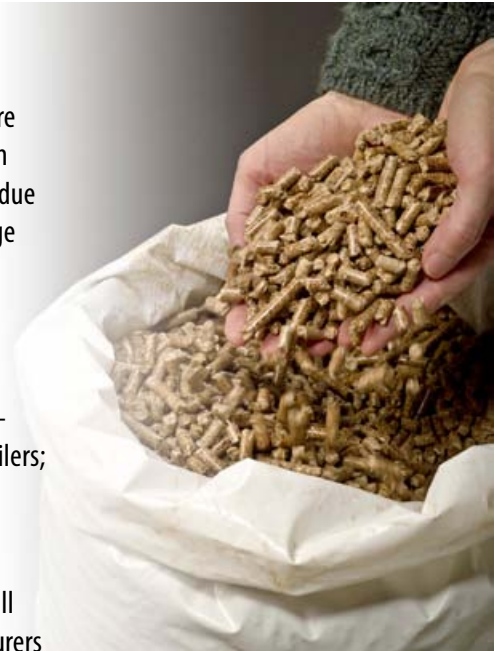
The forestry sector is at a crossroad, and nowhere have the negative impacts been more strongly felt than in northern New Brunswick. But with change comes new opportunity. There is a growing appetite for new construction techniques over conventional construction in both residential and commercial construction, in part due to skilled labour shortages, and in part due to construction time management. The wood sector in northern New Brunswick could emerge stronger than ever from this new trend.

Northern New Brunswick already has a strong foundation of existing companies on which to build an industry of preassembled products and modular components. For example, Leon Chouinard & Fils in Eel River Crossing builds custom roof trusses; Supreme Homes in Tracadie-Sheila builds mini-homes and modular homes, as well as light commercial and industrial trailers; and Fraser Specialty Products produces value-added building products.

Northern New Brunswick has the capacity, skills and manufacturers to build modular homes and commercial buildings, and to provide modular components, including pre-fabricated wall systems, trusses and wall sections, in addition to having state-of-the-art window manufacturers and other supply-chain providers.

Shipment of preassembled products and modular components would be co-ordinated at the Port of Dalhousie, given its close proximity to the entire region and its current capacity and available skilled work force.

To support development of this opportunity, CCNB Campbellton will refocus the Woodworking Center of Excellence to develop a modular fabrication program for wood construction.



The Goals:

- *provide new opportunities for existing wood industry manufacturers and service providers to grow and prosper;*
- *attract new companies in wood products; and*
- *provide skilled job opportunities for displaced workers in the wood industry.*

Objective: provide increased business to New Brunswick's existing manufacturers and service providers.

- Realign the centre of excellence at CCNB Campbellton to create a technology transfer centre for modular construction of wood products.
- Invest in the development and competitiveness of wood manufacturers of sub-components and prefabricated homes.
- Partner with industry to identify opportunities to diversify their business, and secure markets for their products.
- Support the establishment of business consortiums, such as Acadian Trading House Inc., for market and product development.

Objective: attract investment.

- Partner with external firms and companies to become a critical link to national and international preassembled-product markets.
- Address industry gaps through attracting foreign investment in the wood-product fabrication industry worldwide.
- Work with regional, provincial and national firms now established in New Brunswick to increase their presence and to increase their business with northern New Brunswick companies.

Objective: match displaced workers with new job opportunities.

- Identify opportunities for displaced workers in the forestry sector.
- Support employers in meeting their skill needs.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Ten wood-product fabrication operations are established and are adding new product dimensions to the region's existing complement of products.
- Two new national or international companies are attracted to the region.
- Creation of more than 500 new jobs.

Marine Fabrication

The marine construction and repair sector was once a vibrant industry in northern New Brunswick, and it can be again. Historically, northern New Brunswick, particularly the Acadian Peninsula has constructed many large vessels for its fishing fleet. Many skilled workers emerged from the industry and are available to transfer their knowledge to a new generation of shipbuilders.

Currently, the region has a variety of companies providing ancillary marine products and services. Those companies are the foundation on which the region can build a new and vital marine-fabrication industry. Innovative products from the region, such as rescue units, are currently being used by international marine operations. In addition, knowledge of marine industry needs and specific marine requirements is present in the region, and has the capacity to grow.

According to the federal government's shipbuilding forum in 2009, it is estimated that a \$30-billion investment will be required over the next 30 years to meet the demand for new and refurbished vessels. As considerable industry rationalization took place in the 1980s, the capacity to respond to this demand may not be there. This indicates that there will be strong market demand within the industry in the coming years. Some work has already been completed to measure the capacity and competitiveness of the region's industry, indicating that this is a significant opportunity.

Bas-Caraquet's existing marine infrastructure and expertise lends itself well to the development of a marine construction and repair centre. However, the capacity of its existing infrastructure is limited, and will need to be increased to position this facility to meet industry demand. One project that could kick-start this new centre is the construction of a new barge that the Port of Belledune will require as part of its modular fabrication centre development.

The Goals:

- *become a key supplier of products and services that support the region's entry into the modular fabrication and construction industry; and*
- *provide industry diversification opportunities that build on the skills and knowledge of the region.*

Objective: create a marine facility that can build and repair vessels used in modular fabrication, as well as provide services to the traditional fishing industry.

- Invest in the Bas-Caraquet Marine Centre to support expansion of the traditional boatbuilding and repair sector.
- Support development of the Bas-Caraquet Marine Centre to provide the capacity for construction of marine vessels for the modular fabrication and construction industry.
- Invest in a 300-to-600-ton travel lift to service the marine industry and other required infrastructure at the port.

Objective: capitalize on new opportunities related to this industry.

- Establish a technology transfer centre specializing in composite materials for marine fabrication at CCNB in the Acadian Peninsula.
- Develop expertise in developing new products, including barge-building to support modular fabrication and component construction at the Port of Belledune.
- Provide more people with an opportunity for on-the-job training and employment in this industry.
- Support integration of existing companies into the supply chain.
- Work aggressively to attract Industrial Regional Benefits from federal government procurement contracts under the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy.

Anticipated Outcomes

- One barge under construction in Bas-Caraquet, and one order waiting.
- 250 people employed in marine construction.
- The capacity of the Port of Bas-Caraquet to service various types of vessels is increased significantly.

Industrial Development

Northern New Brunswick has numerous vibrant manufacturing companies in diverse industries that have strong opportunities for growth, and are globally competitive. These companies, including plastics manufacturers such as IPL in Edmundston, metal fabricators such as Sunny Corner in Miramichi, the knowledge industry such as Roy Consultants in Bathurst and our value-added resource-based companies, are the backbone of the northern economy. Growing these companies and helping them address new opportunities in the field of green economies, biotechnologies and language industries will increase their competitiveness on the global market. Although there may not be enough companies to form a northern cluster, they are key players in New Brunswick's industry cluster base. Expanding them is an important part of advancing northern New Brunswick's future.

In addition to increasing the capabilities and competitiveness of existing companies, and with 100 per cent of the province having access to broadband, there will be opportunities for new service industries that weren't previously possible. The government has also made other significant investments in northern New Brunswick for improving the growth opportunities and competitiveness of existing businesses.

The Goal:

- *grow industries that will provide employment opportunities, attract additional investment, and increase exports from the region.*

Objective: make industry more productive and competitive.

- Support third-party certification of regional companies, including ISO, LEAN, quality and other certifications.
- Support companies in upgrading their capital equipment to improve productivity and competitiveness.
- Support investments in technology transfer and research and development.
- Support companies in becoming e-enabled.
- Provide competitive tax rates through the Plan for Lower Taxes.
- Develop a private-sector delivery model for loans to assist small businesses.

Objective: provide increased business opportunities for New Brunswick companies.

- Partner with existing companies to implement new processes and develop new products and services.
- Work with national and multinational firms now established in New Brunswick to identify opportunities for northern New Brunswick suppliers to improve and increase their capacity to do business with these companies.

- Help companies pursue new market opportunities that may arise through the Canada-EU Agreement, and through demand from emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China, and Francophonie countries.
- Explore new risk management vehicles (that is, insurance, surety) to assist small contractors in procuring government contracts.

Objective: enhance training and attract skilled workers to northern New Brunswick.

- Invest in distance education to meet training needs.
- Support development of corporate training plans, and provide training to workers and unemployed people to address skill shortages and upgrades, including enhanced recruitment and retention strategies, compensation and benefits.
- Strengthen the industry-apprenticeship-community college partnership and on the job training opportunities to ensure that the industrial trades training and apprenticeship programs meet industry needs, and collaborate with employers to help them meet their workforce training needs.
- Support internship programs that will bring expertise to companies and experience to students.
- Establish a corporate secondment program to provide expertise to regional companies.
- Collaborate with employers to help them meet their skill-shortage needs through immigration programs and initiatives.
- Refocus program delivery in the community college system by creating technology transfer centres in the areas of product development for wood, metal, composite/plastic and information and communications technology.
- The new strategic alliance between Université de Moncton's Edmundston Campus and CCNB Edmundston will provide the environment to focus on the development of the language industry.

Anticipated Outcomes

- New Brunswick is a model for the use of technology.
- Ten companies have added new product lines.
- Increased our exports and developed new markets.
- Establish centres of technology transfer at CCNB in the areas of wood, metal, composite/plastics, information and communication technology.
- Increased number of skilled workers to meet demand.
- Creation of more than 700 new jobs.

Resource-Based Industries

New Brunswick is the most export-dependant province in Canada, with approximately half of its gross domestic product (GDP) derived from international exports of goods and services. Of New Brunswick's international exports, more than 80 per cent are destined for the United States, the vast majority of this in petroleum products shipped to New England. More penetration to other regions of the United States presents an opportunity, and new trade opportunities are emerging for New Brunswick nationally and internationally, with Europe and Asia. Penetrating new markets will be a key component of securing our economic base.

Our resource industries – forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, minerals, oil and gas, tourism – have been a significant contributor to the northern economy. In each of these sectors it is critical to promote increased productivity and support greater competitiveness, diversification and value-added activity. Despite the challenges experienced by some resource industries, we still have strong national and international corporations established in northern New Brunswick contributing to its economy.

In addition, bioscience is an emerging sector, and is estimated to account for approximately five per cent of provincial GDP. Though the region's potential strength in this field currently lies in marine-based biosciences in the northeast, there are real opportunities to develop bioscience technologies from plant compounds in other parts of the region.

Developing the bioenergy industry presents new opportunities. The ports in the region can serve as the entry for feed stocks, as well as for moving out final product. The Red Bank/Sunbay gasification project is an example of an opportunity for the north, and an opportunity for First Nations people.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Creation of more than 250 jobs



Forestry and Forest Products

Of the 300 forest-dependant communities across Canada, more than 50 are in New Brunswick. New Brunswick is Canada's most forest-dependant provincial economy and has, consequently, experienced the greatest losses in productive capacity during the past five years. The closure of forestry-related operations has had a devastating impact on employees and communities throughout northern New Brunswick. The rationalization of the pulp and paper industry and its impact on sawmills, while devastating in the short term, will ultimately result in a much stronger, more competitive, efficient and productive industry, due to new investments in people, products and equipment. The survivors will be well-positioned to meet global demand when markets revive.

There are also new opportunities in global markets as demand for forest products grows in Asia, Russia and South America. The transition from a narrower focus on North American markets to full global partnership is a must for future growth.

The government currently has made significant investments in forestry and forest products initiatives and programs in northern New Brunswick for:

- First Nations timber royalties;
- silviculture;
- making industry more productive and competitive, and to support value-added production; and
- providing strategic support.

The government is committed to continuing to support this important sector of the economy by building on its current investments. As an example, Fraser Paper's lumber mill in Plaster Rock was supported in breaking its dependence on oil and lowering its conversion costs by 20 per cent, making it more competitive for the future.



The Goals:

- *sustain our existing industry; and*
- *add higher value to our resources.*

Objective: make industry more productive and competitive.

- Implement a forestry industry partnership initiative involving multiple employers in the field of wood-products manufacturing in the Restigouche region. The training includes three components: lean manufacturing, human resource management, and workplace essential skills (WES).
- Establish partnerships between the community college system, universities, the federal government and industry, particularly the Woodworking Centre of Excellence in Campbellton, Université de Moncton's Edmundston Campus, and the Maritime College of Forest Technology in Fredericton, to better meet student and industry needs in the region.
- Explore tax incentives for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment.
- Explore the feasibility of a new investment tax credit for equipment required to commercialize bio-energy products.
- Promote cost-efficient harvesting operations on private woodlots.
- Promote third-party certification that will make our companies more competitive.
- Pursue a research center for hardwood with the Université de Moncton's Edmundston Campus and other partners.

Objective: invest in strategic projects that offer the highest-value proposition for the best use of resources.

- Invest in silviculture on both Crown and private land.
- Support bio-energy product development, and invest in bio-energy projects.

- Invest in value-added products, particularly prefabricated and modular products and building components.
- Identify new opportunities for manufacturing, using non-traditional wood resources.
- Pursue a research center for hardwood with the Université de Moncton's Edmundston Campus and other partner.

Objective: address the needs of communities affected by the recent industry downturn.

- Continue to partner with the federal government's Community Development Trust to support communities affected by the closure and sale of mills.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Forestry-related operations are stabilized.
- Existing operations are more competitive.
- Wood allocations assigned to high-value projects.
- Exports to new markets are increased.



Minerals, Oil and Natural Gas

The province's mineral production ranks first in Canada for lead, zinc, silver, bismuth and antimony, and third for cadmium. In non-metals, the province is the largest producer of peat moss and marl in Canada, and second in potash and sulphur. The Bathurst Mining Camp area is world-famous for its base metals deposits, and should continue to be, for many years into the future.

Brunswick Mines outside Bathurst is scheduled to shut down in two-to-three years. Government is working with the company and the people of the region to ease the transition. New training opportunities are being provided for mineworkers, and we are working with local companies in the supply chain to seek new opportunities. At the same time, New Brunswick has been lauded by mining industry professionals as an excellent place to explore.

Peat production is a success story for the region. Jiffy Products (N.B.) Ltd. operates a manufacturing facility, and creates peat pots and pellets as well as other peat moss products used in horticulture, silviculture and home gardening. Its facility in Shippagan has experienced substantial growth during the past five years due to the development of a new bio-degradable shrink wrap that has nearly doubled its sales and staff. Good Earth Canada is another example of a value-added peat company operating in the region.

The government currently has investments of more than \$22.5 million in minerals, oil and natural gas initiatives and programs in northern New Brunswick:

- more than \$21 million in exploration; and
- close to \$1.5 million in product development.

Government is working with several companies that are looking at a significant amount in potential investments in the region during the next three years.

The Goal:

- *ensure that we are competitive with other jurisdictions in promoting further exploration and development of our mineral and petroleum resources.*

Objective: identify significant new mineral, oil and gas resources.

- Increase work to identify new mineral, oil and gas reserves, and enhance known reserves.
- Invest in the extraction and export of aggregate.
- Establish a certified lab to complete assay work and analysis of core samples.



Objective: invest in strategic projects that offer the highest-value proposition for the best use of resources

- Invest in industry expansion and the production of higher-value products, particularly in the peat industry.
- Explore the feasibility of implementing a northern oil and natural gas licence that recognizes the increased challenges of working in the north.
- Explore the feasibility of providing stimulus investment to hydrocarbon exploration companies.
- Invest in the certification, productivity and competitiveness of regional companies.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Significant investments in identifying new reserves that could result in long-term jobs.
- A certified lab is established.
- Three new investments are operational – one in peat and two in aggregate.

Agriculture



The agriculture and agri-food processing sector is a major economic driver in the province, particularly given its contribution to the rural economy. The agriculture and agri-food sector provides direct employment to more than 13,000 New Brunswickers. Only the three prairie provinces and Prince Edward Island rely more heavily on the agri-food sector.

New Brunswick's agriculture sector is diverse and well-balanced between crops and livestock. On the crop side, potatoes; greenhouse and floriculture; and fruits and berries are the major contributors to farm cash receipts. Dairy, poultry and eggs, hogs, and beef are the major contributors on the livestock side.

New Brunswick has capacity for research and development in its primary sectors through institutions such as the Research and Productivity Council, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Potato Research Centre, Bio-Atlantech, and the Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture. The success of these institutions relies not only on adequate funding sources, but also successful commercial development. The Red Bank First Nation's gasification project is just one example of transferring our research and technology to industry.

Northern New Brunswick is the major producer and processor of potatoes and blueberries for the province, well-recognized in national and international markets. Agriculture offers opportunities for growth in the north. Blueberries, cranberries and maple sugar offer significant opportunities for expansion, diversification and value-added products. A good example of what we can achieve is Northumberland Co-operative Ltd. in Miramichi. It has significantly diversified its traditional dairy product lines, and now has profit streams in juices and value-added dairy products.

Government intends to invest significant amounts in new agricultural projects during the next three years.

The Goals:

- *increase production capacity;*
- *add higher value to our resources; and*
- *improve productivity and competitiveness.*

Objective: increase product development and expansion opportunities.

- Invest in growth and diversification of the Christmas tree and wreath-making industries.
- Invest in increased maple syrup production from existing maple stands.
- Support the establishment of wild blueberry production on Crown land.
- Invest in expansion of the cranberry industry.
- Support initiatives in livestock genetic enhancement.
- Promote northern New Brunswick's agricultural and bio-product opportunities to the immigrant market.
- Support projects in agricultural land development on both public and private land.

- Establish a bio-energy and bio-products lab for applied research at CCNB Grand Falls to work in partnership with the Université de Moncton, UNB, the Research and Productivity Council (RPC), Canadian Forestry Service (CFS), and the private sector.
- Establish a pilot project to identify and evaluate bio-gas projects that will provide profitable crop opportunities for the agriculture industry.

Objective: provide new market opportunities.

- Assist producers in selling in new markets.

Objective: enhance productivity and competitiveness in the industry.

- Establish partnerships between the community college system, universities and industry to provide training programs that meet current and future needs.
- Support third-party certification of products and processes, including food safety and organic products.

Anticipated Outcomes

- One pilot bio-gas project in the Grand Falls region.
- Two new blueberry sites and one new cranberry site.
- Increased production in the Christmas tree and maple syrup industries.
- New product sales in new markets.
- An applied research lab in bio-energy and bio-products is established.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture is an important industry in New Brunswick, and has become the cornerstone of the economy in a number of communities. Aquaculture in New Brunswick has grown significantly during the last 20 years, from a relatively new industry in the 1980s, to an important generator of employment and economic activity, particularly in rural coastal communities along the shores of eastern New Brunswick.

Benefits of the industry include the creation of year-round employment in rural and coastal communities, an increased tax base, and the ability to retain New Brunswickers in their home communities, or repatriate those who have left.

The main species grown on a commercial scale in northern New Brunswick is the American oyster. There are currently 522 shellfish sites in New Brunswick, primarily in the north. Alternative species which are of interest for continuing development include shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon, bay scallop and the giant scallop.



The development potential of the aquaculture industry and its prospective contribution to the provincial goal of economic self-sufficiency have been well-recognized. The sectors that make up the aquaculture industry are at various stages of development and maturity, and face different growth priorities and challenges, including competitiveness, financing, risk management, market access and consumer confidence, health and biosecurity, strategic infrastructure, and diversification.

Demands by consumers, retailers, and foreign governments for additional assurance of food safety and product traceability throughout the value chain are increasing. While such demands do not currently pose a barrier to product sales for the New Brunswick aquaculture industry, it is important to stay on top of market trends and potential implications. Identifying cultured products from New Brunswick-based companies via development of premium brands, niche or specialty products, and programming for quality standards and traceability, will enable local producers to continue to command top price for their product, and increase their access to new markets.

The industry must develop in harmony with other users of the marine resource, including commercial fishers, tourism, nature and the local community.

Government intends to make important investments in expansion of the aquaculture industry during the next three years.

The Goals:

- *pursue the sustainable expansion of shellfish and finfish aquaculture;*
- *continue the research, development and adoption of inshore, offshore, freshwater and land-based technology; and*
- *add higher value to our resources.*

Objective: provide infrastructure to support industry expansion.

- Invest in enhancements to the New Brunswick Aquarium and Marine Centre.
- Maximize utilization of the existing aquaculture laboratory at the School of Fisheries in Caraquet to establish applied research in partnership with the Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan.
- Provide landing areas, community washing and sorting sheds, and holding facilities in strategic locations.



Objective: increase product development and diversification.

- Create a governance structure to establish priorities and co-ordinate activities for industry development.
- Streamline the regulatory and policy regime to facilitate entrance into and development of the industry.
- Evaluate the merits of establishing a shellfish technology centre in support of the aquaculture sector.
- Establish pilot projects and pre-commercial trials to explore the feasibility of alternative species development, including trout, Arctic char and scallops.
- Support the adoption of new technologies.
- Support increased commercialization of research.
- Promote aquaculture research activities at the Coastal Zone Research Institute Inc.

Objective: sustain and improve industry competitiveness.

- Provide strategic financial support to reduce risk and enhance competitiveness in the industry.
- Support third-party production/market certification.
- Support workshops that provide opportunities for hands-on technology transfer and relevant training courses to address current and future industry needs.
- Develop appropriate programming to address the gap between research and commercialization in order to stimulate diversification of the industry.
- Support initiatives toward industrial and municipal waste-water system upgrades to preserve marine ecosystems.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Two aquaculture farms with alternative species are established.
- Two new, land-based operations are established.
- More than double the sale of cultured shellfish.
- Enhanced aquaculture research capacity.

Fisheries

New Brunswick's fishing and seafood processing industry is a significant contributor to the northern New Brunswick economy. While the United States remains the key importer of fish and seafood products, Asia is emerging as an important customer for New Brunswick exports, and other countries are exploring export opportunities.

The industry is pursuing opportunities presented by the development of new value-added products, and by research into the utilization of marine byproducts.



Despite its success and importance to the northern economy, the industry faces many challenges, from declines in traditional species to quota allocations and aging infrastructure. But there is still significant economic opportunity in stock replenishment, underutilized species, and secondary and tertiary product transformation.

Government support will be focused on productivity, value-added products, new technology and equipment, innovation, and the expansion of year-round activity in the fisheries sector. We must continue to explore the potential for greater use of the byproducts of fish processing for the production of bio-products through support for research and development, and policies to ensure access to adequate volumes of fish and shellfish byproducts.

Government intends to invest significant amounts in the fishing industry during the next three years.

The Goals:

- *improve competitiveness in our existing industry;*
- *add higher value to our resources;*
- *expand year-round activity; and*
- *diversify into bio-products.*

Objective: invest in strategic projects that offer the highest value proposition for the best use of resources.

- Focus on value-added products, based on what the market is demanding.
- Identify specific opportunities for access to new and/or underutilized resources.
- Partner with industry and research facilities to identify and develop opportunities for byproducts that have commercial potential.
- Support habitat restoration and stock replenishment.

Objective: support initiatives that will improve industry competitiveness.

- Go to new markets and market New Brunswick products on a worldwide scale.
- Work with industry to establish quality certification standards and eco-labelling.
- Support improvement in productivity, operational efficiency and technology transfer.
- Implement a plan to restructure the lobster, shrimp and groundfish fleets to ensure the viability of remaining fishing operations.

Objective: stabilize employment and extend the season.

- Work with plant owners and employees to stabilize the workforce and improve working conditions.
- Work with plant owners and employees to provide better opportunities to add higher value to our resources.

Anticipated Outcomes

- *Two new operations focused on underutilized species and byproducts.*
- *Sales in new markets.*
- *Increase in the availability of seafood products as a result of enhancement projects.*



Tourism and Culture Development

Tourism is an important economic generator for northern New Brunswick. Tourism investments provide benefits to both rural and urban areas.

Most visitors are regional travellers, followed by visitors from Quebec, Ontario and the United States. New Brunswick enjoys a small percentage of visitors from destinations outside of North America, and the number of international tourists continues to grow.

With the backdrop of the Appalachians, Baies des Chaleurs and the vibrant Acadian culture, northern New Brunswick has a unique outdoor experience to market. Every year, visitors flock to popular attractions such as the Botanical Garden and Mont Farlagne in Edmundston, Mount Carleton, Sugarloaf, Miscou Island, the New Brunswick Aquarium and Marine Centre, and le Village Historique Acadien. The north also has a strong winter product that is unique to the province, including cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and more.

From salmon fishing on the Miramichi River to the natural wonder of the Grand Falls Gorge, and to the cultural experiences of Boishébert National Historic Site, Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Site and Metepenagiag Heritage Park, the region has exciting products to offer visitors year-round. The north's outdoor sector not only appeals to a significant segment in some of our current markets (Quebec, for example), it would also appeal to new markets.

Although the region has many natural assets and a strong base of strategic infrastructure, many northern communities do not have sufficient tourism product to attract or retain visitors. A focus on community development and enhancement is required. In addition, the region needs tour operators to develop, sell and deliver product.

The investment in infrastructure for the 2003 Bathurst-Campbellton Canada Winter Games provided new opportunities for development and sport-event hosting in northern New Brunswick. For example, the 2010 Canadian Age Class Speed Skating Championship will be held at the Campbellton Civic Centre. Also, Charlo is known for its cross-country ski and biathlon capability, and historically has organized major events. Sport development and, by extension, sport tourism, can be developed.



The government currently has investments of more than \$30 million in tourism and culture development initiatives and programs in northern New Brunswick, including:

- trail systems;
- waterfront developments;
- regional initiatives to attract visitors; and
- regional infrastructure, including parks, interpretation centres, museums and activity-based venues.

The Department of Tourism and Parks is pursuing ways to enhance intercept opportunities of maritime bound tourism traffic at the Quebec - Madawaska entranceway, to encourage visitors to spend additional time in New Brunswick discovering the many attractions and experiences available. The government intends to continue to make significant investments during the next three years to upgrade tourism infrastructure, market the region, and support product development.

The Goal:

- *target new markets and use new approaches to grow our tourism and cultural sectors.*

Objective: enhance the visitor experience by making investments in key iconic tourist infrastructure.

- Complete Phase 2 expansion of the Acadian Village.
- Continue with upgrades at Sugarloaf Park.
- Upgrade the infrastructure of the Grand Falls Gorge
- Invest in upgrades to the Botanical Garden.
- Continue with investments to Mount Carleton Provincial Park.
- Invest in upgrades to the New Brunswick Aquarium and Marine Centre.
- Invest in an interpretation centre and trail network.
- Invest in Phase 2 of Miramichi Landings.
- Stabilize the snowmobile product in the north with trail improvements, equipment for grooming, and funding for aggressive marketing to this niche market, in all northern regions from Madawaska to Miramichi.
- Invest in improvements and enhancements of Sentier NB Trails.
- Create a strategic welcome gateway in the Edmundston region for visitors from Quebec.
- Develop a customer service centre of excellence and lodge in the Campbellton-to-Mount Carleton area.
- Support development and enhancement of unique tourism offerings of First Nations communities.
- Continue to invest in regional sports and cultural facilities to host major events.



Objective: enhance the visitor experience by offering new products in new markets.

- Develop a three-to-five-year strategy for special events/entertainment/conferences; to develop and hold a series of the right events in northern New Brunswick that will attract visitors/participants to the region.
- Position the north as an ultimate year-round outdoor destination.
- Develop incremental outdoor adventure tourism products to market northern New Brunswick.
- Enhance support to existing markets and identify new market segments, including snowmobiling, fishing, and cruise ships.
- Develop a post-congrès mondial acadien strategy to market in regions where there was high participation, such as Quebec, Louisiana and France.

Objective: improve operator efficiencies.

- Develop a collaborative approach between the tourism industry and the community college system to offer relevant courses to meet the demands of industry, and leverage opportunities for employment in the tourism and service sectors.
- Develop, implement and champion a training and professional development plan for ongoing training.
- Provide WES training to help employers and workers meet their training needs.

Objective: increase stakeholder partnerships and collaboration.

- Work with regional partners including TIANB and local tourism associations to enhance and expand product offerings, and market to new destinations.

Anticipated Outcomes

- 10 per cent increase in tourism to the region.
- Increased number of tourism products and operators.
- Expanded seasonal tourism, particularly in fall and winter seasons.

Getting Ready for the Future

To prepare for the future, we must invest in actions now that may yield measurable results only in the longer term. We need to create new businesses, increase our population, and expand our workforce for the future.

Strategic Infrastructure

Providing strategic infrastructure is one of the most critical priorities that government can undertake to support economic growth. Government must invest in strategic infrastructure that will transform economic development in northern New Brunswick. Without strategic transportation infrastructure, our three key areas of opportunity -- modular fabrication and component construction industries; industrial development; and resource-based industries -- cannot move forward.

The northern industrial corridor and its anchor developments will be our first priority. Economic growth requires that we make smart investments in the structures that support our economy: highways, wireless communications, energy, ports, airports, railways and public infrastructure.

Government has been very pro-active in implementing the new, \$100-million Northern New Brunswick Infrastructure Initiative for infrastructure improvements in northern New Brunswick to ensure that adequate infrastructure is made available for economic development in the region.



A prime example of infrastructure investment in northern New Brunswick is the recent announcement of \$20.4 million for expansion of the Port of Belledune. The investment symbolizes the beginning of the transformation of northern New Brunswick's economy. It will better position the deep-sea port to provide shippers with easy access to global markets, and allow northern New Brunswick to move forward on the road to self-sufficiency. The port will be an anchor development on the northern industrial corridor, and will support the opportunity for modular fabrication and component construction industries.

The Goal:

- *position northern New Brunswick as a prime competitor for investment and access to global markets.*

Objective: invest in strategic projects that offer the highest value proposition for the best use of resources.

- Pursue public-private partnership opportunities for strategic infrastructure, where appropriate.
- Encourage and support active participation on the New Brunswick Gateway Council to ensure that northern New Brunswick opportunities are considered.

Objective: enhance the northern industrial corridor as a gateway to external markets.

The government, through the Department of Transportation, has made significant investments in routes 8, 11, 17, 108, and 180, together with many other roads in northern New Brunswick.

Projects which require attention during the years ahead include:

- Further upgrades of routes 8, 11 and 17, including construction of the Janeville-Pokemouche bypass, and completion of the Miramichi bypass;
- Completion of the twinning of Route 2 from St. Jacques to the Quebec border;
- Further improvements to routes 180 and 108;

- Other highway improvements as warranted, including passing lanes and wildlife fencing;
- Foster intelligent-transportation system partnerships with UNB's National Rural ITS Research Centre, the private sector and government; and
- Further investments in key municipal transportation infrastructure.

Objective: ensure that critical infrastructure required to support new opportunities is in place at the ports of Belledune, Dalhousie, and Bas-Caraquet, and other marine sites.

The government currently has investments of more than \$26 million in port infrastructure, including more than \$20 million recently announced for the Port of Belledune, and intends to make further significant investments in the region.

- Support infrastructure for the attraction and development of modular fabrication and component construction industries at the ports of Belledune, Dalhousie and Bas-Caraquet.
- As part of the Atlantic Gateway Initiative, seek partnered investments for strategic infrastructure at the Port of Belledune.
- Evaluate the opportunities to attract cruise ships to northern ports.
- Support enhancements to the Bas-Caraquet marine centre to support the expansion of marine product fabrication and the traditional boatbuilding and repair sectors.
- Upgrade fisheries services in Bas-Caraquet and Shippagan.

Objective: maintain and enhance air services in the north as part of the strategic infrastructure on the northern industrial corridor, and a gateway to external markets.

Investments of more than \$1.4 million in northern airports have been made in the past two years.

- Evaluate the needs and opportunities for air services in northern New Brunswick, and develop a strategy to prioritize the development and growth of service opportunities.
- Establish a regional airport authority to manage northern New Brunswick airports.
- Explore opportunities for increased charter flights, air cargo services and flight schools from regional airports.
- Ensure the continued availability of critical services such as medivac, air ambulance and forest protection at northern airports.

Ensure the continued availability of critical services such as medivac, air ambulance and forest protection at northern airports.

Objective: maintain and enhance rail services in the north as part of the strategic infrastructure on the northern industrial corridor, and a gateway to external markets.

- Investigate partnerships between rail carriers and others to improve intermodal connections, increase rail service, and support strategic projects.
- Investigate the costs and benefits of increasing, to 286,000 tons, the rail capacity from Campbellton to Miramichi and on to Moncton.
- Promote the use of Via Rail passenger services.
- Explore partnership opportunities with CN for improved service and increased rail-related activities along the CN line between Campbellton and Moncton.
- Intervene, if necessary, to ensure that essential, strategic rail infrastructure is not abandoned.

Objective: pursue both brownfield and greenfield industrial infrastructure developments that are required along the northern industrial corridor.

- Challenge communities to create a community investment commission to manage development of key infrastructure in northern New Brunswick, including existing industrial parks, abandoned mills, factories, compounds and other idle assets, as well as community renewable energy projects throughout the north.
- Support strategic brownfield developments such as the former UPM Kymenne facility in Miramichi (which has been repurposed for UMOE), and new greenfield developments such as the Port of Belledune.
- Use our geographic information system expertise to map infrastructure and assets in support of investment attraction and strategic planning.

Objective: increase renewable energy capacity in northern New Brunswick.

To attract investment and create new job opportunities in our resource and manufacturing industries, government is taking strong action to make our energy rates more competitive, and to reduce volatility in energy prices. To this end, government has signed a proposed energy agreement involving Hydro-Québec and NB Power, and will focus on securing a supply of clean hydro power. In Dalhousie there will be additional challenges to face as a result of this new direction. Efforts are underway to identify new opportunities for this community.

Northern New Brunswick benefits from an extremely robust wind resource, as well as large tracts of undeveloped Crown land suitable for large-scale wind-energy development. In addition, smaller scale community-based renewable energy projects can complement existing generation, offering a full suite of small-scale renewable energy options for residential, small-scale commercial and community applications. Major investments in renewable energy are underway in northern New Brunswick, specifically in wind energy. These projects provide much-needed economic activity in northern communities. The government will continue to support renewable energy through a number of measures.



- Support the development of solar energy projects.
- Support community projects for renewable energy.
- Support economically viable and environmentally sustainable northern New Brunswick bio-fuel projects.
- Invest in energy-efficiency projects.
- Explore the potential of additional hydro redevelopment.
- Introduce a renewable energy technician program at CCNB Bathurst.
- Make the new multi-shop building at CCNB Bathurst a renewable energy demonstration centre.

Objective: increase regional collaboration for service delivery, including fire services, water and wastewater, industrial land, landfills and other community infrastructure.

The government currently has investments of more than \$108 million for community infrastructure, including water and sewer, fire and safety, streets and roads, and other strategic municipal infrastructure. Approximately \$40 million in additional projects has already been identified for the next three years.

- Invest in water and sewer upgrades in northern communities, including training and certification of all municipal water/wastewater operators by 2011.
- Invest in strategic community infrastructure development.
- Build on the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and New Brunswick Relationship Building Bilateral Agreement to ensure that First Nation communities can benefit from economic opportunity in northern New Brunswick.
- Invite Aboriginal entrepreneurs and elders to participate in creating a blueprint for Aboriginal self-sufficiency by 2026.
- Ensure that we have viable municipalities in the province.
- Support the regionalization of services to optimize federal/provincial/municipal investments, by using a regional planning approach.

Objective: ensure that necessary public infrastructure is in place to support stronger communities.

The government currently has investments of more than \$215 million in public infrastructure, including the recently announced \$85-million Restigouche Hospital, the new \$35-million NBCC campus in Edmundston, and the \$16-million Dalhousie Correctional Centre. Current plans include more than \$150 million for new projects and initiatives to build stronger communities that will provide improved services to the people of the region, and attract new people.

- Complete access to high-speed Internet.
- In partnership with regional communities, explore the provision of wireless communications in downtown areas.

- Invest in new policing and justice facilities, including completion of the Dalhousie Correctional Centre.
- Begin construction of the Restigouche Hospital Centre.
- Complete a redevelopment master plan for Chaleur Regional Hospital.
- Construct a new nursing home in the Town of Dalhousie.
- Upgrade post-secondary education facilities and community schools, and provide new infrastructure where required.
- Establish a new centre to consolidate the delivery of government services for the Miramichi region.
- Restructure the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick governance structure, with a head office located in Bathurst.
- Continue to invest in regional sports and cultural facilities to host major events.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Reduced transportation times and shipping costs to/from northern New Brunswick.
- Three anchor developments completed on the northern industrial corridor.
- Two brownfield sites in northern New Brunswick have been reused.
- Two industrial malls established on existing industrial properties.
- Four community projects for renewable energy are in progress.
- Two wind farms are operational.
- Two northern New Brunswick companies are exporting information technology products or services.

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development

A growing economy requires a thriving entrepreneurial sector. Expanding the existing community asset base, and building on the advantages we have, will help to create a more sustainable future. We must create a more competitive business environment that will encourage entrepreneurial activity, investment, innovation and growth.

Government's primary focus in economic development and growth has for many years been on entrepreneurship and small business development. The government has made significant investments in business development and entrepreneurship initiatives and programs in northern New Brunswick in the past two years, including \$1.6 million in operating funds to the Enterprise agencies. Our Plan for Lower Taxes will help to create an even more competitive business environment. Through New Brunswick's set of programs, government intends to invest in entrepreneurship and small business development during the next three years.

In addition to existing programs to support entrepreneurship and small business development, the province will develop a small business loan program with the credit unions and caisse populaires to facilitate more local decision-making in funding business development projects.

The Goals:

- *foster the culture of entrepreneurship that exists in northern New Brunswick; and*
- *pursue opportunities to grow in new directions.*

Objective: improve the success of entrepreneurs and small businesses.

- Challenge the business community to take a leading role in entrepreneurship mentoring and the development of innovative ways of finding access to capital.
- Ensure that we have a streamlined provincial regulatory regime that is fair, relevant for government and industry, and effective in terms of compliance.
- Refocus training for entrepreneurs and support mentorships with seasoned businesspeople.
- Promote northern New Brunswick's small business opportunities to the immigrant market.
- Develop a private-sector delivery model for loans to assist small businesses.
- Work with organizations such as the Canadian Federation for Independent Business and conseil économique to provide outreach services such as seminars on topics relevant to entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Objective: reinvent regional economic development.

- Refocus Enterprise agencies to provide effective services to their clients and to be fully accountable for implementing actions to address strategic priorities.
- Encourage municipal leaders to share responsibility for transforming the economic development delivery structure.

Anticipated Outcomes

- *More effective economic development delivery.*
- *Renewed community leadership and a more active community role in economic development.*
- *Strategically focused agencies and communities.*

Increasing Our Population

Achieving self-sufficiency requires that we harness the skills and resources of all our people. We must take aggressive steps to increase our population through retention, repatriation and immigration, so that we have the people to work in our growing economy. We must reverse the flow of people out of northern New Brunswick. Immigration will play an important role in the growth of northern New Brunswick's population in the longer term. A \$10-million initiative for francophone immigration has been established to attract, integrate and retain francophone immigrants. In addition, The Plan for Lower Taxes will make New Brunswick even more competitive in its efforts to attract new residents.

The Goal:

- *increase the skilled, work-ready population of the region.*

Objective: retain youth in the region.

- Establish programs for youth that will increase dialogue, community participation and awareness.
- Challenge employers to participate in transition-to-work initiatives.
- Contribute to job expos and fairs that will showcase job opportunities for students and graduates.
- Provide appropriate labour market linkages for youth that will better profile the availability of jobs in the north.
- Facilitate new mentorship and support internship, and co-op placement opportunities to more effectively link young people to the workforce.
- Create a culture of learning by challenging employers to register more apprentices, to purchase training at community colleges and universities, and to participate in co-op and internship opportunities.

Objective: attract and retain more immigrants, particularly francophones.

- Identify employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that will lead to an increased number of newcomers.
- Increase utilization of the Provincial Nominee Program and the Temporary Foreign Work Program to meet labour skill shortages.
- Establish and enhance settlement and integration services, in all regions, to immigrants and their families.
- Expand the current pilot project on community sponsorship.
- Attract more international students to help bring investment to the community.
- Develop a plan to attract more international francophone students to northern New Brunswick campuses.
- Increase post-secondary institutions involvement in international projects to introduce new techniques, technology and processes to New Brunswick.



- Invest in an immigrant business start-up program to help immigrants interested in starting a small business gain the necessary training and mentorship to run a successful enterprise in New Brunswick.
- Collaborate with employers to help them meet their skill shortage needs through immigration programs and initiatives.
- Work with provincial accreditation organizations to address credential assessment and recognition issues, and increase the capacity.
- Create partnership among various stakeholders to address issues related to establishing welcoming communities.
- Increase multicultural and diversity awareness.
- Work with educational institutions and the service sector to ensure that their workplaces are more immigrant-friendly.
- Build infrastructure to support business immigrants, particularly in the area of succession planning for local businesses.
- Work with the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour to ensure that programs are available to allow newcomers to gain Canadian work experience.

Objective: repatriate skilled New Brunswickers.

- Link job opportunities here with the skills of those who are looking to move home.
- Participate in job expos and fairs that will showcase job opportunities for repatriates.
- Provide relocation assistance to repatriates moving home to take a job requiring essential skills, as required by a regional company.

Objective: provide job and learning opportunities that will keep people in the region.

- Develop targeted programming for women, youth, seniors and other identified groups.
- Establish labour force adjustment and workforce expansion committees to address regional human resource issues and opportunities.
- Develop and implement WES initiatives in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Workplace Essential Skills in Bathurst, to enhance adult literacy and promote continuous learning in the workplace.
- Make a greater effort to recruit more women and First Nations individuals into the workforce.
- Continue and expand the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers.
- Provide programs for employed people to upgrade their skills, and programs that would enable industry to invest training money in employees.

Objective: increase economic and social inclusion pursuant to Overcoming Poverty Together

- Ensure the needs of citizens of northern NB are represented through membership on the new Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation's Board
- Establish community inclusion networks in northern areas of the province, supported by the Community Inclusion Fund
- Provide financial assistance, through the Community Inclusion Fund, for the operation of a community transportation initiative to enable individuals, including the disabled, to join the workforce or participate in training which would lead to sustainable employment.
- Develop a provincial social enterprise strategy which will benefit communities in northern New Brunswick.
- Reform social assistance to better support social assistance clients and help them access employment.
- Provide a prescription drug program for New Brunswickers without coverage to improve health and provide security for low-income earners.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Some advances can be seen in stemming population decline.
- Increased immigration to all areas of northern New Brunswick.
- One transition-to-work pilot project with a regional high school and local employers.
- One mentorship pilot project with young professional networks and local employers.
- Three multicultural and newcomer resource centres are providing settlement services.

Training and Skills Development

Building a strong northern economy must focus on the education and training of all of our people, from kindergarten through high school and post-secondary education. Literacy levels must improve to prepare people for the skilled jobs of the future. Retraining will provide hope for the future to displaced workers. Le Centre d'apprentissage de Clair has been recognized as a leader in innovation and education in New Brunswick and Canada.

Objective: enhance learning opportunities for our children.

New Brunswick is a national leader in education innovation. This year, in partnership with Microsoft's Partners in Learning program, government committed to create two learning villages, including one in Balmoral. In addition, UNESCO has adopted New Brunswick's community school model as a model for its international schools network throughout the world. Le Centre d'apprentissage de Clair has been recognized as a leader in innovation and education in New Brunswick and Canada.

Private sector companies have also recognized the value of involvement in early learning opportunities for our children. The PALS for Prince Charles partnership between J.D. Irving, Ltd. and Prince Charles School in Saint John won international honours in Italy at the 2006 Global Best Awards recognizing initiatives and partnerships that have a significant impact on the communities in which they operate.

The government has made significant investments in early childhood initiatives and programs in northern New Brunswick, and intends to maintain a strong focus on early childhood programs and services during the next three years.

- Establish community schools to revitalize the role of our rural schools.
- Establish early childhood centres to provide integrated services to preschool children and their families.
- Increase accessibility to library services.
- Encourage more companies to become involved with their schools.
- Make available literacy mentors for elementary school students in northern New Brunswick who are struggling to read.

Objective: provide students with the education and training they need to compete for new jobs, and respond to the changing needs of students and employers.

Government has made significant investments in post-secondary education and training infrastructure and programs in northern New Brunswick, including the licensed practical nursing and the correctional techniques programs in Dalhousie, and intends to invest in post-secondary education and training initiatives during the next three years.

- Increase exposure to trades and business in school, and increase training opportunities.
- Increase the number of locations offering university courses, and the number of university courses offered.
- Collaborate with employers to help them meet their workforce training needs through program and seat-purchase partnerships.
- Offer internships and more co-op placements.

Objective: provide new work skills to workers.

Government intends to invest more than \$4 million in continuous learning during the next three years.

- Work with employers to develop new strategies to enhance adult literacy.
- Develop and implement WES initiatives in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Workplace Essential Skills in Bathurst, to enhance adult literacy and promote continuous learning in the workplace.

- Increase the number and range of adult literacy opportunities.
- Develop partnerships with literacy partners in industry, business and labour communities to develop a robust and effective adult literacy system.
- Continue and expand the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Improved literacy rates.
- More students in apprenticeship programs and more apprentices on the job with local companies.
- Four companies partnered with community colleges in seat purchases.

Research and Technology Transfer

Product innovation is central to our ability to compete in global markets. Innovation, investment in technology, and development of new product lines need to be priorities in expanding our economy.

Northern New Brunswick has a solid base of institutions, such as the Potato Research Center in Grand Falls and the Woodworking Centre of Excellence in Campbellton, with world-class expertise in using our natural resources and renewable materials to develop products, services, fuels, energy and materials. Northern companies also have access to the expertise of research centres throughout the province, such as the National Rural ITS Research Centre and the Centre of Excellence in Modular Construction, to build a new economy.

There are also emerging opportunities for growth and diversification of research in our resource-based industries and in new areas such as health and safety. Research brings highly skilled expertise and experience to our northern communities, and provides the tools that keep our industries competitive in the global market.

Our challenge has been, and continues to be, transforming our research into opportunities for commercialization and investment attraction. However, northern New Brunswick should experience success in this area in the near future. The Coastal Zones Research Institute has partnered with an international company for commercialization of marine bioscience research. The company's core expertise is biosciences, and it is working with four other New Brunswick companies with non-core business in biosciences.

The Goals:

- *develop new products and processes for commercialization; and*
- *improve the competitiveness of regional companies through technology transfer and product commercialization.*

Objective: enhance and diversify our research capabilities and capacity.

- Support the education, training and recruitment of highly qualified people critical to the development of new products and technologies.
- Target national and international firms, including major firms with industrial and regional benefit obligations under federal contracts, to invest in research or establish a presence in the region.

Objective: increase the level of technology transfer and adoption between our research institutions and private sector companies.

- Support the development of partnerships and strategic alliances between companies and research institutions to develop new products or explore ways to improve their productivity.
- Provide support for the commercialization of research and technology between the lab and industry.
- Partner with the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, the federal government (IRAP, for example) and other research and funding organizations to increase the commercialization of products and processes that will make northern companies more competitive.
- Establish and support technology transfer centres for the research and development of metal, wood, composite/plastic, information and communications technology, and resource sectors.

Anticipated Outcomes

- 20 new projects approved through the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation.
- One new international research facility or partner.
- Increased technology transfer from regional research facilities to regional companies and industries.

Implementation Plan

All government departments are committed to achieving the goals and objectives of the action plan, and will work as a team to achieve anticipated outcomes. It will also require a strong commitment from northern communities, industry, the Federal Government and other stakeholders to meet the unique challenges of northern New Brunswick. With a greater commitment from the private sector, government will have a greater opportunity to ensure the development of new tools and new incentives aimed at attracting more investment and expanding key industries in the region.

Implementation of the plan will be led by the Minister responsible for the Northern NB Initiative. The Regional Development Corporation will co-ordinate implementation of the plan and track results. At the regional level, Regional Development Corporation staff will work closely with provincial and federal government departments and agencies to build interdepartmental working teams that can fast-track initiatives and maximize results.

Business New Brunswick, in keeping with its mandate, will lead government's economic development and investment efforts by building a regional economic development team and forging stronger partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders. It will begin with the establishment of a northern economic development office in Bathurst, and a new assistant deputy minister for northern development in the department.

An advisory board will be established to oversee implementation of the plan, and a northern regional forum will champion the plan and provide input and feedback to a dedicated northern economic development team.

The whole of government, in concert with community and business leaders from northern New Brunswick, will be involved in implementing the plan.

Northern Regional Forum

A northern regional forum will be established to provide input and feedback on the action plan to the northern economic development team. The forum will focus on planning initiatives and activities for a longer-term strategy that will build on the foundations of the plan. The Minister responsible for the Northern New Brunswick Initiative will chair the forum to make commitments and craft the future together with the community.

The northern regional forum will consist of representatives from:

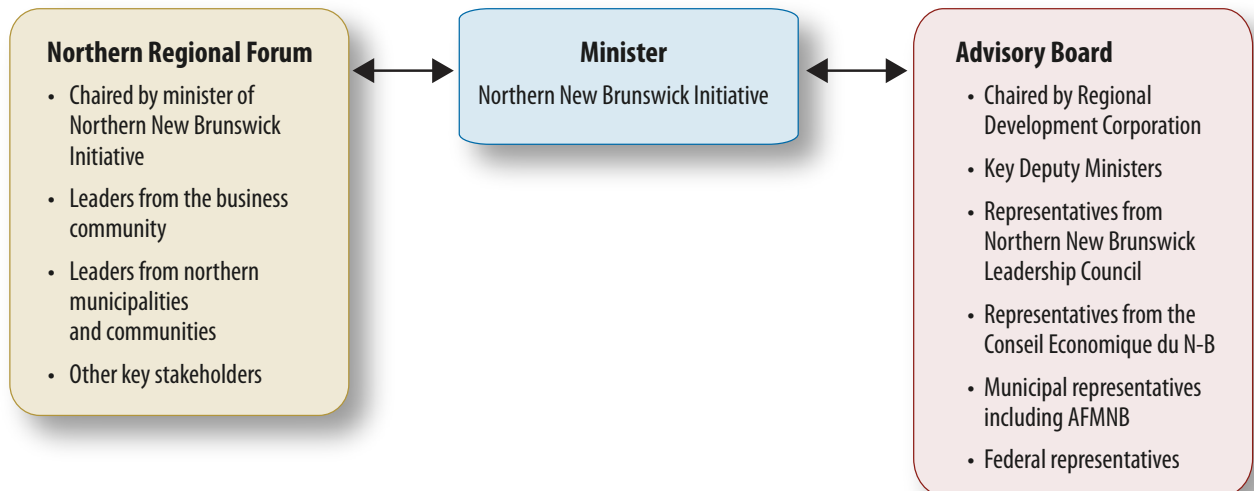
- the business community;
- northern municipalities and communities;
- other key stakeholders.

The forum will meet with the economic development team twice per year to receive updates on the status of the plan, and to provide input and feedback as to next steps.



Advisory Board

An advisory board comprised of key deputy ministers of the provincial government, members of the Northern New Brunswick Leadership Council, representatives from the Conseil Economique du Nouveau-Brunswick and representatives of regional municipalities, will address issues, track results and provide necessary direction to the economic development team. The board will be chaired by the Regional Development Corporation.



Economic Development Team

An economic development team will be assigned to implement the action plan in northern New Brunswick. In addition to Business New Brunswick's Economic Development office in Bathurst, the economic development team consists of representatives from all provincial government departments located in the region, reporting directly to their respective deputy ministers. The economic development team will work in concert with federal government agencies and departments, as well as local economic development representatives, to jointly and collaboratively focus on the key areas of:

- managing files for supply-chain development;
- business attraction and business development;
- research and planning in the areas of identifying and developing investment opportunities, and identifying strategic infrastructure development opportunities;
- communications, marketing and liaison, for community interaction, information dissemination and promotion of the region;
- human resource development, retention and training;
- infrastructure development;
- technology transfer and commercialization of research; and
- financial and technical assessments.

The team will take a proactive role in implementing the plan – it will seize new opportunities and create results.

Marketing and Communications Plan

A marketing and communications plan is necessary to address external and internal communications requirements related to the plan.

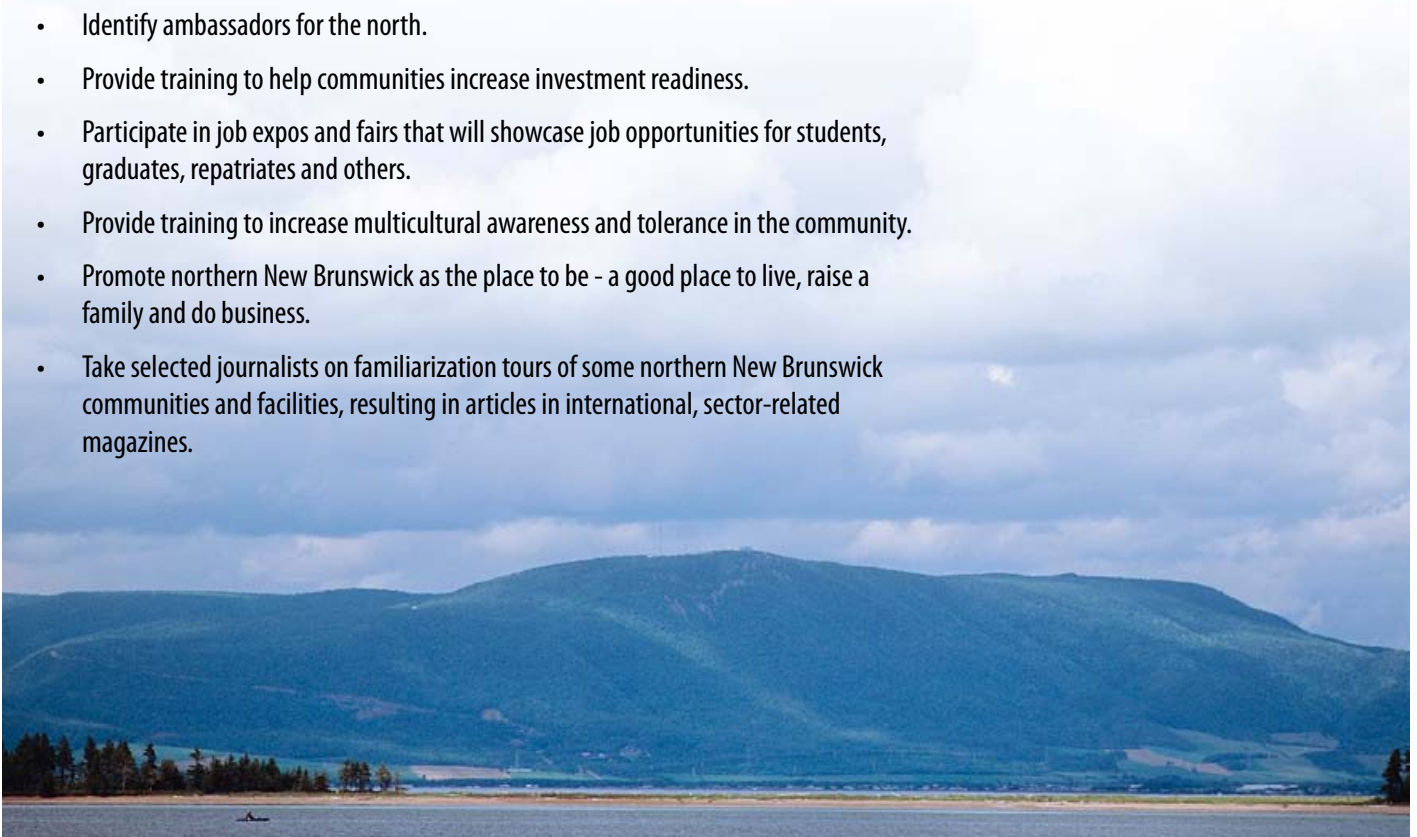
Marketing (external)

Objectives

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to market the region as a good place to live, work, visit and invest.

Action Plan

- Brand the northern industrial corridor.
- Promote northern New Brunswick as a modular fabrication destination.
- Position northern New Brunswick as an ultimate outdoor destination to the outdoor tourism market segment.
- Develop strategies to promote northern New Brunswick as a modular fabrication destination.
- Identify ambassadors for the north.
- Provide training to help communities increase investment readiness.
- Participate in job expos and fairs that will showcase job opportunities for students, graduates, repatriates and others.
- Provide training to increase multicultural awareness and tolerance in the community.
- Promote northern New Brunswick as the place to be - a good place to live, raise a family and do business.
- Take selected journalists on familiarization tours of some northern New Brunswick communities and facilities, resulting in articles in international, sector-related magazines.



Communications (Internal)

Objectives

- Increase community participation in economic development.
- Partner with stakeholders in the region to support growth and development.
- Ensure that stakeholders are kept informed of progress.

Action Plan

- Meet with municipal leaders every six months to review progress and identify new opportunities.
- Meet quarterly with key stakeholders, including Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick, the New Brunswick Business Council, and economic development agencies, to keep them informed of progress and to address emerging opportunities.
- Maintain a strong, ongoing dialogue with our federal government and local economic development partners.
- Keep local media informed of priorities and actions.

Next Steps

The action plan is a beginning to rejuvenation of the northern economy. It will be a challenge of the community – its municipalities, industries and people – to take the next steps in charting a path for growth and renewal.

Government resources will be realigned and refocused to address the priority actions outlined in this plan. New and stronger partnerships will be forged to ensure that we maximize the return on investment of our human and financial resources.

Within the next year, the northern regional forum will champion implementation of the plan, and move forward to take the lead in building a longer-term strategy on its foundation, with input from regional stakeholders. A marketing and communications strategy that is co-ordinated with longer-term initiatives and activities can then unfold.

Conclusion

This action plan is a strong commitment by government to take the steps that are necessary, with the support and active participation of all regional stakeholders and all levels of government, to rebuild the north into a strong contributor and leader in New Brunswick's self-sufficiency.

The vision of a vibrant northern industrial corridor with strong anchor developments, employing 2,700 new, skilled people, including a growing immigrant population, can be a reality – the result of all levels of government, business, education, volunteers and other stakeholders working together to make the north, and all of New Brunswick, a better place to live and work.

By the end of 2013, we anticipate a more vibrant northern New Brunswick that is on the road to self-sufficiency. We will see:

- 2,700 new permanent jobs for the people of the region;
- a reversal of the population outflow;
- a surge of activity in the modular fabrication and component construction industries;
- an increase in international companies investing in northern New Brunswick;
- more competitive companies with new products and new markets for those products;
- a more highly trained and educated work force;
- new investments and better results in our resource-based industries;
- increased immigration;
- increased technology transfer from research institutions to regional companies;
- new and improved industrial, community and transportation infrastructure; and
- an economic development office with strong teams and partnerships in northern New Brunswick.