

# **Prosperity through Collaboration:**

## **Review of Regional Development Models and Potential Applications to the Burin Peninsula**



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## Why Think Regionally?

Communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and elsewhere in Canada, struggle with the question of ‘why think regionally?’. Historically, communities have conducted formal municipal activities and planning independent of neighbouring communities. Over the years, many communities have achieved success in this approach, while other communities have not. Previous rural development strategies focused on ‘smoke stack chasing’, which created competition with neighbouring communities and involved expensive incentives to companies. Rural, resource-dependent regions around the world have faced extensive social, economic, environmental and political restructuring in recent decades, driven by factors such as urbanization and declining birth rates, technological change, increased reliance on the service and information economy globalization, government retrenchment, climate change, resource depletion. This restructuring has contributed to the need for rural communities to regional thinking about their futures.

Research in local development in the 1990s emphasized the regional scale and cooperation among neighbouring communities (Young & Charland, 1992). Arguments for this “new regionalism” and the local sub-provincial region as a focal scale for development include observations that economic issues and assets overflow community boundaries, and that there are economies of scale in regional provision of infrastructure and services (Welch, 2002; Harrison 2006; Storper, 1995, 1997). Even in contexts of widely available information and technology, physical proximity is of growing importance to competitive advantage, innovation and economic growth (Buenza & Stark, 2003; Baptista, 2000; Cowan *et al.*, 2003; Wolfe, 2005). Recent regional development policies aim to support clusters that build on local strengths, including local skills, knowledge, technologies, and sectors (Porter, 2001; Chapman, 2005).

Savitch and Kantor (2003) advocate for regional organizations that can represent the collective interests of community organizations, build civic cooperation around broad issues and balance local interests with those of the broader region. Regional structures that encourage cooperation can also help minimize damages to development potential caused by competitive behaviour between communities (Brunnen, 2006). Economic development structures at this regional scale are described as more accessible and responsive to local communities than those at provincial and federal levels, yet more affordable and effective at instigating significant change than smaller-scale community efforts (Markey *et al.*, 2005; RCEUN, 1986). For senior governments, dealing with single communities is often seen as too time- and resource-intensive. Individual

municipalities are often viewed as financially and politically ill-equipped to deal with today's complex problems (Diamant, 1997). By combining resources local communities increase their discretionary reach, political power and the effectiveness of their development efforts (RUPRI, 2006).

Examples of recent sub-provincial, multi-community regional governance models can be found in health, education, coastal and land use planning, resource management and economic development, not only in Canada but in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and throughout the European Union (Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; Alder & Ward, 2001). Regional development efforts experienced resurgence in Canada during the 1990s as existing institutions came into question and alternatives such as Community Futures organizations demonstrated their promise (Vodden, 2009).

## **Purpose of Paper**

This paper identifies four regional development models from Canada, the United States, and the European Union: Municipalité Régionale de Comté, Liason Entre Actions de Développement l'Economie Rurale (Leader), Regional Competitiveness Model, and the Community Collaboration Model. Each model was selected because they have been deemed successful in some regional development literature and collectively represent a diverse collection of regional development models. In discussion with the Burin Peninsula Regional Council the list of regional development models was finalized. An overview of each model is providing, highlighting key indicators for success, when available. Using the commentary received from community residents of the Burin Peninsula regarding collaborations an initial statement of potential application is provided. This statement should not be considered prescriptive; rather, an initial exploration. Further discussions among community residents, community-serving organizations, governments, and businesses should be conducted to further explore and validate the notions presented.

Although a number of regional development models have been utilized throughout rural communities in Canada and internationally, gathering evaluative information on these models can be challenging. In constructed this document, evaluative information about the models, assessments of critical success factors, and lessons learned through the experience were not always publically documented. This lack of documentation hinders the ability to transfer knowledge and models to new rural regions.

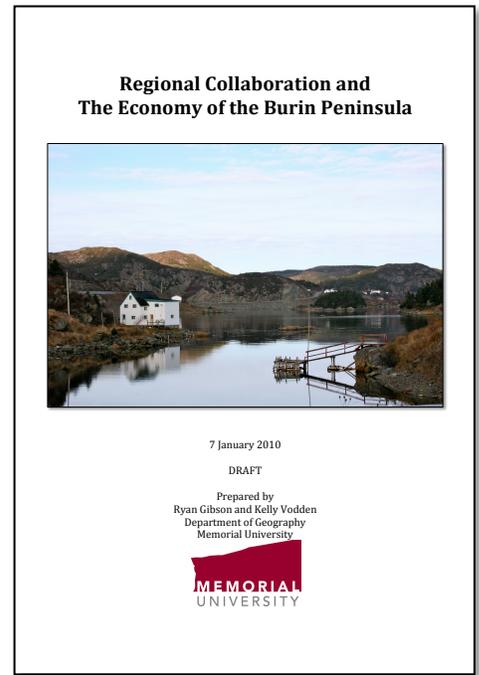
## Burin Peninsula Collaboration Context

In the fall of 2009, the Burin Peninsula Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat partnered with the Department of Geography, Memorial University to explore opportunities and challenges to collaboration in the Burin Peninsula. From December 2009 to February 2010 interviews were conducted with residents of the Burin Peninsula discussing previous and current regional collaboration examples, barriers to collaboration, opportunities for economic development, and the future of the region.

The Burin Peninsula was described as having a “culture of cooperation” fostered through necessity, survival, and adversity. The cooperation in the Burin Peninsula region tended to be focused on key themes or sectors, which fluctuate over time. Most of the regional collaboration noted occurred at the grassroots level. In the discussing examples of regional collaboration initiatives, residents of the region identified a number of barriers impeding collaboration: financial barriers (competition for limited resources, reliance on government job creation programs), geographical and transportation barriers (distance between communities, lack of regular scheduled public transit), knowledge of collaboration and generational barriers (lack of understanding how to collaborate, historic barriers impede collaboration attempts), relationship barriers (need time to create relationships, influence of individual personalities, differing perspectives between youth and seniors), human resource barriers (volunteer burn out, out migration of youth), and external to the region barriers (economic market).

Potential economic development opportunities for the Burin Peninsula region suggested by residents paralleled opportunities identified in strategic plans of region-based organizations in the Burin Peninsula, such as the Schooner Regional Development Corporation’s strategic economic plan. Economic development opportunities were related to: natural resource opportunities, tourism, aquaculture and agriculture, and optimizing infrastructure for competitive advantages.

For further information on collaboration refer to the paper, *Regional Collaboration and the Economy of the Burin Peninsula* (Gibson & Vodden, 2010).



# Regional Development Models

## Municipalité Régionale de Comté

### *Overview of Model*

The Municipalité Régionale de Comté model was developed in Québec in 1979. supralocal regional associations were formed through the Municipalité Régionale de Comté model. The Municipalité Régionale de Comté model focuses on establishing an elected regional forum for decision making on regional issues. The ability of each region to set priorities means considerable diversity of activities among the regions.

#### OVERVIEW

Started: 1979

Origin: Québec

Utilized in: Communities throughout Québec

The majority of communities in the province of Québec belong to one of the 104 Municipalité Régionale de Comté regions. Indian reserves, 14 urban areas, and a small number of northern communities do not belong to a Municipalité Régionale de Comté. In creating new supralocal regional associations the Municipalité Régionale de Comté model did not replace existing municipal government structures; rather, Municipalité Régionale de Comtés are provided responsibilities and opportunities beyond that afforded to municipalities. Municipalité Régionale de Comtés are responsible for activities such as:

- land use planning,
- civil and fire protection,
- waste management, and
- creating a local development centre to support regional businesses.

Further, Municipalité Régionale de Comtés can choose to be responsible for creating regional parks, develop locally owned wind or water electricity enterprises, social housing initiatives, and establish financial funds to support business start ups and entrepreneurship. In some jurisdictions, Municipalité Régionale de Comtés offer services typically provided by municipalities to their member communities on a fee-for-service basis. These services are not imposed on municipalities of the region, rather, municipalities can participate if desired.

To achieve accountability, each Municipalité Régionale de Comté is governed by an elected board. The composition of each board varies, however, each is composed a combination of elected mayors and community members at large. Elected board members' terms vary from two to four years.

#### Funding

Funding to support the activities of the Municipalité Régionale de Comté is provided by the the provincial department of Municipal Affairs, Regions, and

Occupied Territories. Municipalité Régionale de Comtés may apply for additional sources of funding generated from fee-for-service activities and project funding applications submitted to either federal or provincial programs.

### ***Potential Application to Burin Peninsula***

Like any new model of regional development, the Municipalité Régionale de Comté model would require changes to existing policy to reflect the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the model. In Québec, the Municipalité Régionale de Comté is supported by legislation, such as the *Planning Act*, *Municipal Powers Act*, and the *Municipal Code of Québec*. Similar to the Leader model, application of the Municipalité Régionale de Comté model would require careful planning to alleviate overlap with the mandates of existing organizations. The Municipalité Régionale de Comté model offers a single regional entity for discussions, planning, and implementing regional development. The model allows for development to be tailored to the needs and priorities of the region. Burin Peninsula residents identified the need for a regional organization that could address all issues of the region.

Support for a regional development similar to the Municipalité Régionale de Comté may be hesitant given previous experiences with amalgamation in the Burin Peninsula. Residents of the Burin Peninsula region were quick and passionate to articulate negative emotions and experiences about their attitudes towards municipal amalgamation. The Municipalité Régionale de Comté could quickly be misread to resemble amalgamation; however, it is important to recall no community losses any autonomy in this model. Responsibilities above and beyond those of municipalities are granted to municipalité régionale de comtés. Communities individual decide if joint service delivery would be desired or advantageous.

### ***Reports and Resources***

Municipalité Régionale de Comté model is available from [http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/amenagement/outils/amen\\_outi\\_acte\\_mrc.asp](http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/amenagement/outils/amen_outi_acte_mrc.asp).

# Liason Entre Actions de Développement l'Economie Rurale

## *Overview of Model*

The Liason entre actions de développement l'économie rurale (Leader) program was developed by the European Union in 1991. The initiative aimed to address rural decline and out-migration in rural and northern communities throughout countries of the European Union. Since its launch, the Leader program has gone through four multi-year agreements: Leader (1991 – 1994), Leader II (1994 – 1999), Leader + (2000 – 2006), and Leader Approach or Axes 4 of the European Agriculture and Rural Development Fund (2007 – 2013). Throughout the different agreements the general philosophies and approaches remained constant. The Leader program was integrated into the all national rural development programs. The European Union's Rural Development Policy for 2007-2013 focuses on three areas:

- improving the competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sectors,
- improving the environment and the countryside,
- improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy.

The Leader program was launched as a pilot initiative aimed at facilitating economic and social regeneration in rural areas. The program sought to do this through promoting the implementation of local territorial development strategies. These plans were developed at local level and involved local actors in their evolution. The program is a method of mobilizing and delivering rural development in local rural communities. Through the Leader program, Local Action Groups are established representing multiple communities and/or municipalities through both elected and appointed membership.

### OVERVIEW

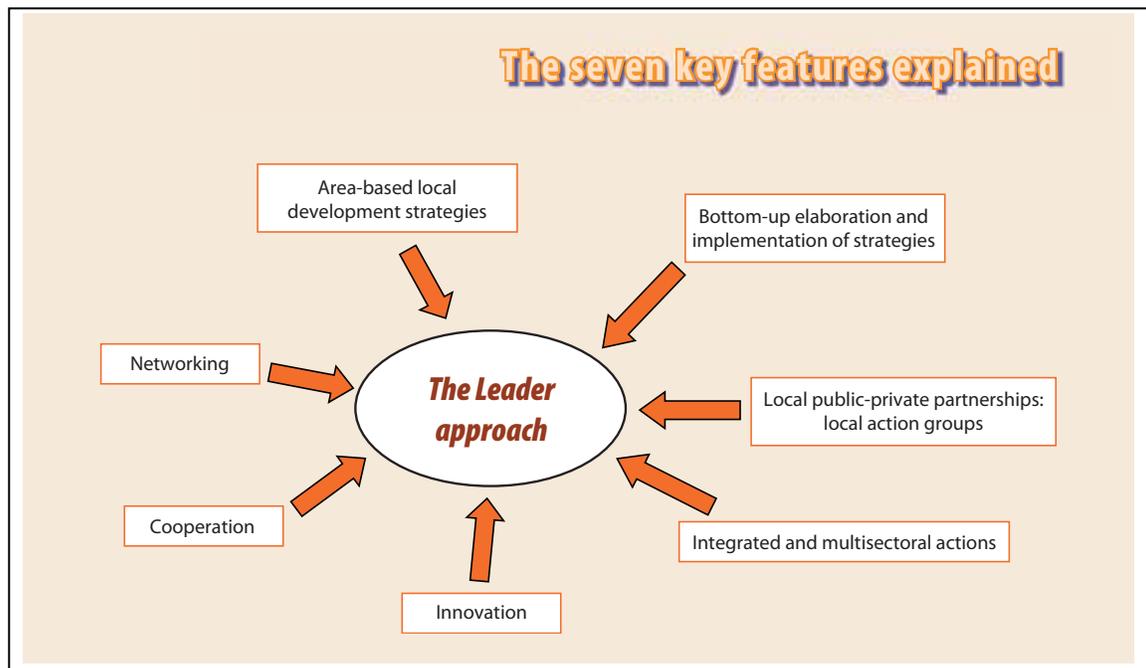
Started: 1991

Origin: Europe

Utilized in: 25 countries  
of the European Union

The Leader program has seven key features (see Figure 1):

Figure 1. Key Features of Leader Program



Source: European Commission (2006)

### 1. Area Based Approach

Regions must be created to ensure cohesion among the communities and residents while large enough to generate development from within the boundaries of the region. The Leader program does not impose boundaries on communities; rather, communities determine their region based on shared needs and experiences, common traditions and identities. Typically regions consist of 10,000 to 100,000 residents

### 2. Bottom Up Approach

To create sustainable and relevant development the program actively engages local communities, residents, and community-serving organizations in the process. Local participants identify local priorities and make decisions regarding the future of their region. Activities emerging from local priorities are lead by a variety of community and regional organizations with support from Leader, federal and county agencies.

### 3. Local Action Group

The program establishes a local group with board membership from the region, including representation from all sectors of the economy, that is gender balanced, and geographically representational. Opportunities for training and development must be present for group members and the

group must provide a structure for regular rotation of membership. The Local Action Group designs and implements a local development strategy for the region.

#### 4. Innovative Approach

Each Local Action Group is encouraged to explore mediums for integrating innovation within the region. To encourage innovation, Local Action Groups are provided flexibility in their decision making to support local initiatives. Innovation is viewed broadly, such as innovation of new markets for products, new technologies, or new policy.

#### 5. Integration

The Leader program is designed to be multi-sectoral. Local Action Groups' strategies need to link and connect with various economic, social, environmental, and cultural stakeholders.

#### 6. Networking

Networking is viewed as a process of sharing information, lessons learned, and good practices between Local Action Groups. Given Leader is a pan European Union program, networking between Local Action Groups is facilitated. To encourage networking, each Local Action Group allocates budget for transnational networking.

#### 7. Cooperation

Local Action Groups are encouraged to go beyond networking and sharing information to cooperate. This cooperation may take the form of joint projects or partnerships.

### Funding

The Leader program is funded through both the European Union and federal governments. Local priorities established by Local Advisory Groups produce diverse source of funding from various government departments and private sectors. The current Leader program involves almost 900 Local Action Groups with a budget of €2.11 billion (approximately C\$3.1 billion).

To understand the amount of funding providing through Leader to Local Advisory Groups the Waterford Leader Partnership is explored. This Local Advisory Group in southern Ireland represents approximately 100,000 residents among three communities and one county. Through the Leader program, the organization annually receives \$2.2 million (Canadian dollars) to cover programming, human resources, and operating expenses. Funding at this level is committed for a seven-year period, 2007-2013.

## ***Application to Burin Peninsula***

The Leader program has intrigued Canadian policy makers and community development practitioners since its inception. The program represents a significant shift from many current programming and policy initiatives in Canada. Policy of the European Union demonstrates the importance and value of rural and northern communities to each respective member country and as such, the Leader program facilitates the development of these communities.

### Area Based Approach

In discussions with residents a clear definition and boundary for the Burin Peninsula region was expressed. The geography of the Burin Peninsula facilitates the definition of space.

### Bottom Up Approach

There are currently many bottom up approaches to local development occurring within the Burin Peninsula region, such as the regional ATV Trails Association. In addition, local and regional priorities are being captured in strategic planning documents by organizations in the region. Most of these initiatives tend to be sector focused, such as economic development or tourism.

### Local Advisory Group

Residents of the Burin Peninsula region noted and praised the level of volunteerism within the region. Given the number of organizations in the region the creation of a Local Advisory Group would need to address potential and/or perceived overlaps of mandates and programs. A concern regarding volunteer burn out was raised numerous times in discussion with Burin Peninsula residents. The creation of another volunteer committee would add additional stress to an existing dilemma in the region.

### Integration

The idea of engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders from the region is practiced among some organizations. The notion of engaging private businesses, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and government departments for regional discussions is not new; however, no forum for holistic discussions currently operates.

### Networking and Cooperation

Residents identified few opportunities to share experiences, information, and lessons learned among communities. A forum for regular discussions among communities was viewed as positive initiative which should be encouraged.

## Funding

There is currently no funding program similar to the European Union's Leader program within the federal or provincial governments. Access to a similar funding arrangements permits diverse initiatives with security of multi-year funding.

The applicability of the Leader model to the Burin Peninsula region, or any other region in Newfoundland and Labrador, requires:

- A clear policy recognizing the importance rural and northern communities and their futures related to the province/country.
- A clear and logical connection between existing provincial and federal policy and programs and the Leader model to alleviate duplication of services and create efficiency.
- A multi-year funding commitment by government, possibly at both federal and provincial levels.
- A strategy for developing and enhancing capacity building and skill set development among community residents regarding the program, roles and responsibilities, cooperation, planning, conflict resolution, and organizational management.
- A strategy for identifying and resolving potential and perceived overlaps with existing community, regional, non-profit, and government organizations.

### ***Further Resources and Reports***

EU Leader Program - [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm)

European Commission (2006). *The Leader Approach: A basic guide*. Luxembourg: Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission.

European Network for Rural Development - <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

## Regional Competitiveness Model

### *Overview of Model*

Regions are unique, with each having diverse strengths. This results varied economic performance across regions. Regional competitiveness is the ability to produce goods and services which meet the test of domestic and/or international markets, or more generally, the ability of regions to generate, while being exposed to external competition, relatively high income and employment levels (Budd & Hirmis, 2004). Regional competitiveness models focus on identifying competitive sectors of the regional economy, promoting research and innovation, creating a friendly/positive environment for businesses (both current and start-ups), promoting training and skills for a new economy, and increasing the number of people employed within the region (Drabenstott, 2008). Outcomes of a regional competitiveness model can be varied but often include an increased number of people employed in the region, increased income/wages, and increased gross domestic product for the region.

There is no single model that demonstrates how to achieve a competitive region (Martin, 2004). Communities and regions need to be aware creating competitive regional economies is a long-term process and outcome (Porter, 2001). This process can be altered by changes to educational and training opportunities and provincial and federal policy.

Key elements of regional competitiveness models include the presence of post secondary educational institutions, an entrepreneurial environment, the current composition of the regional economy, and public-private sector engagement. Elements of regional competitiveness are identified as: labour, land, capital, infrastructure, human resources, quality of place, Internet connections, knowledge infrastructure, social capital, culture, demography, migration patterns/trends, technology, and innovativeness. It is important to recognize a number of these determinants are not regulated at the regional level; many elements involve other levels and of government.

### *Application to Burin Peninsula*

The regional competitive model provides an opportunity for the region to identify and commit resources to regional economic strengths. Through discussions with residents of the region two economic areas were suggested as strengths: (a) fishing and fish processing and (b) ship building. Residents also noted two additional economic opporutnities important to the Burin Peninsula.

#### OVERVIEW

Started: 1980s-1990s  
Origin: Multiple origins, work of Michael Porter advanced the model  
Utilized in: United States and European Union

First, the economic opportunities related to tourism, environment, and heritage activities, such as museums and trails. This industry was viewed as increasing in importance to the region. The second economic opportunity identified was the trade connections to St. Pierre et Miquelon. Many residents described opportunities for this connection to be increased with opportunities for export, trade, and tourism. The regional competitiveness model would facilitate increasing the region's economic competitiveness in these sectors with the desired outcome of increasing income of residents and the number of people employed.

Throughout discussions with residents the College of the North Atlantic was cited for their approach to innovation and technology. The College was viewed as a critical asset for the region in its ability to provide necessary training to ensure residents have skills necessary to enter or remain in the workforce. The support of regional economic development organizations and government programs to encourage entrepreneurship is also vital within the regional competitiveness model. Within the Burin Peninsula region funding appears to be available for qualified entrepreneurs from regional and provincial agencies to support activities such as feasibility studies and business plan development.

The regional competitiveness model is challenged, however, by a mismatch in policy and planning. As noted earlier, regional competitiveness planning is a long-term initiative. Too often, however, funding programs to support the identification of economic strengths, enhance the business environment, and encourage entrepreneurship are short-term or bound by fiscal year funding. It is difficult for regions to access multi-year funding to support long-term planning and activities. This mismatch between long-term planning and short-term funding jeopardizes regional competitiveness models (Thompson & Ward, 2005).

### **Resources**

Centre for Regional Competitiveness, Rural Policy Research Institute –  
<http://www.rupri.org/regionalcomp.php>

Regional Competitiveness, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development -  
[http://www.oecd.org/document/37/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34413\\_36878693\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/37/0,3343,en_2649_34413_36878693_1_1_1_1,00.html)

Rural Areas and Regional Competitiveness -  
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cre/publish/researchreports/competitivenessreport.pdf>

The Brave New World of Regional Development in Rural America -  
<http://www.farmfoundation.org/news/articlefiles/363-Drabenstott%20Farm%20Foundation%20DC%209%2009.pdf>

## Community Collaboration Model

### *Overview of Model*

The Community Collaboration Model was initiated in Manitoba through a collaborative initiative involving Environment Canada, Health Canada, Rural Team Manitoba, and the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University (Walsh & Annis, 2004). The model emerged from a continuation of activities from two programs: the Community Animation Program (a joint initiative of Health Canada and Environment Canada) and the Community Choices program (initiative of Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs). Central to the model is the notion that individuals in rural and northern communities, when provided appropriate tools and resources, can engage in meaningful discussion and decision-making with other communities, community-serving organizations, and government departments. The Community Collaboration Model designed a process to establish inter-community and government linkages while exploring alternative relationships and governance. The goal of the model was to design and facilitate a multi-community, multi-agency cooperative approach for initiating joint planning and project development activities for regional social, environmental and economic community development (Beattie & Annis, 2009).

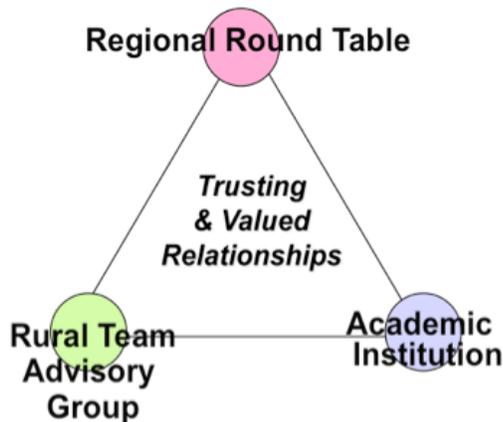
#### OVERVIEW

Started: 1999  
Origin: Manitoba  
Utilized in: Manitoba,  
Nunavut,  
Saskatchewan,  
and the Yukon

### Key Actors

The Community Collaboration Model encouraged multiple communities and First Nations within a self-defined geographical area to create a forum for regional dialogue and discussions. The model consists of three seminal pieces: (i) communities and community-serving organizations, (ii) provincial and federal government stakeholders, and (iii) an academic institution (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Community Collaboration Model



Source: Beattie & Annis (2009)

### Community Stakeholders and Community-Serving Organizations

The newly created forum for discussion is referred to as a regional round table. The model does not stipulate the number of communities required for a regional round table, but current regions using the model range from 6 to 20 communities. The model does not have rules on how to construct, organize, or manage a regional round table. Rather, the model allows the processes to be organic to be inclusive of local and regional interests. As a result, communities and First Nations determine details such as who represents communities (ie: elected officials or non-elected officials), how many representatives from each community, topics of discussion, and frequency of meetings.

Communities do not lose any autonomy through participation in a regional round table. Each regional round table works through a process of identifying a collective vision, agenda setting, and associated project activities. A focus is also placed on building and enhancing skills and capacities among in regional round table members.

### Government Departments

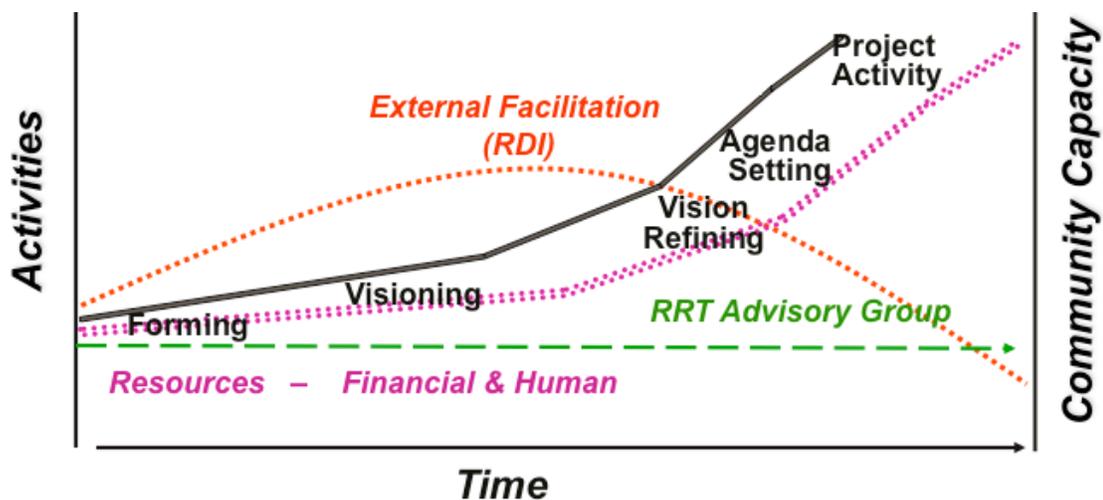
The participation of provincial and federal government departments was a critical component of the Community Collaboration Model. A requirement of the Community Collaboration Model was a commitment from the Rural Team within each province where the model was utilized to ensure engagement of federal and provincial government departments.

Rural Teams are horizontal organizations composed of representation from provincial and federal government departments with mandates or interests in rural and northern communities. The federal Rural Secretariat serves as a facilitator for each provincial Rural Team. Each Rural Team was required to create a working committee, referred to as an Advisory Group, to liaison and

participate with the regional round table. Typically, at least one representative from Rural Team participated in each meeting to build and enhance trust and relationships. The role of the Rural Team is to participate, support, and serve as a ‘pathfinder’ for the regional round table and to communicate regional discussions back to Rural Team members. The involvement of Rural Team commences at the start of the process and remains active throughout the entire process.

**Academic Institution:** The role of the academic institution was to facilitate the engagement of a regional round table through support for regional round table development, initially organizing, facilitating and recording the meetings. The role and level of engagement of the academic institution decreased over time as the regional round table developed capacities and skills. Figure 3 illustrates the role of academic institutions is strong at the beginning and then decreases at the end of the process.

Figure 3. Community Collaboration Model Process



Source: Beattie & Annis (2009)

### Funding

Initial funding for the Community Collaboration Project was available through the Community Animation Project and the Community Choices program, both of which are no longer available. Members of each regional round table contributed in-kind resources to the process and its associated activities. Regional round tables also received funding from various sources for project specific activities.

In 2004, the Rural Development Institute received multi-year funding to assess if the Community Collaboration Model could be transferred to other jurisdictions in Canada from the Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. This funding allowed the establishment of three additional regional round tables

(Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and the Yukon) with multi-year seed funding. Again, each regional round table was successful in applying for project specific funding from multiple sources, often facilitated by participating government representatives.

An evaluation of the Community Collaboration Model indicated the ability for government departments to provide 'process funding' was essential (Beattie & Annis, 2009). Process funding supported intangible outcomes derived through the model, such as financial support to offset travel expenses of bringing multiple communities together for meetings and support for enhancing relationships and trust. According to the evaluation, too often government programs are focused on funding specific projects, eliminating opportunities for enhancing processes, trust, and leadership. Outcomes of the Community Collaboration Model included increased formal and informal collaboration among communities and community-based organizations, increased strategic planning and associated activities, strengthened partnerships with government departments/agencies, and increased regional cohesion.

### ***Application to Burin Peninsula***

The activities and processes of the Community Collaboration Model have been well documented and assessed through a series of participatory evaluations designed and lead by each regional round table and advisory group to capture their outputs and lessons learned. Through the evaluation process key indicators for success of the Community Collaboration Model were identified: active participation of communities, government, and academia; trust and relationships; process funding; desire to work regionally; opportunities for capacity building; and involvement of an academic institution in a facilitator and support role. Each of these key indicators is briefly described below with an assessment of the model's potential application to the Burin Peninsula.

#### Participation of Communities, Government, and Academia

The active and sustained participation of communities, government departments, and academic institutions is critical to the success of the Community Collaboration Model. Each group needs to be able to devote time to build relationships, enhance trust, and create an environment for regional discussions in a non-threatening environment. Lack of regular participation in the process hinders the collective ability to build relationships and trust, which in turn reduces the effectiveness of the model and the outcomes and outputs achievable. The role of an academic institution as a neutral third-party between communities and government was seen as critical. Academic institutions, colleges or universities, could serve to bring communities and government together, assist in developing required capacities, and facilitate discussions of the group.

In the Burin Peninsula, at the moment, there is no general regional forum for multi-community or regional discussions. A number of theme specific issues have developed regional networks, such as Heritage Run Tourism Association. Linkages with Rural Team Newfoundland and Labrador do not currently exist, however, could be explored. The Burin Peninsula Partners Network could assist to initiate connections to senior representatives for key provincial and federal government departments and agencies. The College of the North Atlantic appears to be held in high esteem with community residents and businesses. Given this perception, the College could serve as a neutral third-party to assist the start-up and facilitation.

### Trust and Relationships

The ability to build and enhance trust and relationships between communities, community-serving organizations, government departments, and academic institutions is considered a key indicator for success. Heightened trust and relationships was required for creating and maintaining a healthy forum for regional discussions. The addition of new people to the process, either from new communities or new representatives of communities, perpetuates the need for continual building of trust and relationships.

An initial foundation of trust and relationship exists throughout the Burin Peninsula, as demonstrated through conversations with residents, community leaders, community-serving organizations, and business representatives (Gibson & Vodden, 2010). The current relationships appear focused on a combination of professional and social networks. The extent to which broader relationships extending beyond these networks exists is unknown. There appears to be a culture of hospitality which serves as a positive indicator for building new or enhancing existing partnerships.

### Process Funding

At the heart of the Community Collaboration Model is the commitment of multi-year process funding. Process funding provides opportunities for expenses related to attending meetings, building trust, and developing skill sets and capacities to occur. Process funding was viewed as critical in the formation and early stages of the regional round table forum to enable communities to come together, demonstrate validity, develop critical relationships, and initiate strategic planning. The financial investment for regional round tables in the Community Collaboration Model was approximately \$100,000 over a period of three years.

It is uncertain if the Burin Peninsula has access to multi-year process funding to support a regional collaboration initiative. There are examples of groups and organizations in the region that have received some process funding; however,

government programs typically focus on time and project specific initiatives. Access to such support would require an explicit commitment from provincial and/or federal agencies to pilot this approach in Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### Desire for Communities to Work Regionally

The Community Collaboration Model, similar to other regional approaches, only works when all communities have a desire, capacity, and ability to undertake a regional collaboration. The process recognizes the desire, capacity, and ability of individual communities may fluctuate given local circumstances, such as addressing natural disasters/crisis or changing personalities in local elected leadership roles. Communities need to understand the process of regional development can be ‘messy’, complicated, and chaotic. Group members need to feel comfortable with the dynamics of the process.

A number of regional initiatives have been successful in the Burin Peninsula, although community residents expressed a number of clear challenges in moving forward with a regional approach. Previous discussions within the region regarding amalgamation and joint service delivery initiatives surfaces tension surrounding the perceived loss of autonomy. Community residents described an atmosphere of inter-community competition for limited resources within the Burin Peninsula. That being said, community residents spoke of opportunities for collaboration which illustrates a desire to work together.

In addition, volunteer burn-out was recognized as a challenge for many organizations. The ability to work regionally often depends on volunteers, which may serve as a barrier to the Community Collaboration Model in the Burin Peninsula.

#### Opportunities for Capacity Building

Although most communities and government departments have experience in working regionally, it is not the common discourse. As a result, informal and formal opportunities for capacity building are required to ensure appropriate skills sets for regional initiatives, such as conflict resolution and participatory evaluation skills.

The Burin Peninsula region appears to have many opportunities for formal and informal capacity building. The College of the North Atlantic offers a suite of capacity building sessions, such as conversational French. In addition, there appears to be many community residents and organizations with a wide range of skills who could potential pass along these skills through informal learning events.

#### ***Further Resources and Reports***

Bayline Regional Round Table - <http://baylinerrt.cimnet.ca/>

Community Collaboration Project (1999 – 2004) - [http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/Factsheets/CCP\\_ManitobaFactSheet-July2007.pdf](http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/Factsheets/CCP_ManitobaFactSheet-July2007.pdf)

Community Collaboration Project (2004 – 2009) - <http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/ccp.asp>.

Reflections on Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project, 1999 – 2004 (Walsh and Annis, 2004) - Available online at <http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/Publications/CCP/ReflectionsOnManitobasCCP1999-2004electronic.pdf>.

Rural Teams (Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada ) - <http://www.rural.gc.ca/RURAL/display-afficher.do?id=1230071236210&lang=eng>

The Community Collaboration Story: Community Collaboration Project – Empowering Communities and Building Capacity (Beattie and Annis, 2009) – Available online at <http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/Publications/CCP/CommCollabModelFinalReport-Nov2008.pdf>

WaterWolf Regional Round Table - <http://www.waterwolf.org>

## Summary and Moving Forward

This paper identified four regional development models and their potential application to the Burin Peninsula region. The initial statements of potential application of each regional development model to the region should not be considered prescriptive; rather, an initial exploration. Further discussions among community residents, community-serving organizations, and businesses should be conducted to further explore and validate the notions presented.

Throughout the four regional development models presented seven critical success factors emerged:

1. **COLLECTIVE REGIONAL BUY-IN** for a regional development approach. This requires residents to clearly understand the purpose, benefits, and risks of collaboration. Communities need to have a desire and a capacity to undertake regional initiatives.
2. **MULTI-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT** in the regional development process. This process needs to ensure community residents, community-serving organizations, volunteer/non-profit organizations, government departments, and private sector are actively engaged.
3. Need for local, regional, provincial, and federal **POLICY SUPPORTIVE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT** process and initiatives.
4. The **NEED FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT** opportunities for all stakeholders.
5. Regional development **MODELS AND INITIATIVES REQUIRE FUNDING**. Process funding, or funding to support building trust and offsetting costs of meeting participation, is especially critical.
6. **REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INNOVATIVE**, open to change, and think ‘outside the box’ to ensure regional development models meet locally established priorities.
7. The need for **STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS POTENTIAL OR PERCEIVED OVERLAP** of organizations’ mandates and any new regional development model.

## Questions for Moving Forward

In moving forward, a wide cross section of stakeholders from the Burin Peninsula should review the regional development models presented to address the following questions:

- What is the goal of regional collaboration for communities of the Burin Peninsula region? How does this(these) goal(s) relate to the four models presented?
- How would success of a regional development model be determined? What would it look like? How would residents of the region know success has been achieved?
- How can strategies be developed for engaging federal and/or provincial governments given many of the regional development models involve human and financial commitments from these departments, and potentially policy or legislative changes?
- How can potential or perceived overlap of regional organizations' (existing or proposed) mandates be mitigated or addressed?
- Who within the Burin Peninsula can bring residents together to discuss and decide to move forward with ideas for new models of regional development? Who are the key stakeholders? What can be done to ensure the voices of all individuals and groups are captured?
- Which organizations should be considered for assistance, both human and financial assistance, to move forward with a regional development model?

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