
Rural-Urban Interaction in Newfoundland and Labrador: Understanding and Managing Functional Regions

PROJECT SUMMARY

Increasing urbanization, awareness of the economic competitiveness of clusters and population growth in rural areas adjacent to urban centres are among the trends that have led to calls for more research and policy development related to rural-urban interactions or “*the urban-rural footprint*”. Rural-urban dynamics are one of the primary influences on labour market outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador. Evidence suggests there is a growing divide between urban areas and rural communities with respect to these outcomes and related sustainability indicators.

A great deal of research has already been carried out to identify local workflows between communities and within regions in the province. Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL)’s Community Cooperation Resource Centre (CCRC), Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) and researchers at Memorial University and University of Kentucky, with funding support from CA/NL Labour Market Development Agreement, are working with community and government stakeholders to develop this work further. Existing workflow information will be coupled with information on other forms of regional interaction and sustainability indicators to create tools that will help decision-makers at all levels better identify and predict the factors driving local labour market and sustainable development outcomes in their regions. Increased understanding will in turn lead to more informed local decision making and governance processes, improved sustainable development, labour force and economic development strategies.

The project has four major components:

- 1) delineate and where possible map using GIS, the range of linkages between communities in regions within the province, particularly those between urban and rural communities;
- 2) assess existing governance mechanisms developed to manage these relations, identify gaps and make recommendations to enhance planning and decision making;
- 3) develop a labour market attractiveness/community sustainability index tool for use by community, regional and other stakeholders (considering which communities are most connected through multiple linkages, and which combinations of linkages contribute the most to sustainable regions);
- 4) collaborate with the membership of the MNL and other partners to ensure transfer of learning and best practices, pilot new approaches and communicate lessons learned to inform policy and programs for all orders of government.

This work will leverage and be informed by a complementary national project being conducted by national research collaborators, in partnership with CRRF and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). For more information call the Community Cooperation Resource Centre (709-746-1405) or visit www.nlfm/ccrc/ (About the CCRC/Services/Research).