
***Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave
Integrated Strategic Framework for
Economic Prosperity***

Executive Summary



Prepared for
Cape Breton Partnership



ECONOMIC GROWTH SOLUTIONS INC.

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Preface

In recent years important research and investigative work has been undertaken in relation to the economy of Cape Breton Island and the Town of Mulgrave. Some studies provide a detailed picture of the dynamics of the region's economy. Others are sector and industry specific. As well, each municipality has completed integrated sustainability plans. All this material has provided invaluable insight and has been factored into the new composite strategy that is presented in this report.

With the guidance of the Cape Breton Partnership, the consulting team, Advisory Committee and the input of many valued stakeholders and partners, a viable strategy for enhanced coordination of future economic development activities has been developed.

As we move into the second decade of the 21st Century, Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave are well-positioned to rejuvenate their economic base by building on sustainable competitive advantages that will enable them to more fully participate in the growth oriented sectors of the global economy. By aligning the efforts of key organizations that play a role in economic development throughout Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave, and pursuing updated economic development strategies, the region should be able to move ahead and effectively complete the economic transition process that has been underway for more than a decade.

We would like to acknowledge, with special thanks, the important direction and input for this project provided by the Strategic Framework Advisory Committee:

Co-Chairs:

- ◆ *Bruce Morrison, Municipality of the County of Victoria*
- ◆ *Steven Lilley, Protocase*

Committee Members:

- ◆ *Dan Christmas, Membertou First Nation/Cape Breton Partnership*
- ◆ *Paul Gallant, La Commission du tourisme acadien du Canada atlantique*
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- ◆ *John Malcolm, Cape Breton District Health Authority*
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- ◆ *Chad Munro, Halifax Biomedical*
- ◆ *Marlene Usher, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Integrated Strategic Framework for Economic Prosperity* will help to guide and coordinate economic development activities over the next several years for Cape Breton Island and the Town of Mulgrave. It builds on the capabilities of the region's business community, infrastructure, public sector, not-for-profit organizations and the labour force. The *Strategic Framework* integrates the input and visioning of many stakeholders and uses the existing economic context and economic development organizational structure as the starting point.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES FOR THE *FRAMEWORK*

The *Strategic Framework* explicitly recognizes **collaboration** as being essential for successfully implementing the economic development priorities that the Cape Breton Partnership and all of its partners have identified. It is clear that Cape Breton/Mulgrave has a strategic opportunity of major significance to create long term, sustainable economic prosperity, while enhancing quality of life for everyone.

A few additional important guidelines or principles that are being embraced in the *Strategic Framework* include the following:

- ◆ **Developing strategies that reflect the needs of different regions within Cape Breton/Mulgrave.** The opportunities arising from the concentration of industry and transportation infrastructure in Sydney and Port Hawkesbury will be different than those opportunities stemming from the variety of value-added food processors of Aboriginal and Acadian origin in Richmond County, or the tourism potential of the new golf course in Inverness. Each region within Cape Breton/Mulgrave should celebrate and support the economic development initiatives of the other and seek ways to support that success, with inter-regional collaboration being the key.
- ◆ **Recognizing that environmental sustainability is practical and profitable.** With a mixture of industries coexisting in Cape Breton/Mulgrave, and with modern consumers considering environmental issues in the purchasing process, the region will benefit greatly from sound environmental practices. Indeed, finding ways to build products and services to protect the environment can be lucrative. Furthermore, the attraction and retention of people and businesses will be enhanced by putting the environment at the forefront of the economic development planning process. A unifying component of this principle is the promotion of agricultural diversity to promote healthier soil, air, water and more healthful food for people and animals.
- ◆ **Leveraging the *Jobs Here Economic Development Plan of the Province*.** New economy opportunities, and a policy framework that makes it possible for rural jurisdictions to join the new economy, are emerging from the Province. Now is the time to make the careful

ASSESSING THE CURRENT SITUATION: AN ECONOMY IN TRANSITION

For virtually all of the 20th century the economic pulse of Cape Breton/Mulgrave was measured by the general condition of the primary and secondary goods producing sectors, with coal, steel, fish and forestry dominating. Residents adjusted to the ebb and flow of global demand, steeped in the view that their quality of life was unsurpassed. However, the traditional coal and steel industries ceased operations at the end of the 20th century. This change resulted in more than \$100 million in wages and salaries being eliminated from the local economy and ten percent of the area's labour force was affected directly, with thousands of others indirectly compromised in varying ways.

Shift from Primary and Secondary Industry to a Service-Based Economy

Census data shows that by 2006 Cape Breton had been transformed from an economy largely based on primary resources extraction and secondary processing and manufacturing industries to one based on service businesses. This shift is clearly evident in the labour force data for 2006, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Cape Breton Island & Mulgrave Labour Force Distribution by Industry & County, 2006

NAICS Code	Industry	% of Total Overall		% of Total by County				% of Total for Mulgrave
		Nova Scotia	Cape Breton Is.	Cape Breton	Inverness	Richmond	Victoria	
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	4.6	5.2	2.8	11.4	6.3	17.5	0
21	Mining and oil and gas extraction	0.7	1.4	1.2	2.6	0.7	1.4	3.3
22	Utilities	0.5	1.0	1.1	0.6	1.3	0.8	2.2
23	Construction	6.4	7.4	7.6	6.4	9.3	5.6	7.8
31-33	Manufacturing	8.9	6.1	4.4	9.7	15.8	7.0	18.9
41	Wholesale trade	3.5	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.3	1.2	5.6
44-45	Retail trade	12.5	13.1	14.0	12.0	8.1	10.5	13.4
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.9	5.7	4.9	4.4
51	Information and cultural industries	2.3	1.5	1.8	0.8	0.5	0.7	2.2
52	Finance and insurance	3.1	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.4	1.6	2.2
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	1.5	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.2	0
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	4.9	5.2	5.3	4.5	6.0	4.6	2.2
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0
56	Administrative and support, waste manage	5.5	6.2	7.4	3.8	2.4	2.2	8.9
61	Educational services	7.4	7.6	8.0	6.5	6.8	6.0	4.4
62	Health care and social assistance	11.7	14.8	16.2	11.1	11.4	10.1	5.6
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.9	2.3	2.1	2.4	1.2	6.2	0
72	Accommodation and food services	6.9	7.8	7.2	9.7	7.1	10.9	10.0

NAICS Code	Industry	% of Total Overall		% of Total by County				% of Total for Mulgrave
		Nova Scotia	Cape Breton Is.	Cape Breton	Inverness	Richmond	Victoria	
81	Other services (except public administration)	4.7	4.9	4.9	4.8	6.5	3.3	3.3
91	Public administration	8.4	6.3	7.0	4.9	4.8	3.8	4.4
	Industry-Not applicable	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	4.4
	All industries	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Nova Scotia Statistics – modeled from Statistics Canada 2006 Census data

To better understand differences in the patterns of industry across Cape Breton Island, this table provides an overall comparison of the percentage distribution of the labour force by industry for Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island overall, each of Cape Breton’s four counties and the Town of Mulgrave. This shows that Cape Breton Island has a slightly larger proportion of its labour force involved in health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services compared with Nova Scotia. On the other hand, Cape Breton has a smaller proportion of its labour force in manufacturing, wholesale trade, and public administration, and Mulgrave still has a very strong manufacturing focus.

Within Cape Breton-Mulgrave the patterns diverge significantly for the different sectors, with Richmond County and the Town of Mulgrave having much larger proportions of their labour force involved in manufacturing, while Inverness and Victoria Counties have much larger components of their labour forces involved in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. This means that economic development strategies must continue to target several key sectors of the economy in order to effectively benefit all of Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave.

Structural Economic Change Led to Population Decline

As a result of the dramatic structural change in the economic base over a relatively short period of time, Cape Breton’s population declined significantly from 158,270 in 1996 to 147,450 in 2001 and then to 142,300 in 2006, a total decline of 10.1% during this 10-year period. What is most notable in this pattern of population decline is the extent to which there has been a decline in young people, including young families who have moved away from Cape Breton-Mulgrave in search of work.

- ◆ For example, the decline in the 20–34 age group is almost one-third or 30.5% between 1996 and 2006.
- ◆ There is a smaller but significant decline in the 35–54 year old age group at 6.8% and dramatic declines in children and teenagers (19 years and younger) as a result of the out-migration of young families.

On the other hand the population of older age groups have increased, most notably the 55–64 year age group, which shows a 37.2% increase, suggesting that, in addition to the increase resulting from aging baby boomers, there are likely individuals in this age group moving back to

Cape Breton for semi-retirement or retirement. Some bring significant experience, skills and expertise that may help with the transition to the new economy.

COMPETITIVE POSITIONING AND TARGET SECTORS

It is widely recognized that there is no single sector, industry or business that will propel Cape Breton-Mulgrave into the remainder of the 21st Century with a dramatically revitalized and leading edge economy. The reality is that many sectors and different types of businesses will need to be embraced within the overall sectoral targeting for economic development initiatives.

Cape Breton-Mulgrave's Value Proposition

Frequently quality of life is cited as a critical component of Cape Breton-Mulgrave's value proposition and, while this is certainly the case, it is important to recognize that most jurisdictions promote themselves as offering some sort of high quality lifestyle for various reasons. Therefore, it is important to distinguish what aspects of Cape Breton's quality of life are unique and may be attractive as part of the value proposition. Key elements of the Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave value proposition as a place to do business include the following:

- ◆ **Geographic advantages in relation to international marine shipping** and all types of marine and ocean industries, including shipbuilding and repair, with a long history in these sectors. Important modern port infrastructure assets include the port operations at Sydney and the Strait of Canso Superport.
- ◆ **A strong-willed people with a rich history** and a national and international network of former Cape Bretoners who still have a strong connection to the Island and are resources that can be tapped into.
- ◆ **A collaborative attitude of Cape Bretoners**, which tends to be strengthened by 'needs of the moment'. The leadership and passion required to turn around Cape Breton-Mulgrave's economic fortunes need to be harnessed and mobilized around the Strategic Framework.
- ◆ **A strong economic development focus and related organizational infrastructure.** Most of the mechanisms are in place to facilitate business development, growth and prosperity, resulting in a receptive and supportive business climate.
- ◆ **Effective coordination and communications of business and economic development initiatives.** While perhaps not as effective as it could be, this is a key objective of the Strategic Framework, which should help to strengthen this aspect of the value proposition.
- ◆ **Strong post-secondary educational infrastructure** including Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia Community College, the Coast Guard College, Université Saint Anne, and the Gaelic College. Therefore, most of the required education, training and skills development needed by businesses and the workforce can potentially be accessed within Cape Breton Island.

- ◆ **Traditionally strong tourism sector**, which trades on the diverse natural environment and stunning scenery of the highlands and coastlines, as well as the rich arts and cultural heritage.
- ◆ **A strong arts and cultural community** providing opportunities for artists and artisans of all types, as well as ensuring an abundant supply of arts and cultural facilities, programs and amenities for residents of the region and visitors.
- ◆ **Rich natural resources base** which, despite some depletion, still includes significant fisheries resources, extensive minerals and forestry resources, as well as pockets of arable agricultural land.

All of these elements of Cape Breton-Mulgrave's value proposition contribute to its strength as a place to do business in the 21st century.

Target Sectors

While there are some opportunities in relation to leading edge, emerging and high-tech sectors and businesses, much of Cape Breton-Mulgrave's future economic growth will be a result of further leveraging, modernizing and promoting some of the traditional industries and sectors in which it has some inherent long-term sustainable competitive advantages. These include:

- ◆ The ocean industries sector – this includes fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing, along with other marine-oriented industries and businesses, such as boatbuilding/repair, shipbuilding/repair and related suppliers;
- ◆ Tourism, arts and culture; and
- ◆ Resource extraction, production and processing businesses associated with forestry, mining and agriculture.

Among the leading edge, 21st century industries and businesses in which Cape Breton-Mulgrave has existing strength and that should be further developed are:

- ◆ Green energy, technology and related developments, including the hydroelectric transmission corridor from Newfoundland and Labrador;
- ◆ Industrial site remediation expertise and technology;
- ◆ Information and communications technology (ICT);
- ◆ Biotechnology industries; and
- ◆ International trans-shipping and distribution centre.

ECONOMIC GROWTH TARGETS

During community consultations, there was extensive discussion regarding the appropriateness of establishing specific jobs or population growth targets. It was decided to establish these for the longer term, recognizing the difficulty of measuring any such progress in the short term. After several years, however, it should be possible to determine from overall economic indicators the impacts the *Strategic Framework* is having. Therefore, the suggested targets are as follows:

- ◆ Total growth in jobs for Cape Breton-Mulgrave's economy overall by 2020 of 6% above the 2011 overall average of 43,500 full-time and 9,300 part-time jobs;
- ◆ Overall population growth by 2020 of 2% above the 2011 Census figure of 135,974;
- ◆ An increase in the labour force participation rate by 2020 of 4 percentage points above the 2011 overall average of 56.1%; and
- ◆ A reduction in the unemployment rate by 2020 of 6 percentage points below the 2011 overall average of 15.9%.

It is anticipated that with the concerted effort and focus on growth sectors, as well as significant infrastructure and labour force development investment by the public and private sectors, it should be possible to initiate growth in jobs and population in Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave.

OVERALL GOALS OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

There are four over-riding goals of the Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave Integrated Strategic Framework for Economic Prosperity. These are as follows:

1. Pursue updated economic development strategies for the entire region, with a focus on growth sectors and value-added components of existing sectors.
2. Align the Strategic Framework with the provincial and federal economic strategies. These include Nova Scotia's *Jobs Here: The Plan to Grow Our Economy*, with its focus on human resources (workforce) development, innovation and competitiveness, as well as with the Renewable Electricity Plan. The *Strategic Framework* should also align with the federal government economic strategy: *Canada's Economic Action Plan*.
3. Collaborate with Cape Breton-Mulgrave's principal economic development partners in the pursuit of updated strategies with provincial and federal plans, and fill gaps in economic development programming, particularly as they relate to human resources and entrepreneurship development.
4. Facilitate and monitor the net creation of new jobs on an ongoing basis.

RECOMMENDED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES

The recommended strategies/actions are designed to support each of the four overall goals and related objectives, and to build on the competitive positioning and value propositions for the target sectors and businesses.

1. Pursue Updated Economic Development Strategies for the Cape Breton-Mulgrave Region

Objective	Strategies/Actions
1.1 To establish an overall economic development information and initial point of contact portal that covers all of Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree on a single organization that will be the economic development information portal for Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave and can also serve as the initial point of contact for preliminary enquiries. 2. Put in place the human and financial resources to undertake this role, once agreed upon.
1.2 To develop and implement strategies that will facilitate entrepreneurship and business start-ups of all types in Cape Breton.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the overall economic development information portal website has relevant information, contacts and links. 2. Working with the appropriate partners, offer occasional seminars, forums and training sessions for entrepreneurs, new business start-ups and small businesses. 3. Initiate strategies to enhance entrepreneurs' and start-up businesses' access to capital funding assistance.
1.3 To develop and implement strategies for fostering innovation-based businesses, including manufacturing oriented enterprises and knowledge-based service businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with existing innovation-based businesses to determine current and future needs. 2. Facilitate enhanced access to capital for start-up, ongoing operations, expansion or diversification, and research and development. 3. Facilitate access to appropriate management and technical expertise. 4. Facilitate development of networking forums for innovation-based companies.
1.4 To enhance Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave's Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) efforts, building on the existing work of the RDAs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the RDAs to enable them to enhance their BR+E programs with additional resources and outline targeted outcomes.

Objective	Strategies/Actions
<p>1.5 To develop and undertake Island-wide business and investment attraction awareness and promotion, in partnership with Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), aimed at attracting suitable sustainable businesses and entrepreneurial talent.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Refine Cape Breton-Mulgrave’s brand positioning for economic development opportunities.</i> 2. <i>Launch the new “Invest in Cape Breton” website and with a strategically targeted marketing/awareness campaign.</i> 3. <i>Build on the initial campaign and awareness to implement a talent attraction strategy.</i>
<p>1.6 To agree on a protocol for handling business and investment attraction enquiries, once received, to ensure that leads are followed-up by the most appropriate organizations and jurisdictions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Undertake consultations with the RDAs and municipalities regarding an effective protocol.</i> 2. <i>After sufficient consultations establish a protocol among the partners for following-up on enquiries and leads.</i>
<p>1.7 To put in place the planning, servicing and key infrastructure development tools that rural communities, if they are receptive to economic development, can use to foster and manage growth.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Determine gaps in planning, zoning, services and other infrastructure in municipalities, First Nations and other major communities throughout Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave.</i> 2. <i>Work with municipalities and communities to ensure that the appropriate planning tools are in place to facilitate development.</i> 3. <i>Plan for appropriate infrastructure and services to facilitate economic development.</i>
<p>1.8 To investigate and develop new business and investment attraction strategies that will draw businesses, which will have a sustainable competitive advantage from a Cape Breton location.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Agree on sectors that will be targeted by business and investment attraction.</i> 2. <i>Establish Target Sector Opportunity Teams to oversee implementation of sector specific initiatives.</i> 3. <i>Prepare customized marketing and promotional materials for each target sector.</i> 4. <i>Undertake research to identify specific target businesses or investors in each of the target sectors.</i> 5. <i>Undertake proactive contact and follow-up with prospective target businesses and investors.</i>

2. Align with Nova Scotia's and Canada's Economic Strategies

Objective	Strategies/Actions
2.1 To implement within Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave, the Province's Human Resources (Workforce Development) Strategies related to education, training and skills development.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Work with Nova Scotia Community College to expand program offerings relevant to target sectors.</i> 2. <i>Work with Cape Breton University to help it expand its offerings, particularly in support of innovation and knowledge-based businesses.</i> 3. <i>Attract and retain immigrant skilled workers and entrepreneurs.</i> 4. <i>Undertake a Cape Breton-Mulgrave labour force survey to determine existing skills and expertise relative to economic development needs.</i> 5. <i>Implement skills upgrading by tying-in with the Province's Productivity Investment Program.</i>
2.2 To implement Nova Scotia's key innovation strategies in Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave to further strengthen the ability to develop innovation-based companies and value-added opportunities for existing companies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Participate in the Province's productivity and innovation partnership.</i> 2. <i>Provide enhanced access to capital for innovation businesses.</i> 3. <i>Link to Province's new client-centred model to serve businesses.</i> 4. <i>Support Cape Breton-Mulgrave's innovation businesses as they seek investment from provincial and other sources.</i>
2.3 To enhance global competitiveness of the region's businesses by tying-in with the Province's new International Commerce Strategy, aligning with its investment, trade and innovation priorities and facilitating access to appropriate financial assistance programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Coordinate Strategic Framework's Business and Investment Attraction activities with Province's International Commerce Strategy.</i> 2. <i>Ensure that Cape Breton-Mulgrave's Business and Investment Attraction and Innovation Businesses Strategies align with the Province's investment, trade and innovation priorities.</i> 3. <i>Facilitate access to appropriate provincial financial assistance programs.</i>
2.4 To provide Cape Breton-Mulgrave input into the development of the Province's various sectoral oriented strategies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Determine the current status of each of the strategies and, to the extent possible, participate in their development.</i> 2. <i>Work with provincial officials and agencies to implement the Cape Breton-Mulgrave components of these strategies and plans.</i>
2.5 To implement Cape Breton Island and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Determine implications of Province's</i>

Objective	Strategies/Actions
Mulgrave's components of the Province's Renewable Electricity Plan and participate in Churchill Falls hydro transmission project.	<p><i>Renewable Electricity Plan for Cape Breton-Mulgrave.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Develop a Cape Breton-Mulgrave Energy Sector Plan.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Proactively participate in the industrial benefits and development/construction activity associated with the transmission corridor through Cape Breton-Mulgrave.</i></p>
2.6 To interface with the federal government <i>Canada's Economic Action Plan</i> to leverage opportunities eligible for assistance from the <i>Building Canada Fund</i> and other relevant programs.	1. <i>Identify and pursue appropriate projects that may qualify for assistance under the Building Canada Fund and other relevant federal programs.</i>

3. Collaborate with Partners to Fill-in Programming Gaps

Objective	Strategies/Actions
3.1 To develop a protocol, perhaps via MOUs, that helps to coordinate the activities and ensure complementary of the lead partners in economic development in Cape Breton-Mulgrave including ECBC, the RDAs, the municipalities, First Nations, and Cape Breton Partnership.	<p>1. <i>Convene a forum of the lead economic development partners, to discuss the structuring of a protocol or MOU to coordinate implementation of the Strategic Framework.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Strike a coordinating committee with representation from each of the partners.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Select the coordinating organization to facilitate implementation and coordination of the various strategies and activities being implemented under the Strategic Framework.</i></p>
3.2 To align funding assistance applications for different levels of government and better facilitate the business community's access to financing and business/technical expertise.	<p>1. <i>Liaise with ECBC, ACOA, NSBI, Innovacorp, and other government departments that provide funding assistance for various business and economic development initiatives, to determine application requirements.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Work with the appropriate departments and agencies to achieve a greater level of conformity among the application forms and documentation requirements.</i></p>
3.3 To fill-in gaps in business and economic development programming identified in this study and agree on who fills the gaps.	<p>1. <i>Review current gaps in business and economic development programming.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Assign responsibilities for filling-in the gaps in programming and financial assistance.</i></p>

4. Facilitate and Monitor the Creation of New Jobs

Objective	Strategies/Actions
4.1 To assign Strategic Framework overall coordination responsibility to one of the partners involved in developing and implementing the Framework.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Convene meeting of partners in Strategic Framework to decide on which organization should provide the ongoing coordination and monitoring services.</i> 2. <i>Assign resources to the coordinating organization.</i>
4.2 To monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation of the Strategic Framework on an ongoing basis, and work with partners to refine the Framework from year-to-year to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Determine the most appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.</i> 2. <i>Closely monitor and refine education, human resources and skills development initiatives.</i> 3. <i>Systematically monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation of the Strategic Framework.</i>

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Implementation of the *Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave Integrated Strategic Framework for Economic Prosperity* will need to be a team-based approach, with the principal Cape Breton-based economic development partners each playing a role. In the near term, the following steps will need to be implemented:

1. Formalize collaboration among partners to collectively adopt the Integrated Strategic Framework in principle.
 - One of the purposes of the Integrated Strategic Framework is to update and better align the economic development initiatives of the various economic development organizations, in order to achieve the best impact for the resources expended.
 - This alignment will require coordination among the key organizations that have funds and human resources available for economic development projects.
 - Therefore, we recommend that a Strategic Framework Implementation Task Force be established, which would be the overall authority for implementation of the Strategic Framework recommendations.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding, charter or operating agreement will be drawn up to ensure that all of the partners in the initiative are in agreement with regard to the overall directions and key initiatives. This agreement will be drawn up by the Strategic Framework Implementation Task Force, with the input of the various partners.
2. Form Sector teams and identify the most appropriate priority projects to pursue in the short and long term.

3. Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and undertake Year 1 review. The Task Force will need to agree on suitable measures for determining progress on an annual basis. Achievement of objectives and mechanisms for reporting back to the community need to be determined.

NEAR TERM PRIORITIES

The first decade of the 21st century has seen encouraging headway in continued efforts to build a more robust and globally aligned economy for Cape Breton Island and the Town of Mulgrave. However, varied and complex challenges remain.

Four areas of opportunity that hold substantial incremental development potential and the ability to be catalysts for additional economic growth include the following:

- ◆ Ports development at Sydney and the Strait of Canso, particularly in relation to trans-shipment and diversification at both ports;
- ◆ Energy sector development, building on the numerous alternative energy and conventional energy initiatives planned or already underway; and
- ◆ Innovation businesses, both manufacturing oriented and knowledge-based service businesses – these businesses have the strongest growth potential and will help propel economic growth in Cape Breton-Mulgrave Area.
- ◆ Leveraging major projects such as:
 - *National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy* project components based at Halifax Shipyards;
 - *Donkin Mine* coal mining project; and
 - *Maritime Link* transmission project – between Newfoundland and Cape Breton.

Collaboration among the many partners involved is essential to success in achieving the enhanced economic prosperity associated with these and other opportunities. This *Strategic Framework* is the plan to make this happen.