Nova Scotia Community Development Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that sustainable communities are crucial to the future strength and prosperity of the Province. The Government supports the development of more collaborative approaches with communities and across Government that build on the combined skills, resources and commitment needed to address challenges and opportunities. The Government of Nova Scotia endorses and is committed to the following principles of sustainable community development:

1. **Local Leadership**: The community plays the leadership role in its own development.

2. **Government Support**: Government actively facilitates and supports community development through the provision of information, expertise, guidance, and other resources, as appropriate.

3. **Collaborative Approach**: Community development builds on cooperation, coordination and collaboration between Government and communities.

4. **Balance**: Community development builds on a balanced approach that addresses and integrates economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations.

5. **Respect for Local Values**: Government strives to understand and respect community values.

6. **Social Inclusion**: All community members, regardless of gender, age, disability, race, culture, language or social and economic status have the opportunity to become engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits.

7. **Transparency and Accountability**: Government involvement in community development encourages transparency, accountability, participation and evidence-based decision-making.

8. **Partnerships and Shared Interests**: Community development engages the necessary partners at the community and Government levels.

9. **Common Vision**: Community members and Government define a common vision for the future.

10. **Focus on Community Assets**: Community development is built on existing community capacity and assets.

11. **Volunteerism**: Community development values, respects, nurtures and encourages volunteerism.

2. Policy Scope

The aim of the Community Development Policy is to provide a clearly defined, consistent and collaborative Government approach to encouraging sustainable community development. The Community Development Policy is a framework to guide Government’s support for, and engagement with, Nova Scotia communities.
The Community Development Policy does not supercede Government’s legislated responsibilities and regulatory requirements.

3. **Policy Objectives**

The purpose of the Community Development Policy is to improve the climate for community development through Government support for communities and to ensure that Government decisions, activities and outcomes are compatible with the principles of sustainable community development.

The objectives of the Community Development Policy are to:

1. Clarify Government and community roles in community development
2. Increase cooperation, coordination and collaboration among Departments/Offices, between communities and Departments/Offices, among levels of Government, and among communities
3. Increase Government and community capacity to understand and advance community development
4. Develop an accountability framework to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making in community development

4. **Policy Directives**

To implement the Community Development Policy, and achieve its Policy Objectives, Provincial Government Departments/Offices will:

1. Adhere to the principles of sustainable community development.
2. Support the implementation of the Community Development Action Plan (Attachment A)
3. Apply the Community Development Lens (Attachment B) as appropriate and where applicable to item #4 below.
4. Identify in their annual business plans the decisions, activities and outcomes to which they will apply the Community Development Policy.

The Office of Economic Development will support Departments/Offices in the identification of decisions, activities and outcomes for application of the Community Development Policy, as appropriate.

5. **Application**

The Community Development Policy applies to Provincial Government Department/Office decisions, activities and outcomes identified in their annual business plans that support, respond to, or impact on, sustainable community development.

Where agreed to by the Deputy Ministers’ Community Development Steering Committee, decisions, activities and outcomes of the Provincial Government may be exempted from the provisions of the Community Development Policy, as appropriate.
A Community Development Action Plan outlines the specific activities that will be undertaken to implement the Community Development Policy.

6. Accountability

The Minister and Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Economic Development will have overall responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Community Development Policy and will report annually on progress.

Deputies of other Departments/Offices will be responsible for reporting on their activities in support of the Community Development Policy to the Minister and Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Economic Development.

7. Monitoring

The Office of Economic Development will annually review the Community Development Policy and the Action Plan created to implement it. Third parties may be employed to conduct this review.

8. Definitions

Collaboration means working together to encourage integration of resources, work and/or decision-making across organizations.

Community is a group of people who live and interact in a specific geographic area or people with shared cultures or common interests.

Community Development Action Plan outlines the expected outcomes and specific activities that will be undertaken to implement the Community Development Policy and achieve its objectives.

Community Development Lens is a tool designed to raise awareness and consideration of the possible impact of Government decisions, activities and outcomes on communities.

Cooperation means making a conscious effort to work together and build informal ties that facilitate sharing.

Coordination means working together to reduce or eliminate overlap and duplication.

Deputy Ministers’ Community Development Steering Committee is a group of five provincial Deputy Ministers whose role is to provide overall guidance to the development and implementation of the Community Development Policy

Government Departments/Offices means the list of Departments and Offices as used in the Management Manual Policy.
Government decisions, activities and outcomes means the general work of Government, its legislation, regulations, policies, programs, services and projects.

Social Inclusion is the capacity, willingness, commitment and investment necessary to ensure that all community members have the opportunity to become engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits. This means taking into account gender, race, culture, language, social and economic status, age and disability, during the community development process, as well as in determining its outcomes.

Sustainable Community is a community that takes a long-term perspective to safeguard the interests of future generations so that its social, cultural, economic and environmental resources create positive outcomes for community members and which has the potential to engage in community capacity building.

Sustainable Community Development is a process in which a community uses and enhances its social, cultural, economic and environmental resources to ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It seeks to meet four key objectives simultaneously: social progress that recognizes the needs of all, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

9. Attachments

A Community Development Action Plan
B Community Development Lens

ATTACHMENT A

Community Development Initial Action Plan

Introduction

The Community Development Policy Initiative has drawn some conclusions about what the Government of Nova Scotia should do to improve the climate for sustainable community development, and perhaps more importantly, how it should do it. The Initiative has identified the need for a Provincial Community Development Policy, with a solid action plan to operationalize it.

This Community Development Initial Action Plan results from the Initiative’s extensive learning process. It includes collaborative and concrete proposals for how Government can support sustainable community development. It aims to influence how Government works. It strives to ensure Government decisions, activities and outcomes that support or impact community development are compatible with the principles of sustainable community development.

The specific steps in the Initial Action Plan are organized to support the achievement of the Community Development Policy objectives of:

- Clarifying Government and community roles in community development
- Increasing cooperation, coordination and collaboration among Departments/Offices between communities and Departments/Offices, among levels of Government and among communities
- Increasing Government and community capacity to understand and advance community development
- Developing an accountability framework to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making

Improving the climate for Nova Scotia communities is a long-term and continuing process that will include several distinct steps. Many of the first steps are internal to Government and are designed to make Government a more effective partner in the process. These steps build on the good work currently being done in the economic, social, environmental and cultural sectors. Later steps will focus more directly on community-based initiatives and activities. Concrete actions to support communities will have greater success if the most effective processes and structures are in place. Communities need to be sufficiently engaged in the Action Plan from the beginning to truly reflect the principles of sustainable community development, and to demonstrate that Government heard what was said during the community consultation phase.
## Role Clarification

Objective: Clarify Government and Community roles in community development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarification of what Government does and does not do to support CD</td>
<td>Identify good practices in Government activities supporting CD</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>CDAG, SCI</td>
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<td>Share good practices across Government</td>
<td>Winter/Spring 2005</td>
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<td>Increased understanding of the impact of Government decisions, activities and outcomes on community development</td>
<td>Refine the CD Lens by testing it in a Department (TCH)</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>TCH, CDAG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Make the revised CD Lens widely available across Government</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td>CDAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>A process to clarify and articulate a common Government/community vision for the future of NS communities</td>
<td>Work with VP on the preparation of an approach</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>VP</td>
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## Coordination and Collaboration

Objective: Increase cooperation, coordination and collaboration among Departments/Offices, between communities and Departments/Offices, among levels of Government and among communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<th>Key Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved collaboration within the Provincial Government and with other levels of Government</td>
<td>Engage key federal Government Departments and relevant interdepartmental initiatives in a discussion on the CD policy and possible programs &amp; activities to support it</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>CDAG SCI NS Rural Team ACOA HRSDC VP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engage municipalities in a discussion on the policy</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td>UNSM SNS &amp; MR</td>
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<td>Leadership structure for policy implementation</td>
<td>Organize OED leadership</td>
<td>Begin immediately</td>
<td>OED</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop governance structure that engages citizens, politicians, civil servants and community groups</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>DM Steering Committee CDAG Key community organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 3-5 year action plan for inclusion in the 2005/06 Departmental and Government Business Planning Exercises</td>
<td>Prepare plan based on input Consult within Departments and communities Participate in 2005-06 business planning</td>
<td>Begin Immediately Fall 2004 Jan/Feb 2005</td>
<td>OED DM Steering Committee CDAG SCI Key community organizations</td>
</tr>
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## Capacity Building

Objective: Increase Government and community capacity to understand and advance community development

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<th>Outcome</th>
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<th>Timing</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant civil servants are informed about policy and direction</td>
<td>Develop education strategy for Government employees on: (1) The CD process (2) Increasing collaborative work in CD</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>PSC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Begin to deliver education plan to key Government employees</td>
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<td>CDAG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>PSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased capacity among civil servants and community leaders to understand and advance CD work</td>
<td>Identify training needs and resources available for building capacity through discussions with trainers</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>CDAG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Train the trainers</td>
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<td>Key community organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
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<td>CCN</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>SCI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government policies and practices support CD</td>
<td>Consult with CCN and other similar organizations to identify policy impediments</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>CDAG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consult with Departments to reduce or eliminate impediments</td>
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<td>Key community organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>CCN</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
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<td>SCI</td>
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<td>Better information to help communities in their planning and decision making</td>
<td>Support the work of <em>Community Counts</em></td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td>Finance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Build links between that work and other information provision exercises</td>
<td>Summer 2005</td>
<td>SCI</td>
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<td>Develop a set of “Community Indicators” to help communities and Government understand the status of communities</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>RCIP</td>
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<td>Winter 2005</td>
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<td>ACOA</td>
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## Reporting and Accountability

**Objective:** Develop an accountability framework to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<th>Key Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD approach communicated across Government and to other Governments and key community agencies</td>
<td>Prepare communications strategy</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Communications NS CDAG SCI NS Rural Team ACOA HRSDC Voluntary Planning Key community organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implement strategy within Government and with communities</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>A reporting and accountability framework for community development</td>
<td>Work with relevant Departments to build the framework</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>CDAG</td>
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**Legend:**

ACOA - Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency  
CCN - Coastal Communities Network  
CDAG - Community Development Advisory Group  
SNS & MR - Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
TCH - Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage  
HRSDC - Human Resources and Social Development Canada  
PSC - Public Service Commission  
RCIP - Rural Communities Impacting Policy project  
SCI - Sustainable Communities Initiative  
UNSM - Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities  
VP - Voluntary Planning
ATTACHMENT B

Community Development Lens

Community Development Policy Initiative: Purpose and Objectives
Within Government Departments’ legislative and regulatory mandates, Nova Scotia recognizes the importance of having a clearly defined, consistent and collaborative approach to encouraging sustainable community development. The purpose of the Community Development Policy is to improve the climate for community development through Government support for communities and to ensure that Government decisions, activities and outcomes are compatible with the principles of sustainable community development. The objectives of the policy are to:

1. Clarify Government and community roles in community development
2. Increase cooperation, coordination and collaboration among Departments/Offices, between communities and Departments/Offices, among levels of Government, and among communities
3. Increase Government and community capacity to understand and advance community development
4. Develop an accountability framework to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making in community development

Using the Community Development Lens
The Community Development Lens (the Lens) is a companion to the Community Development Policy. It applies to Provincial Government Department/Office decisions, activities and outcomes identified in their annual business plans that support, respond to, or impact on, sustainable community development. The Lens is designed to raise awareness and consideration of the possible impact of these decisions, activities and outcomes on communities.

The Community Development Policy includes key principles on which sustainable community development is grounded. These principles form the basis for the Lens. To apply the Lens to a particular decision, activity or outcome, consider the principles of community development listed below and answer the questions. The principles are inter-related and need to be considered together. When you have finished answering the questions on the principles, describe:

- How the decision, activity or outcome in question can better support the principles of community development, including ways in which it may already support the principles.
- Whether there are issues that may restrict the application of the principles of community development.
- What actions may be required to overcome any obstacles to achieve the objectives of the Community Development Policy.
Principles of Sustainable Community Development

*Does the decision, activity or anticipated outcome:*

1. Local Leadership
   - Support the community to take a leadership role in its development activities?

2. Government Support
   - Provide information, expertise, guidance and resources to the community, where appropriate?

3. Collaborative Approach
   - Enhance collaboration with the community and across Governments (Provincial, Federal, Municipal and First Nations) and their Departments/Offices, as appropriate?
   - Identify program and policy opportunities to address relevant challenges to community development or to the sustainability of the community?
   - Make Provincial Government Departments/Offices more accessible to the community in a coordinated and effective manner?
4. Balance

- Use a balanced approach that addresses and integrates social, economic, environmental and cultural considerations?

5. Respect for Local Values

- Demonstrate understanding and respect for community values?
- Address potential conflicts of interest among various communities, where applicable?

6. Social Inclusion

- Promote opportunities to participate (where appropriate) and consider differences based on gender, age, disability, race, culture, language, and social and economic status [both within and across geographic communities]?
- Consider the potential impact on, and interests of, communities that are not necessarily geographically based?
7. Transparency and Accountability

- Encourage transparency, accountability, participative and evidence-based decision-making?

8. Partnership and Shared Interests:

- Allow adequate time for effective relationship-building between the community and Provincial Government Departments/Offices or with other levels of Government?
- Engage the necessary partners at the community and Government levels?

9. Common Vision

- Encourage the community to assume some shared responsibility for social, economic, environmental and cultural stewardship, when applicable?
10 Focus on Community Assets

- Build on existing community capacity and assets?
- Identify opportunities for citizen engagement?

11. Volunteerism

- Value, respect, nurture and encourage volunteerism?