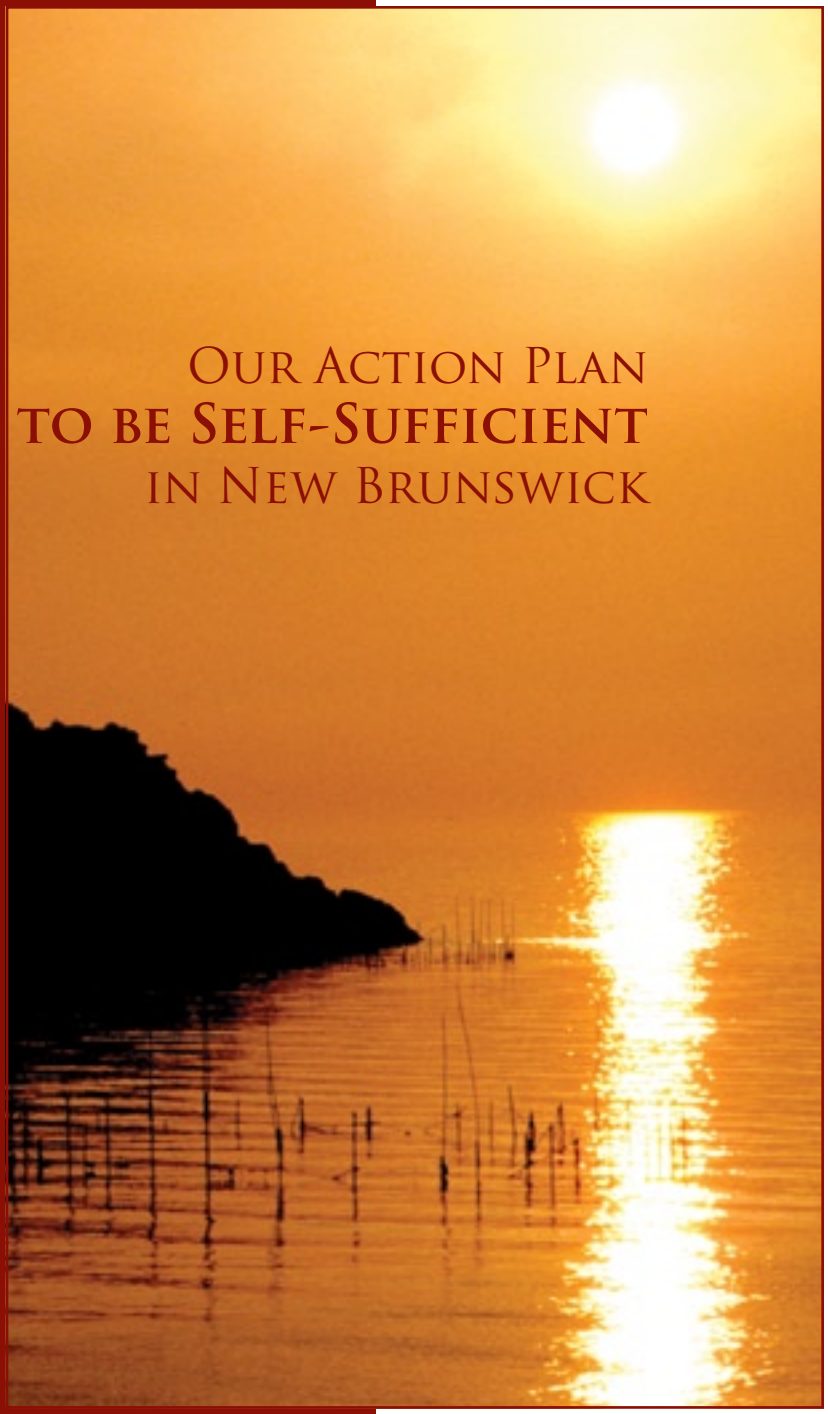
New Nouveau Brunswick

SUMMARY

Our Action Plan to be Self-Sufficient in New Brunswick



Building a Better New Brunswick

New Brunswick is embarking on a period of transformational change that will lead our province to self-sufficiency.

To move forward to self-sufficiency requires fundamental change. What brought us to today won't get us to tomorrow. If we want to maintain what we have and gain in the future, we need new thinking.

Achieving self-sufficiency won't happen overnight. There is much work to be done between now and 2026. We have to start now.

Our vision for a self-sufficient New Brunswick is firmly rooted in the values of our people:

- ***We value our diversity,*** *celebrating our rich and varied heritage; our multicultural communities; our status as Canada's only officially bilingual province; and our reputation for hospitality.*
- ***We value our families,*** *striving to provide our children with the best possible start in life.*
- ***We value our environment,*** *preserving the world of nature that surrounds us.*
- ***We value innovation,*** *encouraging New Brunswickers to fulfill their potential here.*

These values make us who we are. We can retain all of this as we build a better New Brunswick. A self-sufficient New Brunswick will be stronger still because we have stayed faithful to our core values.

We must take immediate steps to set our economy on a firm footing, capitalizing on our advantages to create jobs and wealth throughout the province. We must encourage investment that translates into opportunity that will keep our young people here, bring expatriate New Brunswickers home and draw new residents to our province.

We must invest in our children, so they can have the best possible start in life. We must foster innovation and lifelong learning, and encourage New Brunswickers to achieve their full potential here at home. We must take action on literacy and other barriers to participating in the workforce. We must make government more efficient and effective.

Above all, we must embrace those measures that support our goal and let go of those that don't. Together we will transform this province. Together we will secure our future and create opportunity. Together we will build a better New Brunswick for all.

Achieving Self-Sufficiency

To position New Brunswick to achieve self-sufficiency by 2026, we will focus our resources and efforts to transform our economy, our workforce, our relationships and our government.

To **Transform Our Economy** we will:

- Work with industry to enhance competitiveness, improve productivity and promote diversification of our resource-based industries.
- Target new markets and use new approaches to promote our tourism and cultural sectors so that we excel in customer service and enhance the visitor experience.
- Create a competitive business environment for New Brunswick entrepreneurs that will encourage investment, innovation and growth while sustaining our economic, social and environmental resources.
- Invest in strategic infrastructure that drives economic development.
- Develop and execute a strategic plan for approaching existing national and multinational firms to expand and to recruit new firms to locate in New Brunswick.
- Establish New Brunswick as the region's energy hub, a leader in energy efficiency and a world-class producer of goods and services for the global energy sector.
- Focus on a number of technology clusters and priority core technologies through the development of partnerships and strategic alliances, education, training and recruitment of highly qualified personnel, and investment by outside sources.

To **Transform Our Workforce** we will:

- Make the strategic investments required to ensure that every child arrives at kindergarten ready to learn.
- Ensure that each and every child leaves Grade 5 having mastered the tools to learn – reading, writing and numeracy, and that they graduate from high school having had the opportunity to discover their personal strengths and to find something they love doing.
- Create a post-secondary education system that is student-focused, highly integrated and capable of preparing students for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- Promote a culture of continuous learning in our workplaces and communities.
- Work aggressively with our partners to create opportunities for all New Brunswickers to participate in our economy.

- Increase our population to 850,000 through a comprehensive plan to retain and repatriate New Brunswickers and recruit immigrants.

To **Transform Our Relationships** we will:

- Ensure that public engagement is meaningful, effective, collaborative and sustainable so that citizens can be active participants in achieving self-sufficiency.
- Move forward with the historic Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and New Brunswick Relationship Building Bilateral Agreement to address effective governance, social justice and economic sustainability for First Nations communities.
- Bring a new spirit of collaboration to our relationship with business and labour, working to remove barriers to productivity and trade and promote economic growth.
- Strengthen the non-profit sector, and promote the respect and recognition the sector deserves.
- Build coordinated, active and mutually beneficial partnerships with the Government of Canada and provincial/territorial, state and international governments that are focused on achieving self-sufficiency.

To **Transform Our Government** we will:

- Focus on more efficient and cost-effective means of managing and delivering health care.
- Dedicate the resources required to drive a cultural shift toward wellness and healthy living and empower patients to better manage their own care.
- Put citizens and businesses first in the delivery of public services.
- Revitalize our public service by investing in our employees and creating opportunities for career development.
- Work to make local government more efficient, effective and representative so that all New Brunswick communities are better able to contribute and benefit from the self-sufficiency agenda.

This agenda for transformative change is vital to building a better New Brunswick. By working together and making transformative changes now, we will ensure that we can sustain all that we value and reach our full potential.

Transforming our Economy

To achieve self-sufficiency, New Brunswick needs an economy that can create the jobs and wealth that can be sustained over the long term. By transforming our economy, we will create the conditions for a sustainable future for our rural communities and develop new industries for new markets.

Competitive Resource Industries

Our resource industries – forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, minerals, oil and gas – currently account for nearly one-sixth of the provincial economy. In each of these sectors, it is critical to promote increased productivity, diversification and greater competitiveness. These are our priority actions:

- **Forestry**
  - Seek methods to increase yields from Crown land.
  - Facilitate private woodlot owners and industrial purchasers of wood to work together to establish an equitable marketing arrangement.
  - Support private woodlot marketing boards in enhancing silviculture, certification education and market development.
  - Support an online logistics database to track wood movement within the province and facilitate exchanges between companies to reduce transportation costs and promote efficient use of wood.
  - Work with NB Power and industry to explore options for reducing energy costs through conservation, co-generation, off-peak use and investments in new generation capacity.
  - Establish a policy on the sustainable harvest of biomass material from Crown land.
  - Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the future development of New Brunswick's forest sector to put in place a development strategy to support new investment and greater diversification within the industry.
  - Work with the forest industry and New Brunswickers to address the question of balance between timber harvesting and conservation in managing our Crown Lands.
- **Agriculture**

  Develop a Strategic Investment Initiative for the agriculture sector focused on productivity and competitiveness, development of new value-added products, renewal and skills development, production system enhancement, plant and animal health and development of bio-fuel crops and other bio-products.

- **Aquaculture**
  Work with the federal government to establish programming that will foster growth and sustainable development in the aquaculture sector in a manner similar to other resource sectors.
- **Fisheries and Seafood Processing**
  - Develop appropriate adjustment measures to address the needs of communities and workers affected by restructuring of the processing sector.
  - Work with the federal government to address continuity of supply issues facing New Brunswick fish plants.
  - Explore the potential for greater use of fish processing by-products for the production of bio-products.
- **Minerals, Oil and Natural Gas**
  Review regulations, royalties and the tax environment to ensure they are competitive with other jurisdictions in encouraging increased mineral, oil and gas exploration and development.

Tourism and Culture Development

New Brunswick's breathtaking scenery and unique culture have attracted millions of visitors to our province. But with changing demographics, new technology and an increasingly competitive global tourism marketplace, we need to find new ways to be better. Government's initiatives with the tourism industry will focus on:

- Implementing a new consumer engagement strategy using on-line tools to improve customer service management, reach new special interest markets and strengthen our ability to direct visitors to in-province attractions.
- Enhancing visitor experiences by revitalizing and expanding key tourism infrastructure to deliver world-class experiences, emphasizing the ecotourism potential of waterways and forests and striving to be a leader in customer service. Government will invest $100 million in improvements to tourism infrastructure.
- Promoting our cultural heritage and enhancing the cultural sector through a New Brunswick book publishing policy; support for artists, musicians and filmmakers; and events like the World Acadian Congress and New Brunswick's 225th Anniversary in 2009.
- Pursuing new strategic partnerships with federal agencies, universities and the private sector for promotion, product development and research.

Competitive Business Environment

A growing economy requires a thriving business sector. We must ensure New Brunswick has the most competitive environment possible to encourage business and entrepreneurial growth through the following actions:

- Consulting with taxation experts and working to ensure New Brunswick's overall tax regime is favourable to investment.
- Ensuring that our regulatory regime is fair and transparent, relevant for government and industry and effective in terms of compliance.
- Creating a single window for funding, targeting financial support to key technology sectors, encouraging more partnerships between academics and business and supporting a resource centre to help launch research and development projects and bringing them to the commercial market.
- Assisting New Brunswick firms to develop and expand in key sectors, diversifying their products and bring them to new export markets, supporting productivity improvement programs, strengthening relationships with private sector organizations, and helping local firms get international certification in key technology clusters.
- Challenging the business community to take a leading role in entrepreneurship mentoring and developing innovative means of accessing capital.
- Partnering with the federal government to provide streamlined access to business support programs at all levels.
- Becoming a leader in sustainable development. Developing standards and implementing a provincial planning policy to provide planning certainty for developers and put in place innovative incentives to encourage sustainable management of economic, social and environmental resources.

Seizing New Opportunities

To achieve transformational growth, we must invest strategically in infrastructure that will spur economic development, aggressively attract new employers to our province, capitalize on opportunities in the energy sector and establish technology clusters. These are the new directions we will take to strengthen our economy as we move toward self-sufficiency.

Strategic Infrastructure Fund

Economic growth requires smart investments in the structures that support our economy, including highways, wireless communications, pipelines, power lines, ports and railways. We will establish a Strategic Infrastructure Fund that will support our agenda for transformative change.

Business Attraction Strategy
We must work with existing national and multi-national firms to explore opportunities for increasing their presence in New Brunswick. We must also do more to attract new national and multinational businesses to our province. A special unit will be created within Business New Brunswick to develop and execute an aggressive business attraction strategy, focused on these marquee firms.

Energy Hub
We are well positioned to supply our neighbours with energy as well as meet our own present and future requirements. An Energy Team will be formed to develop an investment strategy to position New Brunswick as an energy powerhouse for the 21st century, including opportunities to promote energy efficiency, supply goods and services to the global energy market, bring natural gas access to northern New Brunswick and examine investment opportunities for a second generating plant at Belledune.

Technology Clusters
Future economic growth will be increasingly dependent on our ability to foster innovation and make new technology available to the wider marketplace. New Brunswick's established research community located in our universities and the advantages of our location and resource-based industries provide a base to develop technology clusters. Opportunities now exist to move forward in three areas:

- ***Advanced Training Technologies***
  New Brunswick has a solid base of firms and institutions with world-class expertise and technology in the area of advanced training technologies. Potential applications include training for military personnel in Canada and abroad, emergency response personnel and commercial pilots, as well as safety technology and remote robotics. The technology and learning developed here can be exported around the globe.
- ***Energy Technology***
  New Brunswick is strategically located to act as an energy hub for North America's north-eastern seaboard. Opportunities are constantly emerging to develop new technologies and produce goods and services for the global energy sector, including nuclear technology, zero-emission coal technology and renewable energy sources, including wind, tidal and biomass.

- ***Bio-Economy***
  New Brunswick has established a significant concentration of expertise in the field of bioscience – using our natural resources and renewable materials to develop products, services, fuels, energy and materials. We will focus support in the areas that offer the best opportunities for commercialization and attracting outside investment.

We will move forward to develop clusters in these areas while exploring opportunities in other sectors. Priority actions will include:

- Completing the process of identifying the most promising technology clusters and the priority core technologies to be targeted for support.
- Reviewing the current mandate and structure of the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation so that it supports key research and development that is complementary to priority technology clusters.
- Leveraging federal programs to support commercialization of cluster-related technologies through direct financial support and attracting venture capital.
- Working to ensure potential investments from federal programs and research institutions are aligned with provincial priorities.

Transforming our Workforce

To become self-sufficient, we must be innovative with the provision of child care, learning and developing our workforce. Through these transformations, we will provide our people with the opportunity to live healthy and productive lives, pursue their passions, and continually learn new skills. This will be the foundation on which we will build a better New Brunswick.

Ready for Life

Building a better New Brunswick begins with our youngest children. We will put New Brunswickers on the right path to their futures with focused investments in the care, health and education of our children.

When Kids Come First

As outlined in the government's education agenda, New Brunswick has set an ambitious course for our public school system, focused on three goals:

- Every child will arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.
- Every child will leave Grade 5 having mastered the tools to learn – reading, writing and numeracy.
- Every child will graduate from high school having had the opportunity to discover his or her personal strengths and find something he or she loves doing.

By putting the interests of students at the centre of decision-making in education, New Brunswick will be transforming schools to promote innovation, inclusion and the achievement of high-quality results. We will expand learning opportunities with a strengthened focus on trades and vocational education, establishing community schools, revitalizing the role of rural schools, and promote the development of strong leadership at the school level. This student-focused school system will help us develop a generation of New Brunswickers prepared to become leaders in a self-sufficient New Brunswick.

Training for the New Economy

Meeting the requirements of the new economy requires new approaches to post-secondary education. We will ensure our post-secondary institutions are equipped to provide students with the education and training they need to compete for the jobs of today and tomorrow and respond to the changing needs of students and employers. We will examine ways to address high levels of student debt to ensure post-secondary education remains accessible and affordable.

Continuous Learning

Enabling New Brunswick to participate in the economy of the new century requires a new approach to learning. Too many New Brunswickers still lack the literacy skills needed to compete in a modern economy, and skills shortages are becoming more noticeable. We will work with employers to develop new strategies to enhance adult literacy, promote continuous learning in the workplace and help workers and employers to meet their workforce training needs.

Opportunity for All

All New Brunswickers deserve the opportunity to participate in our economy and help our province to grow, but many face barriers to work, and some groups remain underrepresented in the workforce. At the same time, there are shortages of workers in some sectors in the province. Achieving self-sufficiency requires that we harness the skills and resources of all our people. To maximize workforce participation, strategies will be developed to ensure all New Brunswickers have the opportunity to contribute to our economic growth.

Increasing Our Population

More people are required to meet the future needs of our workforce. We must reverse the out-flow of people out of the province and make New Brunswick a destination for opportunity. We will take a comprehensive approach to increasing our population, using a mix of strategies to bring new residents to our province and provide current New Brunswickers with the opportunities they need to stay and make their lives here.

We will take action to recruit immigrants to our province and retain them once they are here by marketing our province to the world, promoting diversity and multiculturalism at home and assisting new Canadians in making their homes here. We will work to repatriate New Brunswickers living elsewhere by linking job opportunities here with the skills of those looking to move home. We will strive to engage our youth and support opportunities that will retain our best and brightest.

We will implement and promote programs, policies and practices that will enhance our status as an attractive place to settle and raise a family. This comprehensive approach will ensure we can grow our province over time and have the people and resources we need to build a better New Brunswick.

Transforming our Relationships

Achieving self-sufficiency requires us to build lasting and mutually beneficial relationships with all our partners and to form new partnerships to strengthen our province. We will focus on these key relationships:

Public Engagement

Government will develop a consistent, transparent and forward-looking strategy to ensure that New Brunswickers are fully informed and engaged in the achievement of self-sufficiency.

Government of Canada

We will build upon the positive response of the federal government to the self-sufficiency initiative to create a sustainable, active and mutually beneficial partnership focused on transformational change and achieving long-term objectives.

Provincial/Territorial, State and International Governments

New Brunswick will focus on relations with the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, Maine and the New England states, and members of La Francophonie to create cross-border strategic alliances and new partnerships that advance self-sufficiency.

Aboriginal New Brunswickers

New Brunswick will move forward as part of the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and New Brunswick Relationship Building Bilateral Agreement to hold regular meetings with First Nations leaders, establish bilateral roundtables to discuss issues of mutual concern and work with First Nations to ensure New Brunswick's first peoples can fully contribute to achieving self-sufficiency.

Business and Labour

Government will work collaboratively with business and labour groups to build their participation in the self-sufficiency process.

Communities

Municipalities, community organizations and volunteer groups are important providers of public services to New Brunswickers. Government will work to engage and support these sectors so that they can be full partners in achieving self-sufficiency.

Transforming our Government

To make the transformations necessary to achieve self-sufficiency, we must have a government with a structure that supports principled decision-making, enhanced accountability to taxpayers and the timely delivery of quality public services.

Healthy New Brunswickers

A self-sufficient New Brunswick requires healthy people. Health-related spending accounts for the largest and an increasing share of the provincial budget.

We will do more to promote healthy living, encourage healthy habits and lifestyle choices for young and old alike, provide people with chronic illnesses the opportunity to do more to manage their own care, enable senior citizens to enjoy healthy and active lives, and ensure the health needs of our most vulnerable residents, particularly children, are appropriately addressed.

To ensure we can meet our health care needs now and in the future, we must incorporate new technology and innovative methods of health care delivery into our health system. To provide high-quality, affordable health care, e-health applications are vital. By developing and implementing a "one patient, one record" system, we can improve service, enhance efficiency and create new opportunities for economic growth.

We can also use new technology to build on our reputation as a leader in home health care, expanding the range of tele-health services and implementing new home-based monitoring systems to help people manage their own health care. We will actively promote wellness and physical activity for our youth, healthy aging for our seniors and healthy lifestyle choices for all New Brunswickers.

The Provincial Health Plan will set out new directions for health care in New Brunswick, which will ensure we can live in better health while sustaining the health care system that we cherish.

Improving Service Delivery

Government services must put citizens first. They must be convenient, timely, easy to use, flexible, transparent and efficient. Improving service delivery will provide greater satisfaction to clients, a more business-friendly environment for entrepreneurs and will ensure that tax dollars are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

We will evaluate our programs, processes and policies with one question in mind: does this help or hinder our drive toward self-sufficiency?

We will be a leader in providing high-quality and timely services to our residents. Service New Brunswick gives the province a solid foundation on which to develop new approaches to enhance the accessibility and quality of a wide range of services. We will:

- Increase the use of "single window service," making public services easier to use and more efficient to deliver.
- Streamline and modernizing service delivery to the public and the business community, improving timeliness and reducing service costs.
- Enhance integrated electronic access to government services.

A Renewed Public Service

The provincial public service faces the demographic challenges now facing other New Brunswick employers. The retirement of the "baby boom" generation presents a significant challenge – within the next five years, one-quarter of public servants plan to retire or pursue other career paths. But this is also an important opportunity.

We will reach out to our public service to make them active participants in achieving self-sufficiency. We will:

- Invest in the skill sets of public servants.
- Promote continuous learning in the workplace and investing in skill sets.
- Review pay, benefits and human resources policies to ensure they are competitive with other sectors and attractive to potential recruits.
- Develop a new generation of leaders within our public service.
- Engage in succession planning for pending retirements.
- Actively recruit talented individuals to our public service.

These actions will renew and revitalize our public service, giving it the credibility to implement the changes that must be made to build a better New Brunswick.

Stronger Communities

A self-sufficient New Brunswick requires strong communities. Local governance must be effectively managed, providing tax structures that meet communities' needs while ensuring a competitive environment for business and employment.

A commissioner has been appointed to study local governance issues and provide recommendations on:

- Local government structures, to end New Brunswick's "democratic deficit."
- Property taxation, with the aim of equalizing the tax burden for all New Brunswickers.
- The creation of a new provincial funding mechanism for municipal governments, to be in place by December 2008.

- Enhancing land-use planning that follows sustainable development principles.
- Improving regional planning and service delivery.

In responding to these recommendations by the fall of 2008, government will strive to position New Brunswick's communities to take advantage of the opportunities created by self-sufficiency.

Working Together

Self-sufficiency will benefit all New Brunswickers, and each of us has a stake in its achievement. Achieving this goal requires that we work together.

Parents can contribute by taking an active role in their children's education, supporting their teachers and schools as well as ensuring their children are prepared to make appropriate choices for their post-secondary education and working lives.

Businesses and entrepreneurs can help to grow and sustain our economy by investing in improving the productivity of their workforce and by mentoring young entrepreneurs.

Public servants can work to establish strong working relationships with other governments, post-secondary institutions, communities and organizations and provide innovative solutions to the challenges facing our province.

Workers can play an important part by continually upgrading their skills; seeking out opportunities for workplace training and personal growth; and enhancing productivity by working with employers through their unions and associations.

New Brunswickers can take an active role in their communities, welcome newcomers and become engaged, with their government and fellow New Brunswickers, in moving our province forward.

Government will play its part by using its policy-making and legislative powers to support sustainable growth and by providing sound leadership.

By acting as responsible citizens and working together as partners, self-sufficiency is within our grasp.