



Public Policy and the Social Economy in Atlantic Canada (Phase II): New Brunswick - briefing paper by Dr. Jan Myers

Introduction

As part of the activities of the Atlantic Node of the pan-Canadian Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network, the public policy working group initiated a project to map and provide an inventory of provincial legislation, policies, programs and initiatives that are directly relevant to community economic and social development, the social economy, and building the capacity and opportunities for engagement in policy formulation and implementation in the Atlantic region. This initial phase consisted of desk based research to identify information publically available through government and other agency websites as well as more traditional academic routes for literature reviews and searches (bibliographic, journal and research databases), up to 2008 and before the 2008 federal elections.

A review of some of the available literature and policy scan reports to-date indicates a concentration on substantive or administrative policy and relations. This includes program focused, funding relationships and accountabilities, and/or issue based concerns (e.g. employment, social exclusion and services for specified groups) often, but not always, in relation to resourcing and service delivery¹. Many of these reports identify issues common across sub-sectors of non-profit organizations (e.g. changes in funding regimes, changing jurisdictions and downloading of public programs) and identify good practice approaches in relation to, for example, single issue concerns (e.g. child care, elder care, learning disabilities, housing, drugs and alcohol services); communities of interest (Native communities, migrant and immigrant workers); and in relation to transaction relationships (often bi-lateral and concerned with service delivery, contracts, funding, accountability). Part of the analysis of a policy environment is to look for opportunities to build on these kinds of relationships and good practice examples.

What we want to explore in the second part of the research are the conditions, contexts and relationships that contribute to and facilitate non-profit and social economy organizational involvement in public policy dialogue and development² and purposeful relationships between and across sectors. These “purposeful relationships” or active alliances are often multi-stakeholder: public, private, non-profit sectors and social economy organizations; different levels of government; and shaped by broader civil society concerns, mixed economy of care, regeneration and stakeholder involvement and a growing emphasis on social economy and social enterprise. This second phase of the research involves discussion with key respondents to identify good practice examples, gaps and opportunities for collaboration

¹ Caledon Institute (2007) Community Stories: Leading to enable: government engagement in vibrant communities Saint John, Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy

² Voluntary Sector Initiative (2003) Participating in Federal Public Policy, Ottawa: Voluntary Sector Task Force

and inclusive approaches to engagement and involvement linked to improved policy planning and decision-making. Some of the questions that will shape this discussion include:

- How key respondents explain what the ‘social economy’ means in the context of their work and what are the key constituent parts of the social economy in their area (e.g. visibility an predominance of non-profit and voluntary organizations, or co-operatives, or social enterprises for example)
- How key respondents’ understandings and definitions of the social economy are reflected in existing government policies?
- What are the consequences of these differing understandings in terms of governance and policy frameworks?
- What types of relationships exists around policy development and implementation?
- What policy needs are not being met and what changes are required in the regulatory environment to meet these gaps and enhance collaboration between SE sector organizations and governments?
- What conditions, contexts and relationships exist/need to exist which promote and facilitate non-profit sector involvement, for example, in policy deliberation, production and implementation.

In order to try to provide an overview as well as a comparison to earlier data³, the policy review reports produced for each of the four Atlantic Provinces focus on specific aspects of government support for social economy (SE) organizations and activities, for example:

- Identification of department or departments with a mandate to support SE organizations and activities;
- Legislation that commits the federal, provincial and/or municipal governments to support social economy organizations and activities;
- Policies that outline broader government support for the social economy, SE and third sector organizations and activities;
- Specific programs and initiatives that support the social economy through: start up or seed funding for social economy organizations (e.g. co-operatives, non-profit enterprises, etc.) and/or ongoing funding and support (e.g. via infrastructure organizations such as cooperative development agencies or direct to social economy organizations);
- Evidence of support for community and sector engagement in policy formulation;
- Policies geared towards involvement of communities of interest (Aboriginal and First Nations), geographical communities (rural development) and specific sectors (health, housing) in policy development;
- Policies/initiatives at a local level linked to social economy organizations and sector development; and

³ In 2002, the Canadian Community Economic Development Network carried out a survey of provincial governments’ commitment to and support for community economic development initiatives in their region. This was published in 2003 as *An Inventory of Provincial and Territorial Support to Community Economic Development in Canada* (Infanti) and was used as a baseline framework for the current review.

- Other support and infrastructure organizations geared to supporting social economy organizations (SEOs) or promoting joint working between SEOs and government (and private sector).

This briefing provides a summary of the report⁴ produced with regard to New Brunswick, a full copy of which is available on request.

Supporting the social economy in New Brunswick

In 2008, there were 13 credit unions in New Brunswick within a total of 207 co-operatives⁵. According to the new Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat there are approximately 2732 registered charities and over 4000 incorporated non-profits employing nearly 40,000 people in New Brunswick. Every year, New Brunswickers provide on average around 52 million hours of volunteer labour⁶, which amounts to an economic value of over \$400,000,000.⁷ In comparison, there are 89,717 people employed in the public sector with the vast majority of these (63,693) employed with the provincial government.

In considering policies that link government and social economy organizations, it is possible to list all departments and a number of programs that relate to supporting aspects of the social economy – for example funding initiatives for single issue concerns involving bi-lateral relationships between one government department and one or more organizations, such as funding for organizations providing services for drug or alcohol dependency. In 2007, the Bradshaw report (2007)⁸ identified 26 separate government departments, each having their own relationship and set of protocols in relation to the voluntary and non-profit sector alone. These bi-lateral relationships, policies and programs are important as they affect policy on a special interest and coalition level and may link to new policy development and government interdepartmental collaboration. However, our concern is also to look for broader integrations and supports across the social economy.

In 2006, with the election of Shawn Graham as premier, the non-profit sector was now seen to be the ‘third pillar’ in building a vibrant and sustainable New Brunswick⁹. In addition, after six years of concentrated activity on policy issues with the launch of PolicyLink NB in 2001 and the publication of the Bradshaw Report in 2007, the Community Non-profit Organizations Secretariat was established with the appointment of a minister with portfolio

⁴ The report – *Public Policy and the Social Economy in Atlantic Canada: New Brunswick – An inventory of jurisdictional policies, programs and activities that support social economy organizations at municipal, provincial and federal levels* – is available in pdf format.

⁵ Thériault, L., Skibbens, R., & Brown, L. (2008) *A Portrait of Co-operatives and Credit Unions in Atlantic Canada: preliminary analysis*. Working Paper #2008-01. Halifax, NS: Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network.

⁶ <http://www.gnb.ca/0012/CNPO-OCSB/facts&stats-e.asp>

⁷ Calculated using the 2008 minimum wage level for New Brunswick of \$7.75 per hour (<http://srv116.services.gc.ca/wid-dimt/mwa/rpt2.aspx?lang=eng&dec=1>)

⁸ Bradshaw, C., Rickards, S., Landry, F., & Hutchins, R. (2007). *Blueprint for Action: building a foundation for self-sufficiency*. New Brunswick: Department of Family and Community Services, Government of New Brunswick.

⁹ Peacock, K (2009) *Poverty Reduction Policies and Programs: restoring hope or treading water*, Social Development Series commissioned by Canadian Council on Social Development

for the voluntary and non-profit sector. Also in 2007, a report by Bulthuis¹⁰ pointed to new ways of working in and across different levels of government in Saint John with moves to more inclusive and horizontal ways of working through town-hall style meetings, forums and consultations across the region.

While it is important that there are levels of government, departments and officers within departments facilitating engagement with a range of stakeholders it is also important to have an organised non-governmental sector to put forward ideas and local solutions. This requires both organized social economy infrastructure and the mechanisms supported by government for increased meaningful and purposeful exchange. We have examples of this on a sectoral basis (for example certain sections of the voluntary and community sector linking with government to discuss funding issues, evaluation mechanisms and changes in service provision), which are indicative of bi-lateral or transactional relationships between sector / sector organizations and government / government departments. There are examples of special interest coalitions (task forces and organizations such as the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative). There are also examples of inter-connectivity between government departments, and between provincial, municipal and private sector organizations, some of which include social economy representation or strategies and action plans that outline intention to include citizen's organizations and social economy organizations in current and future policy deliberations.

The next section details some of the departments, mandates, strategies and policies that:

- mandate or encourage avenues for dialogue with third sector and social economy organizations;
- do / or have the potential for inter-sectoral collaboration and co-operation; and /or provide financial and technical support for specific activities;
- acknowledge interdependence in a mixed economy of care in delivery of a range of services and community development activities; and
- provide a springboard or platform for co-construction, co-production, implementation and evaluation of social and economic policies.

Policies and frameworks that support the development of the social economy

This section is organised around a series of question to categorise some of the policy scan data collected, summarised in the table below and then explained in more detail. The information provided is indicative rather than definitive of the relationships, policies, programs and organisations/departments that exist currently (i.e. as of 2008). Part of the rationale for the second phase of the policy scan is to engage with people 'on the ground' to explore the 'reality' of the situation to date.

¹⁰ Bulthuis, M. (2007). *Community Stories - Leading to enable: government engagement in vibrant communities Saint John*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy

Policies and frameworks that support the development of the social economy and / or provide avenues for policy dialogue and development between social economy organizations and government.	
1. Is there a department with a mandate to support social economy organizations and activities?	N
2. Is there legislation that commits federal, provincial and / or municipal governments to support social economy organizations and activities?	Y
3. Are there policies that define broader government support for social economy and social economy and third sector organizations and activities?	Y
4. Are there programs and/or initiatives that support the social economy through: start up or seed funding for social economy organizations and/or ongoing funding and support?	Y
5. Is there support for community and sector engagement in policy formulation?	Y
6. Are there specific policies geared towards involvement of communities of interest, geographical communities and specific sectors (health, housing) in policy development?	Y
7. Are there policies/initiatives at a local level linked to social economy organizations and sector development?	Y
8. Are there other support and infrastructure organizations geared to supporting social economy organizations (SEOs) or promoting joint working between SEOs and government (and private sector)?	Y

Q: Is there a department with a mandate to support social economy organizations and activities?

A: No, but....

There is no specific department with a mandate for ‘social economy’ or ‘third sector’. However, there are departments that are responsible for specific aspects of the social economy, for example:

- *Community Non-Profits Secretariat*: set up as a direct response to the premier’s Community Non-Profit Task Force in 2007. It was set up to facilitate better relationships between the non-profit sector and government and has four main functions: a point of contact for government/non-profits; policy development; policy coordination and support to the sector through regular regional conferences, support for professionals in the sector to develop training opportunities and to subsidise training for professionals in the sector to participate in training offered to provincial civil servants.
- *Justice and Consumer Affairs, Credit Unions, Co-operatives and Trust Companies Branch* – responsible for the supervision of credit unions and caisses populaires and the administration of the Co-operatives Act. The mandate of the Department is ‘to promote the impartial administration of justice and to ensure the protection of the public interest’ (Annual Report 2007-2008). The Branch also advises and recommends policy and legislative changes concerning co-operatives. In the 2006 Co-operatives Annual Report, the Minister of Justice and Consumer Affairs, suggested that as there are nearly 400,000 members of co-ops and credit unions in the province. Co-operators hold an important place in the population and co-ops are a ‘potential source of major change in consumerism’ including social and environmental concerns and that they provide consumers with a forum for democratic participation.

- *Department of Social Development* - This department delivers a comprehensive range of integrated supports to individuals and families, such as child welfare; day care and adoption; income and support programs; housing programs; disability programs; and long-term care programs including nursing home services. The Department serves as a focal point for youth policy, seniors' policy and the voluntary sector associated with its mandate.
- *Business New Brunswick* - Business New Brunswick has a regional and community development mission for all regions, focussed principally on New Brunswick business growth and development. It provides a 'single-window' entry point for firms and entrepreneurs seeking financial and technical assistance from government. The current regional economic development commissions report through Business New Brunswick.
- *Service New Brunswick* - has a mission to improve the delivery of government services to the public. The Department oversees the registration of non-profits under the Companies Act (see below) and provides information and guidance on registration and duties under the Act.
- *Department of Wellness and Recreation, Municipality of Mirimichi*: mandate and aims of the department include building 'partnerships with community groups, organizations and individuals to provide opportunities to meet the citizens' needs and to avoid the duplication of services'

Q: Is there legislation that commits federal, provincial and/or municipal governments to support social economy organizations and activities?

A: Yes

- *Co-operative Associations Act and Regulations*
- *Credit Unions Act and Credit Unions Regulations under the Act*
- *Credit Union Act – Networking Regulation*
- *Corporations Act* – allows for the registration of non-profits. The Canada Corporations Act will be replaced by the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act in 2009.
- *Regional Development Act* – as noted by Infanti (2003) the Act governs the working of the Regional Development Corporation which is the key agency in negotiating between the Province and federal government and co-ordinates and finances provincial development initiatives. Its primary focus is on job creation, employment and economic development of the region and local communities.
- *New Brunswick Housing Act* - sets up the New Brunswick Housing Corporation. Financial support to non-profit associations (co-operatives) and can incorporate a non-profit corporation.
- *Education Act* includes strategies for establishing partnerships with the community to improve the quality of learning in schools, and in facilitating the use of schools by community groups and organizations.

- *Agricultural Associations Act* – allows for the establishment of member organizations to represent farmers and agricultural organizations
- *The New Brunswick Health Council Act* allows for the establishment of the NB Health Council. Part of the remit of the council includes the meaningful engagement of citizens in dialogue to improve health service quality in the province. The Council is active in community engagement exercises linked to policy development as well as service delivery. Links with the Provincial Health Plan, Transforming New Brunswick's Health-care System.

Q. Are there policies that define broader government support for social economy and social economy and third sector organizations and activities?

A. Yes

- *Delivering on the Blueprint* – the government response to Blueprint for Action
- *The Liberal Party Manifesto Charter for Change 2007* commitments announced in the Speech from the Throne 2007 – cornerstones of the charter are education, energy and economic development.
- *Our Action Plan to be Self-sufficient in New Brunswick* – aims include ensuring that public engagement is meaningful, effective, collaborative and sustainable so that citizens can be active participants in governance; and 'strengthening the non-profit sector and to promote the respect and recognition the sector deserves' (S1.7).
- *Disability Action Plan Strategy* – this is part of the process of inclusion that comes with the Province's goal of self-sufficiency by 2026 (above). One of the aims is to involve consumers in all aspects of planning and delivery of services and facilities. There are also objectives about improving access to employment, but no mention of social firms.
- *Be Ready for Success: a 10-year early childhood strategy*: sees community non-profit and voluntary sector as partners in achieving strategy objectives. Provides funding (see below)
- *Poverty Reduction Strategy* – plan being updated. Leadership for achieving outcomes is seen to rest with government, business and non-profit sector.
- *Wellness Strategy* – the Select Committee on Wellness sees non-government organizations as key stakeholders in achieving the aims of the strategy. One of the recommendations is that a provincial coordinating mechanism to be set up representing government, non-government organizations, universities and the private sector can provide resources and support to communities and help them build capacity. It also places responsibility on communities in terms of promoting healthier lifestyles.
- *Benefits Blueprints* – Energizing Sustainable Communities Initiative – broad based community initiative which supports community champions and individuals as well as government and non-governmental organizations to research and to seek improvements to policies, programs and investments. The current council does not have co-op or non-profit representation. The summary of findings from its first phase

of work is to give a boost to neighbourhood capacity and programs addressing poverty. It mentions social enterprise (which is defined narrowly as a business that hires ‘individuals with disabilities, a criminal history, or other barriers to employment’, which fits the definition of a ‘social firm’ rather than a social enterprise per se); the report also mentions action-oriented housing initiatives but doesn’t mention housing co-ops.

Q. Are there programs and/or initiatives that support the social economy through: start up or seed funding for social economy organizations (e.g. co-operatives, non-profit enterprises, etc.) and/or ongoing funding and support (e.g. via infrastructure organizations such as cooperative development agencies or direct to social economy organizations)?

A. Yes

- *Early Learning and Child Care Trust Fund*, launched 2007: start-up funding grants offered through the Trust Fund have supported the creation of 166 new infant spaces, 116 new rural spaces, 72 new extended hours spaces, and 40 new seasonal child care spaces. The report does not say if these are voluntary/non-profit or co-operative providers, but the strategy, *Be Ready for Success* (see above), looks at voluntary and community organizations as potential partners.
- *Northern New Brunswick Infrastructure Initiative* (Regional Development Corporation) – development of the economy and building community capacity in Northern New Brunswick – initiatives must be submitted and sponsored by a department, an agency or a Crown Corporation.
- *Family and Youth Capital Assistance Program* (Regional Development Corporation) – capital assistance for youth and family community oriented projects e.g. development of playgrounds, renovation of buildings, purchase of equipment
- *Community Events Program* (Regional Development Corporation) – contribution to festivals and community events
- *Shelter Enhancement Program* (Dept of Social Development) - non-profits and charities providing emergency shelters and second stage housing for survivors of family violence.
- *Growth Fund* – non-profits are ineligible. Provides financial support for start-up and expansion of existing enterprises including some cultural enterprises and craft production, so could possibly include social and co-operative enterprise.
- *Community Mental Health Centres*: programs and services – services are provided through four distinct operational sectors, one of which is non-profits and consumer-run programs. Expansion of the policy has seen development of mental health support services, such as housing, vocational training and community support networks.
- *Affordable Housing Program* – forgivable loans to private non-profit corporations and co-operatives for acquisition and rehabilitation, conversion and operation of rental housing projects.
- *Strategic Initiatives Fund* – under the Arts branch of the Department, this initiative provides funding to cover some of the costs of innovative projects. Projects have to

have a focus of strengthening the economic and strategic contribution of the cultural and artistic sector. Open to non-profits.

Q. Is there support for community and sector engagement in policy formulation?

A. Yes

- *2007: Task Force on Self-sufficiency* to include consultations with citizens.
- *2007: Select Committee on Wellness* – established to engage residents to consider how to improve wellness in the province.
- *2008: Throne Speech* – announced that the poverty reduction plan will be developed with input from individuals, community non-profit organizations and the business sector.
- *Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Coalition* – made up of 5 government departments and seven non-government organizations working collaboratively; currently co-chaired by the Canadian Cancer Society and the Department of Wellness, Culture & Sport.

Q. Are there specific policies geared towards involvement of communities of interest (Aboriginal and First Nations), geographical communities (rural development) and specific sectors (health, housing) in policy development?

A. Yes

- *Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat* established in 1999 with a deputy minister appointed exclusively for Aboriginal Affairs in 2003. In 2007, a bilateral agreement was reached on relationship building between the Assembly of First Nations chiefs and the Province of New Brunswick. Aboriginal Affairs Initiative (Regional Development Corporation) – supports activities being carried out by the Secretariat. Administers a grants program.
- *Throne Speech 2007*: Deputy Minister under Department of Health to meet the needs of Francophone and Acadian residents.
- *Canada – New Brunswick Agreement on the Provision of French Language Services*: provides for funding for three school-community centres (Sainte-Anne; Beausoleil and Samuel-de-Champlain).
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons* – 2007 strategy includes objectives to involve consumers in all aspects of the planning and delivery of services and facilities. There are also objectives to improve access to employment but does not mention social firms. Accountability of partners involved in design and delivery of services includes data collection and reporting of the level of participation by people with disabilities and their advocates in public policy planning processes. The strategy report also contains a number of recommendations for other government departments to establish stakeholder meetings and consultation events.
- *Minister's Working Group on Violence against Women* (Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs) established in 2000 and in 2002 a violence prevention officer was appointed to work with departments and community organizations. The working

group is a partnership between government and relevant community groups. The working group presented a strategic framework to government in 2001 and continues to meet annually to review accomplishments. '*A Better World for Women: moving forward 2005-2010*' is the government's second action plan. The report points to inter-departmental project teams and successful partnerships and working relationships with community stakeholders. The Women's Issues Branch of the Executive Council is responsible for leadership and co-ordination function of the action plan (recognising that issues overlap with broad Status of Women's issues). There is also *Provincial Partnerships in Action (PPA) Committee* which brings together representatives from 14 local family violence committees. These committees include service providers from both the community and government sectors. The committee comes together twice a year for training, skills development, networking, information sharing on best practices, and how to develop and evolve a provincial response for the provision of core services to be provided to women and their families.

- *Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat* – consultations in 2007 with key stakeholders on long-term care strategy.

Q. Are there policies/initiatives at a local level linked to social economy organizations and sector development?

A. Yes

- *Economic Development Act / Regional Development Corporation Act*: in 2002, the Province restructured its economic development agencies, as part of a community-based economic development strategy, to create the Enterprise Network. This was noted by Infanti (2003) as a CED initiative related to building social capital. Although funded by the provincial government, ACOA and participating municipalities, the agency is set up as a not-for-profit organization. Part of its remit is to increase business representation, community input (more often than not linked to municipality input rather than community non-profit organizations) and local decision-making power.
- *The provincial department Environment and Local Government* is responsible for liaison with municipalities and local service district governance.
- *Saint John Community Council* – funding for social programs
- '*Defining Our Commitments*': a corporate strategy for the City of Saint John: Citizens' Advisory Group had input into developing the strategy. The plan pledges to incorporate feedback from the community into service delivery decisions and to allow time for meaningful and informed input. The City is looking to set up cross-functional teams to develop collaborative working and to develop partnerships with community groups. There are plans to engage the entire community of Saint John into community planning around sustainability, and the report specifically prioritises an expanded role for Saint John Non-Profit Housing to be responsible for housing in Saint John with appropriate level of resources.

- *City of Dieppe Strategic Plan*: includes priorities to create a vibrant community to support cultural identity, health and well-being and quality of life in Dieppe. Part of this is to encourage volunteering including for committees and councils; to promote inclusion and to encourage participation in community life.

Q. Are there other support and infrastructure organizations geared to supporting social economy organizations (SEOs) or promoting joint working between SEOs and government (and private sector)?

A: Yes

- *Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative* in Saint John
- *Community Business Development Corporations*: 10 CBDC offices located in rural areas of New Brunswick, not-for-profit organizations run by volunteers from the business community to provide (high risk) capital and resources particularly for entrepreneurs who have difficulty accessing financial resources through mainstream sources. Part of the Atlantic Association of CBDCs, mainly funded through ACOA. Operate Seed Capital Program, Technology Development Fund, Women in Business Initiative, Self-employed Benefit program. Mainly geared to individual entrepreneurs has supported child care projects.
- *Enterprise Network* (quango – see above)
- *Vibrant Communities Saint John* (Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement) – ‘voice’ to government, encourages co-ordination and collaboration. Lead community response on poverty. Brought governments together with business and the non-profit sector and individuals living in poverty to discuss delivery of a ‘resident-focused strategy for poverty reduction in Saint John.
- *Human Development Council, Saint John* (a United Way agency): non-profit social planning council, mainly focused on poverty. The Council has supported the development of a number of organizations including the Urban Core Support Network. Saint John Community Loans Fund and Saint John Learning exchange.
- *Saint John Community Loan Fund*: promotes community investing. It recruits investments to build its loan pool and donations to safe-guard the loan pool against losses. Provides loans to help get individuals back to work, business loans and loans to secure housing.
- *Centre Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne* – works to promote and facilitate volunteer action and to provide services for children and young people, adults, seniors and vulnerable people in the four electoral ridings of Caraquet, Tracadie-Sheila, Shippagan-les-Îles and Centre-Péninsule
- *Co-operative Enterprise Council New Brunswick* was incorporated in 2008 to supplement the coverage of its francophone sister organization, Coopérative de Développement Régional – Acadia (CDR-A). Services include technical support and advice, training and help to put innovative ideas into practice. A 2008 survey of priorities for New Brunswick co-ops is available for download from their website.
- *Credit Union Central New Brunswick* – part of remit is to promote the organization, development and welfare of credit unions and to encourage co-operation between co-

operatives and credit unions in New Brunswick. It also advocates a flexible legislative and regulatory environment for credit unions (and promotes compliance) and provides a range of services. Currently seeking amalgamation to become Credit Union Central Atlantic.

- *Bathurst Sustainable Development* - originally set up in 1995 as a partnership between the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the NB Environmental Trust Fund. When the project ended in 2001 members decided to set up as a non-profit community organization. The website has information on a variety of programs - urban transit, energy efficiency, solar and conservation programs as well as information on funding.

Issues arising from the first phase of the policy scan

We can begin to look at different ways to analyse and describe policy development and engagement with stakeholders – this can be looked at in terms of structural relationships: transaction (single issue and finding relationships which tend to be bi-lateral) and evolution and transformation (multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnership opportunities); place-based and geographical (level of government; geographical – rural /urban); and in terms of levels of participation and engagement of key stakeholders (co-construction and co-production of policies and services).

The policy scan and review gives a useful platform and foundation which can support further research in New Brunswick to further develop dialogue with key stakeholders - policy movers, shakers and consumers - around the scope and contribution of social economy organizations and policies and frameworks that can support the support social economy organizations at municipal, provincial and federal levels. There are key actors – on the ground - from government departments and social economy organisations who can support the development of this information and help to give voice and shape to what’s happening on the ground with regard to policy in action. Their experiences and interpretations are important.

Some of the issues and observations arising from the first phase of the policy review include:

- There appears to be no clear understanding, acceptance or usage of the term ‘social economy’ to describe activities that involve social enterprises, non-profit organizations, co-operatives and mutuals in New Brunswick. This is not unusual and in many ways reflects how both government and social economy organizations or sub-sectors are organised: theme and issues based activities (e.g. health, education, business); the services provided to particular sections of the communities (e.g. youth, seniors, people with physical disabilities, mental health issues and other specific needs); categorised by organisational legal and governance structures (e.g. charity, volunteer organisation, self-help group, co-operative, credit union).
- There are departments with specific mandates for specific parts of the social economy. In development and policy areas, this tends to be mainly non-profits, with perhaps the exception of housing co-operatives.

- The term ‘social and economic development’, as Infanti discovered in 2003, is often used to promote economic development (growth, attraction and retention of work age individuals including immigrants, new business) which may have social benefits (revitalisation of urban or rural communities).
- Co-operatives and social enterprise tend to be grouped with economic development and ‘business’ and government policies and support tend to be more focused on registration and compliance, technical support and start-up finance. In this respect, charities and non-profit voluntary and community organizations appear to be more ‘visible’ in terms of contributing and responding to (social) policy developments and initiatives.
- Engagement in policy determination and design seems to be of a consultative nature than full participation. There are some cross-cutting issues – such as anti-poverty initiatives – that involve multi-sector organisations and actors although often with an emphasis on public-private sector partnership. Often involvement of ‘community’ partners is geared to elected members (municipal representatives) and / or individual citizens.
- Activity at a provincial level is most visible although there are hubs of activity at municipal level in New Brunswick and this is matched by development initiatives in the third sector, for example: the Urban Core Support Network in Saint John, the Centre Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne, which covers four specific electoral ridings, and Bathurst Sustainable Development. There are also opportunities for cross-departmental and cross-cutting issues to involve non-governmental stakeholders in areas of provision of human service organisations and services.
- It is still early days, to evaluate the impact of the Community Non-Profits Secretariat and the commitments to the *Blueprint*. A report from a regional meeting in 2008, where attendees were evenly split between government and community showed that 47% of attendees had not read the delivering on the Blueprint document. Of those that had, 87% had not analysed the document and 92% of attendees had not identified any actions specific to implementing recommendations from the report. What this points to is a need to examine consistencies between espoused actions through policy statements and documents and actual developments and practice. This can help to identify points of fracture between policy and practice with regard to supporting social economy organisations and enterprises and opportunities to identify good practice on the ground and to develop relationships and dialogue between sectors.

April 2010