



# Sustainability Report Card: Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus Region\*



Map adapted from work on Functional Economic Regions by A. Simms and J. Ward, Department of Geography and Harris Centre Regional Analysis Lab, Memorial University, St. John's NL.  
Map includes municipalities and local service districts only.

## Regional Fast Facts

Population	28,255
Number of Communities**	109

Source: Community Accounts, 2016.

\*\*Includes incorporated and unincorporated communities

*Sustainability means  
keeping our communities  
alive and supporting them  
into the future.*

**What is a Sustainability Report Card?**  
A sustainability report card is a check-up on the well-being of a community or region based on a common vision for the future. This Report Card is a snapshot in time of the region, which includes 3 distinct smaller regions shown to the left. This Report Card is meant to lead to strategic planning and collaboration across communities to take action on these findings. The top identified priorities for regional sustainability are shown below.

## Top Sustainability Priorities

- Meeting basic needs, tackling poverty, and promoting equity
- Maintaining sense of place, physical & cultural identity
- Intergenerational equity
- Governance and participation
- Integration of environmental, social, and economic factors

Photo credit: homeaway.ca (bottom left), College of the North Atlantic (top left), Robert Berdan (upper right), Maurice Barry (bottom centre), Random Age-Friendly Communities (top centre), Town of Sunnyside (bottom right).

\*Regional boundaries correspond with Clarenville-Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region as defined by the NL Office of Public Engagement

## Regional Overview

The Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus Region extends from Bonavista to Port Blandford, Swift Current, and Long Harbour. The region has a rich cultural heritage and unique identity found in 3 distinct sub-regions: the Bonavista Peninsula, the Clarenville region, and the Isthmus of Avalon. These smaller regions each have their own unique cultural and economic character, but remain interdependent. The regional economy, based historically in fishing and fish processing, now boasts a diversified mix of services, manufacturing, primary industries, office professions, and other sectors. Much economic growth has occurred around services, tourism, and mineral processing and energy sectors in recent years. At the same time, communities are working hard to preserve their rich history and the culture of outport communities and fishing.

### Top 5 Sectors of the Regional Economy

Sector	No. of Employees	% of Workforce	% Change
Services	3,535	24%	+2.9%
Construction	3,115	21%	+4.5%
Fisheries*	2,070	14%	-25.1%
Office	1,585	11%	+36.6%
Manufacturing	875	6%	+5.4%

Source: Community Accounts 2016

Reference years 2001-2006 due to change in Census data.

\*Fisheries employment includes both harvesters and fish processing workers.

### A Common Vision for the Region

Sustainable development for the Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus region must be rooted in a holistic and attainable vision for the future that people across the region can believe in. This should include a wide range of social, environmental, and economic goals shaped by the values of the region's residents in order to guide a common agenda for action. The Regional Council has expressed a holistic sustainability vision, shown

below, that this Report Card uses as its compass for measuring the region's progress.

***The vision of the Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus Region is of a sustainable region with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.***

### How We Measure Progress

In this Report Card, we use 22 indicators shaped by a two-year public engagement process to show how well the region is doing in achieving its sustainability vision. We have rated each of these indicators on a scale shown below, using both public perspectives and data from a wide range of sources. Each indicator has benchmarks, including a target for how much we hope it will improve, and a limit that warns us that we need to work harder to improve it. Recent trends are shown by arrows. To the right are images showing how we are doing in each of the region's 5 sustainability priority areas. The figure below shows the scale we have used to evaluate the region's indicators, ranging from excellent (green) to poor (red).



Image credit: Telos Brabant Centre for Sustainable Development, Netherlands. Benchmarks adapted from methods developed by Telos.

### Where We Are Now





# Meeting Basic Needs, Tackling Poverty, & Promoting Equity

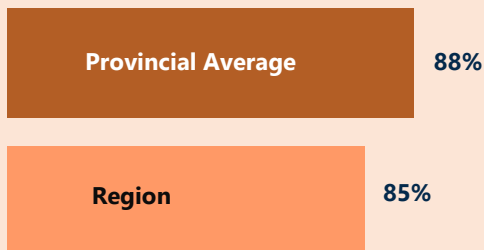
Status: Moderate

*In order to become a sustainable region, we must first ensure a good quality of life for everyone. A public survey conducted in 2015, in which 299 residents of the region participated, identified that residents' top concerns included things like employment, affordable housing, access to healthy and affordable food, and healthcare services. As economic growth transforms many communities, we must ensure that people benefit equitably and can meet their needs.*



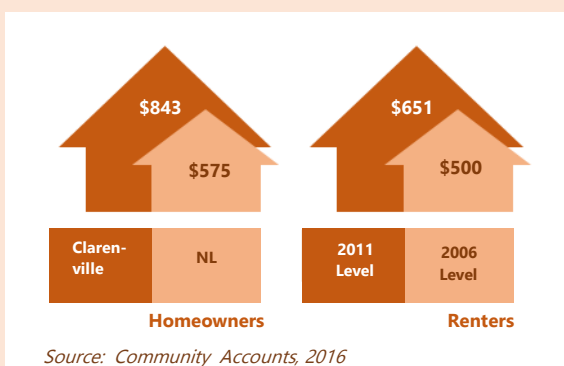
*The Come-by-Chance Community Garden. Photo credit: Roger Goobie.*

## Residents with Regular Access to a Doctor



Source: Community Accounts, 2016

## Median Housing Costs for Clarenville



Source: Community Accounts, 2016



*The CREST Bus. Photo credit: Brenda Reid.*

## Clarenville Region Extended Seniors' Transportation (CREST)

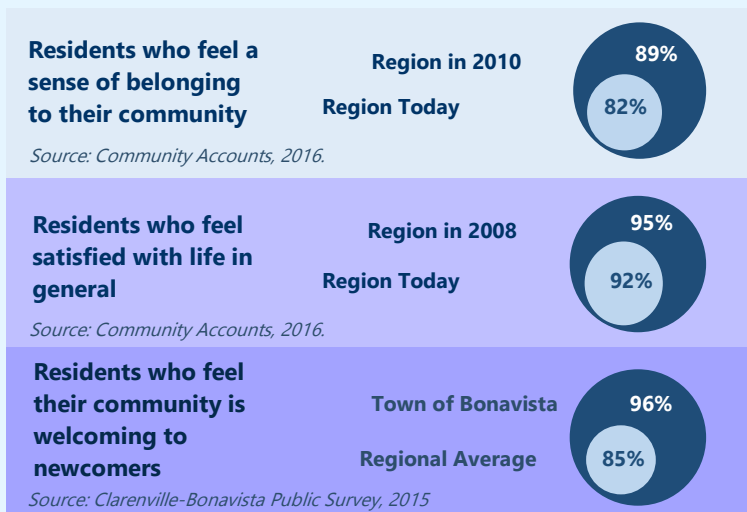
In 2013, the provincial government chose Clarenville for one of five pilot projects for age-friendly transportation. A group of local partners including the Town

of Clarenville and Random Age-Friendly Communities came together to create a public bus service for seniors. Clarenville Region Extended Seniors' Transportation (CREST) began operating on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The CREST bus, operated entirely by volunteers, provides affordable transportation to seniors aged 60+ and people confined to a wheelchair aged 25+. Covering a 20 km radius, the bus serves 12 communities including Clarenville, Milton, George's Brook, Harcourt, Random Heights, Elliott's Cove, Snook's Harbour, Deep Bight, Adeytown, Hillview, North West Brook, and Queen's Cove. The service costs \$2 per ride. CREST relies on the hard work of over 90 volunteers and the support of partners like Co-op 50/50, the Clarenville Lions' Club, Bell Aliant Pioneers, Odd Fellows, the Royal Canadian Legion, and the Rotary Club. Call 466 1114 to book a ride or for more information.

Indicators	Status & Trends	Examples	Data Sources
Affordable Housing	↓	In 2006, average rent in Clarenville was \$500/month, which has increased by 30% while housing costs for homeowners have increased by 11%. Especially in the Clarenville area and the Isthmus, renters, seniors, and students are struggling to afford rising housing costs.	National Household Survey, 2011
Employment Opportunities	↑	Since 2006, the employment rate has increased from 75% to 78%, but many businesses and organizations report that they are struggling to fill vacant positions and attract job seekers.	Community Accounts, 2016
Access to Primary Healthcare	↓	In 2012 91% of residents had regular access to a doctor, while only 85% had access as of 2013. Several communities have had doctors recently retire, and residents outside of the Clarenville area have limited healthcare services within their communities.	Community Accounts, 2016
Access to Transportation	↓	For every one of the region's residents, there is 1.1 vehicles on average, although many seniors must depend on friends and family for rides and most communities have no public transportation options.	Statistics Canada, 2016
Access to Good Food and Nutrition	↑	Since 2011, the proportion of individuals with a healthy body weight increased from 23% to 32%. However, many residents struggle to afford fresh, healthy food which often must be purchased a considerable distance away from their communities.	Community Accounts, 2016



The Sir William Ford Coaker Historical District, Port Union. Image credit: Jerry Moulard.



Indicators	Status & Trends	Examples	Data Sources
Stabilizing Population		The region's total population has decreased 1.6% since 2006 and the average age has grown from 40 to 44 since 2001. However, population decline is less severe than in several other rural regions, and some communities are starting to see new residents moving to the region and an increase in children and young families.	Community Accounts, 2016
Community Connectedness	↓	In 2010, 89% of residents felt a strong sense of belonging to their community. As of 2013, only 82% feel this way.	Community Accounts, 2016
Preservation of Cultural Heritage & Local Identity		There are 18 heritage sites and museums within the region, and during the tourism season over 69,000 visitors come to the region, which is 18.7% of the province's total annual visitors.	Department of Tourism, Culture, & Recreation, 2011; Community Infrastructure Mapping System, n.d.
Social Inclusion & Diversity		85% of residents perceive that communities are welcoming to newcomers, while the region's immigrant population is 1.04%.	Community Accounts; Clarenville-Bonavista Public Survey
Active & Healthy Lifestyles	↑	In 2011, only 54% of residents reported very good or excellent personal health, which has increased to 64%.	Community Accounts, 2016

## Maintaining Sense of Place, Physical & Cultural Identity

Status: Good

The Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus region boasts a rich cultural heritage and identity. From Cape Bonavista, where John Cabot first landed in 1497, to a thriving contemporary arts community, to the rugged coastline dotted with traditional outport communities, the region's heritage is a tremendous asset which has been the centrepiece of a strong cultural tourism industry. However, continuing out-migration and an aging population mean that we must find ways to preserve the region's unique identity while promoting opportunities that will attract young people to stay in the region.



The new aquarium in Champney's West. Photo credit: Champney's West Heritage Group.



Historical demonstrations at Trinity. Photo credit: Trinity Historical Society.

### Trinity Historical Society

Trinity Historical Society Inc. was established in 1964 to preserve the unique built heritage of Trinity. With a year-round population of 137 (2011), Trinity was one of the first communities on the Bonavista Peninsula to develop its tourism sector. Today, Trinity Historical Society is a major contributor to the town's cultural and economic life. The organization manages six historic buildings, including Green Family Forge and the Trinity Museum, which attracts 6,500 visitors per year. The Society is the second largest employer in Trinity, employing upwards of 35 people seasonally. In addition, the Society is a firm believer in regional cooperation and is working with several other heritage not-for-profit organizations across the Bonavista Peninsula in collaborative partnerships. Learn about the work of the Society at <http://www.trinityhistoricalsociety.com/>.



# Intergenerational Equity

Status: Good

A key aspect of sustainable development is to take a long-term view to making decisions. We must consider how the decisions we make at the community and regional level will affect the next generation, while improving opportunities for our children. In a time of fiscal uncertainty, it is more important than ever to reduce the burden of debt we leave for future generations to pay, while making investments in public education that ensure people in the region will have new opportunities to lead fulfilling lives and careers in their communities for years to come.

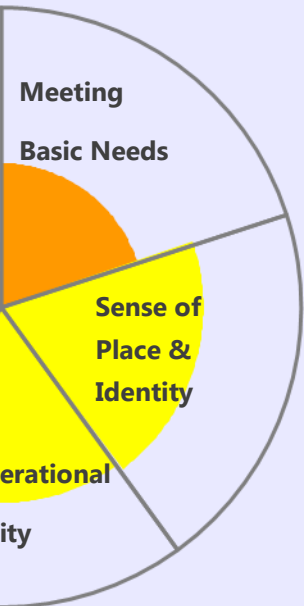
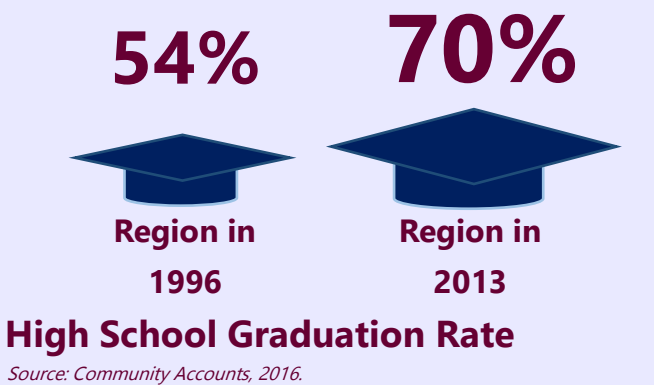
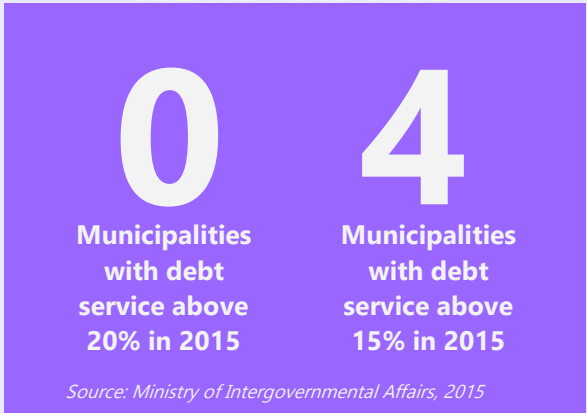


Photo credit: Today's Parent.



The College of the North Atlantic Bonavista Campus. Photo credit: Brennan Lowery.

## Public Debt-Service Ratio



## Bonavista Living

Bonavista's cultural heritage stands at the heart of its economic and population growth. Boasting the largest inventory of built heritage in rural Newfoundland, the town's heritage is also the foundation of Bonavista Living, a social enterprise that has been a major force in the community's revitalization. This real estate company, which started with five houses in 2011 and a vision for positive impact, is now actively restoring 41 residential and commercial properties throughout Bonavista. Its core goals are to preserve and restore the town's built heritage in a way that both protects and capitalizes on these cultural resources in order to create a more livable community for all. Furthering this vision are its sister companies: Bonavista Creative, which leases commercial space for new businesses, and Bonavista Creative Workshop, a producer of craft doors and windows. Together, the 3 companies have created over 60 jobs and are bringing 7 new businesses into the community along with 24 new full-time residents. Bonavista Living demonstrates how community development can preserve local character and identity through creative and mission-driven enterprise. Learn more at <https://www.bonavistaliving.com/>.



Jubilee House, a historic bed and breakfast restored by Bonavista Living (Photo credit: Bonavista Living).

Indicators	Status & Trends	Examples	Data Sources
Public Debt	↓	There are no municipalities in the region with a debt-service ratio exceeding 20%, but 4 with a ratio greater than 15%. Individuals, families, and communities alike expect to be affected by cuts in the 2016-2017 provincial budget aimed at addressing the provincial government deficit, which has grown from 23.4% of GDP in 2011-12 to a projected 35.9% in 2015-16.	Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, 2015; Fraser Institute, 2016
Youth Unemployment	↑	In 2010 the provincial youth unemployment rate was 23.1%, which has decreased to 16.4%.	Statistics Canada, 2016
Investment in Education	↑	In 2013, 70% of the region's adults have a high school diploma or higher, up from 54% in 1996. Residents are concerned that reduced funding at the College of the North Atlantic will affect local educational opportunities, especially at the Bonavista campus.	Community Accounts, 2016

## Governance and Participation

### Status: Good

*Good governance is more than just good government – it takes teamwork and collaboration from citizens, organizations, businesses, local and provincial government sharing in the task of solving common challenges for the region. The Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus region has many highly engaged communities where people are willing to participate in public decisions and local governments want to involve the public. As we think about how to become a sustainable region, we must work together with other communities and with people in every sector to find new strategies that benefit people across the region and in which community members are effectively engaged.*



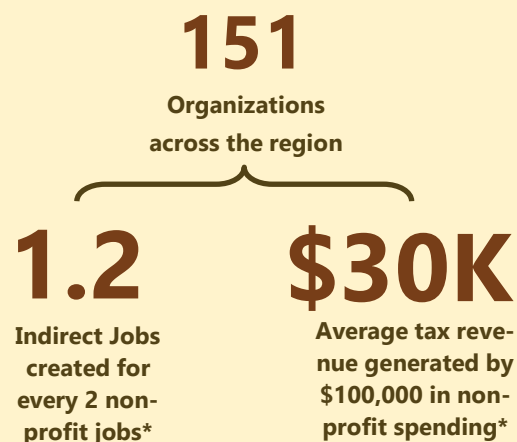
Photo credit: Alliances for Community Engagement.

### Alliances for Community Engagement (ACE)

Alliances for Community Engagement (ACE) is a pilot project being led by the Community Sector Council NL (CSC). The goal is to create shared spaces where people (individuals, community organizations, businesses, institutions, and governments) from across the Clarenville-Bonavista region can come together to strengthen their connections and their communities. A “shared space” could be a meeting, an event, an online connection, or many other things – a big part of the project will be discovering which methods work best on the ground. This project emerges from the former federal rural secretariat’s work in the area and through CSC’s extensive contact with local people and organizations like the Voluntary Clusters Initiative. The ACE project is funded by the Government of Canada’s Social Development Partnerships Program. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is also a partner, and a portion of the project is being funded through a grant from the Co-operators. CSC’s will also be engaging the support and partnership of many organizations around the region, including the College of the North Atlantic, The Sir William Ford Coaker Heritage Foundation, the Trinity Historical Society, and more. Text credit: Community Sector Council - <http://communitysector.nl.ca/ace>

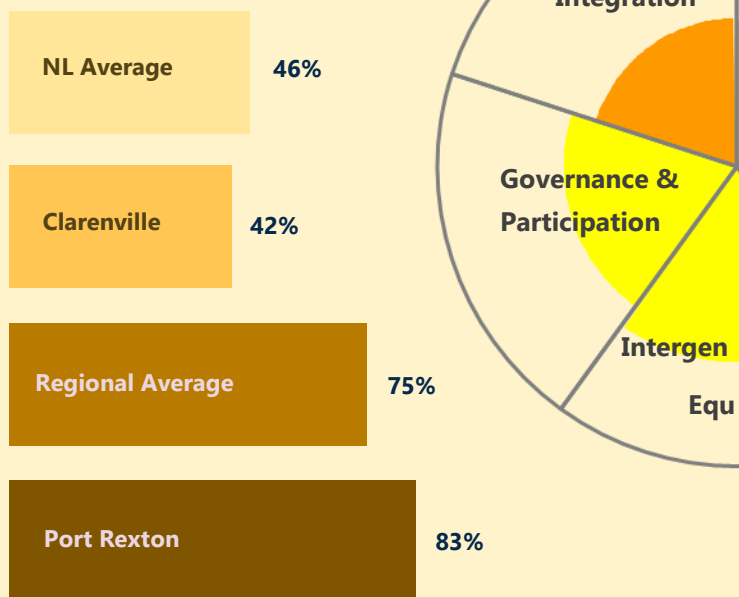
Indicators	Status & Trends	Examples	Data Sources
Commitment to Governance and Local Autonomy		Within the region’s 48 municipalities and local service districts, 76% of residents were satisfied with local government. However, residents wish to see more locally controlled decision making and more regionally-based forms of governance.	Clarenville-Bonavista Public Survey, 2015
Citizen Engagement, Vibrancy of Non-Recorded Activities		75% of residents in the region do volunteering activities, compared with 46% at the provincial level. Local government takes effort to do meaningful public engagement, and citizens in general participate actively in decision-making.	Clarenville-Bonavista Public Survey, 2015; Community Accounts, 2016

## Impact of the Non-Profit Sector



\*Based on 2015 study of the non-profit sector in St. John’s  
Source: Community Sector Council, 2015

### Volunteering Rates



Source: Clarenville-Bonavista Public Survey, 2015



Clarenville youth volunteer to help teach a computer skills class for seniors.  
Photo credit: Brenda Reid.



# Integration of Environmental, Social, and Economic Factors

## Status: Moderate

At its core, sustainable development means learning to live within the limits of our planet and ensuring healthy local ecosystems. The Clarenville-Bonavista-Isthmus region is still recovering from the 1992 ground-fish moratorium and is redefining its relationship with the ocean. We face a common challenge to protect both the land and the sea and related livelihoods – like agriculture and fishing – that depend on them, while reducing waste and fighting climate change.

### Green Depots



Clarenville  
& Bonavista

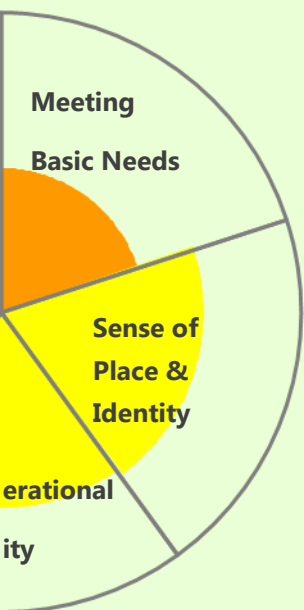


St. Anthony-  
Port Aux  
Choix  
Region



Stephenville  
-Port Aux  
Basques  
Region

Source: Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, 2014.



### Sunnyside Water Treatment Pilot

Sunnyside, like many communities in the region, has struggled with water quality for a long time. Using chlorine to treat the water supply, the community was exposed to potentially harmful compounds such as trihalomethanes (THMs), at levels 2-4 times above safe levels. In September 2015, the municipal government found a new way to make tapwater safer for residents. This 90-day pilot project, which uses a hydrogen-peroxide-based process, brought down THMs from over 300 parts per billion to 45 in a matter of days, well below federal guidelines. Residents saw immediate improvements, reporting that tapwater was

softer on skin and hair. In addition to these public health benefits, the pilot's installation cost was much cheaper than that of conventional systems and the Town expects that, if approved for long-term use, it will reduce municipal water treatment costs every year. Several communities have already approached the Town of Sunnyside for more information and the Town presented at the Municipalities NL Drinking Water Workshop in Gander on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. Learn more at <http://www.sunnysidenl.ca/index.htm>.



Sunnyside's new hydrogen peroxide-based water treatment system. Photo credit: Robert Snook.



Ocean View Trail in King's Cove. Photo credit: Keith and Heather Nicol.

Indicators	Status & Trends	Examples	Data Sources
Viability of the Agricultural Sector		In 2008, there were 400 people employed in agriculture in the region with a farm gate value of \$20 million annually. However, residents report a decrease in the number of farms in the region and there is a strong desire for more control over local food systems through community gardens, new farm businesses, and other initiatives.	Discovery Regional Development Board, 2008; Skeard, Holloway, & Vodden, 2011
Waste Reduction Strategies		There are 2 Green Depots in the region. However, most communities have no recycling service. In addition, Newfoundlanders produce more garbage on average per year than people in any other province in Canada.	Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, n.d.; Environment Canada, 2016
Air Quality & Health	↓	The Air Quality Index ranks as Low Risk (2-3) in the region. However, air monitoring conducted by North Atlantic observed recent increases in sulfur dioxide at Arnold's Cove and 7 instances of dangerously high particulate matter levels in Sunnyside in 2014.	Environment Canada 2016; NL Dept. of Environment & Conservation, 2015
Water Quality and Treatment	↑	10 local service districts and 2 municipalities have long-term boil water advisories in place, and many communities have high levels of water contaminants.	Minnes, Vodden, & Team, 2014
Energy Use and GHG Reduction Measures	↑	Newfoundlanders on average emit 16.6 tons of greenhouse gases per year, 6 tons less than in 2002. However, this must decrease by 10% to meet the provincial "Turning Back the Tide" GHG reduction target.	Environment Canada, 2016; Government of NL, n.d.
Ecological Protection		The region has 1 ecological reserve and 2 provincial parks, and vast forestland and marine ecosystems.	Community Accounts, 2016
Sustainable Fisheries Management	↓	Several communities have strong employment in fishing and fish processing plants. However, cod stocks are still 85% below healthy levels and shrimp biomass has decreased since 2007, while fisheries-based employment has decreased by 25%.	Discovery Regional Development Board, 2008; DFO, 2014; Community Accounts

## About Regional Council

The Regional Council of the Clarenville-Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region is a voluntary body made up of 7 residents of the region. Regional Council's mandate is to provide advice to the provincial government regarding the sustainable development of the region and its communities. Regional Council fulfills this mission by working with the Office of Public Engagement and other partners within the region in doing public consultation, community-based research, creating citizen-based policy advice, and fostering collaboration between different people, organizations, and communities in the region.



*The historic Bonavista Lighthouse. Photo credit: Bob Brink Photographs.*

## About This Project

The Clarenville-Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region has a vision for **a sustainable region with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities**. In pursuit of this vision, Regional Council has supported 2 previous phases of collaborative research to identify the factors that determine the sustainability of the region. This research was conducted in consultation with the public through an engagement process that included a survey of 299 residents and 2 public workshops. In this phase, we conducted 3 workshops and spoke with local leaders across the region to make sure community members had a say in the Report Card's format and findings presented. This project, funded by the Memorial University Accelerator Fund, the NL Office of Public Engagement, and the Memorial University Collaborative Applied Research in Economics (CARE) initiative, was carried out by Dr. Kelly Vodden at Memorial University's Environmental Policy Institute and PhD student Brennan Lowery. This project has also

## Project Partners

GRENFELL  
CAMPUS



Environmental Policy Institute



Global Partnership for Small-Scale Fisheries Research



telos brabant centre for sustainable development



For more information visit our website at:

<http://regionalsustainability.ruralresilience.ca/case-studies/clarenville-bonavista-region/>

received in-kind support from the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, the College of the North Atlantic, the Memorial University Regional Analysis Laboratory, the Too Big to Ignore research group, and the Telos Brabant Centre for Sustainable Development.

## Take Action

Here are some ways you can help make sure this Report Card leads to action for a more sustainable region:

- Participate in upcoming strategic planning discussions or related projects
- Tell us what you are doing to make a difference in your community
- Give us your feedback:

Email: [ruralsustainabilityNL@grenfell.mun.ca](mailto:ruralsustainabilityNL@grenfell.mun.ca)

Phone: (709) 639-2703

This project was made possible with funding support from the following organizations:



Office of Public Engagement



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACCELERATOR FUND