



Strategic Plan

2008-2011

Prepared by the ACSI Steering Committee

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

1. INTRODUCTION	2
Context.....	2
Strategic Priorities	3
Launch.....	3
2. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES	4
Vision.....	4
Mission	4
Guiding Principles	4
3. MARKET ANALYSIS	5
Strengths	5
Opportunities	5
4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	8
Priority #1 – Expand the ACSI Network	8
Priority #2 – Build Partner Capacity and Competence on Sustainability	10
Priority #3 – Build Momentum Towards Sustainability through Collective Action.....	13
Priority #4 – Evaluate and Share the ACSI Framework with Others	15
5. RESOURCE PLAN	17
Operational Resources.....	17
Management and Direction.....	17
Hosting and Location	18
Strategic Partnerships	18
Human Resources.....	19
Staffing Needs	19
Financial Resources.....	20
Budget	20
Fundraising and Potential Funding Sources	22
6. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	23

1. INTRODUCTION

Context

The Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative (ACSI) was developed with the aim of building greater regional collaboration on and support for sustainability in Atlantic Canada. The development of ACSI was sparked by an international conference called “Rethinking Development” hosted in Antigonish, NS in June 2005 by Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Atlantic. Following this conference, GPI Atlantic worked in partnership with other interested organizations — The Natural Step Canada, SENSE (Sustainability Education in Nova Scotia for Everyone) and the Nova Scotia Environmental Network (NSEN) — to develop and implement a regional sustainability project that would capitalize on the interest seen at the Rethinking Development conference.

ACSI was officially launched in May 2007 and is now housed with and coordinated by the Centre for Rural Sustainability (CRS), based in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Over the last year, ACSI and its Sustainability Partners (13 organizations who signed a project charter, making a formal commitment to taking action on sustainability in their organizations) have worked towards greater sustainability in Atlantic Canada using The Natural Step framework as a guide (for more information about The Natural Step, please see <http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/resources/resources.htm#TNS>). The 13 Sustainability Partners that signed charters pledging to act on sustainability and participated in ACSI from May 2007 – April 2008 are:

Aliant
Antigonish Sustainable Development
Bathurst Sustainable Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
Halifax Shambhala Centre
iNova Credit Union
Jacques Whitford Ltd.
Just Us! Coffee Roasters
Plovers, The Environmental Store
City of Saint John
Stewardship Outreach Section, NS Department of Natural
Resources
Town of Stratford
Town of Wolfville

In addition to the Sustainability Partners, there are many other organizations that were part of the ACSI network over the past year and have a shared interest in supporting this project and in making Atlantic Canada more sustainable. These organizations, called Network Partners, supported ACSI through resources and tools, contributing to the network, participating in events, and aiding in the overall



success of ACSI. A list of the Network Partners is available on the ACSI website, at <http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/about/networkInfo.htm>.

In April 2008, ACSI celebrated the successful completion of its first year. The first sustainability project of its kind at a regional level, ACSI has built a strong and diverse network of organizations and communities involved in working towards creating sustainable communities and organizations. The over 40 ACSI partners and stakeholders have expressed a desire to see ACSI continue this momentum.

At the ACSI year-end Sustainability Summit hosted in April 2008, ACSI stakeholders supported the formation of a steering committee to coordinate the future direction of ACSI. The steering committee was tasked with developing a three-year strategic plan for the future role and direction of ACSI, in keeping with the aspirations of the partners and stakeholders that participated in the initiative between May 2007 and April 2008.

Strategic Priorities

The following are the four strategic priorities for the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative for the upcoming three year period between September 2008 and September 2011:

1. Expand the ACSI network.
2. Build partner capacity and competence on sustainability.
3. Build momentum towards sustainability through collective action.
4. Evaluate and share the ACSI framework with others.

Launch

The proposed timeframe to put this strategic plan to action is the fall of 2008.

2. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Vision

The vision of the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative (ACSI) is for Atlantic Canada to become a global leader in sustainable development.

Mission

The Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative (ACSI) is a group of communities and organizations committed to collectively transitioning Atlantic Canada toward sustainability through regional collaboration, the establishment of best practices, and by acting as champions and role models on sustainability. ACSI provides a common framework, opportunities for networking and peer-learning, and tools and resources to facilitate this transition.

Guiding Principles

The general guiding principles for ACSI are as follows:

Leadership on Sustainability

A healthy environment, a prosperous economy and a vibrant society will be maintained in such a way as to promote continued opportunity for present and future generations.

Excellence and Innovation

All individuals and organizations will strive for excellence through a genuine desire and an innovative spirit to advance environmental, economic, social, and cultural sustainability.

Inclusiveness and Participation

Everyone will have the opportunity to participate in the advancement of sustainability and the co-creation of goals of the regional framework on sustainability.

Transparency

There will be transparent and open sharing of information, ideas, knowledge and processes.

In addition, ACSI relies on the ethical principles of sustainability listed in the Earth Charter (<http://www.earthcharter.org/>). The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental values and principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It was created in 2000 by the largest global consultation process ever associated with an international declaration, and endorsed by thousands of organizations representing millions of individuals. The Earth Charter's inclusive ethical vision proposes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible. It provides a new framework for thinking about and addressing this sustainability vision.

3. MARKET ANALYSIS

Strengths

The ACSI network, to the best of our knowledge, is unique in North America because it brings together partners from a range of sectors, across provinces, and takes a holistic approach to regional sustainability. Here are ACSI's key strengths:

- ACSI is positioned as a regional sustainability umbrella project and it works to advance communities and organizations toward sustainability through well-defined programs and initiatives that are supported through a mentoring and networking process, together with other resources such as educational seminars.
- The ACSI network shares a common understanding of sustainability and a common vision for achieving it through diverse actions.
- ACSI is the first regional initiative of its kind that aids communities and organizations in identifying and reaching their sustainability goals
- The initiative is based on building momentum through collaboration.
- It is the only inter-provincial initiative in Canada currently supported by The Natural Step Canada, an internationally recognized sustainability training organization.

Opportunities

ACSI's development and launch coincides with increasing interest in and commitment to sustainability across a variety of sectors and at all levels of government. It is critical to point out that ACSI's objectives in increasing awareness of sustainability and building capacity in responding to sustainability challenges can work with and enhance other activities taking place throughout the Atlantic region, across Canada, and internationally.

At the international level, ACSI's vision, mission, principles and mandate align with the United Nations' Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), 2005-2014. The goal for the Decade is to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning (<http://www.unesco.org/education/desd>). As a training program, ACSI provides important learning in the non-formal education sector. The key action areas of the DESD are sustainable consumption, sustainable urbanization, gender equality, health promotion, environment, rural development, cultural diversity, and peace & human security. ACSI can be mindful of the developments of the DESD and will stay connected with the United Nations' international work to promote sustainability education. ACSI's educational efforts to encourage behavioural and organizational changes to create a more sustainable region are consistent with the DESD.

At the national level, the federal government launched in December 2006 the fourth round of three-year Sustainable Development Strategies. These strategies were prepared for thirty-three government departments and agencies, including Environment Canada, Parks Canada, the Atlantic Canada

Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Department of Finance, and Industry Canada. ACOA's Sustainable Development Strategy is particularly relevant to the federal perspective on the Atlantic region. ACOA's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy (*Sustainable Development Strategy III, 2004-2006: Raising the Bar*, available at <http://www.acoa.ca/e/sustain/2004/sust2004.shtml>) states:

...[M]any areas of Atlantic Canada face social challenges in enabling communities to simultaneously enhance or maintain the well-being of their people, with due regard for ecosystem, health and employment objectives. Confronting these challenges must occur in ways that do not place unbearable environmental, economic or social burdens on this and future generations. Atlantic Canada's communities, therefore, require innovative thinking to develop the approaches, partnerships and tools that can effectively address their social issues, while respecting the need to assure clean air and water, energy, employment opportunities, adequate health care, affordable transportation and housing....At ACOA, we believe that a healthy environment is essential to the development of a strong, growing and sustainable economy.

ACSI, as a new and innovative project, can work with federal government departments like ACOA to ensure that the sustainability issues important to Atlantic Canadians are better understood and are addressed.

Provincial governments in Atlantic Canada are also beginning to recognize the importance of sustainable development. In 2007, the Province of Nova Scotia enacted the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*. The Act sets a range of goals and targets for the Province, aiming to make it a global leader in sustainability by 2020. This is part of the Nova Scotia government's focus on sustainable prosperity, a concept which is also enshrined in the economic development strategy for the province released in 2006, called *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity*. Other Atlantic governments are also taking a similar interest in sustainable development.

There is significant and growing interest in sustainability at the municipal and community level. A key factor in this is that as part of the agreement to receive funds from the federally collected gas tax, municipalities must develop an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). Many municipalities are using this as an opportunity to really examine and evaluate their current approach to planning, and to work to incorporate a sustainability perspective throughout their work. Municipalities across the country are developing their own plans, and are moving beyond what is required of them to develop lasting visions for sustainable communities. Some examples of communities in Atlantic Canada on this path include Saint John and Bouctouche in New Brunswick, Conception Bay in Newfoundland, Wolfville, Halifax, and Antigonish in Nova Scotia, and Stratford in Prince Edward Island.

Given all of the activity already happening on sustainability in Atlantic Canada and around the world, ACSI is well positioned to expand its network and work in partnership with others to build regional capacity, inform public policy, and provide sustainability training and mentoring services. Building on the success and the momentum of its first year, and given the current awareness of the need to address sustainability issues from a regional perspective, building on ACSI's past successes is both timely and the right thing to do. No other organization in Atlantic Canada is currently working to build a regional



network for sustainability. Given the clear need for such a regional approach to sustainability, the following are the opportunities for ACSI:

- Increase exposure and build awareness on sustainability in Atlantic Canada.
- Continue to support and train organizations and communities in becoming sustainable using a process similar to that used in the first year of ACSI.
- Provide organizations with sustainability tools and resources based on established best practices.
- Build an effective network of partners that collaborate and support progress towards sustainability.
- Build regional momentum towards sustainability by engaging citizens, organizations and governments within the Atlantic Region.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority #1 – Expand the ACSI Network

Strategy

ACSI's success lies in its ability to build regional momentum on sustainability through collaboration. Expanding the ACSI network with new organizations and communities interested in moving towards sustainability is a key priority. ACSI would like to increase the diversity in size, sector, and geographical location of participating organizations. There are two different ways in which an organization can engage with ACSI: as a Sustainability Partner or as a Network Partner.

Sustainability Partners are official charter members that have made a formal commitment to the goals outlined in the ACSI Project Charter (a copy of the 2007-08 project charter is available for download at http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/downloads/about_acsi/ACSI_projectCharter_final.pdf).

Network Partners are organizations that support the initiative through resources and tools, contribute to the network and aid in the overall success of ACSI. Both types of partners will be critical to building ACSI's network. A new group of Sustainability Partners will join the network once each year, and Network Partners may join at any time of the year.

A fee scale will be developed that is responsive to the diversity among ACSI Partners in terms of size and resources.

Goals

- Increase representation of partners from New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island.
- Ensure a diverse representation from all three sectors – public, private and not-for-profit.
- Continue to provide and improve structures for networking (e.g. web-based, large group events, local events, etc.).
- Identify and develop relationships with local organizations (those working on advancing sustainability in a specific locale in Atlantic Canada) for support and networking purposes.
- Identify different levels of participation (i.e. Network Partners and Sustainability Partners).
- Identify organizations outside the Atlantic region that can share knowledge and best practices with the ACSI network.

Implementation

Networking tools and resources

ACSI will review its website and explore additional electronic tools (e.g. a listserv or blog) that could be used to facilitate network building and communications. ACSI will also develop and share case studies and best practices, and will explore the development of an informal mentorship program among its partners.

Events

ACSI will continue to host training events (such as workshops and webinars) on a variety of topics. These events are open to ACSI Partners and to the public, and will be widely promoted and advertised. In addition to being the training component of ACSI, these events will also serve to draw new Partners interested in sustainability into the ACSI network.

Communications Strategy

A communications strategy will be developed that positions the ACSI network and its Partners as role models and sustainability champions in the region. This strategy will provide direction and planning on both internal and external communications, including the promotion and marketing of ACSI, a media strategy, and communications between ACSI Partners. The communications strategy will provide support for the maintenance and development of:

- ACSI e-newsletter
- ACSI website with access to resources and tools for sustainability
- Templates for media materials such as press releases, a media kit, etc.
- Funding and promotional material
- A 1-2 page profile of ACSI (including vision, mission, goals, key projects, etc.)
- Peer-to-peer communication tools (e.g. listserv) for ACSI partners
- Dissemination strategy (see Priority #4 below)

Performance Measures

1. Diversity of membership: The ACSI Steering Committee and ACSI staff will actively seek to bring new organizations into the ACSI network on an on-going basis. New participating organizations will be recruited from all four Atlantic provinces, and from the public, private, co-operative and not-for profit sectors.
2. ACSI will continue to develop and maintain a website, listserv, newsletter, and other electronic tools that connect ACSI partners and stakeholders.
3. ACSI will develop and implement a communications strategy which will include performance measures for communications.

Priority #2 – Build Partner Capacity and Competence on Sustainability

Strategy

Making this region a leader in sustainability requires building capacity and competence on sustainability among all sectors of Atlantic Canadian society. ACSI's network, knowledge base and resources can provide the process and tools to support organizations in learning about sustainability and beginning to move towards greater sustainability through an approach known as the Adopter Process (developed by Antigonish Sustainable Development – for more information about ASD's approach, please see <http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/partners/antigonish.htm>). Each year, a new cohort of organizations will go through a process similar to that which the first group of ACSI Sustainability Partners went through in 2007-08. Each cohort is a group of 15-20 organizations that make a formal commitment to moving towards sustainability as outlined in the ACSI Project Charter, and go through a year-long program with ACSI to assist and support that process. Each of these organizations becomes a Sustainability Partner and a member of the ACSI network. Once they have completed the year-long program, the Sustainability Partner organizations continue to participate in and support the network, acting as mentors and resources for new organizations starting their sustainability journey.

By building capacity incrementally each year, ACSI develops the competence of participants, expands the ACSI network, supports the creation of local experts and mentors on sustainability topics, and links organizations newer to sustainability with those more experienced. Over time, the number of organizations working together to move in the same direction grows, and momentum builds to do even more on sustainability in Atlantic Canada.

In addition to providing training specifically for each cohort of Sustainability Partners, all ACSI training and capacity-building activities and the ACSI network are accessible to Sustainability Partners, Network Partners, and members of the public.

Goals

- Build organizational and community capacity on sustainability incrementally through charter-based cohorts.
- Align sustainability understanding and objectives through the use of a common language and framework for talking about sustainability.
- Provide regional training and support: coaching, webinars, workshops etc.
- Develop and share processes and tools for organizations and communities working towards sustainability.
- Create a peer sharing network for ongoing engagement among partners and stakeholders for mentoring and sharing of best practices.

Implementation

ACSI has identified two partnership streams: these are ACSI Sustainability Partners and ACSI Network Partners.

ACSI Sustainability Partners

Sustainability Partners are those communities and organizations that have gone through the ACSI adopter training process (see below). The goal of the Adopter Process is to build capacity and commitment to plan for and move towards greater sustainability among all three sectors (public, private and not-for-profit). Each year ACSI aims to have a cohort of up to 20 organizations that will become Sustainability Partners. ACSI Sustainability Partners have access to all ACSI resources, and will receive discounts for webinars, conferences, and training tools and material designed specifically for Sustainability Partners.

Adopter Process

The Adopter process is a year-long program of training and support that provides education for partners about sustainability (including learning about various frameworks and tools) and supports them as they develop their own internal sustainability strategies and actions. The process requires a year-long commitment on behalf of the Sustainability Partners (i.e. committing time, staff, and financial resources not only to attend training sessions, but also to implement the work at home), formalized by the signing of a project charter by senior management. It is expected that at the close of the year, Sustainability Partners will have completed agreed-upon tasks and will share their experiences and lessons learned with the ACSI network and the broader community.

The progress and results of each cohort will be shared via on-line newsletters, an annual conference, and an annual report that provides case studies and lessons learned from the Sustainability Partners. Outcomes of this process will include:

- Developing a common language around sustainability;
- Using sustainability as a lens to guide decisions and new initiatives;
- Building organizational support for sustainability;
- Performing sustainability assessments and a baseline analysis;
- Identifying and implementing sustainability “quick hit” actions;
- Creating and implementing a Sustainability Action Plan;
- Participating in ACSI events and sharing best practices, resources, and tools with peers and the ACSI network; and
- Promoting broad community engagement on sustainability in the region.

The Natural Step framework will continue to be used as the overarching planning framework to provide a common language for talking about sustainability. Other tools and models (e.g. Six Capitals, Ecological Footprint, Four Pillars) will also be explored to expand sustainability understanding.

As part of the program of training provided to Sustainability Partner organizations, ACSI will offer

webinars and workshops on sustainability-related topics of interest. These will be offered on a cost recovery basis. Examples of workshop and webinar topics include green procurement strategies, the Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP) process, and The Natural Step framework.

A comprehensive toolkit for Sustainability Partners will also be created (see for example, the *Sustainability Champion Kit* created by Antigonish Sustainable Development, available at http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/downloads/partners/Antigonish_Model_Sustainability_Kit.pdf) to assist ACSI in recruiting and training interested organizations and municipalities.

ACSI Network Partners

Network Partners are all those communities and organizations that have not made a formal commitment to sustainability through ACSI's adopter process, but are interested in supporting and participating in the work of ACSI. Network Partners will have access to publicly available tools and training material through the ACSI network and will be invited to attend training and other ACSI events. Active ACSI Network Partners may serve on committees and play other active roles in the administration of ACSI.

Network Partners play a key role in supporting the initiative, strengthening the ACSI network, and acting as mentors and role models for ACSI Sustainability Partners. Some of the Network Partners provide sustainability-related programs, products or services that may be of interest to other members of the ACSI Network.

Performance Measures

1. ACSI will seek to recruit a cohort of between 15 and 20 organizations each year that reflect diverse representation from Atlantic Canada to go through the ACSI Sustainability Partner process. The ACSI Steering Committee and ACSI staff will actively seek no less than one organization from each Atlantic province for each cohort.
2. ACSI will hold at least 3 training events (including workshops and webinars) per year. Each year, ACSI will host a regional Sustainability Summit.
3. The progress of ACSI Sustainability Partners will be assessed each year, and their successes and lessons learned will be shared with the network and the public.

Priority #3 – Build Momentum Towards Sustainability through Collective Action

Strategy

ACSI will develop a set of priority areas for action on sustainability, encompassing up to ten areas and related goals. For example, a priority area might be greenhouse gas reduction, and a related goal might be about taking steps towards carbon-neutrality. ACSI Partners will have the opportunity to develop these areas and goals, and may then commit to tackling one or more of these sustainability areas within their own organization. ACSI will facilitate peer-sharing and capacity building on the implementation of these goals within Partner organizations.

Thus far, ACSI Sustainability Partners have primarily focused internally on the activities of their own organizations. Developing a set of common sustainability goals will also allow Partners to see the cumulative effects of their work. By documenting each organization's progress on the goals, progress on sustainability across the region will be more visible. In addition, the priority areas, the commitment of the Partners and the progress made will provide an excellent opportunity to further promote the work of ACSI and its Partners and attract new Partners to the ACSI network.

It is important to note that although there are many benefits to committing to shared goals and all Partners will be encouraged to take part, ACSI also recognizes that some Partners may not want to or be able to make this commitment. Commitment to the specific goals developed will remain voluntary. Commitment to taking action on sustainability however, is, of course, part of the commitment of being a Sustainability Partner.

Goals

- Develop a set of Partner-identified priority areas and related goals for sustainability action.
- Develop a process for Partners to commit to one or more of the goals.
- Integrate work on these goals into the communication tools of ACSI or develop new structures to facilitate peer-sharing of solutions.
- Integrate work on these goals into the capacity-building efforts of ACSI.
- Evaluate and document the progress of ACSI Partners on achieving the goals they have committed to. Where possible, evaluate and document the collective, cumulative effect of all actions taken together.

Implementation

Year One:

ACSI will create a regional sustainability committee of its Partners to discuss sustainability issues significant to ACSI and the Atlantic region. A set of issues for action, encompassing up to ten priority areas and related goals, will be developed in year one of this strategic plan. The priority areas will be

developed through consultation with all the Partners (new Sustainability Partners, ongoing Sustainability Partners, and Network Partners), but drafted by the committee. Once the strategy has been developed, a sub-set of topics will be piloted for commitment and evaluation in year one. The committee will recommend which topics to pilot, how the commitment sign-up should proceed, how this should be integrated into ACSI's programming, and how the evaluation should be conducted.

Year Two:

The full set of priority areas and goals will be launched (timed with the new cohort), and Partners can commit to any of the goals. The popularity of the goals (based on the number of Partner organizations that commit) will help to determine which areas will be prioritized for further training. Capacity-building will be done through peer-sharing opportunities, workshops and webinars. Evaluation and documentation of progress will be done for all the goals. At the end of year two, a consultation process with the Partners will determine if the topics and goals remain relevant or if they should be modified. The regional sustainability committee will continue through year two, and provide advice on capacity-building needs and related communication structures. The committee will also lead the consultation process and any redrafting of the strategy topics and goals. New members may join this committee at the start of year (timed with the new cohort starting).

Year Three:

The revised topics and goals will be used, but essentially the same process will be used as Year Two. Partners will be asked to renew or revise their commitment to topics for year three.

Performance Measures

1. A set of common priority areas and related goals for sustainability action will be developed and Partners may commit to one or more goals.
2. New or improved structures will be created to facilitate the participation of Partners in these shared goals, and to build the capacity of Partners to implement the goals.
3. Annual reports will be produced documenting cumulative progress on achieving the goals.

Priority #4 – Evaluate and Share the ACSI Framework with Others

Strategy

ACSI is the only regional and multi-sectoral sustainability network of its kind in North America. As a new and innovative project, it is essential that ACSI continue to carefully evaluate the development of its network and programs, and to share the lessons learned with others who are interested in taking a similar approach to sustainability work. The knowledge gained from case study development, program and event evaluations, and reviewing and sharing the successes and challenges of the Partners as they strategically incorporate sustainability into their organizations can provide significant insight into how other regions could transition toward sustainability using a similar process and approach. Transferring this knowledge is a key responsibility of ACSI, so that other regions within Canada and internationally can benefit from the ACSI model.

Goals

- Develop case studies and lessons learned from ACSI Partner initiatives.
- Develop evaluation tools and metrics to measure the impact of ACSI programs and services.
- Share the ACSI model and activities with other regions in Canada and internationally.
- Connect ACSI with other Canadian and international organizations and also learn from other regional networks on sustainability.

Implementation

Year One:

The ACSI Coordinator will, with support from the steering committee and host organization, develop a dissemination strategy (part of the communications strategy, see Priority #1 above) that includes templates for case studies, ACSI presentations and professional and scholarly reports. A distribution list will be developed that includes key leaders in government and non-government organizations in the Atlantic Provinces, Canada, the United States, and internationally.

ACSI will develop an evaluation template to document successes, challenges and overall lessons learned.

Year Two:

ACSI will seek external evaluation of its program in its entirety and release the review to its network and other organizations for feedback and consultation. A consultation process will be developed that explores the future of ACSI as a network of organizations and considers the benefits and costs of

becoming a registered society, in addition to other changes to its programs and services.

Year Three:

ACSI will actively share its model with other regions seeking to become sustainable.

Performance Measures

1. ACSI will produce annual reports which will provide case studies and lessons learned from Partner initiatives.
2. ACSI will develop an evaluation template that Sustainability Partners will complete at the end of each year. The evaluation process will be ongoing throughout the program.
3. ACSI will disseminate its success, challenges and lessons learned to the public and to key leaders as identified above through newsletters, e-mail distribution groups, and attendance and presentations at meetings, workshops and conferences.

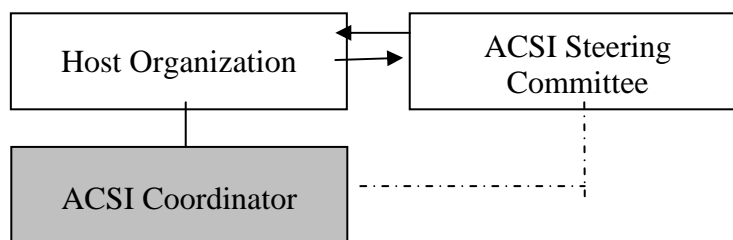
5. RESOURCE PLAN

Operational Resources

Management and Direction

It is expected that ACSI will continue to be managed by a Steering Committee made up of individuals from Partner organizations. The Steering Committee will provide strategic guidance and support to the host organization and ACSI staff, while the ACSI Coordinator will coordinate the day-to-day operations of the project with guidance from the host organization and the steering committee. In its first year, the ACSI Steering Committee will review its membership to determine the degree to which it represents Atlantic Canada and adjust the membership accordingly if required. The committee will, on an annual basis, invite members of the ACSI network to join the Committee. The terms of reference for the steering committee are available on the ACSI website, at http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/downloads/about_acsi/ACSI_SteeringCommitteeTOR_final.pdf.

The ACSI Coordinator is expected to be an ex-officio member of the ACSI Steering Committee.



The current Steering Committee, as of July 15, 2008, consists of the following individuals:

Name	Organization
John Colton (Chair)	Centre for Rural Sustainability
Kuli Malhotra (Vice Chair)	Antigonish Sustainable Development
Amelia Clarke	Sierra Club of Canada
Keith Cossey	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada - Rural Secretariat
Justin Dearing	Ocean Net
Tamara Lorincz	Nova Scotia Environmental Network
Willy Robinson	iNOVA Credit Union
Julie Turcotte	Halifax Global
Sarah Brooks	The Natural Step Canada
Clare Levin (ex-officio)	ACSI Staff

Hosting and Location

ACSI is currently housed with the Centre for Rural Sustainability, based in Wolfville, NS. An expression of interest request has been sent to partners and stakeholders to seek other organizations interested in the future hosting of ACSI. A decision on a host organization will be made once the strategic plan is in place.

ACSI is seeking a host organization that is a good match and fit with ACSI's values. A central location in the Atlantic Region is also an important criterion for consideration. Although housed within the organization, ACSI would remain a separate, independent project with separate funds, guided and managed by the ACSI Steering Committee. The host organization will work with the Steering Committee of ACSI and would provide supervision and guidance for ACSI staff. The host organization should:

- Have a commitment to helping ensure ACSI is a successful project.
- Be able to provide office space and equipment for the ACSI Coordinator (including use of a computer and phone as well as access to other office equipment, meeting space, etc.).
- Have an established financial/accounting system for tracking ACSI revenues and expenses.
- Not be politically affiliated.
- An organization with status as a registered charity would be ideal but is not required.

Benefits to the host organization include:

- Closer involvement with ACSI and its sustainability-related projects.
- Greater profile in sustainable development for the organization.
- Increased capacity through having the ACSI Coordinator working onsite.
- Expanded stakeholder network.
- Registration fees waived for one staff member for each ACSI event or training session.

The final terms of financial responsibility will be negotiated between the Steering Committee and the potential host organization. It is expected that the host organization will be jointly responsible for the financial management of ACSI and may submit funding applications on ACSI's behalf. Although in-kind support is expected of the host organization, ACSI will work toward funding opportunities that cover overhead and administrative costs to the host organization (up to 5% of the total ACSI budget).

Strategic Partnerships

ACSI recognizes the need to strengthen existing partnerships and seek additional strategic partnerships where there are commonalities in meeting the ACSI priorities identified in this plan. ACSI will seek to strengthen its relationship with The Natural Step Canada and other organizations that can aid in achieving ACSI objectives.

As described above (see section on Market Analysis), governments at the provincial and national levels are engaged in tackling the sustainability challenge. As ACSI's objectives aid in the building of momentum towards sustainability, there is an opportunity to work with governments in achieving shared objectives by leveraging the ACSI network and sharing best practices and tools.

Human Resources

Staffing Needs

ACSI Coordinator

Currently one full-time ACSI staff person is required to manage the day-to-day activities of ACSI. Based on the objectives and activities outlined in this plan, it is expected that a second staff person will be hired in Year 2 to provide additional support to a larger number of Partner organizations.

All ACSI staff will be contract employees of the host organization. The Project Coordinator will oversee and coordinate all aspects of ACSI. The Coordinator will work directly with the ACSI Steering Committee and the host organization to deliver on the following tasks:

- Collaborate with partners on the design and delivery of workshops and coaching/mentoring.
- Provide support and coaching to Sustainability Partners as they develop their sustainability initiatives.
- Develop and implement a fundraising plan for ACSI.
- Provide financial oversight for the project.
- Secure venues and provide logistical support for project events.
- Coordinate the development of a communications plan for the regional initiative and ensure plan is implemented.
- Facilitate internal communications between and among partners.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer networking among project partners.
- Assemble and maintain ACSI website and resource centre (books, papers, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) for participants.
- Complete project evaluation, including the development of case studies.

Financial Resources

Budget

Item	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Total over 3 years
REVENUES				
Charter Fees ¹	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Training Session Fees ²	\$49,800	\$54,800	\$54,800	\$159,400
In-kind office space, supplies and equipment	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$36,000
Government Grants	\$50,000	\$61,000	\$60,000	\$171,000
Support from Foundations	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$56,000	\$161,000
Private Fundraising	\$26,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$116,000
Fee for Services	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
TOTAL REVENUES	\$202,800	\$252,800	\$247,800	\$703,400

EXPENSES

ADMINISTRATION

Office space, supplies, equipment, etc.	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$36,000
Meetings (conference calls, catering for meetings, etc.)	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$3,600
Governance (Steering Committee) ³	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$24,000
SUBTOTAL	\$21,200	\$21,200	\$21,200	\$63,600

SALARIES⁴

Coordinator	\$51,000	\$51,000	\$51,000	\$153,000
Assistant Coordinator	-	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$90,000
SUBTOTAL	\$51,000	\$96,000	\$96,000	\$243,000

TRAINING & EVENTS⁵

Facilities (meeting room rental + catering)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
Professional fees/honoraria for training	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$45,000

Training materials & workshop supplies	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$6,750
Professional fees/honoraria for coaching	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Advertising to promote ACSI, recruit new partners, etc.	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$21,000
Staff travel to events	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$9,000
Webinars	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$16,200
SUBTOTAL	\$92,650	\$92,650	\$92,650	\$277,950
<u>NETWORKING TOOLS</u>				
Website hosting, design, updating	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$4,500
Travel for networking purposes ⁶	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$24,000
Filming/editing of video (of workshops and other events)	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$7,500
SUBTOTAL	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$36,000
<u>OTHER</u>				
Case Studies	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
Evaluation	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
Contingency	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$45,000
SUBTOTAL	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$80,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$201,850	\$251,850	\$246,850	\$700,550
NET PROFIT (LOSS)	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$2,850

Budget notes:

1. Fees from Sustainability Partners. Note that a fee scale will be developed that is reflective of the diversity among ACSI Partners in terms of size and resources.
2. Fees for workshops and webinars.
3. Travel costs for two in-person meetings of the Steering Committee.
4. Salary costs include benefits, taxes, etc.
5. 3 events, two smaller workshops and an annual Sustainability Summit, and 6 webinars per year.
6. Trips for 2 ACSI reps to each Atlantic Province (\$2,000 for each trip) each year for networking and recruitment purposes.

Fundraising and Potential Funding Sources

Fundraising

Fundraising Model

A fundraising model will be identified jointly between the Steering Committee and the host organization. The proposed model for funding for ACSI has the following distribution (see attached budget file for further details):

- 24% Government
- 17% Private
- 23% Foundations
- 31% Fee for service (includes fees collected as part of the ACSI program as well as additional consulting fees).
- 5% In-kind (in the form of office space and equipment). Note that some of the in-kind services provided by the host organization may be compensated in cash if funding allows.

Potential Funding Sources

- Federal and provincial grants
- Provincial environment departments in Atlantic Canada
- Foundations
- Existing partner and stakeholder networks
- Private funding from new cohorts
- Fee for service activities

6. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The following implementation schedule shows the major activities associated with implementation and the year in which it should be completed. This schedule should be updated annually along with an annual review and update of the strategic plan.

Goal	Targeted Year for Completion		
	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Priority #1			
Increase representation of partners from New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island.	x	x	x
Ensure a diverse representation from all three sectors – public, private and not-for-profit.	x	x	x
Continue to provide and improve a structure for networking (e.g. web-based, large group events, local events, etc.).	x	x	x
Identify and develop relationships with local organizations (those working on advancing sustainability in a specific locale in Atlantic Canada) for support and networking purposes.	x	x	x
Identify different levels of participation (i.e. Network Partners and Sustainability Partners).	x	x	x
Identify organizations outside the Atlantic region that can share knowledge and best practices with the ACSI network.	x	x	x
Priority #2			
Build organizational and community capacity on sustainability incrementally through charter-based cohorts.	x	x	x
Align sustainability understanding and objectives through the use of a common language and framework for talking about sustainability.	x	x	x
Provide regional training and support: coaching, webinars, workshops etc.	x	x	x
Develop and share processes and tools for organizations and communities working towards sustainability.	x	x	x

Goal		Targeted Year for Completion		
		2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
	Create a peer sharing network for ongoing engagement among partners and stakeholders for mentoring and sharing of best practices.	x	x	x
Priority #3				
	Develop a set of Partner-identified priority areas and related goals for sustainability action.	x		
	Develop a process for Partners to commit to one or more of the goals.	x		
	Integrate work on these goals into the communication tools of ACSI or develop new structures to facilitate peer-sharing of solutions.		x	
	Integrate work on these goals into the capacity-building efforts of ACSI.		x	
	Evaluate and document the progress of ACSI Partners on achieving the goals they have committed to. Where possible, evaluate and document the collective, cumulative effect of all actions taken together.		x	x
Priority #4				
	Develop case studies and lessons learned from ACSI partner initiatives.	x	x	x
	Develop evaluation tools and metrics to measure the impact of ACSI programs and services.	x		
	Share the ACSI model and activities with other regions in Canada and internationally.	x	x	x
	Connect ACSI with other Canadian and international organizations and also learn from other regional networks on sustainability.	x	x	x