



## ANTIGONISH AS A LEADING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Environment

Economy

Culture

Society

# EARLY MINORITY CHAMPION KIT 2008

*Antigonish, Nova Scotia*



## MESSAGE FROM ANTIGONISH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Antigonish area is well-positioned to become a model sustainable community in Canada. In July 2007, the *Framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community* was released to the public - a plan developed locally with a group of individuals representing organizations, businesses, municipalities and the community. The framework has four goals and draws on strengths from well-known sustainability models including The Natural Step Framework, The Five Capitals Model and The Ecological Footprint. The purpose of the framework is to advance sustainability in the areas of economy, environment, society and culture.

While everyone has basic needs that must be met; we all desire to live productive, healthy lives, and to have the ability to hand the same opportunities to our children and further generations. Sustainability is about maintaining this capacity locally and supporting the global movement. Becoming a sustainable community also provides the opportunity to develop a rich knowledge base of achievable actions and best practices which can then be transferred for other communities seeking to become more sustainable. Our Framework has received extensive support locally, regionally and nationally:

*"A comprehensive framework encompassing a wide range of actions for different stakeholders under a shared purpose."*

*"Innovative initiative for the benefit of the community of Antigonish."*

*"An important step in the development of a long-term plan for community sustainability... this framework will serve to guide the community as it moves in the future."*

*"The leading-edge work being proposed in this project is a good example of how communities...can show leadership on sustainability."*

*"Antigonish promises to be a role model for sustainable communities not only in Atlantic Canada but across Canada and internationally as well."*

We invite you to be part of the shared success in advancing the sustainable prosperity of the Antigonish area. This "Early Minority Champion" Kit will familiarize you with the process and provide an opportunity to join over 20 local businesses, organizations and groups already engaged in this initiative. These organizations are implementing best sustainability practices while identifying economic savings and new opportunities. We encourage you to review this kit and contact us before May 1, 2008 if you wish to join this community-based initiative or have any questions.

On behalf of the Antigonish Sustainable Development Board and Early Adopters,



Kuli Malhotra, Executive Director  
Antigonish Sustainable Development



Frank Gallant, Chair  
Antigonish Sustainable Development Board

## WHO WE ARE

### Our Vision

To become a leading sustainable community in Canada.

### Our Mission

Antigonish Sustainable Development is a not-for-profit organization that assists in implementing sustainability for businesses, organizations and communities through strategic goals identified in a modular framework entitled, "Framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community".

### Core Values

Achievement and Productivity  
Environmental Sustainability  
Inclusivity, Transparency and Participation  
Integrity and Trust  
Interdependence and Collaboration (Teamwork)  
Social Justice

### Mottos

Engagement for results.  
Inspire *the Future*.

### Strategic Goals

The four strategic goals of the *Framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community* are as follows:

- Goal #1: Aid businesses and organizations in the Antigonish area in developing and implementing sustainability action plans.
- Goal #2: Aid municipalities in developing and implementing their sustainability action plans (ICSP).
- Goal #3: Create opportunities by building educational awareness and providing solutions to the community at-large in becoming sustainable.
- Goal #4: Share modular framework with other communities and aid them in becoming sustainable.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

A model for *Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community* was presented in February 2007 to provincial and municipal leaders who expressed support for furthering the initiative. The Deputy minister of Environment also expressed support recognizing that Antigonish could very well be considered a pilot community in Nova Scotia for implementing a comprehensive framework. Following upon that, the municipal councils of Town and County of Antigonish jointly contributed funds towards the preparation of the framework that would allow the communities in the Antigonish area to become more sustainable. The project was guided by a steering committee made up of community volunteers, business leaders, municipal councillors and academics. The group represented the four pillars of sustainability: economy, society, environment and culture.

### The Framework

The *Framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community* was completed in July 2007 and the implementation stage launched in September 2007. The framework has four strategic goals and draws on strengths from proven models including The Natural Step (Canada's) Framework, The Five Capitals Model and The Ecological Footprint. The framework is modular - meaning that it can be developed in various segments and adjusted as we move towards the vision of a Sustainable Antigonish.

### Transfer of Knowledge

Becoming a sustainable community provides the opportunity to develop a rich knowledge base of achievable actions and best practices which can then be transferred for other communities seeking to become more sustainable. The Antigonish area is well positioned to become a model sustainable community in the Province of Nova Scotia and in Atlantic Canada because of the leadership taken in this area by the Town and County, and by community interest groups.

### Purpose of the Early Minority Champion Kit

The Early Minority Champion Kit has been established for businesses, organizations and groups that seek to embed sustainability within their culture, grasp opportunities and improve their bottom-line as a result while protecting the natural capital upon which we all depend. Organizations can join by signing the one-year Early Minority Sustainability Charter with Antigonish Sustainable Development. The Early Minority stage is expected to be launched on May 15, 2008 and will end on April 30, 2009. The purpose of the charter is to assist organizations with developing sustainability visions, identifying best practices, conducting an organizational assessment and developing an action plan. Antigonish Sustainable Development will help facilitate the process through the delivery of sessions, assessing progress through meetings and providing resources to aid organizations in accomplishing the commitments of the charter. Based on the size, organizations may send between one to five participants to the sessions and meeting. The cost to join as an Early Minority Champion is \$300 per person.

The following pages provide further information on the process and potential benefits to businesses and organizations for joining as Early Minority Champions.

## PROGRESS ON BECOMING A LEADING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

The Antigonish Sustainable Development board and subcommittees were formed by January 2008. Momentum towards achieving the goals of the framework has been building as illustrated in the following table:

GOAL	ACTION
<p><b>Aid organizations in the Antigonish area in developing and implementing sustainability action plans.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Early Adopter Stage was launched in November 2007 with the goal of signing the Early Adopters Charter with 12 businesses / organizations.</li> <li>◆ By mid-February 2008, 20 businesses and organizations (listed on next page) had signed on, established their sustainability visions and identified their “quick hit successes”.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aid municipalities in developing and implementing their sustainability action plans (ICSP).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In January 2008, the Town of Antigonish accepted a proposal for the preparation of the ICSP by Antigonish Sustainable Development.</li> <li>◆ Antigonish seeks to be one of the first communities to submit the completed ICSP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create opportunities by building educational awareness and providing solutions to the community at-large in becoming sustainable.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In February 2008, Antigonish Sustainable Development launched the first of a series of open monthly community sessions to share opportunities in sustainability.</li> <li>◆ Sessions will focus on: awareness building on sustainability; consumer decision-making power and promoting sustainable life-styles and homes; enhancing quality of life and supporting the well-being of society and other topics on sustainability as identified by the members of the community.</li> <li>◆ Sessions will offer economic savings opportunities in the areas of eco-efficiency, alternative energy, home renovations and alternative transportation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Share modular framework with other communities and aid them in becoming sustainable.</b></p> <p><i>(Projects being undertaken to build towards this goal).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In May 2007, Antigonish joined as a partner with the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative: <a href="http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/partners/antigonish.htm">http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/partners/antigonish.htm</a></li> <li>◆ In September 2007, in collaboration with a student from Environmental Science Department at StFX University, a joint project was launched to develop Sustainable Performance Indicators for the Antigonish area. The first phase – environmental indicators will be completed in April 2008.</li> </ul>

## YOUR ORGANIZATION AS AN EARLY MINORITY CHAMPION

The Early Minority Champions are a group who are stimulated by the actions of innovators. They are the opinion leaders in the community who watch and analyze information brought forward and then become engaged in the process. These leaders serve as examples and help to build further capacity and commitment by demonstrating the viability, benefits, and cost-effectiveness of implementing sustainable practices. Since September 2007 over 40 organizations have expressed interest and continue to come forward as the momentum builds. Over 20 organizations have already joined the Early Adopter Charter which was launched in November, 2007. These are all local and regional organizations representing business and financial services, social services, health, education and cultural sectors. They include small, medium and large businesses.

Stage 2 (Early Minority Stage) is expected to commence with the signing of a charter by May 2008 – a commitment by Early Minority Champions to take concrete steps in moving their organizations towards sustainability. Stage 2 will proceed as follows:

- ◆ Between February and April, 2008, interested organizations and institutions will be familiarized with sustainability and the *Framework of Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community*. Potential Adopters will sign the Charter explained on the next page.
- ◆ By May 15, 2008, up to 100 Early Minority organizations will sign on to the one-year “Early Minority Sustainability Charter” which will entail participation in a series of programs designed to familiarize with sustainability, develop an action plan for their organization and aid in capacity building for the later stages of the Adopter Process.
- ◆ While developing action plans for their organizations, Early Minority organizations will also be recognized as the core group (along with the Early Adopters) in the community that will champion the community’s sustainability planning and capacity building processes. Their organizations will become key drivers in advancing sustainability in Antigonish.

### PARTICIPATING EARLY ADOPTERS ORGANIZATIONS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ◆ <b>Alcove Bistro and Lounge</b>                          | ◆ <b>Student Computers</b>             |
| ◆ <b>Bergengren Credit Union</b>                           | ◆ <b>StFX University Departments:</b>  |
| ◆ <b>Computer Connection Ltd.</b>                          | ◆ <b>Education</b>                     |
| ◆ <b>Fresh Air Society</b>                                 | ◆ <b>Enterprise Development Centre</b> |
| ◆ <b>Guysborough-Antigonish Strait Health Authority</b>    | ◆ <b>Facilities Management</b>         |
| ◆ <b>NS Agriculture, Resource and Stewardship Division</b> | ◆ <b>Sociology and Anthropology</b>    |
| ◆ <b>On-Line Support (Antigonish)</b>                      | ◆ <b>Students Union</b>                |
| ◆ <b>Peak Experiences</b>                                  | ◆ <b>Strait Regional School Board</b>  |
| ◆ <b>Royal Bank of Canada (Antigonish)</b>                 | ◆ <b>Town of Antigonish</b>            |
| ◆ <b>Sisters of St. Martha’s</b>                           | ◆ <b>Voices</b>                        |
|  | ◆ <b>Wishing Wells Society</b>         |

## BENEFITS TO YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR JOINING AS AN EARLY MINORITY CHAMPION

- ◆ **Participation in sustainability training and planning program for up to 5 staff.**
- ◆ **Potential cost savings and / or new revenue opportunities associated with the various actions and investments that arise through participation in the training, planning and networking for sustainability.**
- ◆ **Social capital built among employees in your organization by participating in the program and sharing a common language for sustainability.**
- ◆ **An inexpensive way to develop a sustainability plan for your organization.**
- ◆ **Marketing opportunity to showcase your business / organization at local, regional and national levels.**
- ◆ **Ongoing support and coaching from experts in sustainability and input into the development of the organization's sustainability action plan.**
- ◆ **Peer networking with other Adopter organizations in Antigonish, Atlantic Canada and other regions.**

## COST TO JOIN AS AN EARLY MINORITY CHAMPION

The cost per person to join the Early Minority Charter is \$300. the total cost to each organization will vary based on the number of participants attending. The following chart may be used as a guideline for the number of participants that are recommended to join the charter based on the size of the organization.

<u>Size of Organization</u>	<u>No. of participants</u>
1 - 19 employees	1
20 - 49 employees	2
50 - 249 employees	3
250 - 499 employees	4
500 - 999 employees	5

Please note that there may be other costs associated including transportation to/from local workshop location that should be estimated by each organization individually.

## EARLY MINORITY SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER

### Purpose

The Antigonish Early Minority Sustainability Charter describes the commitments of organizations. Organizations will work with Antigonish Sustainable Development to further sustainability as identified in the *Framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community*. The Framework is intended to build capacity and commitment among a diverse group of organizations that will advance sustainable development in the Antigonish area.

### Scope

The scope of work associated with this charter is outlined below under the commitments section. The Charter timeline is identified in Schedule 1.

### Objectives

The Antigonish Early Minority Sustainability Charter provides concrete steps that will be taken over the period of one year (beginning on May 15, 2008 and ending on April 30, 2009) in an on-going commitment and journey towards a more sustainable future. Organizations will commit to actively participate in an effort to:

- ◆ Build capacity and competence within the organization to become better leaders in sustainable development;
- ◆ Create and implement a plan of action to advance sustainability within the organization through concrete actions;
- ◆ Serve as role models by sharing the own organization's successes and lessons with respect to sustainability;
- ◆ Build an effective network that collaborates and supports progress towards sustainability;
- ◆ Build regional momentum towards sustainability by engaging citizens, organizations and governments within the Atlantic Region;
- ◆ And identify and act on opportunities collaboratively to help move the region towards sustainability.

### Commitments of the Organization joining as an Early Minority Champion:

- ◆ Ensure that leaders from our organization attend strategic functions of this initiative.
- ◆ Participate in a total of at least 5 workshops and monthly progress meetings to share success stories and lessons learned, engage in additional learning and collaboratively identify and act on opportunities to help move the Antigonish area region towards sustainability.
- ◆ Commit time and finances for 1 to 5 individuals from our organization to attend training sessions and meetings.
- ◆ Cover the workshop and session fees for our own participation and the associated travel and accommodations for sessions. The cost per person to attend the full set of sessions will be \$300.
- ◆ Identify sustainability visions for our organization.
- ◆ Conduct a Sustainability Assessment of our organization.
- ◆ Develop a Sustainability Action Plan for our organization.
- ◆ Develop a program to incorporate sustainability into the culture of our organization.
- ◆ Participate in peer to peer networking with other sustainability partners.
- ◆ Play a leadership role in the community and in the region with respect to sustainability.
- ◆ Assist with evaluating the success and effectiveness of this initiative at the end of the charter commitment.

## Commitments of Antigonish Sustainable Development:

- ◆ Administer the Antigonish Sustainable Early Minority Sustainability Initiative Charter and facilitate the Framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community.
- ◆ Collaborate on the design and delivery of this initiative to ensure that objectives are met.
- ◆ Provide high level direction and support, and assist with project management.
- ◆ Design and deliver the training workshops and sessions.
- ◆ Source local and external expertise as appropriate to aid with initiatives.
- ◆ Provide continuous coaching for each of the sustainability partners.
- ◆ Facilitate peer to peer networking amongst the partners.
- ◆ Provide fundraising support and financial oversight of the project.
- ◆ Secure venues and provide logistical support for the initiative.
- ◆ Provide internal and external communications.
- ◆ Facilitate the development of a communications plan for the charter.
- ◆ Assemble and maintain a resource centre (website, books, papers, case studies, Power-Point presentations, etc.) to support sustainability partners.

### EARLY MINORITY SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER AGREEMENT

By signing below, we agree to the commitments as described in the Antigonish Early Minority Sustainability Charter for a period of one year beginning on May 15, 2008 and ending on April 30, 2009.

#### For the Organization/Group committing to the Charter:

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact E-mail/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### For Antigonish Sustainable Development:

Name of Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SCHEDULE 1: EARLY MINORITY CHARTER TIMELINE**

### May 15, 2008

- ◆ Deadline to sign the Early Minority Sustainability Initiative Charter.

### May 20, 2008 (time commitment: 8 hours)

- ◆ Attend full-day session #1: Sustainability, Visions and Quick Hits.
- ◆ "Seven Generations Sustainability for Organizations" module.
- ◆ "Leader Business" module.
- ◆ Process of developing sustainability visions and quick hits.

### June – July 2008 (time commitment will vary)

- ◆ Develop Sustainability Visions and Quick Hits for Organization with support from Antigonish Sustainable Development. There will be a monthly meeting for two hours to discuss:
  - ⇒ Success Stories
  - ⇒ Problem & Challenges
  - ⇒ Opportunity for Collaboration

### August 21, 2008 (time commitment: 8 hours)

- ◆ Attend full-day session #2: Sustainability Assessment.
- ◆ Share Sustainability Visions and Quick Hits.
- ◆ Learn about Sustainability Audits.
- ◆ Assessment methodologies and tools.

### September – October, 2008 (time commitment will vary)

- ◆ Conduct Sustainability Assessment of organization with support from Antigonish Sustainable Development. There will be a monthly meeting for two hours to discuss:
  - ⇒ Success Stories
  - ⇒ Problem & Challenges
  - ⇒ Opportunity for Collaboration

### November 20, 2008 (time commitment: 8 hours)

- ◆ Attend full-day workshop #3: Sustainability Action Plans.
- ◆ Share results of organizational assessments.
- ◆ "Eco-systems and Human Well-Being" module.
- ◆ Process for developing Sustainability Action Plans.

### December 2008 – January, 2009 (time commitment will vary)

- ◆ Develop Draft Sustainability Action Plan with support from Antigonish Sustainable Development. There will be a monthly meeting for two hours to discuss:
  - ⇒ Success Stories
  - ⇒ Problem & Challenges
  - ⇒ Opportunity for Collaboration

### February 19, 2009 (time commitment: 4 hours)

- ◆ Attend full-day workshop #4: "Commitment to Humanity Module".
- ◆ Share identified actions and best practices.
- ◆ Discuss draft action plans.

### March 19, 2009 (time commitment: 4 hours)

- ◆ Share final action plans; this will be the monthly meeting for two hours to discuss:
  - ⇒ Success Stories
  - ⇒ Problem & Challenges
  - ⇒ Opportunity for Collaboration

### April 23, 2009 (time commitment: 4 hours)

- ◆ Attend full-day workshop #5: Evaluation and Next steps
- ◆ Participate in evaluation of Early Adopters Charter Initiative.
- ◆ "Train the Trainer" program.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is Sustainable Development?**

#### The classic definition

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>1</sup>

#### A shared framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community

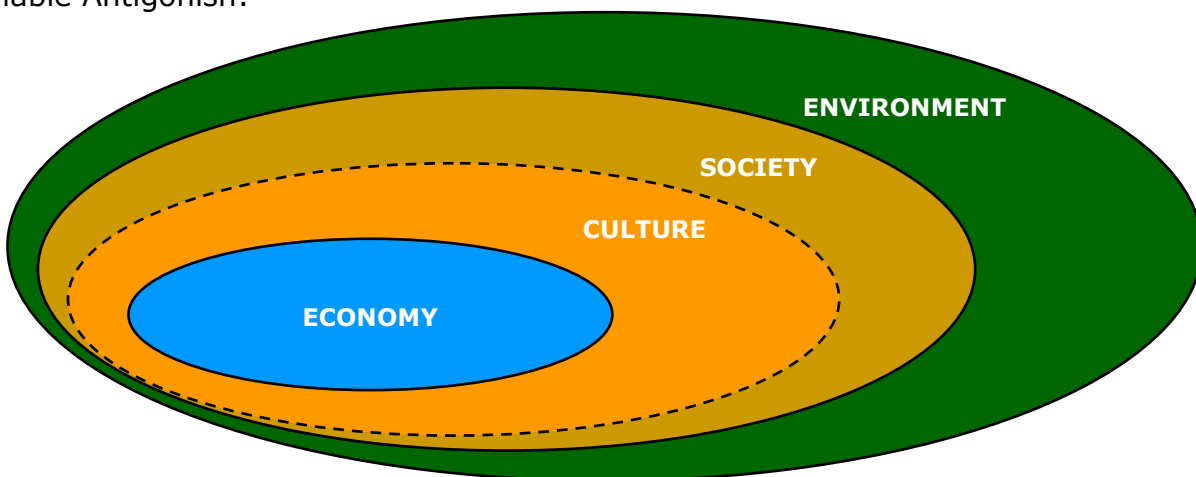
"A dynamic process which enables all people to realize their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems."<sup>2</sup>

### **What is the difference between Sustainability and Sustainable Development?**

Sustainability is the intended outcome. Sustainable development refers to the steps taken to get there.

### **What is the link between Prosperity and Sustainability?**

To further the prosperity of Antigonish, and to maintain a viable economy, the well-being of the community and a healthy culture, we must maintain a healthy environment. To achieve this, it is important that a sustainable approach be taken. The following diagram illustrates how we can best protect our interests for a prosperous and sustainable Antigonish:



The economy is dependant on the health of the society which in turn is dependant on the health of the environment. For prosperity, it is thus important to take care of the environment and society so that our economy can continue to flourish in a sustainable manner. Sustainability is the balancing of these three areas (economy, society and environment) through efficient management of our natural, human, social, financial and manufactured capitals (assets).

<sup>1</sup>The Brundtland Report: [http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/eae/Sustainability/Older/Brundtland\\_Report.html](http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/eae/Sustainability/Older/Brundtland_Report.html)

<sup>2</sup> Forum For the Future: <http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/>

## **What is The Five Capitals Model?<sup>3</sup>**

We are facing a sustainability crisis because we're consuming our stocks of natural, human and social capital faster than they are being produced. Unless we control the rate of this consumption, we can't sustain these vital stocks in the long-term. We believe that by maintaining and trying to increase stocks of these capital assets, we can live off the income without reducing the capital itself. But for this to happen, it is the responsibility of every organization, business and community to manage these capital assets sustainably. There are five types of sustainable capital from where we derive the goods and services we need to improve the quality of our lives.

### **NATURAL CAPITAL**

*Natural Capital is any stock or flow of energy and material that produces goods and services. It includes Resources (renewable and non-renewable materials), Sinks (that absorb, neutralize or recycle waste) and Processes (climate regulation). Natural capital is the basis not only of production but of life itself!*

### **HUMAN CAPITAL**

*Human Capital consists of people's health, knowledge, skills and motivation. All these things are needed for productive work. Enhancing human capital through education and training is central to a flourishing economy.*

### **SOCIAL CAPITAL**

*Social Capital concerns the institutions that help us maintain and develop human capital in partnership with others; e.g. families, communities, businesses, trade unions, schools, and voluntary organizations.*

### **MANUFACTURED CAPITAL**

*Manufactured Capital comprises material goods or fixed assets which contribute to the production process rather than being the output itself – e.g. tools, machines and buildings.*

### **FINANCIAL CAPITAL**

*Financial Capital plays an important role in our economy, enabling the other types of Capital to be owned and traded. But unlike the other types, it has no real value itself but is representative of natural, human, social or manufactured capital; e.g. shares, bonds or banknotes.*

<sup>3</sup> Porritt, Sustainable Development Commission: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/porritt.html>

## What is The Natural Step Framework?<sup>4</sup>

The Natural Step (TNS) Framework offers a clear and compelling science-based understanding of sustainability and a practical strategic planning framework to help organizations make smart, economic moves towards sustainability. The Natural Step framework is now being used internationally by hundreds of organizations, including government departments, universities, municipalities, Fortune 500 companies such as Ikea, Nike, and Interface Inc., and small- and medium-sized businesses. The Natural Step Canada is part of an international non-profit research, education and advisory organization. Its mission is to help organizations, businesses and communities make meaningful progress towards sustainability. At the heart of The Natural Step lie four key concepts, or 'System Conditions', which collectively define the conditions that must be met for society to be able to live sustainably within the Earth's supporting biosphere. It is only by understanding how the world around us works that we can properly understand how we need to manage our human systems so that they do not breach the limits set by the biophysical world. The four system conditions for a sustainable society under the Natural Step Framework are as follows:

### The Four System Conditions for a Sustainable Society

System Condition	In Simple Terms This Means...
1. In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to having systematically increasing concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust.	This means substituting certain minerals that are scarce in nature with others that are more abundant, using all mined materials efficiently, and systematically reducing dependence upon fossil fuels.
2. In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing concentrations of substances produced by society.	This means systematically substituting certain persistent and unnatural compounds with ones that are normally abundant or break down more easily in nature, and using all substances produced by society as efficiently as possible.
3. In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing degradation by physical means.	This means drawing resources only from well-managed ecosystems, systematically pursuing the most productive and efficient use of those resources and of land, and exercising caution in modifying nature.
4. In a sustainable society, people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their ability to meet their needs.	This means using all of our resources efficiently, fairly and responsibly so that the needs of the people, and the future needs of people who are not yet born, stand the best chance of being met.

<sup>4</sup> The Natural Step (Canada): <http://www.naturalstep.ca/system-conditions.html>

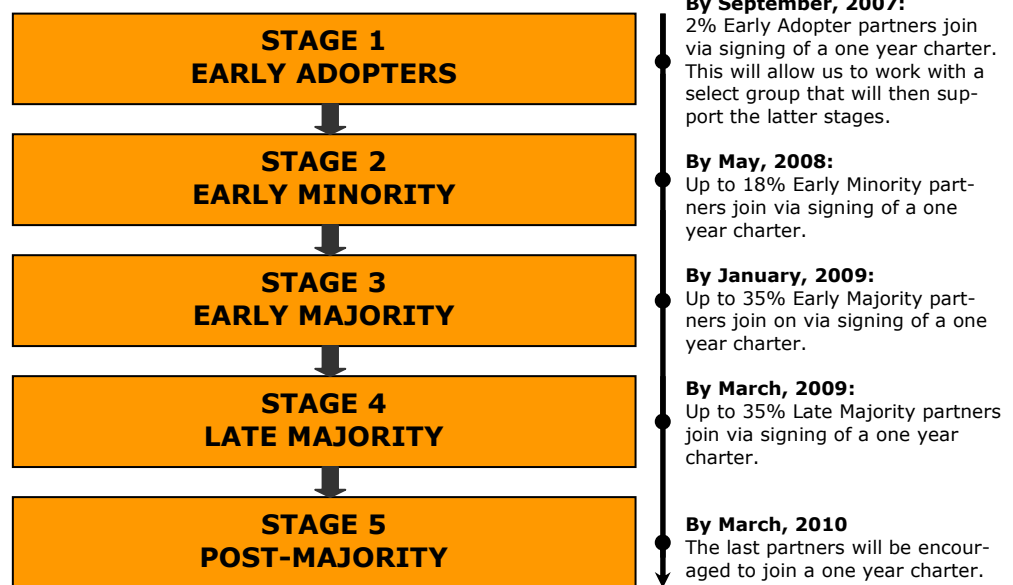
## What is The Ecological Footprint?

"The Ecological Footprint is a resource management tool that measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes under prevailing technology. In order to live, we consume what nature offers. Every action impacts the planet's ecosystems. This is of little concern as long as human use of resources does not exceed what the Earth can renew. Today, humanity's Ecological Footprint is over 23% larger than what the planet can regenerate. In other words, it now takes more than one year and two months for the Earth to regenerate what we use in a single year." This "overshoot" is maintained by liquidating the planet's ecological resources. This is a vastly underestimated threat and one that is not adequately addressed. By measuring the Ecological Footprint of a population (an individual, a city, a nation, or all of humanity) we can assess our overshoot, which helps us manage our ecological assets more carefully. Ecological Footprints enable people to take personal and collective actions in support of a world where humanity lives within the means of one planet." To check out your ecological footprint, visit:

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/>.

## What is Adopters Charter at different stages and what are the commitments of organizations?

The Adopters Charter is a commitment by Adopters organizations to using and fostering widespread understanding about sustainability, and through actions, demonstrate how individuals, organizations, and the community as a whole can take tangible, measurable steps toward sustainability. More specifically, within the limits of the organization's resources and capacity, Adopter organizations agree to support and adhere to an implementation program, which will be developed specifically for the process taking place here in the Antigonish Area.



Adopters also commit to:

- ◆ Learn about the framework for Antigonish as a Leading Sustainable Community and using it to guide decisions and new initiatives in their organizations.
- ◆ Establish an internal support network of “champions” within the organization – 1 to 5 individuals who will attend approximately 8 to 10 sessions and workshops over the course of a year.
- ◆ Perform sustainability assessments within the organization.
- ◆ Creating a sustainability action plan for the organization.
- ◆ Begin implementing actions based on the plan and report periodically on the progress made in implementing the action plan and share lessons learned with peers.
- ◆ Play a leadership / support role in the community with respect to sustainability.
- ◆ Participate in evaluating the program’s effectiveness and the outcomes achieved. Participate with other Adopters in developing a strategy for broad community engagement in the Antigonish Area to promote the lessons, stories and benefits of their experiences with sustainability.

### **What is the goal of the Adopter Process? What are the outcomes?**

The goal of the Adopter Process is to build capacity and commitment to plan for and move towards greater sustainability among individuals, public institutions and private organizations in a given community or region. Outcomes of the process include:

- ◆ Building a common language and message around sustainability;
- ◆ Building organizational support for sustainability;
- ◆ Performing a Sustainability Audit of current practices and performance;
- ◆ Creating a Sustainability Action Plan;
- ◆ Developing and participating in a “sustainability network” of Early Adopters and other like-minded organizations;
- ◆ Developing and implementing a community outreach program;
- ◆ And once Adopters become proficient at incorporating sustainability within their own organizations, they will then begin to collaborate on opportunities for moving the broader region towards sustainability.

### **How does the Adopter process work?**

In a typical Adopters process, a group of communities or organizations in the same region come together. Each organization will identify one to five active participants. It is also important that each participating organization have high-level support, even if senior managers are not those who will be participating in the program or implementing changes. Together, Adopters will participate in a series of sessions facilitated by Antigonish Sustainable Development (ASD). ASD will have support from a network of organizations to develop, implement and evaluate the programs. In the intervals between sessions, Adopters will have assignments to take back and implement within their organizations. The basic content of the training will be jointly set by ASD and Adopters. The content will be flexible and modified to suit the particular needs of one or more of the Adopters. For example, if one organization has already completed some training, then their participation may take a slightly different form than other organizations, in terms of structure and even timeline. The Adopter process takes approximately 1 year, but the timeline is flexible. At the end of that year, Adopters reconvene to celebrate their successes, review progress on the implementation of their sustainability action plans, and share stories and solutions. There will also be opportunities for promotion and communication about what the Adopters are doing throughout the process, and in particular at the end when the group reconvenes.

