



**CMA Economic Development Meeting 21 Jan 2014: for our Cross-Border Region**  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***Economic Component of the 2014 Congress***

*Recognizing one of the biggest challenges in the Region, we want to leave a legacy that will promote the uniqueness of our Region, provide job opportunities for our children and grandchildren, and build a stronger thriving economy.*

***A Cohesive Regional Approach: Potential Impact – this must be compelling enough for the Region to act differently***

- Bridging both cultural and political boundaries
- Managing a Regional supply chain more effectively
  - Lowering barriers to conduct business, transport goods, ...
- Better leveraging of the unique/key assets & access of the Region
  - One of the largest bio-regions in North America
  - One of the largest markets (the U.S.)
  - Tapping into the transfer/transportation of goods flowing in & out of Canada and the U.S.
- Connecting the dots to enhance job-creation and Regional wealth generation, via:
  - **Organization** – e.g., create a Regional Commission (governance innovation)
  - **Technology** – e.g., increasing the local value-added aspect of many businesses
  - **Education** – e.g., a collaborative boundary-free education sharing model where credits are common across the region

***Significant Trends & Challenges:***

- Population across the Region has been steady or declining for the last 15 years while Canada & the U.S. have been growing
- An economy with lower than 30% of 20-to-44 year age group is NOT sustainable – we are at 25.5%; Canada & USA are at 33.9%; Youth Brain-Drain is a serious issue
- Indicators also show an aging population and a continuing loss of talent in our Region
- This Region struggles to retain university graduates
- 52% Employment concentrated in four Industry Sectors: Healthcare & Social Assistance, Trade, Manufacturing and Educational Services – conclusion: Industry Sector diversification is a must for a healthy, thriving Regional Economy
- Little or No Region-Wide *Sense of Identity* or *Sense of Urgency* across this Region
- Language is perceived as a barrier; International Border (both physical and regulatory issues); Interprovincial Border (regulatory issues)
- Lack of Region-wide Leadership, decline of Entrepreneurship Across the Region
- Regional Workforce Skill Gap and Knowledge Gap
- Fragmented Tourism – QC vs. NB vs. N-ME
- Major Differences in Political Structures and Economic Regulations
- Lack of a Cohesive Regional Economic Vision
- Forestry Vision for the Crown Lands in NB & QC

- **Global Economy based on knowledge, Renewable & Alternative Energy**
- **A More Healthy, Natural Way of Living, Sustainable Development**

***Opportunities to Build the Region's Future:***

- Better leveraging our Natural Resources as a key enabler, including addressing the need for specialized skilled workers in forestry, agriculture, etc.
- Developing & deploying alternative & renewable energy – Forestry/Agri-business sector
- R&D development in manufacturing sector – Knowledge Facilities
- Creative and specialized products and services
- Tourism – combining unique cultural and natural aspects of the Region via multi-layered tourism, eco-tourism, international tourism and cultural celebration
- Collaborate with the First Nations people on projects of mutual benefit to the Region and local tribes – enhancing our collective understanding of history and culture
- Connecting Culture and Territory – – providing common ground to form stronger linkages across boundaries
- The Region can become a Showcase:
  - Our natural resources, forestry & agri-food, alternative and sustainable energy
  - Ecotourism + culture tourism + forestry
  - Competences, our research & development facility/institution
  - Knowledge in all sectors, creative niche services
  - Collaborating with First Nation
  - Capturing cross-borders opportunities

***Establishing a New Sense of Urgency: "YOU CAN SUCCEED HERE!"***

- **YOU:** via success stories, forum to lay out opportunities, celebrate success in everything, emphasize the gifts you already have, identify our strengths/qualities, we find solutions (bottom-up), we are independent
- **CAN:** via idea incubators, entrepreneurship training, formal & informal technology training, job shadow, mentoring programs, mentorship system in place
- **SUCCEED:** via proof using success stories, examples shared by retirees and other business leaders
- **HERE:** via cost-effective education, advertise job trends, advertise opportunities, education along the path to success, this is not just for our youth, success is not just about money

***Three key questions:***

- *Do we want to sit around waiting for the next crisis or should we make the region more resilient now?*
- *What are we doing to leave a strong legacy (i.e., 'economic vitality') for our children and grandchildren?*
- *How do we better connect the dots to create more opportunities for our youth and young entrepreneurs?*

***Path Forward – Next Steps***

- Formation of a Cross-Border Region-wide *Core Leadership Team*
- Setting up several *Action Teams* focused on a Regional Commission, Youth Engagement, Workforce Development & Training, Leadership Development, Regional Tourism, Knowledge-Based Enterprises/R&D/Export/Trade, Energy & Natural Resources, Communications/Regional Marketing/Networking