

# The Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative



**Presented at Federation of Canadian  
Municipalities**

***February, 2008***



# What is the ACSI- Overview

- Year-long, collaborative project
- Focused on building capacity and commitment around sustainability - Make Atlantic Canada a leader in this area
- Coordinated by the **Centre for Rural Sustainability**
- Uses The Natural Step Framework as a guide
- 3 events: workshops in May and November 2007 have taken place; upcoming Sustainability Summit April 17-18, 2007
- 14 Sustainability Partners – formal commitment to sustainability
- At least 22 Network Partners – support and participate in the project

# The ACSI Network





# Sustainability Partners

Aliant

Antigonish Sustainable Development Project

Bathurst Sustainable Development

Halifax Regional Municipality

Halifax Shambhala Centre

iNova Credit Union

Jacques Whitford Ltd.

Just Us Coffee Roasters

P'lovers, the Environmental Store

City of Saint John

Saint Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association

Stewardship and Outreach Section, NS Dept of Natural Resources

Town of Stratford

Town of Wolfville



# Network Partners

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada  
AuCoeur\Occur Sustainable  
Communities  
Canadian CED Network  
C-CIARN Atlantic  
Centre for Rural Sustainability  
Coastal Communities Network  
Environment & Sustainable  
Development Research Centre,  
University of New Brunswick  
Federation of Canadian  
Municipalities  
Ecology Action Centre  
Genuine Progress Index Atlantic  
New Brunswick Environmental  
Network

Nova Scotia Environmental Network  
Province of Nova Scotia  
Public Works and Government  
Services Canada  
Rural Secretariat and the Nova  
Scotia Rural Team  
Shambhala Institute  
Sierra Club of Canada – Atlantic  
Canada Chapter  
Sustainable Cities (ICSC)  
The Co-operators Insurance Co.  
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities  
White Point Beach Resort  
Windhorse Education Foundation



## **The Centre for Rural Sustainability (CRS)**

- A community non-profit organization located in Wolfville
- Facilitates learning, planning, and strategic decision making around issues of long-term and short-term sustainability
- Envisions a future where financially stable economies of rural communities are fuelled by ecologically sustainable means that foster quality of life, social justice, and health.

Website: [www.ruralsustainability.org](http://www.ruralsustainability.org)

Email: [info@ruralsustainability.org](mailto:info@ruralsustainability.org)

The Natural Step Canada is a non-profit organization providing results orientated advisory and training services to help community and business leaders integrate social, environmental and economic decision making into their operations with a holistic, proven and scientifically-rigorous framework.



# Building Sustainable Development

Transforming Atlantic Canada into a model of socially and environmentally responsible development

Oak Island, NS

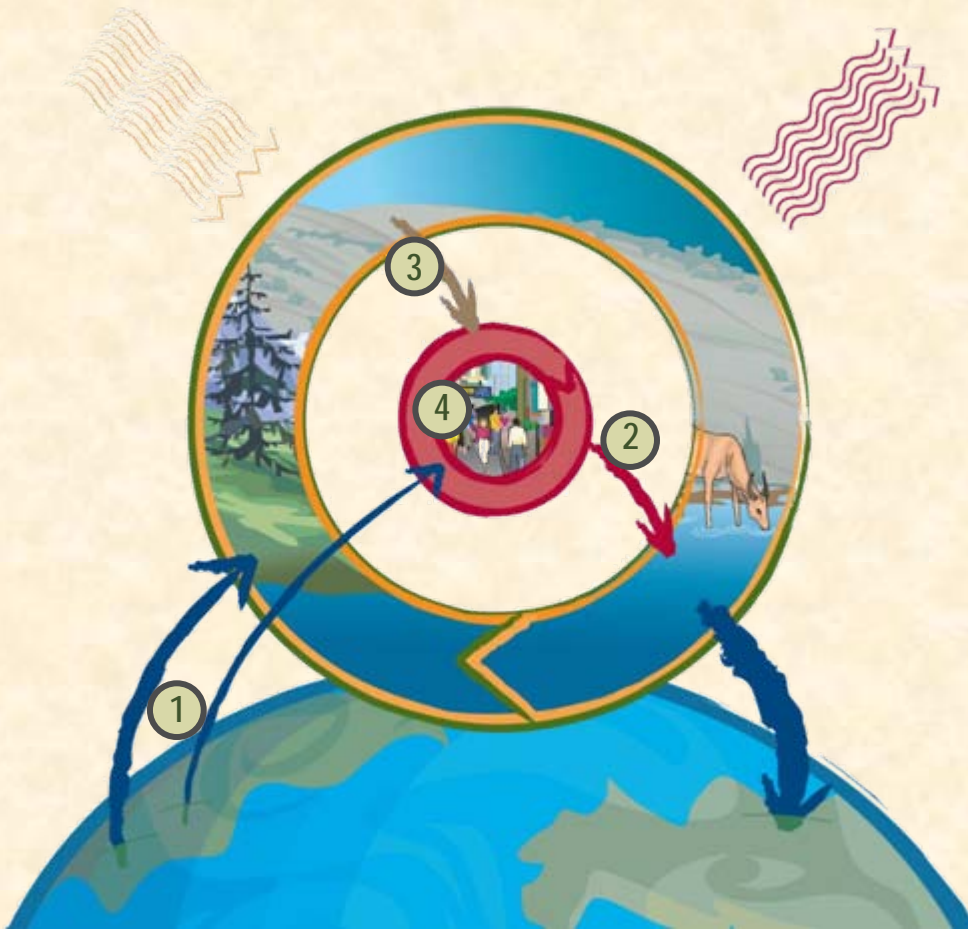
November 18-19, 2005



<http://www.gpiatlantic.org/conference/followup.htm>

# The Natural Step: Conditions for a Sustainable Society

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:

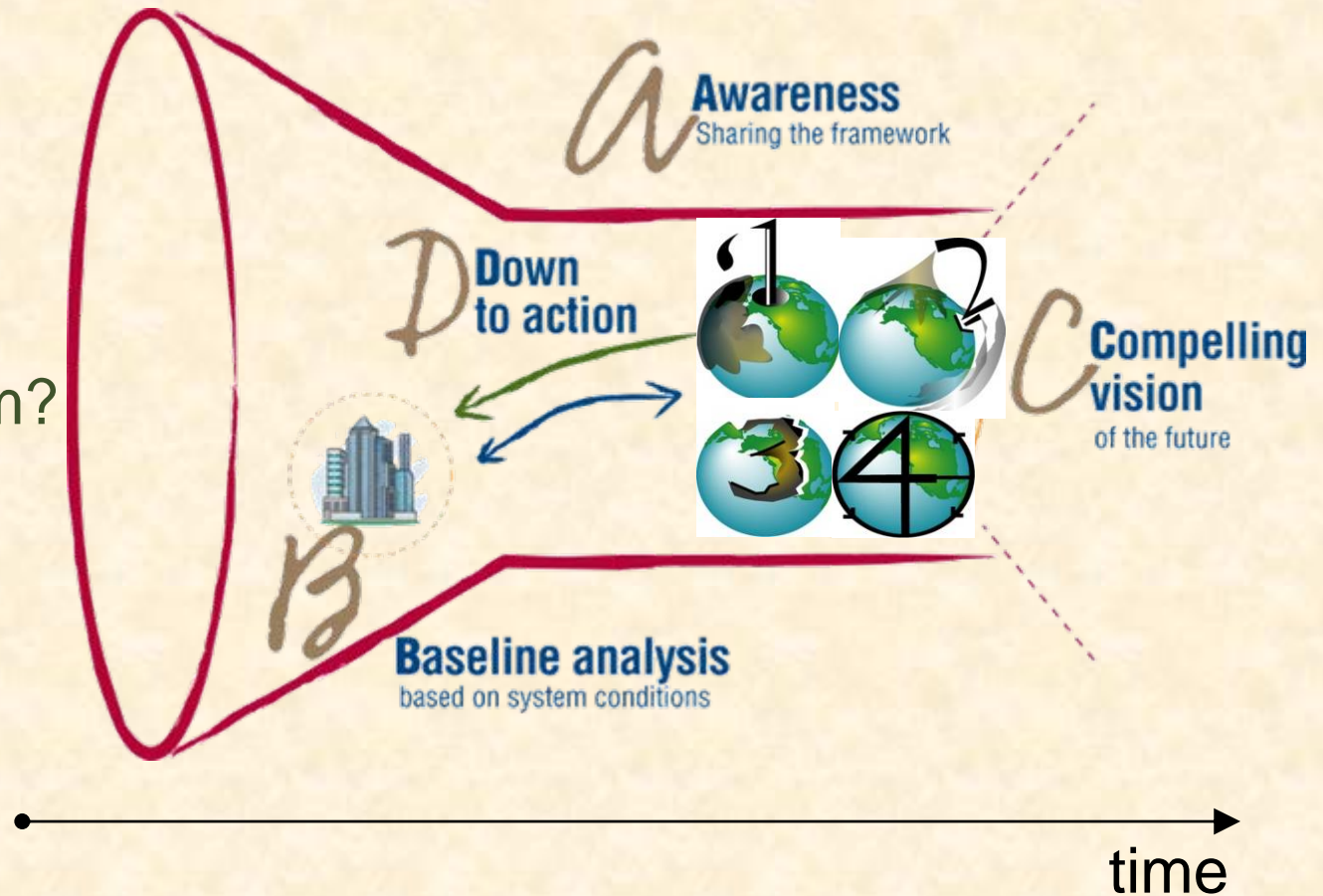


- ① concentrations of substances extracted from the earth's crust
- ② concentrations of substances produced by society
- ③ degradation by physical means  
and, in that society...
- ④ people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs.

# Generic Planning Framework

## “D” Step

- Right direction?
- Flexible Platform?
- Return on investment?



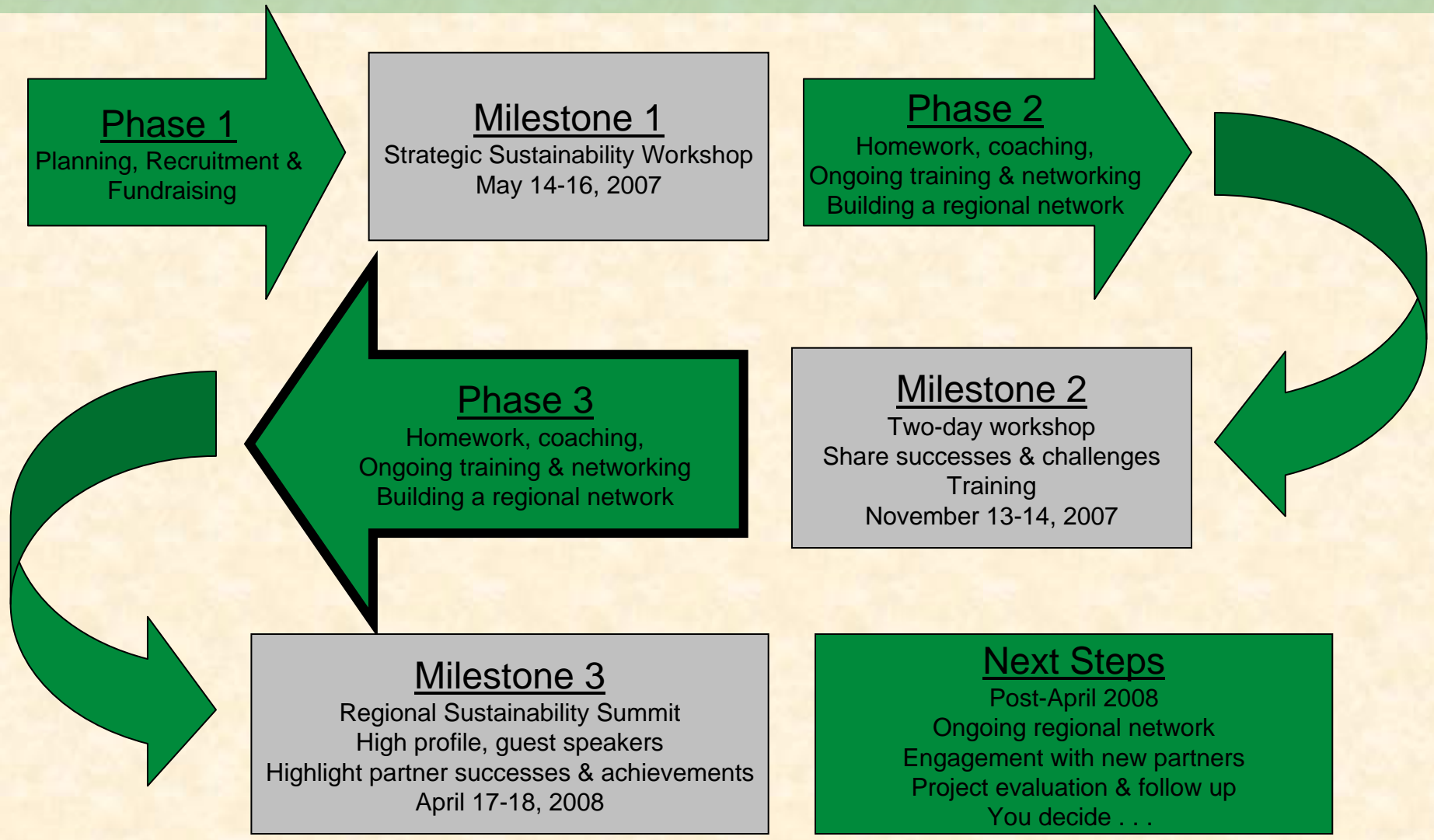
- **build capacity and competence** within their organization to become better leaders in sustainable development
- **implement a plan of action** that advances sustainability within their organization through concrete actions
- **serve as role models** by sharing their own organization's successes and 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
- **identify and act on opportunities** collaboratively to help move the region towards sustainability

## **ACSI supports Sustainability Partners with:**

- 16 Hours of “free” coaching time with TNS Associates
- Access to TNS e-learning module
- Access to a network of like minded organizations grappling with similar issues
- Three face-to-face progress meetings
- Access to additional training and coaching time

## **Network Partners support ACSI by:**

- Attending training/networking sessions
- Helping to promote ACSI in their own networks.
- Inform ACSI partners about the services/information they provide that support sustainability.
- Working together with other partners to collaboratively identify and act on opportunities to help move the Atlantic region towards sustainability.
- Playing a leadership role in the community and in the region with respect to sustainability.



# Stumbling Blocks Along the Way

- Unclear expectations upfront
- Problems determining initial projects
- Ongoing funding
- People are too BUSY!!!

*We will never become a “sustainable society” until we learn to live with greater balance in our own lives.*

# What's Next? – After April 2008

- Long-term vision that ACSI will act as a clearinghouse for information and resources on sustainability
- Ongoing regional network – events, training, outreach on sustainability issues, etc.
- Engagement with new partners – new sustainability partners to participate in similar process
- Current sustainability partners available as mentors and network resource people

## Comments? Questions?

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