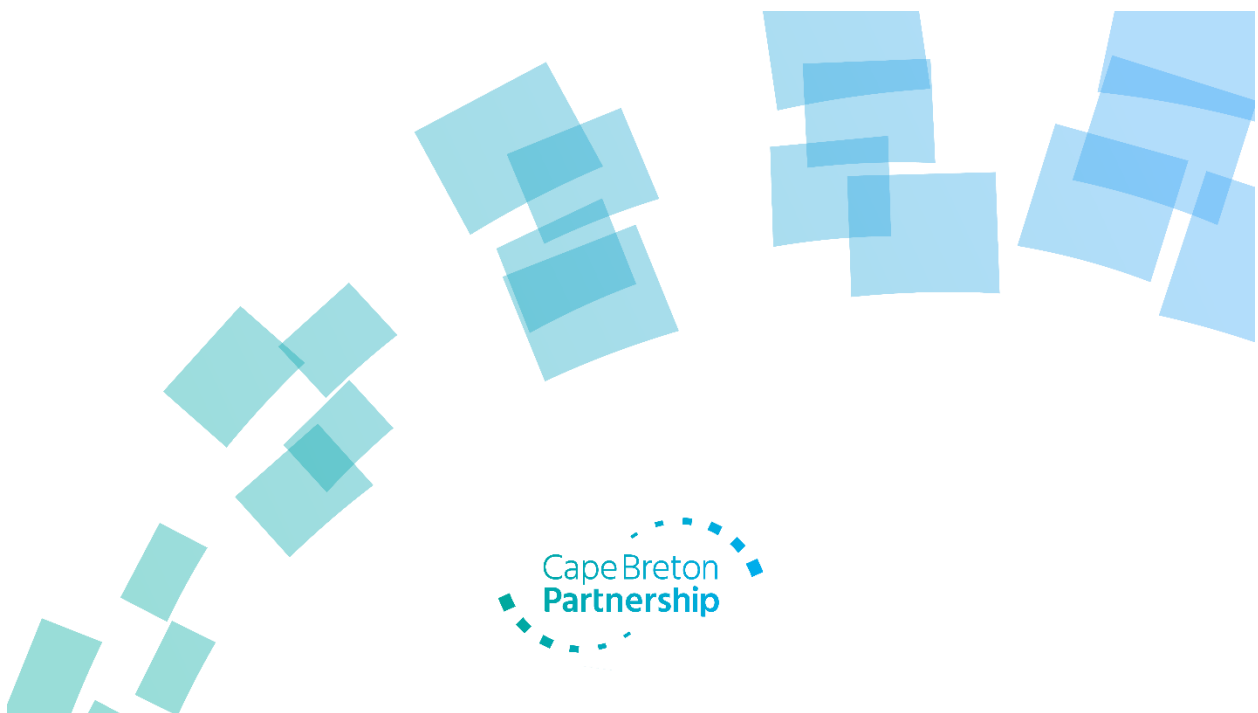


# President & CEO's Report to CBREN Liaison Oversight Committee

June 25, 2020

Reporting Period: Q4, January 1 – March 31, 2020

Presented by Carla Arsenault, Cape Breton Partnership



## STAFFING

The Cape Breton REN currently has a near complete compliment of staff supporting its efforts. The only outstanding position which is currently being re-advertised is the Economic Development Officer for the Strait Area. This posting closed in March but was put on hold due to COVID-19. The posting is now back up and should close in 2 weeks. At that time, down selection and interviews will take place.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES METRICS

### Business Planning

*The **Business Planning Advisor** is a shared REN resource, works with prospective and existing businesses Island-wide to prepare business plans. Began April 15, 2019.*

*Table 1 Business Planning Advisor – CB REN Summary*

Description	Q4 Count	2019/20 Total
Files opened	13 CB REN	44 CB REN
Number of individual clients engaged within these files	20 CB REN	60 CB REN
Business plan files	13 CB REN	40 CB REN
Advisory service files	0 CB REN	4 CB REN

### Creative Economy Development

*The **Creative Economy Development Officer** is a shared REN resource that supports Cape Breton's creative economy by championing the creative sector and pursuing projects that will boost the creative economy.*

*Table 2 - Creative Economy Development Officer– CB REN Summary*

Description	Q4 Count	2019/20 Total
Number of Individuals Engaged in Projects	26 CB REN (19 from shared projects)	63 CB REN (49 from shared projects)
Creative Economy Client Project Files	5 CB REN	8 CB REN
Creative Economy Economic Development Project files started	11 CB REN (shared)	16 CB REN (shared)

### Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) Pilot

The **AIP** is an employer-driven immigration program to help address labour shortages in the Maritimes.

Table 3 - Atlantic Immigration Pilot – CB REN Summary

Description	Q4	2019/20 Total
Designations	10	54
Endorsements	44	120

### Export Growth Service (EGS)

The **EGS** provides access to export-related services for businesses including counselling, mentoring, planning strategies, information, workshops, training, and advice on existing programming. Fulfilled through an annual Export Conference going on its second year, holding Export Round Tables across Cape Breton, a monthly newsletter known as the 'Trading Post', and one-on-one meetings with new and experienced exporters.

Table 4 – Export Growth Service (EGS) – CB REN Summary

Description	2019/20 Total
<b>Events Held</b> (Conferences, community round tables / information sessions, funding announcements)	8
<b>Event Attendees</b>	264
<b>Newsletter Subscribers</b>	237
<b>Newsletters Issued</b>	1
<b>SMEs Participating in Export Growth Service</b>	9

## Connector Program

*The Cape Breton Connector Program Coordinator connects our business community with top talent. Through the program, recent post-secondary graduates or those new to Cape Breton with post-secondary education meet with Cape Breton business leaders to grow their professional network.*

Table 5 - Cape Breton Connector Program – CB REN Summary

Description	Q4 Count	2019/20 Total
Connectors	20	87
Connectees	21	77
Matches	28	75
Events	1	7

## Tourism Seasonality and Labour Project

*The Cape Breton Partnership and Destination Cape Breton Association are working to connect tourism-based businesses to **training opportunities, tools** and **wage subsidies** provided by the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) and Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council (NSTHRC), with support from the Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education (LAE).*

Table 6 – Tourism Seasonality and Labour Project – CBRM REN and CB REN Summary

Description	Q4 Count	2019/20 Total
Regular one on one in person, telephone, or email conversations with clients who may benefit from the programs available.		
CB REN	5	91

### Micro-Loan Pilot Program for Cape Breton – Unama'ki Female Entrepreneurs

*Starting in January 2020, the Cape Breton Partnership and Sydney Credit Union are working together to offer micro-loans while providing support and guidance to female entrepreneurs, using an approach based on Annapolis Investments in Rural Opportunity (AIRO). Recent research conducted on female and Indigenous female entrepreneurs in Cape Breton by both the Cape Breton Partnership and Cape Breton Voices indicated that access to funding is one of the greatest challenges Cape Breton women face.*

*Table 5 – Micro-Loan Pilot Program – CB REN Summary*

Women's Micro Lending Pilot Program Files	Q4 Count	2019/20 Total
CB REN:	6	6

CB REN – SUMMARY
<p>The CB REN data below includes work and files started by the <b>Business Planning Advisor</b> (broken-out summary above), <b>Creative Economy Development Officer</b> (broken-out summary above), the <b>Labour Market Development and Immigration Officer</b> (broken-out summary of the AIP program is above), the CB REN <b>Communications Officer</b> and two <b>Economic Development Officers</b>.</p> <p>Shared files are files that impact and/or benefit people or geographies in both RENs. They are noted as they can cause “double counting” if metrics from both RENs are simply combined.</p>

Table 7 - CB REN SUMMARY

Description	Q4	2019/20 Total	Q4 Notes
<b>Business advisory files</b>	65	207	30 currently ongoing in Victoria County 35 in Inverness County
<b>Succession planning files</b>	3	15	3 open in Victoria County 0 open in Inverness County
<b>New business start ups</b>	12	46	7 new inquiries and 5 plans being worked on from previous quarter in Victoria County 5 in Inverness County
<b>Business expansions</b>	10	29	6 new in Victoria county – 8 started in Q4 '19/'20 will be completed in '20/'21 4 new in Inverness County
<b>Assisting exploring entrepreneurs</b>	11	43	9 current in Victoria County 2 in Inverness County
<b>Business Planning Client Project files</b>	13	44	
<b>Creative Economy Client Projects files</b>	5	8	We were not using Insightly to track these clients prior to Q3. Therefore, annual totals are estimates.
<b>Creative Economy Economic Development Project files started.</b>	11 (all shared)	16 (all shared)	We were not using Insightly to track these clients prior to Q3. Therefore, annual totals are estimates.
<b>TIANS project Client Projects files</b>	5	91	Data from TIANS Tracking Sheet
<b>Women’s Micro Lending Pilot Program Files</b>	6	6	New Program: Sydney Cr. Union and the Cape Breton Partnership
<b>Export Growth Service SMEs Participating</b>		9	SHARED NUMBERS (Island Wide from both RENs)
<b>Connector Program</b>			
- <b>Connectors</b>	20	87	SHARED NUMBERS
- <b>Connectees</b>	21	77	All Connector Program numbers reflect
- <b>Matches</b>	28	75	island-wide numbers from both RENs
- <b>Events</b>	1	7	

## **NEW PROJECTS:**

The Cape Breton recently received approval for 2 new projects.

### **Virtual Adviser Program:**

The Cape Breton Partnership, together with the other Regional Enterprise Networks across Nova Scotia have partnered to bring the Virtual Adviser Program to Cape Breton. Funded by ACOA, and powered by employment technology platform, BoomersPlus, this free program will match qualified companies with a seasoned Virtual Adviser to help their business manage and recover from COVID-19. Virtual Advisers are experienced professionals from across Canada representing a full range of disciplines, industries and environments, willing to share their lessons learned. The CBREN will have 14 spots available to refer Cape Breton businesses. Referrals will be made by our EDOs to BoomersPlus who will match companies to the Adviser.

### **Welcome Communities Initiative:**

Funded by the NS Office of Immigration, the overarching goal of the Welcoming Communities Initiative is to foster more welcoming and inclusive communities in Cape Breton. The main objective of the initiative for 2020-2021 is the launch of the **Cape Breton Welcome Network**. The Coordinator will work directly with the Program Manager for our CB Local Immigration Partnership. Norma Jean MacPhee will transition into the role of Coordinator for this program.

## **OTHER PROJECT UPDATES:**

### **Broadband:**

We continue to work with DevelopNS and Internet Service Providers to raise the issue of broadband in rural Cape Breton. We hosted an in-person meeting with DevelopNS and Seaside Wireless in February in Baddeck, followed by an online meeting in April with Bell Aliant. We are currently working with DevelopNS to host a webinar for mid-July. More details to follow.

### **Cape Breton-Unama'ki Growth Plan:**

The Cape Breton-Unama'ki Growth Plan was due to be launched in April 2020, but was put on hold due to COVID-19. Given that the economic landscape of Cape Breton has changed considerably due to COVID-19, we will continue to pause this initiative until the timing is more suitable.

### **Cape Breton Job Board:**

With the previously scheduled job fairs planned for Inverness, Victoria and the Strait Area cancelled, the Cape Breton Partnership decided to bring the platform online. This is particularly critical now as more individuals look to find work due to COVID-19. This site will be live soon and we will be rolling out communications to residents and the business community on how they can access it. We hope our municipal partners will promote the site as well.

### **Export Growth Service:**

ACOA funding for the Export Growth Service was not continued by ACOA, however we will continue the work with our Coordinator and provide support to the program through other means, including in-house training and the support of other partners.

### **TIANS:**

Last year, CBREN staff worked with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia to offer wages subsidies to extend the tourism season, and provide no or low-cost training for operators on a host of topics. This project has been extended for 2020 and we look forward to continuing to promote this program to our businesses.

### **Housing for Seasonal Workers Study:**

The Housing Study was awarded to BDO who are 95% completed on the project. This study looked specifically at the seasonal housing issues and potential solutions for many employers across Cape Breton, and it is a significant challenge for a number of businesses in rural Cape Breton. Once we have the final updates this summer it will be sent to each of our municipal partners.

### **Community Profiles:**

A series of community profiles were created for each municipal unit. They are now available on the Cape Breton Partnership website at <https://capebretonpartnership.com/en/community-profiles/> and will be available to our municipal partners to promote on their sites.



[www.welcometocapebreton.ca](http://www.welcometocapebreton.ca):

This site was launched last year and has a wealth of information for people who are considering Cape Breton to live, study, work or invest. On this site we also have a downloadable e-book which contains all the necessary information for immigrants looking to move to Cape Breton. We continue to evolve this site as we add more updated information.

[www.Entrepreneurb.com](http://www.Entrepreneurb.com):

The website is a one-stop shop site for Cape Breton entrepreneurs to help them better navigate all of the tools and resources that are available to them out there – regardless of whether they are a new start up or looking at succession planning. This site continues to be updated as required.

#### **Dream Business Program:**

We are now in the final cohort of the Dream Business Program, a partnership with Bridgewater-based MashUp Lab. This is a program for aspiring entrepreneurs. Currently in the 8th cohort which started on May 21. Over the 2 years of this program, 130+ applications were received from 72 different communities in every region of Cape Breton.

#### **Innovation Spaces:**

The Cape Breton Partnership has been working with a number of our municipal partners to develop a series of co-working spaces across Cape Breton. Sites will be located in Port Hawkesbury, Baddeck and Port Hood, along with some other smaller sites. We hope to be able to leverage as much work of the REN as possible to bring programming and supports direct to rural Cape Breton.

### **COVID-19 Support:**

#### **On-line COVID Resources Webpage for Business:**

To support our local businesses, we began by creating a **COVID-19 resource for businesses page** on our website. This page has been updated almost daily and is a one-stop shop for businesses island wide to learn about all of the newly introduced programs and services. As we move towards reopening our economy, we have been posting additional information to support our businesses as they reopen.

#### **Helping Businesses Respond During COVID-19 webinar series:**

This webinar series began mid-March and covers topics identified by our business community. We have covered a variety of subjects such as legal, business continuity, mental health and wellness and OH&S. Our focus is now towards helping businesses reopen.

#### **Business Survey:**

In April, the Cape Breton Partnership launched an online survey for Cape Breton - Unama'ki businesses. We ran it for one week, and had 224 surveys completed by business owners from around the Island. The purpose of the survey was to inform our organization and all levels of government on the status of businesses across Cape Breton Island, understand what programs are being accessed, and identify remaining gaps in the supports being introduced.

**Local Leadership Video:**

In April, the Cape Breton Partnership engaged leaders from all levels and parties of government to encourage Cape Bretoners to stay home. The video was available on our website and promoted on social media.

**Chief Medical Officer of Health:**

The Cape Breton Partnership had the opportunity to host two online discussions between the Cape Breton business community and Dr. Robert Strang. During these meetings business owners were given the opportunity to hear first hand from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, as well as ask specific questions related to their business or industry.

**Creative Economy Support:**

In recognition, of the fact artists have had their incomes affected by COVID-19, two projects have been developed for hiring artists to participate in education and legacy projects. These projects are getting underway. We worked with a number of island wide creative sector leaders and organizations to develop this project including Celtic Colours and the Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design. We have hosted weekly sessions with creative sector leaders across the island over the past several months, including sessions with Federal MPs and the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

**Nova Scotia Coalition:**

The Partnership was also able to represent Cape Breton on the Nova Scotia Business Labour Economic Coalition – a province-wide initiative being led by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

**Reopening the economy tool kit:**

The Cape Breton Partnership worked with several organizations to create a reopening Cape Breton's economy guide for businesses and organizations. The guide is available online, includes checklists and supporting resources. The purpose – to assist our businesses in reopening safely and with confidence.

**Island-wide Economic Recovery Discussions** - The Cape Breton Partnership has been working with island wide leaders from all levels of government and will continue to host economic discussions through COVID-19.

**Cape Breton First Brand Re-Launch:**

In an effort to ensure promote local Cape Breton products and services, and encourage our Cape Bretoners to support our own, the Cape Breton Partnership will be re-launching the former "Think Cape Breton First" campaign under a new logo design which will be rolling out soon across Cape Breton-Unama'ki. We hope to have the support of our municipal partners in helping to promote this new brand through their communication channels.

**Supporting Local Video:**

The Cape Breton Partnership has been working with Seaside Communications to develop a new promotional video to encourage Cape Bretoners to support local. This video will highlight companies from across the island, and we look forward to sharing it on social media once it becomes available.

## COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING:

### Events

*Participation at the following events range from arranging logistics such as location, guest list, managing invite RSVPs, food, transportation, communications and marketing products such as news releases, social media promotion, speeches, advertising, to event management details such as securing speakers and creating all supporting event materials (programs, powerpoint slide decks, etc.).*

Month	Topics
January	Micro lending pilot program announcement, numerous growth strategy consultation sessions
February	Professional Selling Reinvented (Export), Broadband meeting with Seaside Communications, TIANS training sessions, Creative Leaders Workshop
March	Connector appreciation event, Creative Minds Event Series (Sydney, Baddeck), Kick off to virtual webinar series for businesses during COVID-19
Events canceled/postponed in March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inverness Job Expo</li><li>• CB Local Immigration Partnership Partners Day</li><li>• CBU Job Expo</li><li>• Victoria County Job Expo</li></ul>

Product Description	Notes
News releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership celebrates The Most Inspiring Immigrants in the Maritimes recipient, Omar Tag-El Din</li> <li>• New Micro-Loan Pilot Program to Benefit Cape Breton – Unama’ki Female Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership kicks off business advisory series</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership &amp; Mashup Lab looking for aspiring entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Tourism season extension program delivering results for Cape Breton operators</li> <li>• Employers and Jobseekers invited to participate in Cape Breton Job Expo Series</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership’s Export Growth Service; helping businesses grow through export</li> <li>• Ciad Mile Fáilte! Cape Breton Island welcomes record breaking number of immigrants</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership hosts Creative Economy Leaders Workshop</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership introduces Creative Minds: Artists’ Stories</li> <li>• Nominations Open for Cape Breton Safety Awards</li> <li>• Cape Breton – Unama’ki Job Expo Series Moving to Online Format</li> <li>• Message from our President &amp; CEO (COVID-19)</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership kicks off webinar series to support Cape Breton – Unama’ki businesses</li> <li>• Cape Breton Partnership kicks off webinar series to support Cape Breton – Unama’ki businesses</li> </ul>
Publications & Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Export Growth Service promotional materials (post card, web content, banners)</li> <li>• Elevate March edition completed (not yet released)</li> <li>• Municipal Observer submission</li> </ul>