

MIDWESTERN ONTARIO REGIONAL GREEN JOBS STRATEGY



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PROJECT CATCHMENT AREA

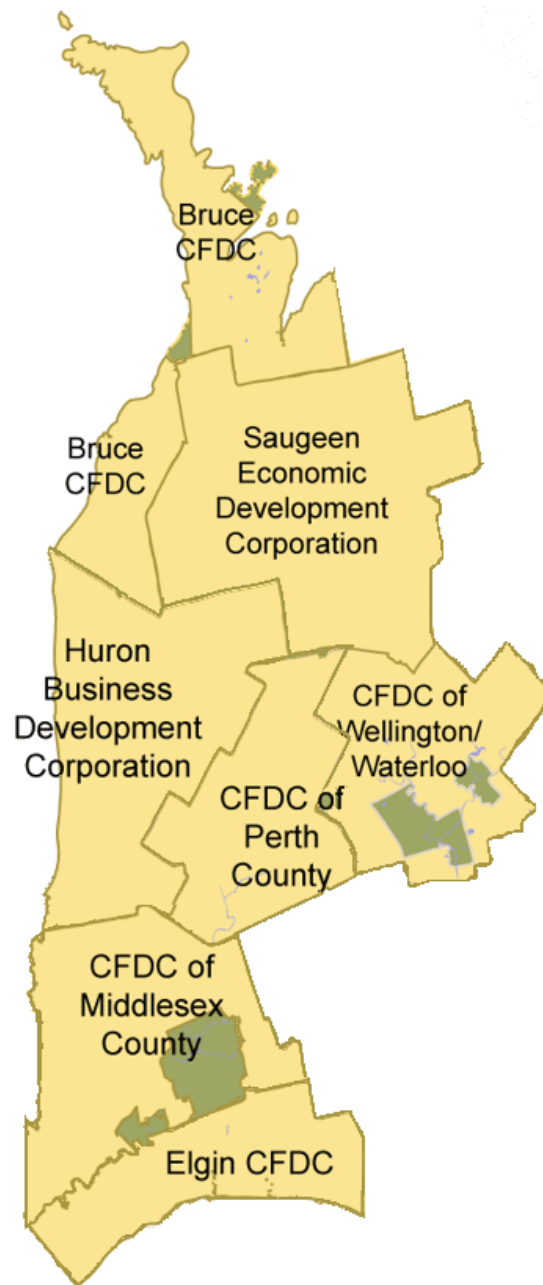


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



When Ontario's *Green Energy & Economy Act* was enacted in 2009, communities throughout the province were presented with the opportunity to stimulate job creation while at the same time addressing pressing environmental issues. The various members of the Green Jobs Strategy came together collectively with the major aim to ensure that the communities of Midwestern Ontario reap the full benefit of this transition to a green economy – meaning our businesses, our communities, and our workforce are prepared to create and capitalize on economic opportunities that stem from the emerging green economy. Down the road, the vision is of a Midwestern Ontario known globally as a region able to prosper economically, while also a leader in taking action on climate change mitigation and adaptation.



What is driving the need for a rethinking of the region's economic development priorities is the growing threat of climate change, volatile fossil fuel pricing, the degradation of the region's natural ecosystems, and global economic uncertainty. Action is required to address these critical issues and to embrace a *green growth* paradigm – where economic progress and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive.



The Green Jobs Strategy examined the state of the region's green economy by engaging green employers, community groups, and many other rural stakeholders, with a focus on renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, and climate change adaptation. The aim of the research was to understand the workforce and development issues important to businesses and organizations, identify specific skill changers and skill needs in new and transformative green industries, and to recognize processes for incorporating sustainable operating practices.



Members of the Green Jobs Strategy Steering Committee want to know where they need to focus their strategic efforts in order to successfully navigate the green economy transition. Using the information gathered – data collection methods included literature review, business surveys, one-on-one interviews, empirical analysis of industrial indicators, and field observations from action research – Green Jobs Strategy researchers developed the Strategic Ideas that are included in this report.

Goals, objectives, outcomes and impacts were drafted based on analysis of the data collected, and then input was collected from Steering Committee members regarding leadership and implementation. Other comments, concerns, and thoughts have also been included in the synopsis of each idea.

The hope is that government, community organizations, and businesses will continue to strive toward developing a greener Midwestern Ontario economy by embracing the Guiding Principles of the Green Jobs Strategy and moving forward with the following strategic ideas for a green economy.

BUSINESS SUPPORT STRATEGIES

AGRI-BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Develop a business plan and proposal for a business incubation and training centre for agri-business and agrienergy entrepreneurs in Midwestern Ontario. The centre may have multiple satellite sites interconnected via video- and teleconferencing for the delivery of training, support, and resource sharing.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Develop a collaborative group that includes Conservation Authorities, Destination Marketing Organizations, Regional Tourism Organizations, and farmers to incentivize improving ecosystem health on farms through assistance developing agri-tourism and eco-tourism products.

BIOGAS BUSINESS CASE WORKING GROUP

Coordinate a group of farmers, municipal leaders, manufacturers, businesses, economic development officers, researchers, and others to aid the development of biogas facilities in Midwestern Ontario; including support for technological development, manufacturing, energy production, waste management services, and value-added products.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES WORKBOOK

Develop a framework and checklist to assist manufacturers in identifying and implementing sustainability initiatives. The project will provide businesses with the opportunity to receive free or cost-shared professional guidance on integrating cost-effective sustainable solutions, such as identifying energy efficiencies.

JOBS, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING STRATEGIES

GREEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Produce tools for career counsellors and teachers to utilize in the process of educating job seekers on green work opportunities. This project will allow career counsellors and teachers to receive free Ontario-based resources including career path development and video profiles.

GREEN EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Map “green” education pathways and identify and leverage green education offerings and training resources.

GREEN WORKFORCE INFORMATION HUB

Create a Green Workforce Information Hub in each geographic area represented and led by Labour Market Planning Boards. Specific and targeted labour market information for each area will be fed into and disseminated by each planning board to various stakeholders, including industry associations, trade unions, educational institutions, employment agencies, local government, and business associations.

SUSTAINABILITY THEMED CAREER DAY

Deliver a series of full-day and shorter workshop sessions to public and high school students linking the principles and actions of the green economy with course selection, career planning, and post secondary decision making.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND GREEN MANUFACTURING

Utilize existing partnerships between economic development organizations in the region to develop and implement a regional strategy targeted at renewable energy and green manufacturing. The overall strategy should involve a number of interconnected investment attraction, networking, and business retention and expansion actions.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

BEST PRACTICES: ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Compile a baseline of information upon which future policy and “on the ground” delivery of ecosystem restoration projects can be delivered. Increasing the quality of our ecosystems and expanding the natural capital in our communities is directly aligned with the principles of the green economy.

COMMUNITY ENERGY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Create and implement an education program for municipal and community leaders (politicians, not-for-profit organizations, community groups) to support demonstration projects involving community energy generation. The project will provide municipal leaders and the public with the opportunity to receive free education sessions on community energy and provide support for community engagement.

MUNICIPAL GREEN ECONOMY TOOLKIT

Produce educational materials and deliver presentations to Midwestern Ontario municipal leaders and staff to raise awareness of the economic and environmental benefits of community sustainability initiatives and investment in green infrastructure projects.

YOUTH STRATEGIES

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION OUTREACH TRAINING

Provide youth and/or displaced workers with the training and skills required to work in ecosystem service fields, including stormwater management, wetland restoration, sustainable forestry, sustainable agriculture, and risk management for municipalities.

STORYTELLING, SOCIAL MARKETING, AND NEW MEDIA PROJECT

Create and communicate stories that describe the experiences of people and their efforts to develop green businesses and sustainable livelihoods. The stories will utilize a variety of media tools and techniques including live theatre, photography, video, print, and virtual media.

YOUTH THINK TANK FOR LOCAL GREEN JOBS

Develop a program led by youth that allows young people to generate new and creative ways of working in the green economy and provide valuable insight into the educational and workforce transitions that will be required.

EVALUATION STRATEGIES

ECO VALUE-ADDED RESEARCH PROJECT

Develop a protocol for Midwestern Ontario that accounts for value-added ecosystem services and other environmental externalities – CO2 emissions, ecosystem degradation, and air pollution. A second stage of the project would facilitate a market for trading services based on their equivalent ECO-value.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

Develop an internal review process for organizations and businesses to measure their policies, practices, and operations in terms of sustainability and other green operating principles.

RECOGNITION STRATEGIES

REGIONAL GREEN AWARDS

Develop criteria for regional organizations to evaluate the sustainability performance of local businesses and organizations in order to recognize outstanding environmental performance at existing awards ceremonies.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The literature on climate change and ecosystem health is clear: greenhouse gas emissions are causing warming and inducing many changes in the global climate system whose health has a direct relationship with the health of our communities. We are already experiencing increases in heat days combined with poor air quality, decreases in Great Lakes water levels, increased risk to the boreal and deciduous forest as a result of drought, pests and fire, extreme precipitation events causing flash flooding, and an increase in invasive species across ecosystems. As climate change leads to more severe weather, society faces a choice – continue to pass on the costs to repair damage to future generations or pay up front to prevent the damage. Just as a healthy body is resilient to disease, a healthy environment can better withstand these shocks.

The Midwestern Ontario region – served by seven Community Futures Development Corporations in the counties of Bruce, Elgin, Grey, Huron, Middlesex, Perth, Waterloo, and Wellington – was hit hard by the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 and the recovery has been slow. After years of unemployment rates lower than the provincial average, the unemployment rate in several of the region’s counties is greater than Ontario’s rate of 7.5%¹. This economic stagnation over the past several years forced employers to explore new opportunities to ensure their survival. Midwestern Ontario is now in a position to transform its economic, social, and environmental stewardship approach to ensure that local communities and ecosystems are healthy enough to adapt to the growing impacts of climate change.

From 2009 – 2011, Labour Market Researchers from the Midwestern Ontario Regional Green Jobs Strategy examined the state of Midwestern Ontario’s green economy. Working with green employers, community groups, and other rural stakeholders, the researchers explored three sectors of the region’s green economy:

- I. Renewable Energy Technologies
- II. Energy Efficiency
- III. Climate Change Adaptation

Using a participatory action research approach, the researchers met with over 100 green employers, 45 rural landowners, 30 municipalities, 10 community groups, and many members of the public across the region. While the region is home to a diverse range of activities, several commonalities were identified throughout the region. These included:

- A lack of awareness of government programs by green employers, community groups, and rural municipal staff created barriers to adoption of green technologies.
- There is a need for economic incentives to promote business growth in environmental services (e.g. tree planting, shoreline remediation, waste management).
- Government regulations were often identified as barriers to business growth.
- A lack of expertise among rural municipal staff and community groups limited their ability to apply for available grants and other sources of funding for green initiatives.

The research to date has clearly shown that without necessary incentives and removal of barriers, the match between market demand and labour supply will be limited. That being said, throughout rural Midwestern Ontario businesses, municipalities, conservation authorities, labour market planning groups, education providers, and consultants are already actively engaged in aspects of the green economy. The strategies outlined in this report aim to assist them as they work towards generating sustainable economic growth and environmental enhancement in a mutually-beneficial relationship within the region. The aim is to leave a blueprint for others to follow and pick up the pieces of the Green Jobs Strategy and carry them forward using their own organizational

¹ Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 and Workforce Planning Ontario, 2011

strengths and expertise. The Green Jobs Strategy steering committee member organizations have the capacity and resources to mobilize other community and workforce actors to adopt and implement strategic responses to forces requiring a transition to a green economy.

A number of actions, reports, and other materials were also completed as part of the Green Jobs Strategy (see Additional Resources section). Each of these parts went into the development of this final collection of green business, community, policy, and workforce initiatives. A mixed methods approach to information gathering and data collection was used and included participatory action research, semi-structured interviews with key informants, structured surveys, document and literature review, and quantitative analysis of secondary data sources.

The green business research stream involved a review and analysis of the region's green economy, as well as a survey of green businesses involved in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and/or climate change adaptation activities. Over 100 companies participated in the Green Business Survey, the findings and analysis of which can be found in the [Green Business Survey Results Report and Infographic](#). To assist economic development and business support agencies better understand the green economy, a series of [Green Sector Overviews](#) were developed to introduce technologies, trends, and labour market information for key sub-sectors of the green economy – biogas, biomass, building and construction, geothermal, green infrastructure, microhydro, social enterprise, solar PV, sustainable forestry, and wind (small- and utility-scale).

The Green Jobs Strategy followed a mandate of community economic development and aimed to equip community leaders with the resources and capacity to propel and respond to a transition to a green economy. The [Green Communities – Year One Report and Case Studies](#) identified two key roles that communities play in developing the green economy: influencing policy makers and demonstrating the principles of sustainable communities in real ways. To exhibit these roles, the Green Jobs Strategy participated in five grassroots community projects, delivered presentations at secondary schools and career days, and led municipal engagement sessions on the green economy. These activities led to the development of three toolkits: *Career Day Toolkit*, *Municipal Engagement Toolkit*, and *Secondary School Presentations Toolkit*. The toolkits will be made available to community organizations to communicate some best practices based on the experiences of the Green Jobs Strategy. All toolkits and reports are available for download at www.workgreen.ca.

A partnership between MITACS Accelerate, the Midwestern Ontario Regional Green Jobs Strategy (MORGJS), and KW PowerLogic provided post-graduate interns to conduct research to develop a long-term resiliency strategy for municipalities to understand and find opportunities within the twin challenges of climate change and rising energy prices (peak oil). Initial research provided valuable lessons about how green policy is developing in Midwestern Ontario. Through a series of dialogues with community, business, and environmental leaders, The Caldwell Team, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, at the University of Guelph and the MORGJS Green Policy Analyst identified emerging common themes and suggested strategies and policy changes necessary to mitigate and adapt to the dual challenges of climate change and peak oil. Their findings are available in four reports that outline perspectives and recommendations for responding to these challenges (available at www.workgreen.ca):

- *A Survey of Community Understanding & Responsiveness to the Twin-Challenges of Climate Change and Rising Energy Prices (Peak Oil): Perspectives of Municipal Leaders in Midwestern Ontario*
- *Implementing Bill 150: Reflections from the field*
- *Implementing Bill 150: Key lessons for municipalities*
- *Mechanisms to Build Resiliency and Mitigate Impacts to Climate Change and Peak Oil While Creating Jobs for Communities in Midwestern Ontario*

Perhaps the main challenge that the Green Jobs Strategy responded to was to ensure a balance between anticipated workforce needs of the green economy and the supply of skilled workers now and in the future. The Green Business Survey engaged businesses to identify and assess labour market issues arising from growth in green industries. Researchers then developed a [Workforce System Framework for Green Jobs](#) to analyze the findings from the survey and *Green Sector Overviews*, which contributed to the development of [Green Jobs Profile: Working in the Green Economy](#) – customized reports with local labour market data from four workforce planning regions in Midwestern Ontario (Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, and Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin), respectively. The framework for an online green workforce information hub for Midwestern Ontario was also created and will be maintained by the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin at www.workgreen.ca. The website is populated with information and resources for businesses, community leaders, and job seekers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These guiding principles outline the fundamental notions of a *green economy* and have guided the development and selection of the project recommendations and strategic ideas.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen the economy and communities located in Midwestern Ontario by adopting new opportunities presented by the green economy and identifying existing activities that offer opportunities for improvement (e.g. working greener).

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

Incorporate social, economic, and environmental factors in the development, implementation, and measurement of strategies equally to ensure the full costs and benefits of the program are accounted for.

BUILD REGIONAL RESILIENCE

Strengthen the region's ability to tolerate disturbance without collapsing, to withstand shocks, to rebuild, and to improve itself whenever possible.

RE-LOCALIZATION

Develop greater capacity for providing sources of food, transportation, products, and services from local sources.

ECOSYSTEM VALUATION

Value nature and provide for environmental full-cost pricing of environmental goods and services. Methodology for clearly measuring ecosystem benefits does not currently exist for the area.

DEVELOP SOCIAL EQUITY

Value people – incorporate social full-cost pricing for decent and adequately paid jobs.

BARRIER REMOVAL

Remove obstacles that limit access to the development of a green economy.

MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

Reduce our dependence on non-renewable natural resources and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

ADAPT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Adaptive strategies are required to restore our ecosystems and to build resilience in the face of looming changes to our climate. Reducing the impact of these changes while also mitigating the drivers of climate change must be a priority.

DEMONSTRATION

Actions should be replicable and provide an education and/or awareness component to communicate the initiatives' social, economic, and environmental benefits.

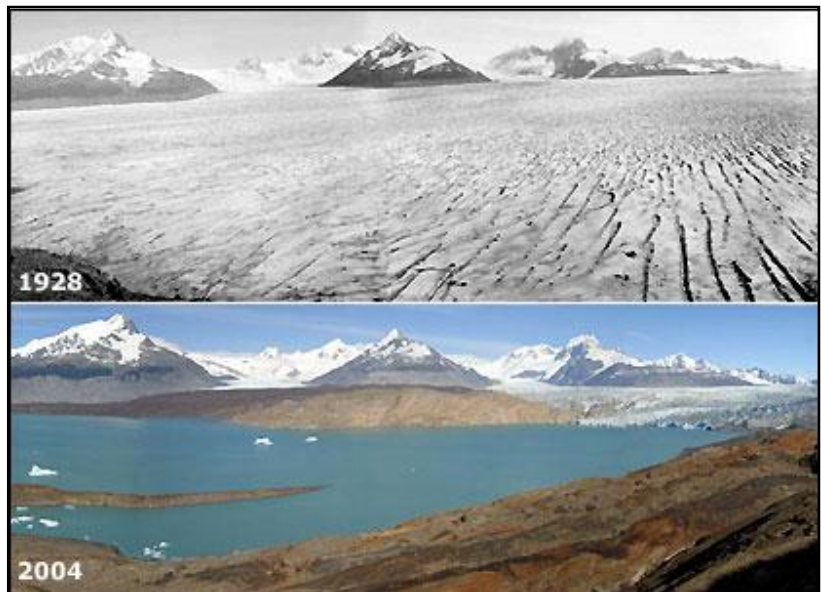
KEY DRIVERS OF THE GREEN ECONOMY

The impetus for the Green Jobs Strategy came as a reaction to four major trends that are driving the need for a shift from our traditional economic model to a *green growth* paradigm: climate change, fossil fuel pricing (peak oil), ecosystem degradation, and global economic uncertainty. The path forward requires that we dispel the myth that there must be a trade-off between environmental sustainability and economic progress.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The International Panel on Climate Change states clearly that human activity is emitting greater and greater amounts of heat trapping gases – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide – into the atmosphere, and these greenhouse gases (GHG) are causing rising global temperatures². Even with moderate reductions in the production of GHGs, average temperatures in Ontario are predicted to rise by 2.5 °C by the year 2050³.

FIGURE 1: ARCTIC SUMMER ICE COVER 1928-2004
(SOURCE: MVCA)



While the melting of arctic glaciers is a stark indication of a changing global climate, the impacts of changing weather patterns will be significant here in Midwestern Ontario. A Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) study analyzed regional climate trends dating back to 1950 and identified potential impacts of these trends. These potential impacts include increased flooding risk, increased erosion across the watershed and soil loss, less moisture from snow melt during planting, bluff and gully erosion along the shoreline, increased energy consumption, increased dependence on crop inputs, longer, more frequent heat waves, and greater pressure on municipal services (e.g. road maintenance).

FOSSIL FUEL PRICING / PEAK OIL

The increasing price of fossil fuels and related products (electricity, gasoline) is of great concern for most rural Ontarians. As cheap sources of fossil fuels become harder and harder to access, the pressure to wean ourselves off these non-renewable resources increases. A survey⁴ administered by researchers at the University of Guelph, in partnership with the Green Jobs Strategy, explored the level of understanding and responsiveness to the challenge of rising energy prices. Findings from the survey suggest that there is a general understanding of the

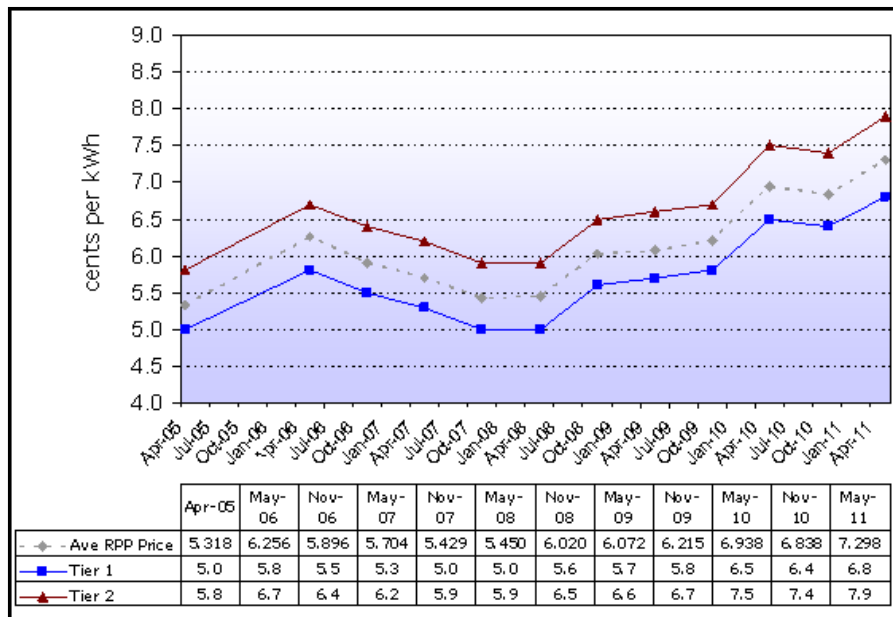
² IPCC (2007). *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis*. (www.ipcc.ch)

³ Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation (2009). *Adapting to Climate Change in Ontario*. (www.climateontario.ca)

⁴ For full survey results, see *A Survey of Community Understanding & Responsiveness To the Twin-Challenges of Climate Change and Rising Energy Prices (Peak Oil): Perspectives of Municipal Leaders in Midwestern Ontario* at www.workgreen.ca

challenge of rising energy prices amongst municipal leaders, and they tend to acknowledge the immediate impact of energy prices more so than the longer term impacts of climate change.

FIGURE 2: ONTARIO ELECTRICITY PRICES
(SOURCE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD)



Some municipalities in Midwestern Ontario have begun to take action to confront these challenges through the development of environmental and community energy plans, green energy projects, and energy conservation and efficiency measures⁵. However, there remains a need for greater communication about what the effects of rising energy prices could be in the long-term and what actions other communities are taking to plan for them. In the short-term, rising costs have put greater pressure on all businesses and citizens to consider ways of “greening” their operations and activities.

ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report: Living Beyond Our Means (2005) set out several key messages about global ecosystems’ resiliency to the impacts of climate change. The central theme of these messages is that the world is dependent on nature and ecosystem services to provide the basic conditions for a decent, healthy, and secure life. However, humans have made unprecedented changes to natural ecosystems in recent decades to meet increasing demands for food, fresh water, and energy. While these changes have certainly improved the lives of billions, they have also weakened nature’s ability to deliver key services (e.g. purification of air and water). Measures to preserve these ecosystem services are more likely to succeed if local communities take ownership, share benefits, and are involved in environmental decision-making.

Conservation Authorities throughout Midwestern Ontario regularly monitor several key indicators of ecosystem health and resiliency, including surface and groundwater quality and forest health. Some sub-regions of Midwestern Ontario are already showing signs of vulnerability – for example, the Maitland watershed forest cover and forest interior received low ratings from the MVCA in 2001 – and should be targeted as priority areas in an overall ecosystem restoration strategy.

⁵ See <http://workgreen.ca/content/green-projects> for a list of example projects.

FIGURE 3: GULLY EROSION IN THE MAITLAND WATERSHED
(SOURCE: MVCA)



Economic and business development opportunities could be created if the value of ecosystems services is included in strategic planning decisions. More often than not, the positive externalities generated by environmental protection activities are not counted or compensated. Although discussions about payments for ecological goods and services (PEGS), carbon offset markets, and green bonds are occurring in some circles, formal adoption of these strategies has not taken place on a large scale.

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

The Midwestern Ontario region was struck hard by the economic downturn beginning in 2008 – for example, Bruce County experienced a 204% increase in unemployment claims from 2008 to 2009. A recovery has been slow, as the number of unemployed people nationally increased by more than 30% between 2009 and 2011⁶. Events during the summer of 2011 have only created greater uncertainty as exemplified by volatile global financial markets.

The global recession and stalled recovery further emphasizes the need to consider development strategies that embrace re-localization, reduce dependence on non-renewable natural resources, improve energy efficiency, and restore ecosystems. Adoption of these principles is needed to build regional resiliency in the midst of an ongoing financial crisis and to ensure that the rural economy of Midwestern Ontario is positioned to develop sustainably in a future with a different set of values. The idea of creating *shared value* has been promoted by a number of business leaders and economists⁷ and refers to policies and practices that enhance economic competitiveness while also advancing the social and environmental conditions in surrounding communities.

Green jobs and the green economy present an opportunity to create shared value through new business development and the transition of existing business activities. While economic growth has been slow to recover from the financial crisis in 2008, certain segments of the green economy have exhibited significant job gains and outperformed the rest of the economy during this time. Other characteristics of the green economy are promising in an unstable economic environment. Many subsectors of the green economy are manufacturing intensive and offer more opportunities and higher wages than more traditional industries⁸.

⁶ Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey* (2011).

⁷ Kramer, M. & Porter, M. (2011). *The Big Idea: Creating Shared Value*, *Harvard Business Review*.

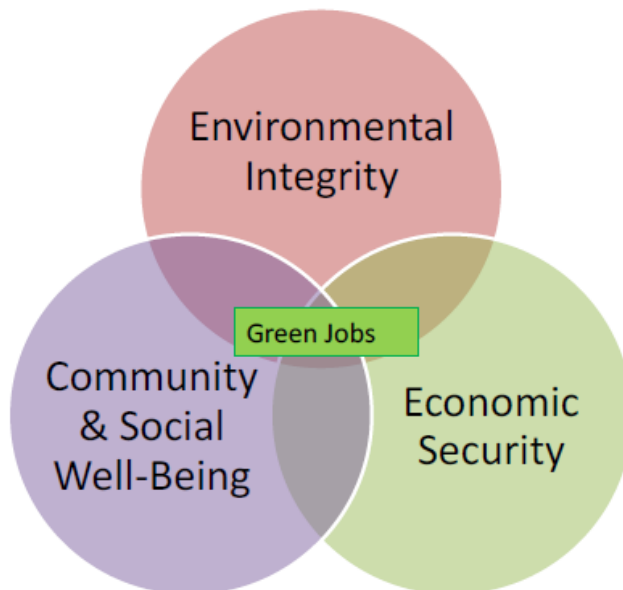
⁸ Brookings Institute (2011). *Sizing the Clean Economy: A National and Regional Green Jobs Assessment*.

GREEN JOBS AND THE GREEN ECONOMY

WHAT MAKES A JOB GREEN?

The greening of the Midwestern Ontario economy is already underway as policy initiatives and environmental pressures have created new opportunities for business and social enterprise in the region. From a strategic planning perspective it is important to examine what this transition will mean for employment and education institutions in terms of workforce and training needs, as well as employment trends and skill requirements. Government policies have and will continue to play a role in the green economy; but are current environmental and economic policies encouraging or hindering this transition, and how are they addressing the unique challenges that are faced by rural municipalities?

FIGURE 4: GREEN JOBS AND THE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY



On top of that, the question of what makes a job green needs to be addressed. ECO Canada⁹ defines a green job as one that works directly with information, technologies, or materials that minimize environmental impact and also requires specialized skills, knowledge, training, or experience related to those areas. It is this last part of the definition that has significant implications for education and workforce planning. In Year One, the Green Jobs Strategy took a broader view, referring to any job whose activities and outputs positively impact the three pillars of sustainability – environmental integrity, economic security, and community and social well-being. To simplify the data collection process throughout the project, only green jobs that existed within the sectors of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, and Climate Change Adaptation were examined; however, the strategies outlined in this document consider new green jobs (and the greening of existing jobs) in other sectors of the economy.

Transitioning existing careers into green jobs often requires the completion of a degree, diploma, or certification program. Many colleges and universities are providing programs specifically tailored for work in the renewable energy, climate change adaptation and energy efficiency industries. Examples of occupations in these areas include: solar panel installers, forest management consultants and geothermal installers. Many other occupations, such as business development officers, millwrights, plumbers, and electricians are also found in the green economy but may require additional training. For a full listing of green occupations in Midwestern Regional Ontario, see the Green Jobs Profiles document on www.workgreen.ca.

⁹ ECO Canada (2010). *Defining the Green Economy*.

GREEN JOBS PROCESS

The impetus for the transition to a green economy has not come from a single driving force, but from a variety of organizations and institutions developing creative responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by a changing climate. Each of these responses – from new business opportunities in renewable energy to tree planting programs, community sustainability planning to local food systems – will have a unique effect on the workforce requirements of the region. The question that then needs to be addressed is *who* will identify these requirements and develop and implement green work and training programs?

In order for the green economy to flourish in Midwestern Ontario, organizations and businesses must be able to recruit and retain the talent they require. In addition, they must be able to train workers to ensure they have the skills required by these transformative industries. Several key industries in the green economy (utilities, construction, agriculture, and forestry) are transforming rapidly, while other new industries (renewable energy and ecosystem services) are developing, and as a result there are four key challenges for the sector:

- i. identifying specific skills changes in transformative industries
- ii. identifying new skills needed for jobs in new green industries
- iii. updating existing skills to incorporate sustainable practices and processes
- iv. highlighting skills that are transferable between traditional and green industries

The strategic ideas outlined in the remainder of this report aim to address each stage of the green jobs process: education and awareness-raising; workforce planning; skills training; and business development. Each of the 18 strategic ideas outlines potential responses to the four key drivers of the green economy, with goals and objectives that are relevant to a variety of regional stakeholders in Midwestern Ontario.

STRATEGIC IDEAS

BUSINESS SUPPORT

AGRI-BUSINESS INCUBATOR

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

BIOGAS BUSINESS CASE WORKING GROUP

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES WORKBOOK

JOBS, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

GREEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

GREEN EDUCATION PATHWAYS

GREEN WORKFORCE INFORMATION HUB

SUSTAINABILITY THEMED CAREER DAY

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND GREEN MANUFACTURING

COMMUNITY

BEST PRACTICES: ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION SERVICE DELIVERY

COMMUNITY ENERGY EDUCATION PROGRAM

MUNICIPAL GREEN ECONOMY TOOLKIT

YOUTH

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION OUTREACH TRAINING

STORYTELLING, SOCIAL MARKETING, AND NEW MEDIA PROJECT

YOUTH THINK TANK FOR LOCAL GREEN JOBS

EVALUATION

ECO VALUE-ADDED RESEARCH PROJECT

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

RECOGNITION

REGIONAL GREEN AWARDS

[agri-business incubator]

Develop a business plan and proposal for a business incubation and training centre for agri-business and agrienergy entrepreneurs in Midwestern Ontario. The centre may have multiple satellite sites interconnected via video- and teleconferencing for the delivery of training, support, and resource sharing.

PROVIDE BUSINESS TRAINING, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES AMONGST ENTREPRENEURS IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND AGRIENERGY INDUSTRIES

The region's farmers and agriculture workers are among Canada's brightest and most creative, but larger downward trends in agriculture could be a threat to existing operations. An aging workforce and out-migration of youth from rural areas leads to a need for more skills training. However, there are opportunities for business development in value-added agriculture, agri-food, and agrienergy. Building on the momentum of the [Innovation Centre for Entrepreneurs](#) (ICE) in Elgin County, a business incubation and training centre would provide business training and support to existing farmers in other areas of the region who want to expand their operations, as well as to young entrepreneurs. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Research existing business incubation models and develop a business plan for a new or satellite facility in Midwestern Ontario
- ii. Provide opportunities to connect young, aspiring agri-business entrepreneurs with experienced business and agriculture leaders
- iii. Encourage the development of new business opportunities that will improve the competitiveness of sustainable agriculture operations and promote on-farm renewable energy production

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Provides business and sustainability training for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Creates opportunities to showcase success stories of young, sustainable agri-business entrepreneurs.

Supports small-scale, local food production and creates jobs in production, processing, and distribution.

Provides access to objective advice on interpretation of policies and available programs, incentives, and grants that support business development.

Supports the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices by encouraging and supporting alternative on-farm business models.

Supports business development that addresses public issues like food security and climate change.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

By sharing capital expenditures and costs associated with business start-up, the incubator model lessens the financial risks taken by entrepreneurs.

Co-location in partnership with existing post-secondary institutions will infuse access to training throughout the communities of Midwestern Ontario and increase the presence of rural lenses in research activities.

Businesses looking to re-locate will find the incubator to be a safer place to explore new market opportunities.

Improved communication between farm business owners and municipalities may lead to improved regulations that allow more opportunities for alternate/secondary on-farm businesses (e.g. artisan food production, energy generation).

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Elgin Business Resource Centre, having launched ICE in 2011, is a potential champion and resource for expanding their business incubator model throughout the region, in partnership with other **CFDCs**, such as the **Huron Business Development Corporation**. The **Municipality of Perth South** has also expressed interest in this idea.

Elgin Business Resource Centre is willing to share best practices and have made the ICE business and governance model available to the public (see Additional Resources section and Appendix). Elgin Business Resource Centre is currently seeking funding for a business consultant to work with ICE clients.

While agriculture is a focus of most CFDCs, a potential new business incubator does not necessarily need to have agri-business as a restriction. CFDC offices can also provide access to other business incubator studies from across the province and to meeting space.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Business Support:

- Regional economic development organizations (SCOR, SWEA, Municipal)
- Business Enterprise Centres
- Sarnia-Lambton Industrial Association

Agri-business:

- Agriculture Management Institute
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program

Education and Training:

- University of Waterloo (Accelerator Centre example)
- University of Guelph – Ridgetown Campus
- Fanshawe College
- Regional Equine & Agricultural Centre of Huron (REACH)

Many areas have explored the development of a business incubation centre. Therefore it is crucial to learn from existing models and identify best practices – mentorship programs, public-private partnerships, linkages with post-secondary and research institutions. Significant market research is required to determine potential business targets, site selection, and project budget.

Adding an agri-food focus to the model is also a possibility. Elgin has shown interest in developing a commercial training kitchen pilot project. Local politicians, economic development organizations, and OMAFRA (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs) have also shown interest in this idea, but buy-in from other groups, such as the Health Units and agri-business community, is needed.

While there are significant roadblocks, opportunities for the development and application of renewable energy technologies on farms exist. Agrienergy and related activities include biomass, biogas, wind, solar, local food, and sustainable agriculture practices.

Examples: [ICE](#), [Vineland Research and Innovation Centre](#), [Centre for Social Innovation](#), [Erie Innovation and Commercialization](#)

IMPROVE ECOSYSTEM HEALTH ON FARMS AND ASSIST FARMERS

[sustainable tourism development through ecosystem restoration]

Develop a collaborative group that includes Conservation Authorities, Destination Marketing Organizations, Regional Tourism Organizations, and farmers to incentivize improving ecosystem health on farms through assistance developing agri-tourism and eco-tourism products.

TO DEVELOP SECONDARY ON-FARM BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Greater adoption of sustainable agriculture practices is needed to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and improve our natural ecosystems' ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Sustainable agriculture also includes improving ecosystem health on farms, which can present opportunities to reduce operating costs, improve waste management, and earn additional sources of income by developing agri-tourism and eco-tourism products. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Engage Conservation Authorities and stewardship organizations in agri-tourism and eco-tourism product development
- ii. Develop and market new tourism offerings in the region
- iii. Create incentives for improving the health of on-farm ecosystems through tourism business opportunities
- iv. Educate and create awareness of the importance of ecosystem services through tourism

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Development of skills and knowledge related to sustainable agriculture practices.

Greater awareness of opportunities for secondary on-farm business operations.

Contribute to ecosystem resiliency throughout the region.

Educate landowners about the environmental and financial benefits of ecosystem health initiatives.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Focus tourism marketing activities on the region's environmental assets.

Provide financial and business development support for farmers who wish to develop on-farm tourism products.

Reduce the tourism industry's overall carbon footprint by marketing sustainable tourism attractions to local and regional tourists, thus limiting transportation requirements.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

CFDCs are interested in building local agriculture into their loan portfolios and many are also involved in tourism development and marketing – **Middlesex Tourism** magazine is an excellent resource available to promote new tourism products. Other regions produce tourism maps and online tourism resources.

Agri-tourism is already developing in several counties, with CFDCs involved to varying degrees. CFDCs can also serve as effective connectors for communicating with potential partners. Some marketing ideas included eco-tourism road signs and routes, education and engagement via social media, and collaboration with culinary tourism events.

For many potential partner organizations, including **Conservation Authorities**, implementing sustainable agriculture practices and value-added agriculture opportunities is the main focus, with tourism development as a sub-component or incentive instrument. There may be possibilities to work with some of the agriculture organizations listed below about how to implement green farming practices.

University of Guelph has resources to share best practices for land use planning and effective land use on farms.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Agriculture:

- Association of Farm Advisors
- Agricultural Management Institute
- Ontario Soil & Crop Association
- Local farm groups (e.g. Food Auctions)

Agri-business:

- Farm Start (University of Guelph)
- Farm Credit Canada
- Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association

Tourism:

- Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO 1,4,6,7)
- Destination Marketing Organizations (local food maps)
- Municipalities involved in tourism promotion

Environmental Stewardship:

- Stewardship Councils
- Thames Talbot Land Trust (in partnership with Conservation Authorities)

A large component of this strategy's implementation hinges on how tourism development can be used as an incentive to adopting sustainable agriculture practices and ecosystem restoration activities. With the growing popularity of the local food movement, organics, culinary tourism, and other sustainable agriculture practices, and the right mix of partners, there may be ripe opportunities to develop tourism offerings based on these trends.

Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO) and **County Planning and Development** departments are potential local and regional champions for this strategic initiative. RTO 7 (Bruce, Grey, and Simcoe Counties) is undertaking a Green/Sustainable Tourism Development Project that aims to create a toolkit for tourism operators and organizations to evaluate their operations and provide direction on steps required to become a sustainable tourism attraction.

Example: [Above the Falls Challenge Course](#)

[biogas business case working group]

Coordinate a group of farmers, municipal leaders, manufacturers, businesses, economic development officers, researchers, and others to aid the development of biogas facilities in Midwestern Ontario; including support for technological development, manufacturing, energy production, waste management services, and value-added products.

IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO BIOGAS DEVELOPMENT IN MIDWESTERN ONTARIO

Biogas production facilities can potentially provide many social and environmental benefits. An on-farm anaerobic digester provides opportunities to improve waste management practices, environmental stewardship, and community economic development; however, a business case has not been developed that will allow the industry to establish itself in Midwestern Ontario. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Investigate new models and technologies for biogas systems in the region – including small-scale, municipal, and community-owned models
- ii. Develop business opportunities related to the by-products of anaerobic digestion
- iii. Create connections between sources of organic waste and anaerobic digestion facilities

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Potential to generate opportunities for more sustainable agriculture practices and alternative sources of income for small-scale farms.

Identifies job opportunities and skills needs throughout the biogas industry.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Provides regular updates to farmers and municipalities on findings (newsletters, webinars, and conference presentations).

Improves communication between farmers, communities, and governing bodies, and also helps to manage each party's expectations about potential projects.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

OMAFRA has the knowledge and network resources to play a leading role in developing a working group, but local champions will still need to be identified. OMAFRA also maintains a comprehensive Anaerobic Digestion Contact List that includes designers/developers, researchers, and other experts and resources.

There are researchers and graduate students at the **University of Guelph** who are exploring issues in biogas production and development.

A number of biogas projects are in various stages of development throughout the region, including **Bruce, Middlesex, Perth,** and **Sarnia-Lambton**. Other steering committee members have contacts with key people in some of these projects.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

[ReGenerate Biogas](#) is a new organization that assists municipalities, co-operatives, and local organizations identify, develop, and operate community-owned biogas facilities. In 2001 they helped to develop a green energy bond to facilitate community-ownership of a biogas facility at the Toronto Zoo, and could provide useful input to the development of projects in Midwestern Ontario.

[Growing the Margins](#) is an Ontario rural energy conference held annually in conjunction with the **Canadian Farm and Food Biogas Conference and Exhibition**. The latest research and development of biogas project development is often shared at this conference.

Example: OMAFRA – [Agricultural Biomass for Combustion Energy](#) working group

[sustainable business best practices workbook]

Develop a framework and checklist to assist manufacturers in identifying and implementing sustainability initiatives. The project will provide businesses with the opportunity to receive free or cost-shared professional guidance on integrating cost-effective sustainable solutions, such as identifying energy efficiencies.

ASSIST LOCAL BUSINESSES IN BECOMING REGIONAL LEADERS IN MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, WHILE ALSO INCREASING THEIR OWN EFFICIENCY

Implementing sustainable business best practices will help local companies become more competitive, reduce their environmental footprint, and strengthen their ties within the community. Employee engagement is a key component of the sustainable business process and historically, this region has exhibited excellent labour-management relationships. This should improve the chances that sustainability initiatives will be successfully adopted. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Create a sustainable business report and a framework for identifying and implementing sustainable business strategies
- ii. Improve employee engagement and create stronger ties between businesses and the community
- iii. Showcase examples of best practices implemented by businesses that have participated in the project

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Increased energy efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and increased competitiveness of local businesses.

Greater availability of resources for businesses to track and improve their environmental performance.

Identification of wastes in the manufacturing process that can be utilized in renewable energy generation or recycled as raw materials (“cradle-to-cradle” production model).

Engages employees in the decision-making process and raises the quality of existing jobs.

Increases collaboration between CFDC organizations.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Educate businesses and employees on sustainability initiatives in the workplace.

Document and promote the identification of efficiency opportunities and the implementation of workplace sustainability initiatives.

Businesses will be able to see clear financial benefits from the adoption of energy efficient practices.

A cost-sharing arrangement will help to eliminate financial barriers for businesses to access professional sustainability advice.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Huron County has developed this sustainable business best practices project out of a recommendation of their *Take Action for Sustainable Huron* report. The project is being run in partnership with the **Huron Manufacturing Association** and has recruited three local manufacturers to take part in the pilot project. These manufacturers will be working through the workbook with area consultants **Kuzuka**.

Four County Labour Market Planning Board is interested in carrying this project forward in the Grey/Bruce area, and is looking at training youth with a Business Systems Analyst to work with local businesses. Job Creation Partnerships and other internship opportunities are potential sources of funding.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (an industry, economic development, college collaboration) has developed a report on Sustainable Best Practices that is available for reference. Other models that have been implemented should also be reviewed and/or adopted.

Utilizing residential home energy efficiency program models as a comparison in the development of this project could be helpful.

Other potential partners include **Excellence in Manufacturing** (ECM) and regional manufacturing associations.

Examples: **Sustainable Huron** and **Huron Manufacturing Association** – [Manufacturing Efficiencies Project](#), **Sustainable Waterloo** – [Regional Carbon Initiative](#)

[green career development]

Produce tools for career counsellors and teachers to utilize in the process of educating job seekers on green work opportunities. This project will allow career counsellors and teachers to receive free Ontario-based resources including career path development and video profiles.

DEVELOP PORTABLE AND INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS FOR GREEN CAREERS

To remain competitive, green businesses require workers who have advanced problem solving and troubleshooting skills. Workers in these industries receive most of their learning on the job and must be able to recognize and take advantage of all learning opportunities. Businesses, such as those in the geothermal industry, for example, require new apprenticeships to be created to fill key skill demands (e.g. hydronics, natural building). The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Engage businesses in determining and developing industry standards/credentials
- ii. Educate and train to green industry standards/credentials
- iii. Refine/develop “green” apprenticeship models

This Strategic Idea would complement the Ontario-based Resources for Green Career Development idea and the School/College/Work Initiative (SCWI).

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

“Green” education pathways are developed with input from local businesses.

Local businesses have access to a skilled labour pool.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Businesses given opportunity to influence education pathways based on skills needed.

Sector specific skills are identified and necessary adjustments to education and training are implemented.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

The **Labour Market Planning Boards (LMPB)** envision the College system taking this task on, but identify it as a priority in their work. The LMPBs could assist by providing a central place for this information and have completed a Green Jobs Profiles Handbook to be made available to a wide variety of stakeholders.

The **Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin** is willing to approach the SCWI for \$3,000 to \$5,000 in funding to support this idea. In addition, they will be taking over the www.workgreen.ca web site at the conclusion of the Green Jobs Strategy project and any additional green career development resources can be housed on this site.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

LMPB Executive Directors suggest combining this Strategic Idea with the Green Education Pathways Strategic Idea. The Ministry of Education’s [Passport to Prosperity](#) program could be a potential partner down the road.

[green education pathways]

Map “green” education pathways and identify and leverage green education offerings and training resources.

ASSIST CAREER COUNSELLING PROFESSIONALS IN PROVIDING ONTARIO-BASED CONTENT FOR GREEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TO JOB SEEKERS

Collected responses from teachers have indicated a desire for Ontario-specific content showcasing the career path opportunities available within the green economy. Access to relevant career path information and video profiles that students can relate to will increase their access to new and upcoming opportunities created through the development of the green economy. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Develop career path documents showing the green opportunities that are available in existing jobs by highlighting the skills or training that will increase the opportunities for work
- ii. Create video job profiles of real workers within Ontario discussing the nature of work and the knowledge and courses that help them in day to day work

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Students and job seekers have access to career path information.

Students and job seekers have a better understanding of the nature of green work opportunities.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Increased access to career path information and Ontario-based video content increases awareness of opportunities provided by the green economy.

A skilled workforce for the green economy is readily available within Midwestern Ontario.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Labour Market Planning Boards (LMPB) have a template that was used to generate a *Green Jobs Profiles* handbook and the network resources to ensure the handbook is distributed to school boards, employment services agencies, Small Business Enterprise Centres, and other stakeholders.

Green Jobs Strategy researchers provided a list of green jobs identified during the course of the project and provided the occupational data for each job profile.

The **Four County Planning Board (FCPB)** took the lead on this project, handling document layout, production and distribution. The *Green Jobs Profiles* contain local labour market data for the areas covered by the **Elgin-Middlesex-Oxford, Waterloo-Wellington, Four County, and Sarnia Lambton Planning Boards**. The final handbook was launched at the FCPB's Annual General Meeting on September 22, 2011.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

LMPB Executive Directors suggest combining this Strategic Idea with the Green Education Pathways Strategic Idea and that the two projects be completed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's program [Passport to Prosperity](#).

[green workforce information hub]

www.workgreen.ca

Create a Green Workforce Information Hub in each geographic area represented and led by Labour Market Planning Boards. Specific and targeted labour market information for each area will be fed into and disseminated by each planning board to various stakeholders, including industry associations, trade unions, educational institutions, employment agencies, local government, and business associations.

CREATE AN INFORMATION PORTAL FOR CURRENT LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO MIDWESTERN ONTARIO FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Building regional, business, and individual capacity in the green economy was identified in year one of the Green Jobs Strategy as essential to the development of green industries in Midwestern Ontario. A central information hub or portal can gather and share data on regional green assets (infrastructure, labour, funding opportunities, sector overviews, education and training, etc). Regions with workforce systems based on shared/open networks will become more competitive because they are able to recognize opportunities faster, mobilize resources sooner, and equip their workforce with the skills needed to compete. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Develop information pathways for stakeholders to feed information into the hub as well as receive information from the hub
- ii. Identify, define, and project workforce demand and skills gaps for new and existing green jobs in Midwestern Ontario
- iii. Foster collaborative partnerships between stakeholders to address and monitor labour force adjustment issues

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Industry specific action plans developed to address skill or labour shortages.

A centralized information hub created for specific areas in Midwestern Ontario.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Leverage labour market information to identify available skills and emerging occupations by creating information pathways into and out of the hub.

Identify current or future skill shortages.

Be a model for other communities on how business and local government agencies can collaborate on local economy and labour market issues.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

The **Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Planning Board** will take over the www.workgreen.ca web site and the **Green Jobs Strategy** can prepay some of the hosting costs.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Labour Market Planning Boards already do much of this kind of work. The Virtual Trade Show model was mentioned as an example. A common understanding of what a green job is will need to be developed in order for the model to be replicated.

[sustainability themed career day]

Organize a Sustainability Themed Career Day Program that consists of a series of full-day and shorter workshop sessions delivered to public and high school students linking the principles and actions of the green economy with course selection, career planning, and post-secondary decision making.

RAISE STUDENT AND TEACHER AWARENESS OF EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GREEN ECONOMY AND LINK LOCAL SUPPLIES WITH THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

Themes for various symposia of a Sustainability Themed Career Day would include energy, water, food, transportation, social media technology, knowledge and creative economies, and other fields that respond key green drivers. The local development of career days highlighting key areas of interest for young people and the sharing of best practices builds support for youth retention in rural areas. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Expand the capacity of local schools, school boards, agencies, and businesses to deliver career day programs
- ii. Support the development of a social enterprise in the delivery of career day programs
- iii. Include youth internships and training as part of the project development process

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Establishes a framework for a multi-year series of career day initiatives.

Identifies the best approaches and methods for maximum uptake and delivery efficiency.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Increased workforce capacity to meet the demands of the economy in light of future trends (e.g. climate change, fossil fuel pricing, and ecosystem degradation).

Increases the number and quality of opportunities for students to identify future careers and current pathways to success.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Labour Market Planning Boards, Employment and Training Groups, and School Boards are already partnering and leading similar initiatives. Collaboration with social enterprises and not-for-profit organizations (e.g. [C.A.R.E. Stratford](#), [Grey Bruce Sustainability Network](#)) may present new opportunities for incorporating sustainability and related themes into career day offerings.

CFDCs and municipalities are other organizations who could provide support for these initiatives. As well, the **Green Jobs Strategy** can provide guides, toolkits, and contacts to project partners.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Is there a need to expand the career day approach in terms of numbers and focus of events in the region? Private sector sponsorship is one strategy for obtaining the funding required to organize and run a career day – considering costs for student busses must be accounted for. There is a good opportunity for a best practices review of these events.

Examples: [Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board Career Fair](#), [Skills London Oxford Middlesex Elgin \(SLOME\) Career Exploration Day](#), [Huron Perth Agriculture and Water Festival](#).

[regional strategy for renewable energy and green manufacturing]

Utilize existing partnerships between economic development organizations in the region to develop and implement a regional strategy targeted at renewable energy and green manufacturing. The overall strategy should involve a number of interconnected investment attraction, networking, and business retention and expansion actions.

PROMOTE THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE REGION WITH RESPECT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AND MANUFACTURING TO DEVELOP A RENEWABLE ENERGY CLUSTER

Depleting natural resources and the effects of climate change mean that the region needs to develop renewable ways to meet future energy needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Traditionally a major economic strength of the region, manufacturing was hit hard by the recession and has been slow to recover. The introduction of the Green Energy Act and Feed-In Tariff program has provided business development opportunities in renewable energy, but the playing field is extremely competitive. A targeted, regional strategy for renewable energy and green manufacturing is needed to compete with other jurisdictions, and working with established, local manufacturers is a way to continue moving forward while there is uncertainty around the province’s strategy for renewable energy. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Work with existing manufacturers to meet mounting, wiring, installation, and maintenance requirements for renewable energy projects and facilitate networking between local manufacturers and renewable energy companies
- ii. Provide community groups, co-ops, and the public with information and assistance with community-owned renewable energy projects
- iii. Promote the region as a unique and competitive place for investment in renewable energy

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Economic Development Officers (EDOs) will be equipped to provide objective advice on interpretation of policies and available programs, incentives, and grants to support business development.

EDOs will develop shared investment attraction materials that focus exclusively on renewable energy and green manufacturing opportunities.

Fosters participation from community groups and municipalities in community-owned renewable energy projects.

Promotes local green success stories to a broad audience and utilizes those stories as an investment attraction/business development tool.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Provides information packages and training for EDOs on renewable energy technologies, markets, and policies/programs/processes.

Information is shared with community groups about the opportunities for community-owned renewable energy projects.

A lack of knowledge about policies and processes and uncertainty about future plans for renewable energy from investors is a barrier. Educating the economic development community about those processes will help to remove that barrier.

Networking sessions will eliminate the barrier between local manufacturers and technology investors.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Green Jobs Strategy has developed a “Green Toolkit” for economic development organizations that consists of a number of documents, including overviews of renewable energy technologies and other green industries.

Four County Labour Market Planning Board has expressed interest in working on this project and contributing green workforce and labour market information.

CFDCs may be able to work together regionally to develop green business support materials.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

South Western Economic Alliance (SWEA) and **South Central Ontario Region (SCOR)** are regional economic development organizations that cover parts of Midwestern Ontario. These organizations promote the region collaboratively and could be potential champions for the development of a green investment attraction strategy.

Huron Manufacturing Association oversees a Renewable Energy Networking Group that has the opportunity to play a critical role in regional economic development. There is potential for this group to pilot strategies to build strong linkages between manufacturers and investors, share knowledge, and administer green training programs. The model could then be adopted throughout the region.

Other organizations that could provide useful information or play another role in a regional strategy include **OMAFRA**, **Manufacturer’s Innovation Network**, **Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA)** and **Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC)**.

Example: **Colorado Clean Tech Hub** – www.cleantechhub.com

[best practices: ecosystem restoration service delivery]

Compile a baseline of information upon which future policy and “on the ground” delivery of ecosystem restoration projects can be delivered. Increasing the quality of our ecosystems and expanding the natural capital in our communities is directly aligned with the principles of the green economy.

IDENTIFY AND SHARE EXAMPLES OF APPROACHES TO SOURCING AND DELIVERING ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION SERVICES

Increasing the delivery of ecosystem services (clean air, water, and soil) through “on the ground” watershed rejuvenation projects builds local community support, engages landowners in the restoration process, creates work for local businesses, reduces soil erosion, increases soil fertility, and builds ecosystem resiliency to the impacts of climate change. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Identify commonalities in ecosystem service delivery models – including Conservation Authorities, private sector, and provincial models
- ii. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers to increased program uptake
- iii. Establish a mechanism for ongoing exchange of ideas, delivery, and collaboration

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Summary of research findings highlighting the various approaches to ecosystem service delivery.

Landowner-supported mechanism to facilitate ongoing sharing of ideas and best practices regarding land use and ecosystem resiliency.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Partnership with the provincial government to increase the delivery of ecosystem restoration projects.

Improved efficiency of ecosystem service delivery.

Development of new business and social enterprise opportunities in ecosystem restoration and environmental services.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

OMAFRA and **Conservation Authorities** have the knowledge and resources to play key roles in the development of this project. **Maitland Valley Conservation Authority**, with other partners, is working on a feasibility study of developing a Watershed Resiliency Fund.

OMAFRA and the **University of Guelph** have completed research on many of the project’s areas of interest. In combination with the green policy research conducted in year two of the Green Jobs Strategy, much of the required research is already available.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

This strategic idea may be combined with the *Ecosystem Restoration Outreach Training* or evolve into a study of the impact of ecosystem restoration on local food production. Whichever path the initiative takes, there may develop opportunities for new social enterprises to deliver services beyond the capacity of existing organizations.

Other organizations that could contribute knowledge and/or resources to the project include the Ministries of Energy and Natural Resources, and regional Stewardship Councils. At the County level, support through the Clean Water Fund may be available.

[community energy education program]

Create and implement an education program for municipal and community leaders (politicians, not-for-profit organizations, community groups) to support demonstration projects involving community energy generation. The project will provide municipal leaders and the public with the opportunity to receive free education sessions on community energy and provide support for community engagement.

PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT TO MUNICIPALITIES INCLUDING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Equipping municipal and community leaders with information and knowledge to support community energy projects will allow communities to strengthen their local energy security and their ties within the community. Community support is a key success factor for the development of renewable energy projects and is deficient in some parts of Midwestern Ontario. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Educate the general public on the economic, environmental, and social benefits of community energy
- ii. Provide support to municipalities in hosting successful community engagement sessions

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Educates municipal leaders and the community at-large on the potential for community-owned energy projects.

Demonstrates the benefits of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency programs.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Fosters support within the community regarding the development of renewable energy projects.

Encourages community groups to explore investments in renewable energy generation.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Several **CFDCs** (including Huron, Perth, and Wellington-Waterloo) have expressed interest in being regional champions for a Community Energy Education Program. This project could be closely linked with the *Municipal Green Economy Toolkit*. A strategy for engaging municipal leaders in the project is to host tours of existing community energy demonstration sites.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

[Rural Ontario Municipal Association](#) (ROMA), [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#) (FCM), [Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#), and [Ontario Power Authority](#) are all organizations that may be able to share resources (knowledge, networks, funding opportunities) during the planning and development of this project.

FCM's [Green Municipal Fund](#) supports municipal energy conservation plans, as well as capital projects involving renewable energy and energy efficiency, transportation, waste reduction, and water conservation. Redevelopment of brownfield sites is also eligible.

[Energy: A Campaign for Middlesex Centre](#) – The Municipality of Middlesex Centre ran a \$1.5 million community fundraising campaign to support the construction of a Wellness and Recreation Centre. In addition to providing numerous community amenities, the building has integrated sustainable design features. Site sustainability, energy efficiency, water conservation, indoor environmental quality, and renewable energy generation are among the green design features of the building.

Community Power for Sarnia has materials on starting a community energy co-operative and there may be funding available for initial studies.

[municipal green economy toolkit]

Produce educational materials and deliver presentations to Midwestern Ontario municipal leaders and staff to raise awareness of the economic and environmental benefits of community sustainability initiatives and investment in green infrastructure projects.

DELIVER DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE RANGE OF TOOLS, PROGRAMS, AND INCENTIVES FOR GREEN MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES

The negative response from many rural Ontario municipalities to the Green Energy Act (mainly due to the removal of local authority over renewable energy project development) has resulted in other green initiatives (e.g. energy efficiency, greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, community energy) being rejected. Aligning economic development with environmental sustainability is the main objective of the toolkit. Secondary objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Present options and benefits of sustainable management of municipally-owned green space
- ii. Present energy efficiency and GHG reduction program options and benefits
- iii. Provide a “one-stop” approach to the layering of financial incentives for project delivery and funding

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Increased understanding amongst municipal leaders and staff of the financial benefits of implementing sustainability initiatives.

Increased awareness of how municipalities can partner with other agencies and private organizations for the service delivery of sustainability initiatives.

Sharing of resources on the available planning and community engagement tools available to support project delivery.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Solidify the role of municipalities in supporting the delivery of sustainability and green infrastructure projects.

Encourage municipalities to take a leadership role in developing sustainable communities.

Create a community-based collaboration in support of sustainability planning.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

CFDCs and **Conservation Authorities** could provide support for this strategic initiative, but buy-in will have to come from municipalities.

University of Guelph, [Rural Ontario Institute](#), and [Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#) are other organizations with resources to support this idea. Faculty members at the University of Guelph can apply for KTT (Knowledge Translation and Transfer) funding through the Agri-Food and Rural Link program in partnership with **OMAFRA**.

Steering Committee members may also be able to contribute as partners on funding applications, making connections at the municipal level, and defining the best communication approach.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Potential sources of project funding include Trillium Foundation, [Green Municipal Fund](#) and Community Energy Partnership Program (there is also potential to tie this strategic idea in with the *Community Energy Education Partnership*). Another opportunity for collaboration is to link municipal outreach and education with the development of green education using digital media (see *Storytelling, Social Marketing, and New Media Project*).

[ecosystem restoration outreach training]

Provide youth and/or displaced workers with the training and skills required to work in ecosystem service fields, including stormwater management, wetland restoration, sustainable forestry, sustainable agriculture, and risk management for municipalities.

TRAIN YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN THE DELIVERY OF ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAMS TO RURAL LANDOWNERS

Providing local youth and/or displaced workers with the knowledge and skills to share in the economic benefits provided by healthy ecosystems will address several of the key drivers of the green economy. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Share best practices in ecosystem service delivery
- ii. Train youth to *sell* the ecosystem restoration approach to local landowners and build an economic case for ecosystem restoration at the sub-watershed scale
- iii. Increase the amount of land converted to ecosystem services and reduce the negative impacts of climate change – soil erosion, poor water quality
- iv. Support the transition of local workers and businesses to sustainable, eco-value added activities

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Implementation of a labour force development program based on ecosystem restoration.

Builds connections with local and regional training agencies to assist students to identify potential career paths and post-secondary opportunities.

Creation of green jobs and social enterprise.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

A strong local workforce that supports the strengths of rural Midwestern Ontario (natural ecosystems, agriculture, tourism, recreation, and community development).

Increased local understanding of the economic benefits associated with watershed-based ecosystem restoration initiatives.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Conservation Authorities and **OMAFRA** are potential champions of this project with **Labour Market Planning Boards** playing a supportive role. Other organizations that could be project champions include [Conservation Ontario](#), [Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association](#), and regional watershed restoration groups (e.g. Pine River Watershed Group, Lake Huron Southeast Shore Working Group).

Examples of this type of work exist within the Maitland Valley watershed. **Maitland Valley Conservation Authority** has many of the resources and local knowledge necessary to lead this initiative.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

This strategic idea presents a possible opportunity for social enterprise development. Project partners should explore not-for-profit, but also fee-for-service organizational models. Public-Private partnership is another model worth exploring.

Other organizations that could potentially contribute knowledge and resources to the development and implementation of this strategic idea include Trillium Foundation, Ministry of Natural Resources, Stewardship Councils, Ontario Works, and other programs such as Skills Link.

[storytelling, social marketing, and new media project]

Create and communicate stories that describe the experiences of people and their efforts to develop green businesses and sustainable livelihoods. The stories will utilize a variety of media tools and techniques including live theatre, photography, video, print, and virtual media.

SHARE SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS STORIES OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES, AND ENGAGE THOSE STORIES WITH THEIR PEERS

The potential hazards that come with climate change, rising fossil fuel prices, and ecosystem degradation will have a significant impact on our collective economic future. Therefore it is necessary to generate interest and awareness of actions being taken to address these issues. A sense of urgency must also be communicated about the responses required to prepare for the potential impacts of climate change. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Raise awareness and understanding of sustainability issues through real-life examples from the region
- ii. Support the development of youth and adults alike in the use of creative writing and multimedia skills, as well as the production and marketing of products to schools and communities
- iii. Create a product that can be presented in multiple ways, catering to the needs of myriad audiences – e.g. offices, schools, community groups, and government

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assemble a group of interested professionals (from key skill areas) committed to carrying out the project.

Communicate various regional responses to the effects of climate change, rising energy prices, and ecosystem degradation.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Provide local people with the tools required to effectively communicate to a wide audience and empower them to spread their message of sustainability.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Labour Market Planning Boards and the **University of Guelph** are potential champions with the resources to support this project's development and implementation. University of Guelph could provide support through Capacity Development and Extension.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Many secondary schools and colleges have courses in digital media (the University of Waterloo – Stratford Campus focuses on innovating by bringing together students, researchers, and entrepreneurs to advance digital media). Youth Training and the Specialist High Skills Major Programs are other opportunities to involve young students in the development of digital media projects, while also connecting them to green businesses and social enterprises.

There is possible collaboration between this strategic idea and the *Youth Think Tank for Local Green Jobs*. Linking green career education and young entrepreneurs with sustainability and digital media training could provide great opportunities.

Perth County has organized a [Social Media Boot Camp](#) workshop series to introduce businesses and local people to a variety of social media tools. A similar structure could be implemented to train individuals and community organizations on how to utilize social media to communicate their messages of sustainability.

[youth think tank for local green jobs]

Develop a program led by youth that allows young people to generate new and creative ways of working in the green economy and provide valuable insight into the educational and workforce transitions that will be required.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIDWESTERN ONTARIO'S GREEN ECONOMY

For the green economy to flourish in Midwestern Ontario we need youth to remain and prosper in their communities. But in order for youth to stay (or return), they need to feel a connection to their local economy and see opportunities to learn and make a living. The green economy will be led by today's youth and as such we have the opportunity to engage them in its development. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Allow youth to explore how their experiences and knowledge of global networks can change or influence the green economy
- ii. Leverage youths' familiarity and comfort with real-time communication and learning to realize new and innovative business models for the green economy
- iii. Capitalize on young people's views of authority to challenge leaders who fail to recognize the interconnectedness of the green economy

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

New and innovative green business models developed by the region's youth.

Changes to career guidance, internship, and apprenticeship programs to better reflect the realities of the green economy.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Presents challenges to current "business as usual" mindset, resulting in new opportunities for entrepreneurs and youth.

Greater retention of youth in rural communities.

Inclusion of sustainability thinking in rural business models.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Four County Labour Market Planning Board has expressed interest in moving forward with this idea – possibly as a pilot project in the four counties and then expanded to the rest of the region. **OMAFRA** has resources to help facilitate a pilot project potentially involving existing businesses, School College Work Initiative, and/or local secondary schools.

Middlesex Business Help Centre is involved with several programs for young entrepreneurs and has resources for operating a program aimed at assisting youth with their business ideas. Other **CFDCs** run youth entrepreneurship programs, so the knowledge and experience exists within these organizations to lead a youth program for green business. However, the key to this strategic idea is to give control of the message to the region's youth and let them lead the conversation about green jobs and the green economy.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

The forum for this project could be taken in many directions, from a “Dragon’s Den” style activity (there has been discussion about organizing a green business competition for youth) to an online “crowd sourcing” portal involving social media platforms to a business summer camp with a *green* focus. Any format will have to contend with the travel challenges of rural youth.

Green business and entrepreneurship programs that focus on environmental issues would also provide opportunities to promote social enterprise models. (A *Green Sector Overview – Social Enterprise* was produced by Green Jobs Strategy researchers and introduced various social enterprise models and links to opportunities for sustainable development – all Green Sector Overviews are available at www.workgreen.ca).

Consider adding this component to the [Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre](#) in Ingersoll or [Youth Opportunities Unlimited](#) in London and Middlesex County, or tapping into existing science fairs, robotics clubs, and focus groups through local secondary schools. There are a number of active environmental programs for youth. Proponents of this strategic idea should explore partnerships and collaboration with these organizations and programs.

Other potential partner organizations include: Employment Ontario, Ontario Trillium – Future Fund, Youth Coordinators at Health Units and Counties, Stewardship Networks, and Colleges (green apprenticeship).

Example: **South Western Ontario Opportunity Project (SWOOP)** – environmental awareness project for youth.

[ECO value-added research project]

Develop a protocol for Midwestern Ontario that accounts for value-added ecosystem services and other environmental externalities – CO₂ emissions, ecosystem degradation, and air pollution. A second stage of the project would facilitate a market for trading services based on their equivalent ECO-value.

FULLY ACCOUNT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXTERNALITIES AND DEVELOP A MARKET FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Understanding the fiscal value of ecosystem services (e.g. clean air and water) provides a rationale for investing more *now* on climate change mitigation and ecosystem restoration initiatives. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Demonstrate the value of ecosystem services in monetary terms (ecosystem valuation, carbon credits/offsets, green municipal bonds)
- ii. Demonstrate the contribution of various activities to greenhouse gas emission levels and other environmental hazards
- iii. Develop support for a regional Payment for Ecological Goods and Services (PEGS) program and demonstrate the program's value in terms of community economic development (e.g. job creation potential)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Supports increased capital investment from the public and private sector in immediate mitigation and adaptation measures.

Increases the likelihood of meeting greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

Increased understanding of ecosystem value.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Greater ecosystem resiliency in the face of climate change.

More jobs created related to sustainability initiatives.

Increased community, business, and government participation in sustainability initiatives.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Conservation Authorities have a vested interest in raising awareness of the value of ecosystem services and therefore could be a potential project champion. A framework for community action on the Lake Huron - Georgian Bay Watershed was developed in 2007 and is supported by a steering committee that includes representation from Environment Canada, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, University of Guelph, Ministry of Natural Resources, Huron County Planning Department, OMAFRA, and regional Conservation Authorities.

OMAFRA, proponent of the Environmental Farm Plan program along with the Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association and other organizations, and the **University of Guelph** have much of the knowledge and resources available to play a major role in an ecosystem valuation program. OMAFRA and the University of Guelph have also partnered to distribute research funding in areas related to this project.

CFDCs may be able to help local organizations communicate the value of ecosystem services in their region through their community economic development programs.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

Individuals, landowners, and community groups that want to reduce their carbon and environmental footprints can play a central role in the adoption of an ecosystem valuation project, however some people will view the approach as another tax.

Other organizations with the ability to contribute to and/or provide support for this strategic idea include Stewardship Councils and the Canadian Association of Farm Advisors.

[practice what you preach]

Develop an internal review process for organizations and businesses to measure their policies, practices, and operations in terms of sustainability and other green operating principles.

ASSIST PRACTITIONERS OF GREEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO EVALUATE THEIR OWN SUSTAINABILITY

Communicating the need for greening the economy can most effectively be accomplished by demonstrating how to apply green principles to our own workplace activities. Demonstrating business and community sustainability begins with our everyday habits and activities. Energy and water consumption, social equity, healthy workplaces, collaboration, and engagement are all effective responses to the green economy drivers. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Develop a clear set of evaluation metrics for organizational sustainability and apply the evaluation framework to Steering Committee members' organizations
- ii. Share the results with peers and reward sustainability leaders
- iii. Provide advice and support for organizations looking to improve their sustainability performance

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Development of a report card for organizational sustainability.

Creation of a focus group to develop and review the Sustainability Assessment Protocol (SAP).

Establishes a recognition award for sustainability leaders.

Development of future action plans and performance tracking mechanism.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Provides a solid foundation at the Steering Committee level for future actions to support the transition to a regional green economy.

Build solid connections between organizations based on their "self-analysis" process.

Increase Green Jobs Strategy's credibility as an organizational leader in the green economy.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

One of the project's central green job principles is to demonstrate sound sustainability practices. Analysis of organizational behaviour is difficult, but necessary. There is a possible need for an external group to perform the analysis and reporting.

Evaluation and adoption of green organizational practices could be used as a marketing piece for participating organizations.

RECOGNITION

[regional green awards]

Develop criteria for regional organizations to evaluate the sustainability performance of local businesses and organizations in order to recognize outstanding environmental performance at existing awards ceremonies.

CREATE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES REGARDING SUCCESSFUL GREEN BUSINESS INNOVATIONS IN THE REGION

Public recognition of first class sustainable business performance will provide incentives for companies to invest in innovative sustainability initiatives. *Green Business* awards will also increase awareness among regional businesses about the economic and environmental benefits that green business practices can generate. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- i. Recognize and honour green business innovators from across Midwestern Ontario
- ii. Promote innovation and competition amongst green businesses in terms of their sustainable business practices
- iii. Create opportunities to share knowledge of successful green projects happening in the region and encourage other businesses and organizations to adopt similar practices

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Successful green businesses are celebrated by fellow regional companies.

Foster knowledge transfer opportunities and innovative thinking.

Highlight the success of Midwestern Ontario as a green economy leader within the province.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Increased competition within the regional green economy and promotion of the *greening* of existing businesses.

Promoted incentives for innovation and excellence in the green economy.

POTENTIAL STEERING COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Labour Market Planning Boards throughout the region and regional **CFDCs** are potential champions who can take this initiative on, as they have the knowledge of their local business communities.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMENTS

A common suggestion has been to add a green award category to existing award ceremonies and/or events, rather than develop a new awards event. A project champion would be able to utilize existing research and information to develop the evaluation criteria for a green award that organizers of existing awards ceremonies could then adopt.

Other organizations that could adopt a green award:

- [Southwest Economic Alliance](#) (SWEA) – holds an annual economic development conference in the region
- [Western Ontario Warden’s Caucus](#) – a partner with SWEA and potential partner organization at the County level
- [Economic Developers’ Council of Ontario](#) (EDCO) – large annual conference held in Toronto
- Advocate for a new award category at higher levels – e.g. **Ontario Chamber of Commerce** and the **Premier’s Awards** for manufacturing and agriculture

CONCLUSION

Four global trends are impacting our way of life in Midwestern Ontario and forcing us to re-envision our economic development priorities. Climate change, peak oil, ecosystem degradation, and economic uncertainty are driving the transition to a green economy. The strategic ideas set forth in this document are realistic responses to these drivers, based on two years of participatory action research with the region's green economy leaders, which will help Midwestern Ontario lead this transition.

Many businesses and social enterprises in the region are actively adopting green economic principles, but further encouragement and support for these green economy innovators are needed. The Business Support strategic ideas aim to provide information, develop necessary infrastructure, and build connections to facilitate business development and growth in key green sectors. The potential impact of these initiatives is to create demand for workers with the skills and knowledge that is required in the green economy.

Another major piece of the Green Jobs Strategy was to analyze whether current environmental and economic policies were encouraging or hindering the adoption of sustainable activities, and how were they addressing the unique challenges that are faced by rural communities. The *Mechanisms to Build Resiliency and Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change and Peak Oil while Creating Jobs for Communities in Midwestern Ontario* delves deeper into this area and paints a bigger picture of the policy framework that is required to respond to the key green drivers. The policy recommendations incorporate the Green Jobs Strategy's *Guiding Principles* and are intrinsically linked to the strategic ideas in this document. Ideally, green policy mechanisms would respond to the green drivers by both stimulating labour market demand and ensuring an adequate supply of workers with the required skills and knowledge.

Identifying potential champions for each of these strategic ideas was a third critical piece in the development of this document. The Green Jobs Strategy Steering Committee members should be commended for actively pursuing ways to make their communities more sustainable. Collectively, the Steering Committee organizations house an abundance of knowledge and resources that can be used to take these strategic initiatives forward. That being said, it will be necessary to involve other key stakeholders from the local community, private sector, government, and non-governmental organizations through strategic partnerships. It was for this reason that each strategic idea identified potential partner organizations with additional resources to contribute. The Community strategic ideas strive to equip these key organizations with additional information about sustainability initiatives and the green economy.

A common theme throughout the strategic ideas is to ensure that green businesses are able to recruit and retain workers with the skills they require – today and in the future. The Jobs, Education and Training strategic ideas aim to collect and disseminate information on transferable skills and specific skill changers in key green industries, while the Youth strategic ideas aim to engage the future workforce in identifying green skill requirements and developing new skills that incorporate sustainable practices. This combination of community economic development and labour market planning will aid Midwestern Ontario communities as forces propel them to embrace a sustainable growth development model.

To best understand how these strategic ideas respond to the key drivers of the green economy, please read the full suite of reports and materials developed by the Green Jobs Strategy. All of these documents are listed in the Additional Resources section and are available for download on www.workgreen.ca.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Steering Committee

Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation	www.bruce.on.ca
Elgin Business Resource Centre	www.elginbusinessresourcecentre.com
Huron Business Development Corporation	www.smallbusinesshuron.ca
The Business Help Centre of Middlesex County	www.cfdcmiddlesex.on.ca
Perth Community Futures Development Corporation	www.perthcfdc.ca
Saugeen Economic Development Corporation	www.sbdc.ca
Wellington-Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation	www.wwcfdc.com
Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning Board	www.localboard.on.ca
Four County Labour Market Planning Board	www.planningboard.ca
Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin	www.workforceplanningboard.com
Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board	www.sltb.org
Lambton College	www.lambton.on.ca
University of Guelph	www.uoguelph.ca
Maitland Valley Conservation Authority	www.mvca.on.ca
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	www.omafra.gov.on.ca

Green Jobs Strategy Final Reports (all available at www.workgreen.ca/content/final-reports)

Business Retention and Expansion Survey Infographic
Green Career Profiles
Green Jobs Strategy Final Report and Recommendations
Green Sector Overviews (Biogas, Biomass, Geothermal, Green Infrastructure, Green Building and Construction, Micro Hydro, Small Wind, Utility Wind, Sustainable Forestry, Solar PV, Social Enterprise)
Workforce System Framework for Green Jobs
Career Day Toolkit
Municipal Engagement Toolkit
Secondary Schools Presentations Toolkit

MITACS Reports (all available at www.workgreen.ca/content/final-reports)

A Survey of Community Understanding and Responsiveness to the Twin-Challenges of Climate Change and Rising Energy Prices (Peak Oil): Perspectives of Municipal Leaders in Midwestern Ontario
Mechanisms to Build Resiliency and Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change and Peak Oil while Creating Jobs for Communities in Midwestern Ontario
Implementing Bill 150: Key Lessons for Municipalities
Implementing Bill 150: Reflections from the Field

Green Energy and Economy Act

The Green Energy and Green Economy Act (GEA) established a Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) for electricity produced from wind and other renewable energy sources. The FIT prices are intended to provide investors a reasonable financial return over a 20-year period, support the development of renewable energy generation, and create jobs in Ontario. The program is divided into two streams – FIT and microFIT. The FIT program is for renewable energy projects that generate more than 10 kW. Small projects (less than 10kW) fall into the microFIT stream, which aims to encourage businesses and homeowners to engage in renewable energy projects.

Green Energy Act www.mei.gov.on.ca/en/energy/gea

Feed-In-Tariff Program www.fit.powerauthority.on.ca

Green Funding Opportunities

Canada Business [Environment and Business funding and incentive programs](#)

[Community Energy Partnerships Program](#)

[Community Development Program](#)

[EcoAction Community Funding Program](#)

[Green Municipal Fund](#)

[Knowledge Translation and Transfer](#)

Ontario Ministry of Energy [Searchable Incentives Guide](#)

Ontario Trillium Foundation [Community Capital Fund](#)

Ontario Trillium Foundation [Future Fund](#)

Innovation Centre for Entrepreneurs (www.iceinnovation.ca/)

The Innovation Centre for Entrepreneurs (ICE) is a mixed-use business incubator located in St. Thomas, Ontario. ICE provides small and growing businesses with the resources and support they need to grow and prosper. For communities interested in exploring the ICE business incubator model, a number of documents and materials have been made available to the public.

Please contact [John Regan](#), General Manager, Elgin Business Resource Centre or [Delia Reiche](#), ICE Business Development Manager to access these materials.

Other Resources

visit www.workgreen.ca to find further green resources for businesses, community leaders, and job seekers

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