

## **Core questions for regional data collection (June 30<sup>th</sup> version)**

Note: Sub-questions are optional (left to the discretion of research team members). Sub-questions may be used to help clarify or elaborate on the main question and will be drawn upon in in-depth theme-based case studies.

### Beginning the interview

#### ***FIRST, THE INTRODUCTION: EXPLAIN THE RESEARCH IN SIMPLE TERMS.***

Topics to cover :

- 1- *What is the research? (short project description posted)*
  - 2- *Who is doing and who is funding the research.*
  - 3- *Who are you exactly (the researcher presents him/herself)*
  - 4- *Why are you doing the research (e.g. if part of a thesis say so).*
  - 5- *Overview of what we want to know in terms of informations?*
  - 6- *The return of the research in the community ?*
  - 7- *Why you need the collaboration of the interviewee? Or how important is his/her collaboration? How was he/she identified?*
- *Important to explain to the interviewee that you will record the interview (unless they prefer that you not), that you will protect the identity and the information and nobody will discover that you said that, etc.*

#### ***SECOND, THE SIGNATURE: PROCEED WITH THE INTERVIEWEE TO SIGN THE CONSENT FOR THE INTERVIEW.***

#### ***THIRD, START WITH THE IDENTIFICATION OF/INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANT AND THEIR ORGANIZATION.***

##### **A. Introduction**

To the interviewee:

1. What community do you live in?
2. What is your role with (name organization)? How long have you been in this position? With the organization?
3. As an individual, what, if any, other organization(s) are you affiliated with? What are other ways are you involved in your community and/or region (e.g. as a volunteer, committee or Board member, donations, other)?

*Note to team: This is a way to see connections between orgs and individuals (networks) and among the organizations that exist because the same people are participating in each others' activities.*

Introduction to the target organization/governance theme:

*(Fill out as many as you can ahead of time and ask for clarification or confirmation)*

*Introduction to this section: "In these questions I will ask you to tell me a little bit about your organization(s)" (if relevant ask them about more than one organization).*

4. How long has your organization been in operation? (if not in documentation)

5. What is the purpose of your organization/agency?

- *What are your organization's mandate, goals, intended outcomes?*

- *Role of your agency relative to other agencies with similar mandates?*

*Note: if relevant based on your research about organizations in the area.*

OR

*If the purpose/mandate is stated in literature:*

According to your website (or brochure etc.) your mandate is ... Does this reflect the actual priorities of the organization as it operates today?

6. Have the organization's mandate and/or goals changed over time or are they basically the same as they were in your early years?

- *If so, please explain. How have they changed?*

- *What were some of the factors leading to this change (e.g. because of internal review, change in community circumstances, policy or funding program change)?*

- *How have these changes altered the way your organization works, or the way in which it has been able to meet its mandate?*

7. Do your organization's activities include: economic development? Recreation? Water or watershed management-related activities? If yes, please explain.

8. Have your organization's responsibilities increased, decreased, or remained the same over the past five to ten years? Please explain (e.g. In what ways have they increased or decreased?).

9. (Related to changes described in #8) Have the resources available to your organization also increased, decreased, or remained the same over this period? Please explain (what kinds of resources, how significant has the change been compared to the changes in your activities and responsibilities?)

10. Does your organization collaborate with others to plan and make decisions or complete projects related to (respondent organization's area of interest), or does it primarily operate on its own?

*Note: Start with what they have already mentioned if appropriate, e.g. So far you have mentioned that you work with ... Some of this may already have been covered – skip if so.*

- *If no, is this by choice or necessity?*

- *If yes, please explain (e.g. how do you collaborate and with whom?)*

- *What other organizations are involved: government (name specific agencies and individuals), NGOs, Aboriginal Groups, international organizations?*

- *Are these arrangements formal or informal?*

- *How long have these collaborative arrangements been in existence? What brought about the collaboration or partnership?*

- *In what ways have they changed over time? New groups involved? Groups no longer involved?*

- *Have these changes been related to changes in your mandate or activities?*

- *Have you been able to collaborate more or less effectively with other organizations in your region as a result of these changes?*

- *Factors contributing to any successes of this collaboration?*

- *Barriers or challenges faced?*
- *What leads to trust or mistrust in this relationship?*
- *Is this relationship(s) considered important in achieving your organization's goals/vision?*

*Note: Talking about relationship mapping and what it would look like visually if they were to map out the different people they work with and the types of relationships can provide a good tool to get people chatting. We plan to map out networks in the regions and provincially/nationally so please look for these relationships and include them in your notes.*

11. Do the collaborating organizations make joint decisions in these instances or does one organization tend to make decisions on behalf of the group? *Please explain.*

- *Is power shared in these collaborative processes? Please describe.*
- *How are joint decisions made? (e.g. majority vote, consensus)*
- *Do all members have equal access to information or are some more informed than others?*
  - *Can all members influence decisions equally or are some more influential than others?*
  - *How is this achieved?*
  - *Are decisions of the collective upheld in all circumstances? If not, please provide some examples of when they are upheld and when they are not.*
- *How are conflicts (potential or actual) resolved?*

12. What is the structure of your organization?

*Membership size and categories/ representation, committee structure, mode of decision making?*

*Inclusive of all types of community members - especially those who are typically disadvantaged from participation (e.g. the poor, elderly, seasonal residents, Aboriginal people, those with child or elder care responsibilities)? Which of these types of groups are included or excluded? What are some of the ways your organization ensures they are included?*

OR

*If the structure is stated in literature:*

According to your website (or brochure etc.) your organizational structure is ... Does this reflect the how your organization actually functions?

13. Has this structure changed over time or stayed basically the same?

*If so, please explain. What were some of the factors leading to this change (e.g. because of internal review, change in community circumstances, policy or funding program change)?*

#### Planning and Policy (Governance and Integration)

*(Again, fill out as many as you can ahead of time and ask for clarification or confirmation)*

14. Is your organization involved in any type of planning process(es)? If there is a process(es), describe these.

- *Is it/are they internal planning process(es)? Strategic planning for your organization? For other community or regional planning initiatives?*
- *How is it organized?*
- *Was it done in conjunction with other agencies (if yes, what other groups are involved)?*
  - o *After giving time for the respondent to answer this question, follow up (where necessary) with probes like: - Does this include the involvement from volunteer groups? regional organizations? provincial organizations? federal organizations? international organizations?*

15. Was there a formalized (e.g. graphically detailed) design of the regional plan preparation process, from establishing its purpose to identification of objectives, the specification of the required analyses, the mode of plan design, the process of plan selection and approval, and the key steps in implementation?

16. What are the major policies and other initiatives from each level of government that have influenced your organization's regional development plans or policies?

- *a) Have they influenced the formulation of the issues and objectives of the development policy and plan, (b) the design of the research, (c) the process for designing the plan itself, (d) the identification of development alternatives, and (e) the selection of a final alternative for regional development here?*

17. What role, if any, did the general public (private citizens, not only formally organized interest groups) play in the final selection of the development strategy here?

- *If the public has been involved, please describe the level and methods of community engagement.*
- *Is there an explicit recognition of the need/desire for inclusivity in participation?*

18. Has your organization identified the region's top problems and/or opportunities? If yes, what are these problems and/or opportunities (top 5-10)? How are they categorized within your plans or policies?

19. In the identification of the condition of the region, and its problems and potentials, was this done in a comparative setting, comparing it with (for example) the province or Canada as a whole (e.g. as a lagging region, as a leading region, one requiring special measures)?

19. Does your development plan explicitly link output targets (e.g. river lands protection, visitor volume increases) with concrete input requirements (e.g. capital budgets, pre-completed projects)?

20. Does the development policy and/or plan explicitly deal with (a) questions of personal security, (b) the spiritual dimension of residents' lives, (c) the collective sense of community pride, and/or (d) issues around racial, cultural, socioeconomic and other forms of discrimination?

21. Does the development policy and plan here (a) explicitly link the recommended development agenda with the "public interest" (or "the good of the community"), and (b) derive a recommended course of action from a multi-topic analysis of the region, encompassing for example the economy, environment, culture, social and other dimensions of the region?

22. Is the region conceived of a "system", in the language of the analysis behind the policy and/or plan?

23. Were such things as social, cultural, economic and similar networks or sub-systems explicitly identified and analyzed in the development planning process?

*Note: David and I have discussed whether people will understand the systems and networks terminology. We should be on the look-out for people struggling with these words and this will tell us that this kind of thinking is not prevalent – at least in these terms. Researchers should make note of this and can then explain the concepts to the respondent briefly in other words and/or using examples.*

#### Place-based Development

24. Please describe the geographic boundaries of the area your organization works within?

*Note to researchers: be aware of official boundary wherever possible. Provide a map for participants to identify communities or draw the boundary of their region, or bring a service area map with you to verify if one exists from the organization's websites/documents.*

- *Do you operate or serve in all of this region or primarily concentrate in one area?*
- *Do you operate or serve outside the region (if Yes: in what areas do you operate?)*

25. a) What is the rationale for the identification of this particular region? b) Who was responsible for the final determination of the "region" - size, extent, etc?

26. Has the region in which you operate or serve changed over the last 10 years or has it stayed basically the same? *If it has changed, what were the reasons for these changes?*

27. What if any institutional and organizational linkages are planned for the development strategy of this region and that of neighbouring region(s)?

28. What do you consider to be the top 3 to 5 strengths or unique aspects of your region?

- *What are some of the social, economic, environmental assets of your region?*

*Note: This should be handled in the following way: 1. ask the question and record their responses (leaving plenty of time). 2: If they have not mentioned them, then probe with respect to: economic strengths or assets, social strengths or assets, cultural strengths or assets, environmental strengths or assets (see suggestions below). The responses should be recorded in such a way that we can differentiate the initial responses from the ones occurring after the probes.*

For probing:

- *Can you tell me one social asset of your region?*
- *Can you tell me one economic asset of your region?*
- *Can you tell me one environmental asset of your region ? (for exemple : land, sea, river, mountains or any environment asset that you can think of) (Here its important to precise because «environmental assets» can be very large)*
- *Can you tell me one other asset other than social, economic or environmental present in your region?*

29. You just said that your region has X, Y, Z assets. Are your organization's plans and projects building on these assets? Are they focused primarily on these assets? Can you give me some examples ? (For ex. If landscape is an asset, do you focus on the development of tourism enterprises?)

30. Does your region have a "brand" (e.g., slogan or other marketing approach) that it promotes in tourism or economic development materials? If so, provide an example(s).

- *When and how did this regional branding develop and how it has evolved?*

31. What is the level of local support for local businesses and products? For example, is there a buy-local campaign?

- *If so, has it been successful or unsuccessful? Please explain.*

32. How would you describe the level of access to financial capital within the region?

- *To what extent is there access financial capital locally vs. relying on external sources?*
- *Have you or your organization made use of these sources? If yes, where they local or external?*

33. Are you aware of any natural resource management or environmental stewardship activities (e.g. waste management, forestry, fisheries or water management, energy, built environment, transportation, food security)? If yes, please explain.

#### Rural-Urban Interdependence and Collaboration

34. Are there examples of collaboration between rural and urban communities in your region (e.g. between rural and urban municipalities, firms or non-government organizations)? Please explain.

- *If yes, collaboration for what? and how? ex. partnerships for services, financial and economic relations, sharing access to water supplies? food sources? energy? protected areas? other examples? Do they collaborate on natural resources or environmental initiatives? If yes, please explain.*

- *How are these collaborations done? by formal protocols or informal arrangements? long term? short term?*

- *How well do you feel this collaboration is working? Please explain (e.g. why it is working well or why it is not).*

- *If there is no rural-urban collaboration, why not (in your opinion)?*

*Then, if not already covered above:*

35. Are there instances where rural and urban communities (and/or organizations) in the region collaborate on natural resources or environmental initiatives, e.g. *management of shared water supplies? food sources? energy? protected areas? other examples?* Please explain (see sub-questions for Q34. above).

36. Do rural and urban communities organize joint social, recreational, or cultural activities with your region? If yes, please describe these (see sub-questions above). If no, why do you think this is the case?

37. *Does your organization have financial or economic relationship(s) with organizations, agencies or members located in urban areas (for rural representatives – in rural areas for urban respondents)?* Please explain.

- *Do you collaborate on economic development initiatives? Please explain (see sub-questions for Q34. above).*

#### Learning, Knowledge Flows and Innovation

38. a. Has your organization launched any new or different programs, initiatives or ways of doing things (e.g. new technologies, practices or processes) over the past three to five years that you are particularly proud of, or that have worked particularly well? If yes, please explain.

b. If yes, please describe how this new initiative or way of doing things came about.

- *From where did your ideas come? e.g. Were they adapted from your own previous practices? Based on something someone else in the region was doing? On something an organization outside the region was doing, something recommended in a report or article?*

- *Why are you doing things differently?*

- *What organizations or individuals supported you in these efforts? In what ways did they support you? With knowledge and information? Financial assistance? Other?*

- *Have you used any programs that explicitly address innovation?*

39. In your opinion, how open is your organization (and the people in your organization) to change and to new ideas? Please explain/provide examples.

- *Has your organization made any attempts to search out lessons/ideas from outside of the region or do ideas primarily come from within the region?*

- *Would you consider your organization to be creative or does the organization tend to use the same ideas and approaches continually over time?*

- *How tolerant is the organization to taking risks? Can you provide an example?*

- *What are the general attitudes within the organization towards outsiders and newcomers? How is this reflected in your organizational structure? In your partnerships?*

40. Does your organization encourage and support training for your staff and volunteers, or is this left up to individuals to pursue their professional development? Please explain.

41. Describe any opportunities that exist to reflect on lessons learned from regional development practices within your organization.

- *Is there internal reflection within the organization of such lessons? If yes, where and when does this reflection take place?*

- *Does your organization undertake formal evaluations or do you reflect on your experiences in a more informal way?*

- *Is there an explicit commitment to, and expectation of formal evaluation?*

- *If yes, what is the goal of the evaluation process?*

- *Have previous evaluations (formal or informal) resulted in any improvements in your organization? If yes, please provide examples.*

- *If formal evaluation programs are present, do they reference to the concepts of effectiveness, efficiency, as well as measurable 'deliverables'? setting of specific goals and objectives, and in some instances targets, identification of measurable (a) outputs, and (b) outcomes?*

42. Does the organization share the lessons learned from these reflective exercises with others (e.g. other organizations, whether within or outside the region), or are they primarily for internal learning purposes only?

- *If lessons are shared please explain how this is done and with whom.*

- *Do you also hear from others about the lessons they have learned in their work? If yes, again how and by whom are these lessons shared?*

- *Has sharing of lessons learned led to any improvements in your organization or the work that you do? If yes, please explain.*

#### Closing Questions – asking for individual vs. organization perspective

43. a) As an individual, what do you consider to be your region?

b) *What makes you say this? What make you identify with this region?*

44. *If different from #13* - Do you relate to the (our case study area boundary, e.g. Kittiwake/Gander-New-Wes-Valley) region as your region as well, or not?

- *e.g. Do the official boundaries make sense to you, or not?*

45. Do you have a sense of what other residents (or citizens) in the area consider to be their region? If yes, please explain.

46. What do you think are the most important future opportunities to enhance the well-being of residents and communities in your region?

47. What, if any, major challenges do you foresee in pursuing these opportunities or this vision for the future?

- *In what ways are you developing your capacity to deal with future opportunities and challenges?*

48. What, if anything, would you like to see changed with regard to regional development (in the region or the province) *e.g., new programs, change in policies, increased access to funding, etc.?*

49. Do you have any final remarks, questions or things you would like to add? If yes, please explain.

50. What information related to the topics we have been discussing can we provide back to you that would be useful to you?