



The Path Forward

♦ for the development and diversification of the economy of SCOR ♦

**Strategic Management Plan
2009 – 2020**



June 2009

Summary

In establishing the SCOR Partnership, the five Counties of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford adopted the following mandate:

1. To pursue a regional approach to economic development thus ensuring the vitality and sustainability of our communities.
2. To harness the region's potential and become a rural economic powerhouse in Ontario and Canada.
3. To establish SCOR as a strategic, integrated and globally competitive economic region.

In the past year, the Partners have worked closely with volunteers and stakeholders from across the region to develop this strategic management plan.

The long-term vision is:

***In 2020, SCOR has a sustainable, prosperous and diverse economy driven by innovation.
Our bountiful land, enterprising people and dynamic communities are the foundation for our success.***

The vision is supported by seven strategic directions and related goals:

Agribusiness & Food Industry

- Capture & retain value from field to consumer through innovation, commercialization and value added processing.
- Expand into new and growing markets related to human health, landscaping and the bio-economy.

Tourism

- Leverage and market existing natural assets, authentic small town lifestyle, cultural assets and events and agriculture/food assets to become the tourism destination of choice.

Manufacturing

- Attract new businesses and industries, and retain and expand existing businesses and industries.
- Seek out and support development of businesses and industries offering innovative products and services that are part of the new economy.
- Achieve a balanced manufacturing sector representing a broad diversity of business sizes and sectors.

Energy

- Become a global leader in sustainable energy and in diverse renewable energy production.

Environment

- Become a recognized leader in environmental and resource stewardship.
- Expand business activity in green services, processes and products.
- Create a Centre of Excellence for research and development in environmental and energy solutions.

Culture & Quality of Life

- Increase development of life skills and skills associated with entrepreneurship and employment in new economy businesses and jobs.
- Increase retention of our youth.
- Support creative individuals and enterprises, both commercial and nonprofit, that contribute to the regional economy by creating and distributing cultural goods and services.
- Offer a high quality of life in both our rural and urban communities.
- Celebrate our local culture and sense of place.

Public Infrastructure

- Put in place the infrastructure - water, sewer, public transportation, transportation and broadband communications - needed to support and grow our new economy.
- Implement a sustainable approach to development of regionally significant infrastructure.

To achieve these goals, five year action plans (2009-2014) were prepared for each strategic direction and fifteen (15) priorities for immediate action were identified. The 15 priorities for action will strategically invest in people, businesses, communities and infrastructure vital to the diversification of the regional economy. They will bring an initial investment estimated at \$760M from public and private sources into the regional economy with approximately \$700M going to public infrastructure. It is estimated that 15,500 jobs will be created across the region within five years.

SCOR has an action-oriented mandate and has positioned itself to lead the development and diversification of the regional economy. The SCOR Partners are now acting upon two critical matters. The first is the establishment of an effective and sustainable organizational structure, in the form of a not-for-profit corporation, which will allow the partnership to achieve its regional economic goals over a number of years. The second is to move as quickly as possible into implementation using an effective transitional approach and building upon the current SCOR committees and resources.

SCOR is continuing its work with regional partners and is seeking the cooperation of senior levels of government to make the necessary investments in the development and diversification of the economy of the region.

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1.0 Background

1.1 Understanding South Central Ontario Region (SCOR)

The South Central Ontario Region, composed of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford counties, has enjoyed almost a century of prosperity. To a large extent the rural economy of the area has been based on successful crop production, taking advantage of the natural attributes afforded by the sand plains geology and favourable climatic conditions. Agri-services industries and food processing businesses flourished in concert.

The collapse of the tobacco industry has significantly impacted the region's economy. The local food processing industry has also been in decline as the industry sought efficiencies. Additional challenges facing the region include the increasing cost of energy and labour, global economic uncertainties and decreasing commodity values. The impacts to the region have been, and continue to be, difficult for many individuals and families.

Despite the challenges, the region's economy is becoming more diversified and opportunities are emerging. The proximity to urban centres provides opportunities for both economic diversification and available markets. The region's natural assets and authentic small villages and towns are abundant, providing a strong foundation for a high quality of life and expanding tourism. New partnerships and a strong commitment towards positive change are helping to develop a path forward for the region.

1.2 About the SCOR Partnership

The recently established partnership between the county governments of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford and creation of SCOR (South Central Ontario Region) is indicative of the regional needs and the desire and leadership of local governments to forge a new path forward together.

The SCOR Partners recognize the ongoing need for:

- Regional leadership and collaboration
- Vision and commitment to change
- Commitment to sustained implementation
- Accountability
- Funding
- Ability to harness the power of the entrepreneurial spirit and mindset.

Memorandum of Understanding signed by all five Counties in the region.

Separated cities of London, Brantford and St. Thomas are not partners but are recognized as important regional stakeholders by SCOR Partners.

The purpose of the partnership is:

1. To pursue a regional approach to economic development thus ensuring the vitality and sustainability of our communities.
2. To harness the region's potential and become a rural economic powerhouse in Ontario and Canada.
3. To establish SCOR as a strategic, integrated and globally competitive economic region.

1.3 Development of a Strategic Management Plan

The SCOR Executive Committee, composed of elected officials from the five counties, has provided leadership and is responsible for adoption of the plan. The SCOR Administrative Committee, composed of senior and economic development staff of the five Counties, has provided advice and direction.

The Ontario government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), has provided both financial and staff support for development of this strategy. Additionally, OMAFRA has coordinated participation from other provincial ministries.

A community-based planning process has been used to develop the management plan. Volunteers were appointed to a Strategic Planning Team. These sixteen (16) community representatives, consisting of diverse, forward thinking regional stakeholders, developed a long range vision, strategic directions and goals for the plan during Phase 1 of the work. In Phase 2, an additional ninety (90) volunteers were appointed to Working Groups to develop action plans for each of the strategic directions established in Phase 1.

Extensive community consultation was undertaken with five workshops held across the region in Phase 1 and five open houses and stakeholder meetings in Phase 2. More than 220 persons participated in these events with another 65 people providing comments using our online surveys.



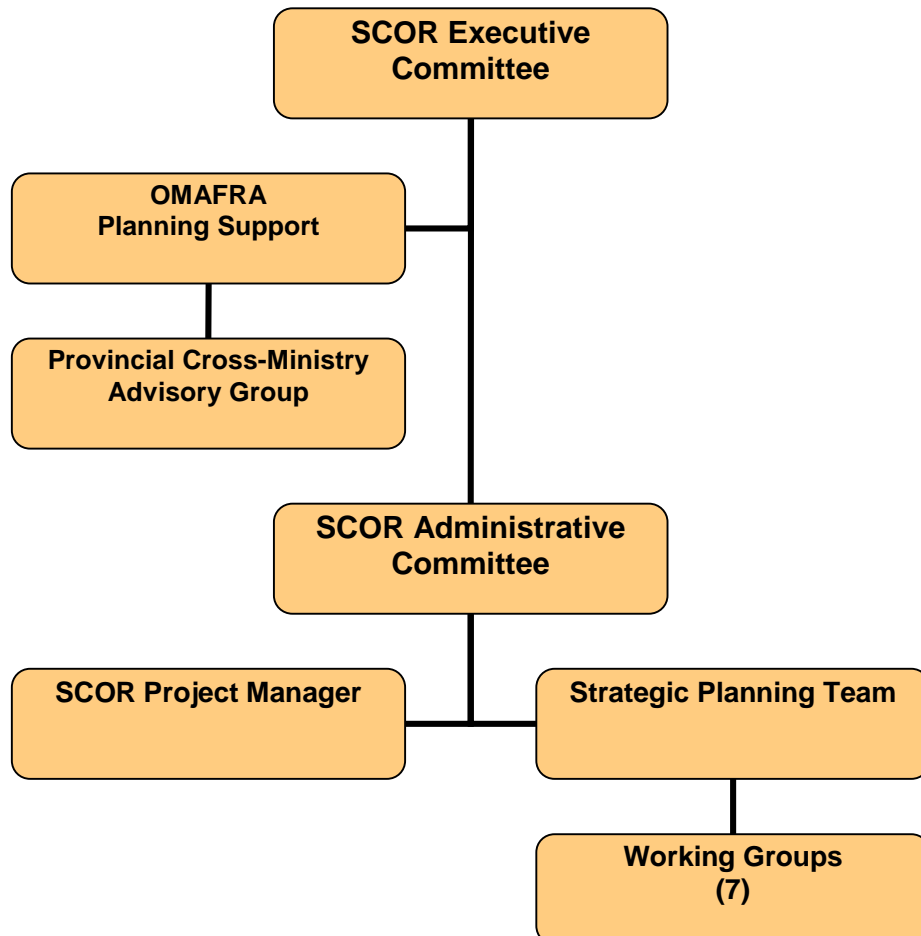
Communications were ongoing throughout the planning process. The SCOR website – www.scorregion.com – was a valuable source of information for stakeholders and the public. Media work was carried out by the SCOR spokespersons supported by the SCOR office.

The strategic management plan is a mid to long term strategy for revitalization and diversification of the regional economy. It has two parts:

1. A **Strategic Framework**, composed of:
 - Economic profile
 - Vision statement
 - Strategic directions
 - Goals for each direction.
2. An **Operational Strategy**, containing:
 - Action plans for each strategic direction and priorities for action
 - Implementation strategy including organizational considerations and resource implications.

Figure 1.1 shows the organization structure of SCOR for development of the strategic management plan.

Figure 1.1 Organizational Structure for Strategic Management Plan Project

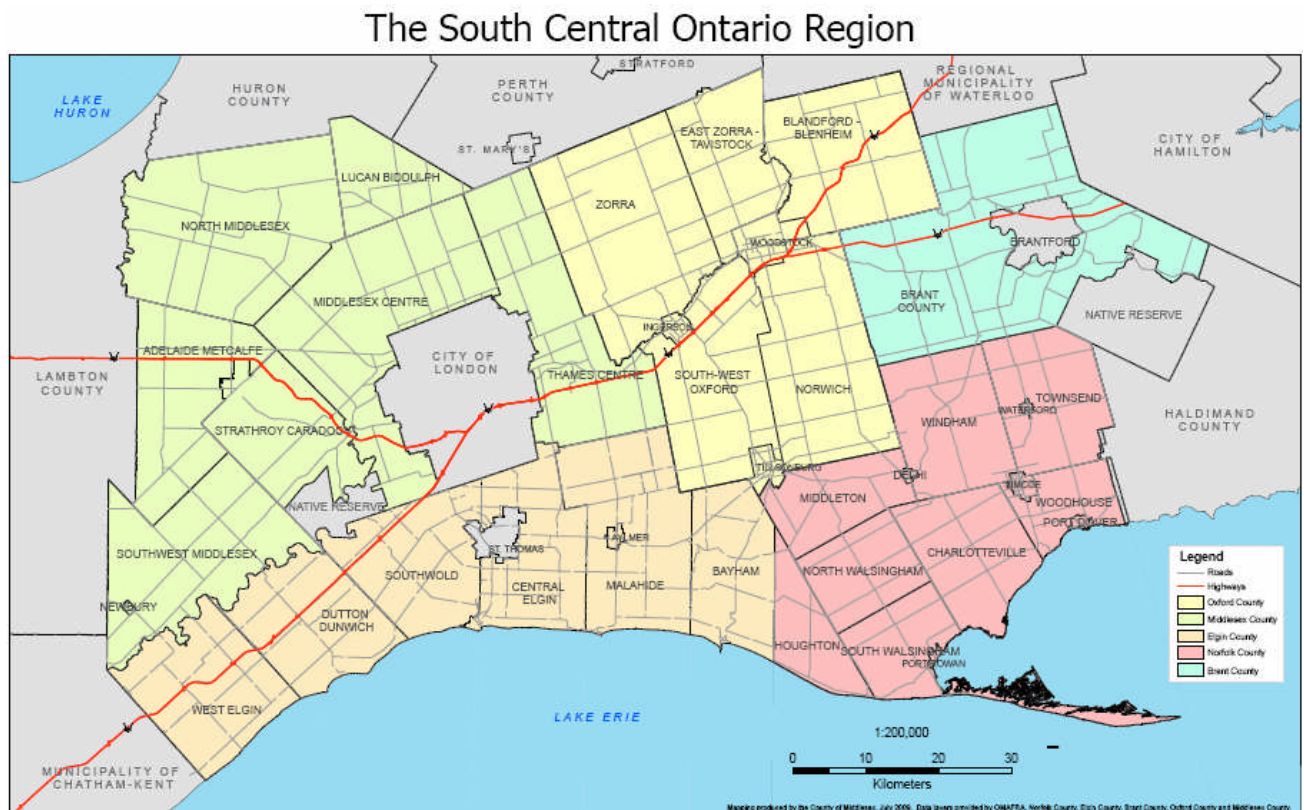


2.0 The Path Forward – A Strategic Framework

2.1 SCOR Profile

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) prepared an extensive economic profile of the area using on a number of data sources including localized content. A summary of the profile follows. The full profile document can be found online at www.scorregion.com.

The South Central Ontario Region is composed of the counties of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford. The region is located in the heart of southwestern Ontario and includes the area from west of London to the outskirts of Hamilton to the east and north to Tavistock with Lake Erie serving as its southerly boundary.



The South Central Ontario Region (SCOR) has enjoyed almost a century of prosperity. To a large extent the rural economy of the area has been based on successful crop production, taking advantage of the natural attributes afforded by the sand plains geology and favourable climatic conditions. Agri-services industries and food processing businesses flourished in concert.

The decline of the tobacco industry has had a significant negative impact on the region's rural economy and business in all economic sectors. The local food processing industry has also been in decline as this sector sought efficiencies. The impacts to the region have been difficult

for many individuals and families. Government has provided funding for three distinct diversification programs over the past several decades to encourage growers to switch to alternative enterprises but further diversification is still required.

SCOR is served by all major transportation options and is intersected by and has access to Highways 401, 402 and 403. The existing road network facilitates access to major border crossings with the United States with a number of Provincial highways providing connectivity within the region. Access to rail, airports, ports and public transit is available within the region although at varying degrees depending on the location. SCOR has access to 150 million consumers within a one-day's drive, with 16 million consumers within a three hours drive. The area is bisected by a number of energy corridors including hydro, natural gas and alternative energy. Fifty-two (52%) of the SCOR area does not have adequate access to broadband service.

The total population of SCOR is 319,405 (2006 Census). Growth rates from 2001 – 2006 (4.0%) lagged behind the provincial average by 2.6% although the gap between SCOR and Ontario's population growth narrowed by 0.8% primarily due to increased growth in Brant, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford Counties. The age of the population in SCOR generally follows provincial trends although with slightly lower population of youth and a slightly higher population of seniors.

In SCOR, there were 37,231 identified immigrants living in the area, which represented 12% of the population. Recent immigrants (immigration from 2001 to 2006) to SCOR represent only 1% of the total population, which is a lower rate compared to the Ontario average at 5%. The area has, or is adjacent to, the largest population of First Nations and Amish in Ontario with large settlements of Mennonites as well.

Compared to the Ontario average, SCOR averaged 7% more residents without a certificate, diploma or degree. The region had less than average certification in the 15 to 24 age group and higher than average unemployment in this same group. There was a less than average number of residents with university level degrees (53% less than provincial average).

Where a large centre exists within a county boundary such as London, Brantford or St. Thomas, there appeared to be 60% of the rural residents commuting into an urban area for work. Those counties without larger urban centres still had 40 – 50% of residents commuting outside of the county boundary for work.

The labour force occupation data for SCOR highlighted some structural differences of the regions economy compared to the provincial averages. In the SCOR area the following occupations were notably higher than the provincial occupation average including: trade, transport, equipment operators and related (19% SCOR vs. 14% Ontario), primary industries

- 988,491 hectares or 2.4 million acres
- 320,000 persons plus seasonal residents
- among the mildest climates in Canada
- dominates Canadian agricultural production in ginseng, asparagus, sour cherries, cucumbers, green peas, green and wax beans, specialty vegetables, sweet corn and turkey
- 234 km of the Lake Erie shoreline

- regional population includes all communities, both rural and urban, that form part of the five participating counties
- the separated cities of London, Brantford and St. Thomas represent an additional population of over 450,000 people

(10% SCOR vs. 3% Ontario), and processing, manufacturing and utilities (11% SCOR vs. 7% Ontario). The following occupation classifications were lower in the SCOR area than the provincial average including: finance and administrative (14% SCOR vs. 18% Ontario), sales and service (20% SCOR vs. 23% Ontario), and natural and applied sciences (4% SCOR vs. 7% Ontario).

- higher than average participation rate of 69% for SCOR versus 67% for Ontario
- unemployment rate for SCOR was 4.8%, which was lower than the region's major urban areas and the Ontario average of 6.4%

The average household income was \$72,590, which was higher than region's major urban centres, but lower than the provincial average of \$77,967. Government transfer payments made up a lesser proportion of income in SCOR than both the provincial average and the cities within SCOR. The percentage of those living in SCOR with income between \$20,000 and \$99,000 was consistently higher than the provincial average. The region had less than the average number of households in the under \$19,000 and over \$100,000 income categories

The total assessment for SCOR was \$28,227,566,929 of which 63% was residential, 26% was farmland, 6% was commercial, 3% was industrial and 2% was listed as other. The number of all building permits and new square metres of construction in SCOR vary greatly from year-to-year between 2000 and 2007. On average the number of permits rose by 7.5% per year. The total value of the new construction remained stable and gradually increased over the same period.

In terms of venture capital, nothing of note was found in the region although some resources are available in London, Kitchener and Guelph. There are six agricultural or related research and development facilities located within or in close proximity to SCOR, five Ontario Centres of Excellence and five relevant regional innovation networks

Universities and colleges have established satellite campuses in various parts of the region. Increasingly college offerings are reflecting the regional labour market/training and adjustment opportunities and priorities as opposed to the provincial market trends or student preferences.

The region has networks of entrepreneurial and community development-related organizations and support associations. These include economic development offices, chambers of commerce, community futures corporations, small business enterprise centres, downtown business improvement associations, boards of trade, economic advisory committees, etc. A number of communities at both the upper and lower tier have also completed economic development strategies.

There are no 'full service' (i.e. providing organized on-site mentoring / subsidized rent) business incubators in the area. There are however, a number of places, the owners of which are providing space in large warehouse type properties for numerous beginning and established small manufacturing / processing businesses. In addition to this, many of the communities have established industrial parks with various sizes of new or used buildings and vacant building sites available. Servicing to vacant sites varies greatly in capacity. A number of centres would like to increase their development lands.

Each municipality is serviced by a general hospital, long-term care facilities, mental health agencies, substance and addiction services as well as regional health care-related facilities

and provisions including ambulatory service, nursing homes and childcare amenities. SCOR is serviced by two Local Health Integration Networks.

Housing ownership accounts for 80% of accommodations which is approximately 10% higher than in the cities of the region. Rent, mortgage payments and housing prices were all significantly lower than the provincial average. In 2006, the average dwelling value in SCOR was \$234,643 which was higher than the region's major urban centres, but lower than the Ontario average at \$297,479. In SCOR, housing costs are lower than the provincial average, which is a major factor in the affordability of an area to live. This is highlighted by the lower percentage of households spending (more than 30%) on rent or ownership.

SCOR offers an array of cultural, heritage and natural assets including museums, artisans, galleries, historic towns and villages, parks, camping, golf, hiking and biking, festivals, agricultural fairs, events, nature activities including birding, and wineries. Lake Erie coastline offers beaches, fishing, marinas, boating and other water-based recreational opportunities. Grand River and its tributaries (Brant) offer fishing, kayaking, canoeing opportunities.

According to 2006 tourism statistics SCOR received 7,298,645 person visits. Of those 64% were same-day visits and 36% were overnight. The number of visits per season were relatively equally distributed. Of those

giving a reason for visiting the region the highest number were visiting friends and/or relatives - 41%, next were those participating in outdoor/sports activities - 17%, followed by those who visited for shopping - 15%. 91% of visitors were from Ontario and 1.1% was recorded to be from other provinces. The top three countries recorded were the United Kingdom – 27%, Germany – 11% and Netherlands – 10%. There was a stated \$940,140,532 in total visitor spending in 2006.

- 46 facilities providing health care, programs and services
- wide array of cultural, heritage and natural assets
- 7.3 million person visits each year generating \$940M annually

Between 2001 and 2006, industrial employment in SCOR increased by 5.45%. This was behind the provincial overall industry employment rate of growth during the same time-period, 6.16%. In SCOR, in 2006, manufacturing was the top sector for employment. Other major job sectors include Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, retail trade and health care and social assistance. Large job sectors include wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, educational services, accommodation and food services and other services (except public administration).

According to the 2006 Census of Agriculture, there are 8,347 farms and 628,783 hectares of land in crops in SCOR. There are 12,450 farm operators, with an average age of 53. Total gross farm receipts for SCOR farmers is \$2.1 billion with farm business operating expenses at \$1.7 billion and total market value of farm capital estimated at \$11.8 billion, SCOR farms dominate in Ontario's production of ginseng (98% of Ontario crop), tobacco (93%), asparagus (82%), fall rye (81%), cucumbers (64%), green peas (61%), green and wax beans (60%), specialty vegetables (52%), sour cherries (48%), sweet corn (48%), cabbage (38%), apples (30%), corn for grain (27%), strawberries (23%), winter wheat (22%), dry white beans (21%), potatoes (21%) and soybeans (20%). SCOR farms also recorded 28.4 million kilograms of turkey (35% of total Ontario population), 995,609 pigs (25%), 69.4 million kilograms of chicken (18%) and 56,352 dairy cows (17%).

SCOR farms dominate Canadian agricultural production in the following areas: tobacco, ginseng, asparagus, sour cherries, cucumbers, green peas, green and wax beans, specialty vegetables, sweet corn and turkey.

In SCOR, between 2001 and 2006, increases in employment occurred in construction, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, professional, scientific and technical services, administrative/ waste management/ remediation services, health care and social assistance, arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation and food services, other services (except public administration) and public administration. The greatest decline in employment between 2001 and 2006 was in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting. Loss of employment also occurred in manufacturing, retail trade, information and cultural industries, and finance and insurance, and educational services.

Positive regional competitive advantages (determined by Shift Share Analysis) or indications of growth potentially due to competitive regional advantages were documented for the Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation and warehousing; Professional, scientific and technical services, Management of companies and enterprises, Administrative/Waste management/remediation Services, Accommodation and food services, and Other services (except Public Administration). These sectors accounted for 52.09% of employment within SCOR.

2.1.1 Global Trends

Several trends were considered to be of particular importance to the diversification and revitalization of the region.

The dramatic global economic decline, triggered by financial and market uncertainty, is rapidly reshaping our economy. Declines in manufacturing and especially the auto sector will affect Southern Ontario for a number of years. Job losses are occurring and retraining of large numbers of skilled workers is required.

The environment is a major driver of change. New “green” opportunities are emerging.

Markets are changing. Consumers are not uniform; there are emerging market differentiation opportunities to realize.

Worldwide travel and tourism is expected to grow at a level of 4% per year over the next ten years.

Infrastructure is a critical foundation to prosperity & competitiveness. Physical and social infrastructure is important to attracting, retaining and growing businesses and communities.

Urban areas are traditionally more prosperous than rural ones. The SCOR region includes urban centres that can help drive prosperity in the rural areas.

The global economy is changing. China, India and others have become

major suppliers of low cost commodities and also represent new markets for our goods.

Economies are becoming regional. There is more interest in sourcing local products and shortening supply chains. Each region needs to develop its own path to success.

Resources will become increasingly scarce and their availability and quality will impact future decisions.

2.1.2 Regional SWOT

The strategic management plan will build on the region’s strengths, address critical weaknesses, seize available opportunities and, to the extent possible, address threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural assets (land, water) • Transportation corridors • Strong agriculture sector • Proximity to major urban centres and markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of broadband, water, serviced industrial land & sewage capacity • Limited tourism infrastructure • Land use conflicts
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Value-added food products and processes • Non-food uses of agricultural products • Innovation and expansion of research, development and commercialization • Niche markets • Buy local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-regulation at all levels of government • Lack of marketing awareness of the region and its products • Unfocused political will at senior levels of government • Loss of agricultural land • Global competitiveness

2.2 Vision and Strategic Directions

Significant effort went into creating the long-term vision for SCOR. The Strategic Planning Team crafted the vision statement and related strategic directions and goals with great care. The vision was the subject of the first round of region-wide consultation. Many important and interesting recommendations were gathered through the consultation that helped to shape the final vision.

In December, the SCOR Executive adopted the vision statement and the strategic directions with related goals presented in Figures 2.0 and 2.1.

Figure 2.1 SCOR Vision



Figure 2.2 Strategic Directions & Goals

SCOR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION	
2009-2014	
Strategic Directions	Related Goals
Agribusiness and Food Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capture & retain value from field to consumer through innovation, commercialization and value added processing. ▪ Expand into new and growing markets related to human health, landscaping and the bio-economy.
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leverage and market existing natural assets, authentic small town lifestyle, cultural assets and events and agriculture/food assets to become the tourism destination of choice.
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attract new businesses and industries, and retain and expand existing businesses and industries. ▪ Seek out and support development of businesses and industries offering innovative products and services that are part of the new economy. ▪ Achieve a balanced manufacturing sector representing a broad diversity of business sizes and sectors.
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Become a global leader in sustainable energy and in diverse renewable energy production.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Become a recognized leader in environmental and resource stewardship. ▪ Expand business activity in green services, processes and products. ▪ Create a Centre of Excellence for research and development in environmental and energy solutions.
Culture and Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase development of life skills and skills associated with entrepreneurship and employment in new economy businesses and jobs. ▪ Increase retention of our youth. ▪ Support creative individuals and enterprises, both commercial and nonprofit, that contribution to the regional economy by creating and distributing cultural goods and services. ▪ Offer a high quality of life in both our rural and urban communities. ▪ Celebrate our local culture and sense of place.
Public Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Put in place the infrastructure - water, sewer, public transportation, transportation and broadband communications - needed to support and grow our new economy. ▪ Implement a sustainable approach to development of regionally significant infrastructure.



3.0 Operational Strategy

3.1 Action Planning

For each of the seven strategic directions, an action plan was prepared. The plan describes a recommended scope of action to fulfill the goals associated with the direction. Suggested actions were assessed using the following criteria:

- Contributes to achievement of the SCOR vision.
- Satisfies goals for this strategic priority.
- Has a regional impact.
- Addresses and satisfies performance measures concerning innovation, sustainability, prosperity and diversification.
- Allows SCOR partners to take effective action.
- Is 'doable' (practical and achievable at the regional level or with identifiable assistance).
- Provides strong case for funding support where it is needed.

Only actions that satisfied the majority of the criteria became part of the action plan. The assessment assisted in the prioritization of actions within each action plan.

Performance Measures

Innovation:

- Increases # of new businesses/ processes/products/ clients/markets
- Increases # of new technologies/processes
- Increases # of *new economy* jobs
- Increases level of and funding for research and commercialization activity

Sustainability:

- Economy – Increases regional gross domestic productivity
- Social – Improves the wellbeing of our communities
- Environmental – Reduces our carbon footprint

Prosperity:

- Enhances quality of community life
- Increases average household income both rural and urban
- Increases % of local business ownership

Diversification:

- Maintains and enhances our rural/urban land use mix
- Increases the mix of businesses/economic sectors found in the region
- Promotes retention of youth and attraction of young working people
- Increases educational levels of our residents and workers

The action plans are found in Appendix A – Action Plans. **It is important to note that these plans contain additional actions that have been recommended by the working groups. To achieve our goals, these actions should be implemented as time and resources permit.**

3.2 Priorities for Action

In total, fifteen (15) actions are considered to be priorities for action over the period 2009-2014. Other action plan items will be implemented as time and resources permit.

15 Priorities for Action

- Greatly contribute to achievement of the SCOR Vision & Goals.
- Immediately respond to the challenges of economic change and decline being experienced throughout the region.
- Strategically invest in people, businesses, communities and infrastructure vital to the diversification of the regional economy.
- Bring an estimated investment of \$760M from public sources into the regional economy with approximately \$700M going to public infrastructure.
- Private investment will match or follow.
- Create an estimated 15,500 jobs across the region within five years.
- Become a model of rural economic revitalization demonstrating ways to sustain and expand agriculture while adding and expanding complementary rural and urban economic activity.

Six of the priorities assist in the achievement of several strategic directions and are considered to be of the highest priority. They are:

1. Maintaining The Competitive Edge
2. Supporting Entrepreneurship
3. Accessing Business Capital
4. Investing in Infrastructure
5. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization
6. Recognizing Youth As Innovators

The remaining nine (9) priorities are unique to a single strategic direction. They are:

Agribusiness & Food Industry

7. Accessing the Marketplace

Culture & Quality of Life

8. Implementing a Regional Communications Strategy on Skills & Training
9. Enhancing the Quality of Life of Our Communities

Energy

10. Fielding a Winning Team
11. Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy

Environment

12. Reducing Our Carbon Footprint
13. Protecting Drinking Water

Tourism

14. Marketing Themed Touring Routes
15. Developing An Agri-Tourism Showcase

Each priority for action is briefly described below. For more detail, please see the action plans found in Appendix A.

1. Maintaining the Competitive Edge

The five Counties maintain a supportive business environment in the region. With the commitment of the SCOR partners to a regional approach to economic development and diversification, it is important for the partnership to ensure that the region, as a whole, remains competitive. Both our rural and urban communities must be supported in their efforts to improve their quality of life.

Working Groups recommend that the SCOR partners review the region's regulatory environment including policies, programs, taxes, fees and charges to ensure that the new directions set out in the SCOR Vision & Goals are being supported to the greatest extent possible across the region. It is recognized that there are both single-tier and two-tier Counties in the region and this must be taken into account in the review process.

Also recommended is advocacy with senior levels of government and their agencies for regulatory change that minimizes barriers and supports achievement of our Vision and Goals.



2. Supporting Entrepreneurship

Sustainable economic growth and diversification of the SCOR economy will be driven by entrepreneurs and businesses in all sectors of our economy. They need and want focused business support that is coordinated across the region.

For example, in the short term, retention of existing manufacturing operations in SCOR is a key priority. Expansion and attraction efforts should be focused on those sub-sectors and segments where SCOR has demonstrated a competitive advantage and there appear to be good growth prospects. These are: food processing; fabricated metal processes; automotive assembly and parts manufacturing; and, manufacturing relating to renewable energy and



green products.

Two initiatives are proposed:

i. Business Support Services

The region is well-served by a network of agencies including CFDCs, Enterprise Centres, municipal economic development and tourism departments, provincial/federal programs and staff services, private agencies and business/tourism and agricultural groups offering business support services.

Working Groups recommend that these agencies review their services with the intent of focusing and coordinating their services, on a regional basis, to support achievement of the SCOR Vision & Goals.

Services of key interest are: market identification and marketing know-how; product development including research, development and commercialization; business information; and, networking and mentoring.

More knowledge, expertise and leadership will be needed for regional producers to effectively take advantage of agribusiness opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry, construction products, energy from biomass and, other sectors seeking bio-products. Support to farmers and processors for business planning and product development is needed including building corporate contracts on a sheltered, long-term and risk sharing basis with pharmaceutical and other firms and, access to patient investment capital.

Similarly, business support and capital investment needs to be directed towards the manufacturing sectors that SCOR believes can be expanded across the region.

ii. BR+E (business retention, expansion and attraction)

The region is active in business retention, expansion and attraction activities. The challenge is to shape this work to support the SCOR Vision & Goals.

Working Groups recommend that the municipal economic development and tourism departments lead efforts with the other agencies active in the region to:

- Enhance, and coordinate on a regional basis, business retention, expansion and attraction (BR+E) activities to ensure that the target sectors are the focus of activities.
- Use BR+E to drive a grass-roots approach (community driven, locally focused); strengthen relationships with stakeholders such as agricultural producers, tourism operators and manufacturers.
- Support analyses including the potential for import replacement and emerging and niche markets.

3. Accessing Business Capital



A companion requirement to entrepreneurial support is access to business capital.

Initiatives, such as marketing and investment attraction, should generally be complementary to and jointly undertaken with other relevant groups such as the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) and the South West Economic Alliance (SWEA).

There are three initiatives:

- i. Increase knowledge, among entrepreneurs, of sources of investment capital.
- ii. Establish the \$50M *SCOR Innovation Fund* increasing both public and private pools of investment capital in the region.
- iii. Create incentives for investment in new products, services and processes using tools such as community improvement plans.

4. Investing in Infrastructure



The SCOR Partners recognized the need for investment in public infrastructure to support the revitalization of the region's economy.

Working Groups recommended infrastructure investments, estimated at \$670-700M in 2009 dollars for projects involving SCOR participation. Ranging from roads to broadband communications, infrastructure investment is vital to the diversification of the SCOR economy.

- i. **Sustainability** - Assimilative Capacity Studies for the three watersheds – Thames, Grand & Long Point – are recommended.
- ii. **Water** - A linked regional system of piped water is proposed:
- iii. **Provincial Highways & County Roads** – including the improvement of north-south roads for the movement of goods and people.
- iv. **Sewer**
- v. **Rail & Airports**
- vi. **Harbours**
- vii. **Broadband**
- viii. **Public Utilities**

Please the action plan for more detail.



5. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization

There are two centres of excellence proposed. These centres will become catalysts for regional economic growth positioning SCOR as a leader in several economic sectors.

i. Diversification of the Agriculture Sector

- Increase applied research, product development and commercialization of agricultural products, services and processes in the region.
- Increase regional sales to both food and non-food markets.
- Expand the function of the Erie Innovation and Commercialization Initiative, making good use of under-utilized facilities in the region, to fill knowledge gaps, support a dynamic interaction between researchers and producers and, accelerate commercialization of field products including: commercialization of new agricultural products, services and processes; commercialization of sustainable technologies and practices; and, pursuit of non-food markets such as pharmaceutical.
- Establish a business incubator to assist with commercialization by producers including: business support services including access to business capital; and, mentoring/networking among producers.
- Provide research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth to bring their academic training back into the region and apply it to commercialization of new agricultural products, processes and services
- Launch a virtual centre by working with youth, schools, conservation authorities, researchers, etc.

ii. Centre of Excellence Providing Rural and Agricultural Solutions to Climate Change

- Increase applied research and support for commercialization of environmental and energy solutions – products, services and processes – in the region.
- Re-purpose under-utilized facilities in the region as a centre of excellence for rural and agricultural solutions to climate change. The concept for the centre is: commercialization of sustainable agricultural practices; commercialization of sustainable rural and agri-based energy production; and, demonstration of climate change adaptations in rural communities.
- Create a business incubator to assist with commercialization of products by farmers, processors and businesses.
- Provide research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth to bring their academic training back into the region and apply it to commercialization of new environmental and energy products, processes and services.
- Launch a virtual centre by working with youth, schools, conservation authorities, researchers, etc.

6. Recognizing Youth As Innovators



Five initiatives are recommended:

i. Provide research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth.

This recommendation is linked to the proposed centres of excellence. Financial incentives will encourage youth to bring their academic training back into the region and apply it to commercialization of new agricultural products, environmental and energy services, manufacturing technology and more.

ii. Launch a virtual centre of excellence.

Also linked to the proposed centres of excellence, virtual centres can be created by working with youth, schools, conservation authorities, researchers, etc.

iii. Launch a youth-driven online campaign to promote a green lifestyle.

Use the SCOR web site as a platform and design/build a web presence. Use Facebook, MySpace, Youtube, Twitter, Flickr and other networking sites to spread the campaign.

iv. Foster creativity early in life.

Enhance and expand the educational focus on creativity at the elementary and secondary school levels by placing greater emphasis on music and the arts, math, science and technology. Encourage Ministry of Education and school boards to enhance curriculum accordingly.

v. Promote community voluntarism.

Expand experiences and opportunities available to students during their secondary school years. Create post-secondary experiences in SCOR that contribute to career development and support community projects.

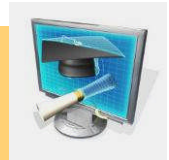
Support participation in experiential and internship programs such as Katimavik whereby participants work in a service learning environment of benefit to the community and with personal living expenses and modest stipends provided.

7. Accessing the Marketplace (Agribusiness & Food Industry)



- Increase the ability of regional producers to bring their products to the marketplace and obtain a greater return for their products.
- Replace imports with regional products to the greatest extent possible and promote **buy local**.
- To achieve the above, study the feasibility of options for improving the food chain for the benefit of producers (farmers and processors) in SCOR. Options to be considered include: cooperative marketing group; clearing house function; and, regional food brokerage centre.
- Support development of an Agri-Tourism Showcase in the region at a high profile location on a 400 series highway.

8. Implementing a Regional Communications Strategy on Skills & Retraining (Culture & Quality of Life)



The solutions that follow are being driven by two significant situational changes:

- Economic Recession - Those seeking services now include an increasing number of experienced and skilled workers needing a new career path. Workers requiring educational and life skills upgrades are growing in numbers as are the number of youth. Employers are facing stresses that affect their ability to manage their labour force needs.
- Provincial skills programs are under review and significant changes are anticipated as Ontario responds to shifts in the provincial economy.

The training system in the region is dynamic, being able to respond quickly to changing training needs through a wide range of agencies and facilities throughout the region.

A key solution, for both workers and employers in the region, is an aggressive communications campaign that addresses the immediate needs brought on by the recession and continues through the changes in provincial skills programming, anticipated by early 2010.

Key components of the Communications Strategy are:

- i. Develop tools to assist with initial entry into the training system including a Service Map and a Decision Tree.
 - The Service Map would describe the range and type of services available. Both employer and worker eligibility would be described. The training system is not consistent across SCOR and mapping by County would be required.
 - The Decision Tree is a tool for service providers doing intake. Using the Service Map and the Decision Tree, workers can be directed quickly and effectively to the service best fitting their needs and eligibility.
- ii. Train agency staff within the system to use the tools.
- iii. Make the Service Map available as widely as possible both online and through training agencies, economic development offices, business, tourism and agriculture associations, schools, information centres, etc.,
- iv. Work with the media.
- v. Market the business benefits of participation in training programs to employers, working jointly with economic development offices. Get out and make direct contacts.
- vi. Hire a Communications Officer for a minimum of 18 months to implement the Communications Strategy across SCOR.

9. Enhancing the Quality of Life of Our Communities (Culture & Quality of Life)



i. Support voluntarism.

Begin with a current assessment of the volunteer environment in the region. Using methodologies that have been developed by agencies such as Volunteer Canada, determine the strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of both volunteers and organizations offering community and cultural services/programs and operating facilities. Provide this assessment to SCOR Partners, community and volunteer groups and encourage action to

improve the volunteer experience.

ii. Engage our youth. See priority #6- Recognizing Youth as Innovators.

iii. Enhance access to public facilities for community and cultural activities.

Review best practices in the region and beyond and make recommendations to the SCOR Partners for improved policies and practices regarding the operation of public facilities. Ensure that barriers to access such as rental fees are addressed as well as options that encourage greater community involvement in the operation of public facilities.

10. Fielding a Winning Team (Energy)

We need to act immediately to demonstrate our competitiveness in biomass energy from agricultural products. We need to show that we have a competitive team that:

- Speaks with a single voice for agricultural producers in the region
- Has the ability to produce and deliver the quantity and quality of agricultural product needed
- Has the technology partners needed to process our agricultural product into desired fuel product
- Has both the marketing and communications expertise needed to work with power corporations and governments, assuring them of our ability to deliver a competitive and reliable product.
- Have the support of our communities as reflected in the advocacy of regional representatives – SCOR Partners, MPPs and MPs.



11. Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy (Energy)

Renewable energy offers important economic benefits to both our rural and urban communities. The benefits can be realized throughout SCOR.

SCOR needs to undertake consistent and aggressive advocacy with senior levels of government for locally-grown renewable energy solutions. While the proposed Ontario Green Energy Act addresses a number of our concerns (i.e., the 'arbitrariness' of rates paid for power going into the grid), more is needed and now is the time to advocate for SCOR stakeholders.

There is a 'need to even the playing field' for regional proponents that tend to be smaller, cooperative companies with strong ties to our rural and agricultural communities.

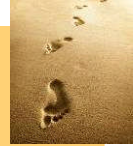
There is a need for senior levels of government to be partners in the process of developing renewable energy with a consistent and rational program package that supports development of a diverse network of renewable projects throughout SCOR. Program support needs to support development of renewable energy projects from conception through delivery with research and development, technology and project development and supply chain improvements.



There is a need to address issues regarding power transmission. The power grid needs to be more flexible and decentralized, accepting power inputs from sources throughout SCOR region. It needs to be 'smarter'.

12. Reducing Our Carbon Footprint (Environment)

Use the existing ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) program, operating in Norfolk County, as the basis for a regional program. This farm based program uses biomass to sequester carbon and reduce our footprint and provides co-benefits in nitrate management and in reduction of farm operating costs. ALUS uses incentives to offset the initial operating expenses associated with restoring the environmental balance on the farm. This approach also supports source water protection. Finally, it is a start on regional readiness for participation in any carbon credit trading program established provincially or federally.



13. Protecting Drinking Water (Environment)

In preparation for provincial regulatory changes taking effect in 2012, SCOR Partners support regional implementation of strategies currently being developed by the region's Conservation Authorities with support of MOE. There is potential to use Cap 'n Trade income to partially fund implementation in two to five years.



14. Promote Themed Touring Routes (Tourism)

Six regional tourism themes are recommended for SCOR - festivals and fairs; outdoor activity and eco-adventure; authentic small towns; agri-tourism, food and the culinary arts; world-class natural heritage; and, cultural heritage.



15. Develop An Agri-Tourism Showcase (Tourism)

At a premier site on a 400 series highway, develop a mixed use centre accommodating food retailing, food service; food science and culinary arts education; and, a travel information centre. This showcase could be developed in conjunction with a food brokerage centre (see priority #7 – Accessing the Marketplace).



4.0 Implementation Strategy

SCOR has an action-oriented mandate. With this strategic management plan, the SCOR partnership has positioned itself to lead the development and diversification of the regional economy.

There are two critical considerations for the SCOR partnership:

1. Establishing an effective and sustainable organizational structure that will allow SCOR to achieve its regional economic goals over a number of years.
2. While SCOR establishes this operational structure, it remains important to move as quickly as possible into implementation. A transitional approach building upon the current SCOR committees and resources is required.

4.1 Organizational Options

SCOR has received advice on organizational options that would support and sustain delivery of their mandate and this strategic management plan over the long term. On behalf of SCOR, OMAFRA retained consultants who researched and evaluated organizational models.

Organizational & Funding Models for Regional Economic Development & Diversification in South-Central Ontario Region

Purpose of the study was:

- To review the provision of economic development and tourism services across the region.
- To review available funding programs which SCOR could access for economic development.
- To research comparable regional economic development organizational models from other jurisdictions.

The consultants, having reviewed comparable agencies and having considered the implementation needs of the strategic management plan, recommended that the SCOR Partners consider establishment of an incorporated non-profit corporation owned by the 5 counties and managed by a Board of county representatives. Its mandate would be planning, priority setting, management and delivery of economic development services and projects of regional importance. This mandate would be achieved in coordination with and complementary to existing economic development services within the region and the existing network of economic services in SCOR.

Source: GGA • Management Consultants/TCI Management Consultants, Executive Summary (April 27, 2009 draft) prepared for OMAFRA.

The full Executive Summary (draft) is available at www.scorregion.com.

4.2 Transition Period

A transition period of up to 12 months is being assumed. To ensure implementation of the strategic management plan proceeds during this transition period, a number of matters must be considered:

1. Resource requirements and timing associated with the 15 priorities for action.
2. Funding opportunities and potential for other agencies to assume leadership of some of the priorities.
3. Implications of deferring action on priorities.
4. Current capacity of SCOR to initiate and sustain implementation of management plan.
5. New resource requirements, for transition period, and opportunity to secure resources from partnership of other sources.

4.2.1 Timing and Resource Implications of 15 Priorities for Action

Figure 4.1 presents the timing as recommended by the Working Groups. Immediate action has been recommended on the following priorities for action:

1. Dramatic changes are taking place in the energy sector. Decision-making at the provincial level is moving quickly. While the proposed Ontario Green Energy Act addresses a number of our concerns, more is needed and now is the time to advocate for rural stakeholders. The Energy Working Group recommends that two priorities - **Fielding A Winning Team and Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy** - require immediate attention if SCOR is to be a leader in renewable energy and secure business in the production of agri-biomass energy.
2. Change is currently being considered in the food supply chain and, particularly, the role of the Toronto Food Terminal. The Agribusiness & Food Industry Working Group recommends that the feasibility study relating to **Accessing the Marketplace** move forward quickly so regional food producers can effectively represent their interests.
3. The training system in the region is dynamic, being able to respond quickly to changing training needs through a wide range of agencies and facilities throughout the region. Nonetheless, the economic recession is negatively affecting workers and undermining the ability of the system to provide appropriate training services. Those seeking services now include an increasing number of experienced and skilled workers needing a new career path. Employers are facing stresses that affect their ability to manage their labour force needs. The Culture & Quality of Life Working Group recommends **Implementing a Regional Communications Strategy on Skills & Retraining**, for both workers and employers in the region. An aggressive communications campaign can support efforts to meet the immediate needs brought on by the recession and can continue through the changes in provincial skills programming, anticipated by early 2010.

Other priorities require a sustained effort with many projects concentrated in 2010 and 2011.

Figure 4.1 – Timing for Implementation of 15 Priorities for Action

Priority for Action & Description	Higher <<< Intensity of Effort >>> Lower											
	Milestones											
	2009				2010				2011			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Maintaining the Competitive Edge				Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark
2. Supporting Entrepreneurship				Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark
3. Accessing Business Capital i. Increase knowledge, among entrepreneurs, of sources of investment capital. ii. Establish the SCOR Innovation Fund. iii. Create incentives for investment.				Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light
4. Investing in Infrastructure					Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light
5. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization i. Diversification of the Agricultural Sector ii. Centre of Excellence Providing Rural and Agricultural Solutions				Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light
6. Recognizing Youth As Innovators i. Provide research scholarships and internships. ii. Launch a virtual centre of excellence. iii. Launch a youth-driven online campaign to promote a green lifestyle. iv. Foster creativity early in life. v. Promote community voluntarism.		See #5 above										

Priority for Action & Description	Milestones											
	2009				2010				2011			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
7. Accessing the Marketplace			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
8. Regional Communications Strategy on Skills & Retraining				■	■	■	■	■				
9. Enhancing the Quality of Life of Our Communities						■	■	■	■			
i. Support voluntarism.						■	■	■	■			
ii. Engage our youth.												
iii. Enhance access to public facilities.							■	■	■	■		
10. Fielding a Winning Team			■	■	■							
11. Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy			■	■	■							
12. Reducing Our Carbon Footprint					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
13. Protecting Drinking Water							■	■	■	■	■	■
14. Promote Themed Touring Routes					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
15. Develop An Agri-Tourism Showcase						■	■	■	■	■	■	■

There are resource requirements, both staff and financial, for the 15 priorities for action. Estimates are found in Appendix B.

All of the priorities have staffing implications for the SCOR Partners and for other regional partners. In-kind contributions also are anticipated.

The most costly projects relate to infrastructure investments but other priorities, such as the expansion of centres of excellence and the development of a tourism showcase, have significant capital costs.

The opportunity for funding support, from both federal and provincial programs and agencies, is very good at this time while private sector investment is more difficult to secure.

4.3 Implementation During the Transition Period

The following recommendations are made:

1. THAT SCOR maintains the current Executive Committee and Administrative Committee structure with existing roles and responsibilities through the transition period.
2. THAT expertise is retained, on a contract basis, as follows:
 - a. **SCOR Project Manager** – providing daily project management. Establish monitoring system for performance measurement. Reports through the Administrative Committee to the Executive Committee.
 - b. **Development Officer** – maintaining the database on funding sources and assisting SCOR, municipal governments, community organizations and private applicants to identify and make applications to potential funding agencies. Reports through the SCOR Project Manager to the Administrative Committee.
 - c. **Communications Officer** – developing communications materials and assisting SCOR Partners, through the Spokespersons, to communicate and advocate on various priorities (i.e., energy, skills training). Reports through the SCOR Project Manager to the Administrative Committee.
 - d. **Communications Officer (2)** – working with a steering committee to implement the Regional Communications Strategy on Skills and Retraining. Reports through the Communications Officer to the SCOR Project Manager.
 - e. **Food Industry Consultant** – assessing the options to improve regional access to the marketplace for locally-grown and prepared food products and to increase the local share of the retail price. Works with a Food Industry Steering Committee. Reports through the SCOR Project Manager to the Administrative Committee.
 - f. **Project Facilitator** – assisting SCOR Partners and their service partners with three priorities for action – Maintaining the Competitive Edge, Supporting Entrepreneurship and some components of Accessing Business Capital.
3. THAT office space for SCOR operations is secured from one of the Partners for the transition period.

The above-noted resources will allow the following priorities to be initiated as soon as possible:

- a. **Accessing the Marketplace**
 - b. **Fielding a Winning Team & Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy**
 - c. **Implementing a Regional Communications Strategy on Skills and Retraining**
 - d. **Maintaining the Competitive Edge**
 - e. **Supporting Entrepreneurship**
 - f. **Accessing Business Capital**
4. THAT SCOR seek funding support from both the federal and provincial governments to assist with this critical period of transition to action.
 5. THAT SCOR proceed to incorporate and make other changes in its mandate and functions as noted in section 4.1.

APPENDIX A – Action Plans

Strategic Direction - Agribusiness and Food Industry (as of 03-09)

Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Capture & retain value from field to consumer through innovation, commercialization and value added processing.▪ Expand into new and growing markets related to human health, landscaping and the bio-economy.
Description of Action
<p>1. Maintaining the Competitive Edge</p> <p>The five Counties maintain a supportive business environment in the region. With the commitment of the SCOR partners to a regional approach to economic development and diversification, it is important for the partnership to ensure that the region, as a whole, remains competitive. Both our rural and urban communities must be supported in their efforts to improve their quality of life.</p> <p>The SCOR partners review the region's regulatory environment including policies, programs, taxes, fees and charges to ensure that the new directions set out in the SCOR Vision & Goals are being supported to the greatest extent possible across the region. It is recognized that there are both single-tier and two-tier Counties in the region and this must be taken into account in the review process.</p> <p>Perceived steps are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) SCOR Administrative Committee prepares a terms of reference for this review, in consultation with County CAOs,2) It is anticipated that recommendations for change, approval and implementation of change will flow out in phases. <p>Also recommended is advocacy with senior levels of government and their agencies for regulatory change that minimizes barriers and supports achievement of our Vision and Goals.</p> <p>2. Supporting Entrepreneurship</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Enhance business support services for the agricultural sector specifically targeting agribusiness and food industry expansions and start-ups. Services of key interest are: market identification and marketing know-how; product development including research, development and commercialization; and business information, networking and mentoring. <p>A number of agencies provide business support services and there are several sources of business capital available. These resources need to be enhanced and focused to support innovation, diversification and value-added business activities in the</p>

agriculture sector. We wish to work with these agencies – CFDCs, Enterprise Centres, farm and commodity groups, government programs and staff services such as OMAFRA and, private investors - to implement a dynamic regional network of services.

More knowledge, expertise and leadership will be needed for regional farmers and local processors to effectively take advantage of agribusiness opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry, construction products, and energy from bio-mass and, other sectors seeking bio-products. Support to farmers and processors for business planning and product development is needed including building corporate contracts on a sheltered, long-term and risk sharing basis with pharmaceutical and other firms and, access to patient investment capital.

- 2) Enhance, and coordinate on a regional basis, business retention, expansion and attraction (BR+E) activities to ensure that the target sectors are the focus of activities including: identification of market opportunities in the agribusiness and food sectors. Promotion of best practices; and, information sharing on topics such as food safety, traceability, etc.

Use BR+E to drive a grass-roots approach (community driven, locally focused); strengthen relationships with stakeholders such as grower, commodity and cooperative groups; facilitate individual solutions to specific problems; and, recognize that different levels of support will be required by different individuals and business types.

Analyze:

- Imports and identify and assess potential for import replacement.
- Capacity to capture more of local retail market (retail supply chain of retailers/supermarkets) and promote **buy local**.
- Emerging and niche markets.

3. Accessing Business Capital

A companion requirement to entrepreneurial support is access to business capital.

Initiatives, such as marketing and investment attraction, should generally be complementary to and jointly undertaken with other relevant groups such as the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) and the South West Economic Alliance (SWEA).

There are three initiatives:

- 1) Increase knowledge, among entrepreneurs, of sources of investment capital.
- 2) Establish the \$50M *SCOR Innovation Fund* increasing both public and private pools of investment capital in the region.
- 3) Create incentives for investment in new products, services and processes using tools such as community improvement plans.

4. Expanding Research, Development and Commercialization – Diversification of the Agricultural Sector

- Increase applied research, product development and commercialization of agricultural products, services and processes in the region.
- Increase regional sales to both food and non-food markets.
- Expand the function of the Erie Innovation and Commercialization Initiative, making good use of under-utilized facilities in the region, to fill knowledge gaps, support a dynamic interaction between researchers and producers and, accelerate commercialization of field products including: commercialization of new agricultural products, services and processes; commercialization of sustainable technologies and practices; and, pursuit of non-food markets such as pharmaceutical.
- Establish a business incubator to assist with commercialization by producers including: business support services including access to business capital; and, mentoring/networking among producers.
- Provide research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth to bring their academic training back into the region and apply it to commercialization of new agricultural products, processes and services
- Launch a virtual centre by working with youth, schools, conservation authorities, researchers, etc.

The perceived steps in establishing the centre of excellence include:

- 1) Build the case for expansion of the centre - SCOR as a natural leader in agricultural solutions that will fill knowledge gaps in current research and development efforts in Canada.
- 2) SCOR champions are identified and promote the expansion with the federal and provincial governments.
- 3) Identify partners - educational institutions, corporations, rural communities, conservation authorities, farm and commodity groups, etc.
- 4) Work with partners to develop the expansion concept more fully.
- 5) Identify facility potential and other sites in the region for research and demonstration activities.
- 6) Develop business case including financial plan.
- 7) Launch centre.

5. Accessing the Marketplace

- Increase the ability of regional farmers and local processors to bring their products to the marketplace and obtain a greater return for their products.
- Study the feasibility of options for improving the food chain for the benefit of farmers and processors. Options include: cooperative marketing agency; clearing house function; and, regional food brokerage centre.
- Tourism Business Plan also identifies opportunity for a high profile site on a 400 series highway for a multi-purpose facility for the wholesaling and retailing of regional food products; interpretive centre on regional food production; culinary centre with food service and skills training; agri-tourism information centre; and more. A high profile site on a 400 series highway is suggested.

A three phase study process is recommended:

- 1) Phase 1 – Describe current situation. Analyze current situation including consultation with producers on barriers to accessing market, financial limitations of current supply chain as well as perceived market opportunities and opinions on best approach for future market access.
- 2) Phase 2 – Research best practices and current review of the Toronto food terminal. Develop range of options for market access. Establish performance criteria and evaluate options. Consult with producers on evaluation and select preferred option. \criteria to include: increased return to producers on their products; reduced costs to reach market; participation rates of producers; and, sustainable business model.
- 3) Phase 3 – Describe preferred option for accessing the marketplace and prepare business case.

6. Investing in Infrastructure

See Infrastructure Action Plan.

Strategic Direction - Culture and Quality of Life (Culture Sub-Group; as of 03-09)

Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Support creative individuals and enterprises, both commercial and non-profit, that contribute to the regional economy by creating and distributing cultural goods and services.▪ Offer a high quality of life in both our rural and urban communities.▪ Celebrate our local culture and sense of place.
Description of Action
<p>1. Enhancing the Quality of Life of Our Communities</p> <p>Three actions are recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Support voluntarism. Begin with a current assessment of the volunteer environment in the region. Using methodologies that have been developed by agencies such as Volunteer Canada, determine the strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of both volunteers and organizations offering community and cultural services/programs and operating facilities. Provide this assessment to SCOR Partners, community and volunteer groups, etc. and encourage action to improve the volunteer experience.2) Engage our youth. In addition to the recommendations made by other Working Groups:<ol style="list-style-type: none">i) Foster creativity early in life. Enhance and expand the educational focus on creativity at the elementary and secondary school levels by placing greater emphasis on music and the arts, math, science and technology. Encourage Ministry of Education and school boards to enhance curriculum accordingly.ii) Promote community voluntarism. Expand experiences and opportunities available to students during their secondary school years. Create post-secondary experiences in SCOR that contribute to career development and support community projects. Similarly to the federal Katimavik program, provide financial assistance for living expenses and modest volunteer stipends.iii) Enhance access to public facilities for community and cultural activities. Review best practices in the region and beyond and make recommendations to the SCOR Partners for improved policies and practices regarding the operation of public facilities. Ensure that barriers to access such as rental fees are addressed as well as options that encourage greater community involvement in the operation of public facilities. <p>2. Maintaining the Competitive Edge</p>

Agree with this action that has been put forward by several Working Groups for the SCOR Partners to review and improve their policies, fees, etc Also, for the Partners to advocate for improvements with senior levels of government.

3. Accessing Business Capital

Agree with this action that has been put forward by several Working Groups, to assist cultural groups and artists to access funds.

4. Communicating With and Familiarizing SCOR Residents

Use programs such as Open Doors and Trails Open to familiarize those who live and work in SCOR with the rich and diverse heritage of the region. Generate support for heritage preservation and celebration.

5. Cultural Planning

Encourage all SCOR Partners to complete a cultural strategy. Build upon the experience and leadership found in the region (i.e., Oxford County). Start with mapping of cultural assets and share this information with tourism agencies. Market cultural facilities, programs and events, making good use of online opportunities.

6. Maintaining Educational Facilities and Increase Rural Access to Health Care Services

The quality of life, and indeed the very existence, of our rural communities relies upon the availability of schools and health care. Advocacy by the SCOR Partners with the Government of Ontario is recommended.

7. Networking of Museums, Art Centres, Theatres

These cultural assets and the organizations that operate them are strengthened through cooperation; their access to expertise is improved; their purchasing power is enhanced; and, they can market more effectively.

Strategic Direction - Culture and Quality of Life (Skills Sub-Group; as of 03-09)

Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increase development of life skills and skills associated with entrepreneurship and employment in new economy businesses and jobs.▪ Increase retention of our youth.
Description of Action
<p>The solutions that follow are being driven by two significant situational changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Economic Recession - Those seeking services now include an increasing number of experienced and skilled workers needing a new career path. Workers requiring educational and life skills upgrades are growing in numbers as are the number of youth. Employers are facing stresses that affect their ability to manage their labour force needs.▪ Provincial skills programs are under review and significant changes are anticipated as Ontario responds to shifts in the provincial economy. <p>The training system in the region is dynamic, being able to respond quickly to changing training needs through a wide range of agencies and facilities throughout the region.</p> <p>1. Implementing a Regional Communications Strategy on Skills & Retraining</p> <p>A key solution, for both workers and employers in the region, is an aggressive communications campaign that addresses the immediate needs brought on by the recession and continues through the changes in provincial skills programming, anticipated by early 2010.</p> <p>Key components of the Communications Strategy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Develop tools to assist with initial entry into the training system including a Service Map and a Decision Tree.2) The Service Map would describe the range and type of services available. Both employer and worker eligibility would be described. The training system is not consistent across SCOR and mapping by County would be required.3) The Decision Tree is a tool for service providers doing intake. Using the Service Map and the Decision Tree, workers can be directed quickly and effectively to the service best fitting their needs and eligibility.4) Train agency staff within the system to use the tools.5) Make the Service Map available as widely as possible both online and through training agencies, economic development offices,

business, tourism and agriculture associations, schools, information centres, etc.

- 6) Work with the media.
- 7) Market the business benefits of participation in training programs to employers, working jointly with economic development offices. Get out and make direct contacts.
- 8) Hire a Communications Officer for a minimum of 18 months to implement the Communications Strategy across SCOR.

2. Increase Resources for Case Workers and Coaches for Workers and Facilitators for Employees

The system is complex and using the programs can be confusing and time-consuming. Having a consistent relationship with a knowledge service provider throughout the time a worker or employer is participating is essential. Access is essential. Work loads are already large and with increasing demand, more resources will be needed for this service to be effectively delivered.

3. Enhancing Rural Access to Services

For those with limited resources, accessing services is an issue. A rural accessibility plan is needed that takes services closer to the client. Co-location is one means of securing office space for part-time use by staff that move around the service area delivering programming. A Job Bus is another option.

Strategic Direction – Energy (as of 03-09)

Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Become a global leader in sustainable energy and in diverse renewable energy production.
Description of Action
<p>1. Fielding a Winning Team</p> <p>We need to act immediately to demonstrate our competitiveness in biomass energy from agricultural products. We need to show that we have a competitive team that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Speaks with a single voice for agricultural producers in the region▪ Has the ability to produce and deliver the quantity and quality of agricultural product needed▪ Has the technology partners needed to process our agricultural product into desired fuel product▪ Has both the marketing and communications expertise needed to work with power corporations and governments, assuring them of our ability to deliver a competitive and reliable product.▪ Have the support of our communities as reflected in the advocacy of regional representatives – SCOR Executive, MPPs and MPs
<p>2. Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy</p> <p>SCOR needs to undertake consistent and aggressive advocacy with senior levels of government for locally-grown renewable energy solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There is a ‘need to even the playing field’ for regional proponents that tend to be smaller, cooperative companies with strong ties to our rural and agricultural communities.▪ There is a need for senior levels of government to be partners in the process of developing renewable energy with a consistent and rational program package that supports development of a diverse network of renewable projects throughout SCOR. Program support needs to support development of renewable energy projects from conception through delivery with research and development, technology and project development, supply chain improvements, etcetera.▪ There is a need to address issues regarding power transmission. The power grid needs to be more flexible and decentralized, accepting power inputs from sources throughout the SCOR region. It needs to be ‘smarter’ and there is a need to address the ‘arbitrariness’ of rates paid for power going into the grid. SCOR is seeking a fair market rate offered across the region.
<p>3. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization – Centre of Excellence Providing Rural and Agricultural Solutions to Climate Change (see Environment Business Plan)</p>

- The Energy WG supports the repurposing of under-utilized facilities in the region (such as the federally-owned research station near Delhi). The group is suggesting that this centre of excellence can focus research, development and commercialization on a range of energy solutions including biomass, wind, gasification, solar and ethanol/bio-fuel.
- Creation of a business incubator would be very advantageous to development of new energy businesses.

4. Supporting Entrepreneurship & Accessing Business Capital (see Environment Business Plan)

5. Communications

- Bring the community along with us as SCOR develops as a renewable energy leader. Maintain our broad-based community support.
- Implement a communications strategy that supports our advocacy efforts with senior levels of government and other influential agencies, governments and corporations outside of SCOR.
- Launch a youth-driven online campaign to promote a green lifestyle.

Strategic Direction – Environment (as of 03-09)

Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Become a recognized leader in environmental and resource stewardship.▪ Expand business activity in green services, processes and products.▪ Create a Centre of Excellence for research and development in environmental and energy solutions.
Description of Action
<p>1. Reducing Our Carbon Footprint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) as a foundation for a regional program to use biomass to sequester carbon and reduce our footprint and provide ‘co-benefits’. This approach also supports source water protection and is a start on readiness for Cap ‘n Trade. ALUS using incentives to offset the operating expenses associated with restoring the environmental balance on the farm.
<p>2. Leadership in Carbon Cap & Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work with stewardship councils, conservation authorities and others to put into place a regional partnership advisory committee.▪ Develop regional Cap ‘n Trade protocols.
<p>3. Protecting Drinking Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In preparation for 2012, SCOR Partners establish ongoing regional implementation strategy. Potential to use Cap ‘n Trade income to partially fund implementation.
<p>4. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization – Centre of Excellence Providing Rural and Agricultural Solutions to Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increase applied research and support for commercialization of environmental and energy solutions – products, services and processes – in the region.▪ Re-purpose under-utilized facilities in the region as a centre of excellence for rural and agricultural solutions to climate change. The concept for the centre is: commercialization of sustainable agricultural practices; commercialization of sustainable rural and agri-based energy production; and, demonstration of climate change adaptations in rural communities.▪ Create a business incubator to assist with commercialization of products by farmers, processors and businesses.▪ Provide research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth to bring their academic training back into the region and apply it to commercialization of new environmental and energy products, processes and services.

- Launch a virtual centre by working with youth, schools, conservation authorities, researchers, etc.

The steps include:

- 1) Build the case for establishment of the centre - SCOR as a natural leader in rural and agricultural solutions that will fill knowledge gaps in current research and development efforts in Canada.
- 2) SCOR champions are identified and promote the centre with the federal and provincial governments.
- 3) Develop the concept more fully, emphasizing the commercialization of sustainable agricultural practices; commercialization of sustainable energy production; and, demonstrating climate change adaptations in rural communities.
- 4) Identify facility potential and other sites in the region for research and demonstration activities (i.e., conservation lands, farm plots).
- 5) Identify partners - educational institutions, corporations, rural communities, conservation authorities, farm and commodity groups, etc.
- 6) Develop business case including financial plan.
- 7) Launch centre.
- 8) Create a business incubator to assist with commercialization of products by farmers, processors and businesses
- 9) Research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth to bring their academic training back into the region and apply it to commercialization of new agricultural products, processes and services
- 10) Launch a virtual centre by working with youth, schools, conservation authorities, researchers, etc.

5. Maintaining Our Competitive Edge

- Undertake a regional review of the regulatory environment including policies, regulations, fees, charges and taxes and make changes that are supportive of innovation and change and the establishment of a 'green' sector (use BR+E approach to assess and address regional barriers and challenges to business development).
- Advocate for similar improvement at the provincial and federal levels.

6. Supporting Entrepreneurship

- 1) Enhance business support services for the green sector specifically targeting new products, services and processes. Services of key interest are: market identification and marketing know-how; product development including research, development and commercialization; and business information, networking and mentoring.

A number of agencies provide business support services and there are several sources of business capital available. These resources need to be enhanced and focused to support innovation, diversification and value-added business activities in the green sector. We wish to work with these agencies – CFDCs, Enterprise Centres, business and manufacturing groups, government

programs and staff services and, private investors - to implement a dynamic regional network of services.

This is a new sector with emerging markets and more knowledge, expertise and leadership will be needed for regional businesses to effectively take advantage of the market opportunities.

- 2) Enhance, and coordinate on a regional basis, business retention, expansion and attraction (BR+E) activities.

Use BR+E to drive a grass-roots approach (community driven, locally focused); strengthen relationships with stakeholders; facilitate individual solutions to specific problems; and, recognize that different levels of support will be required by different individuals and business types.

Analyze emerging and niche markets.

7. Accessing Business Capital

A companion requirement to entrepreneurial support is access to business capital.

Initiatives, such as marketing and investment attraction, should generally be complementary to and jointly undertaken with other relevant groups such as the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) and the South West Economic Alliance (SWEA).

There are three initiatives:

- 1) Increase knowledge, among entrepreneurs, of sources of investment capital.
- 2) Establish the \$50M *SCOR Innovation Fund* increasing both public and private pools of investment capital in the region.
- 3) Create incentives for investment in new products, services and processes using tools such as community improvement plans.

8. Forestry Management

- Use provincial 50,000 Trees Program and its incentives to assist Conservation Authorities to reach higher planting targets on public and private land.
- Establish a Champions Network to promote good management practices.

9. Stewardship

- Regional coordination of existing stewardship activities and agencies giving greater focus to regionally-significant goals – reduction of carbon footprint, source water protection and forestry management.

10. Investing in Infrastructure

See Infrastructure Action Plan.

11. Communications

- Bring the community along with us as SCOR develops as a leader in sustainable development. Maintain our broad-based community support and participation.
- Work with conservation authorities on development of public demonstration sites.
- Implement a communications strategy that supports our advocacy efforts with senior levels of government and other influential agencies, governments and corporations outside of SCOR.
- Launch a youth-driven online campaign to promote a green lifestyle.

Strategic Direction – Manufacturing (as of 03-09)

Goals

- Attract new businesses and industries, and retain and expand existing businesses and industries.
- Seek out and support development of businesses and industries offering innovative products and services that are part of the new economy.
- Achieve a balanced manufacturing sector representing a broad diversity of business sizes and sectors.

Description of Action

In the short term, retention of existing manufacturing operations in the SCOR area is the first priority. Expansion and attraction efforts should be focused on those sub-sectors and segments where the SCOR area has demonstrated a competitive advantage and there appear to be good growth prospects. These are: food processing; fabricated metal processing; automotive assembly and parts manufacturing; manufacturing relating to renewable energy and green products.

It is important to develop a better understanding of the types of manufacturing businesses that are located in SCOR, which segments have been growing and which have been studied.

Initiatives, such as marketing and investment attraction, should generally be complementary to and jointly undertaken with other relevant groups such as the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) and the South West Economic Alliance (SWEA).

1. Maintaining the Competitive Edge

The five Counties maintain a supportive business environment in the region. With the commitment of the SCOR partners to a regional approach to economic development and diversification, it is important for the partnership to ensure that the region, as a whole, remains competitive. Both our rural and urban communities must be supported in their efforts to improve their quality of life.

The SCOR partners review the region's regulatory environment including policies, programs, taxes, fees and charges to ensure that the new directions set out in the SCOR Vision & Goals are being supported to the greatest extent possible across the region. It is recognized that there are both single-tier and two-tier Counties in the region and this must be taken into account in the review process.

Perceived steps are:

- 1) SCOR Administrative Committee prepares a terms of reference for this review, in consultation with County CAOs,
- 2) It is anticipated that recommendations for change, approval and implementation of change will flow out in phases.

Also recommended is advocacy with senior levels of government and their agencies for regulatory change that minimizes barriers and supports achievement of our Vision and Goals.

2. Supporting Entrepreneurship

Sustainable economic growth and diversification of the economy will be driven by entrepreneurs and businesses in all sectors of our economy. They need and want focused and coordinated business support. Two initiatives are proposed:

1) Business Support Services

The region is well-served by a network of agencies including CFDCs, Enterprise Centres, municipal economic development and tourism departments, provincial/federal programs and staff services and private agencies offering business support services.

It is recommended that these agencies review their services with the intent of focusing and coordinating their services, on a regional basis, to support achievement of the SCOR Vision & Goals.

Services of key interest are: market identification and marketing know-how; product development including research, development and commercialization; business information; and, networking and mentoring.

More knowledge, expertise and leadership will be needed for regional producers to effectively take advantage of agribusiness opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry, construction products, energy from biomass and, other sectors seeking bio-products. Support to farmers and processors for business planning and product development is needed including building corporate contracts on a sheltered, long-term and risk sharing basis with pharmaceutical and other firms and, access to patient investment capital.

2) BR+E (business retention, expansion and attraction)

Again, the region is active in business retention, expansion and attraction activities and again, the challenge is to shape this work to support the SCOR Vision & Goals.

It is recommended that the municipal economic development and tourism departments lead efforts with the other agencies active in the region to:

- i) Enhance, and coordinate on a regional basis, business retention, expansion and attraction (BR+E) activities to ensure that the target sectors are the focus of activities.
- ii) Use BR+E to drive a grass-roots approach (community driven, locally focused); strengthen relationships with stakeholders such as agricultural producers, tourism operators and manufacturers.

iii) Support analyses including the potential for import replacement and emerging and niche markets.

3. Accessing Business Capital

A companion requirement to entrepreneurial support is access to business capital.

There are three initiatives:

- 1) Increase knowledge, among entrepreneurs, of sources of investment capital.
- 2) Establish the \$50M *SCOR Innovation Fund* increasing both public and private pools of investment capital in the region.
- 3) Create incentives for investment in new products, services and processes using tools such as community improvement plans.

4. Investing in Infrastructure

See Infrastructure Action Plan.

5. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization

- 1) Diversification of the Agricultural Sector (see Agribusiness & Food Industry Action Plan)
- 2) Centre of Excellence Providing Rural and Agricultural Solutions to Climate Change (see Environment Action Plan)
- 3) Manufacturing Share Centre – Promoting An Open Sharing of Technology Know-How (to be described)

Description of Action	Milestone (mm/yy)	Cost Estimate (in 2009 \$)
<p>3. Provincial Highways & County Roads</p> <p>In Elgin County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highbury Avenue (from Highway 400 south to St. Thomas) needs to be upgraded as a regional route for the movement of goods and services ▪ Wellington Street (from Highway 400 south to St. Thomas) needs to be upgraded as a regional route primarily serving personal vehicles, commuters and travelers. ▪ Elgin Road 73 needs to be upgraded as a regional route. <p>In Middlesex County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Middlesex County Road 14 (from Highway 402 to Commissioners Road) needs to be upgraded ▪ SWEA has suggested that Highway 7 be rerouted between Highway 4 and Highway 402 <p>In Oxford County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MTO has an EA underway to examine options for rerouting Hwy 7/8. ▪ Interchanges (Highways 401/403) associated with Oxford County 4 upgrading <p>New North/South Regional Road through Oxford and Norfolk Counties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential routing should take advantage of existing roadways and minimize impacts on urban areas ▪ Oxford County Road 6 (northbound from Highway 401) needs to be upgraded along its full length ▪ Oxford County Road 6 (southbound from Highway 401 to north of Tillsonburg) could potentially form part of this upgraded route and a ring road passing east of Tillsonburg would be required ▪ Highway 59 (Norfolk) (southbound from Highway 3 to Lake Erie) could potentially provide the final portion of this route <p>In Brant County:</p> <p>MTO has an EA underway for a rerouting of Highway 24 (between Highways 403 and 401)</p> <p>NOTE: Another SWEA recommendation, not recommended here, is Highway 3 expansion from St</p>	<p>as determined by development needs</p>	<p>\$20M</p> <p>\$20M</p> <p>\$25M</p> <p>provincial \$\$</p> <p>provincial \$\$</p> <p>??M</p> <p>\$30M</p> <p>\$37.5M</p> <p>\$15M</p> <p>provincial \$\$</p>

<p>Thomas to Fort Erie.</p> Description of Action	Milestone (mm/yy)	Cost Estimate (Million\$)
<p>4. Sewer</p> <p>The Group recommends that the local solution is the best solution in most circumstances.</p> <p>A regional solution is recommended in the Highway 402 area of Komoka-Kilworth-Mt Brydges-Delaware where employment lands also are planned.</p> <p>5. Rail</p> <p>In Middlesex County: SWEA has recommended an inter-modal location at Mt Brydges and Highway 402</p> <p>NOTE: Changes would be driven by development needs or larger-scale planning for high speed or regular rail expansions for passenger service or goods movement (i.e., report of the Premier's Advisory Council on the Economy).</p> <p>6. Airports</p> <p>No recommendations for change are made at this time. Further review is warranted.</p> <p>7. Harbours</p> <p>There are 8 harbours in the region with 4 in each of Elgin County and Norfolk County.</p> <p>In Elgin County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expansion of the Port Glasgow harbour as a recreational facility would be appropriate in conjunction with development of new resort facilities and/or lifestyle housing ▪ Port Stanley is a commercial harbour. While the federal government has indicated an interest in divestment and recreational use in the future, SWEA has recommended a return to full commercial use. ▪ Port Bruce is a recreational facility. 		<p>\$25M</p> <p>provincial \$\$</p>

- Port Burwell serves commercial fishing but is limited in its functionality due to silting issues.

In Norfolk County:

- Port Dover – 40% commercial/60 recreational in use
- Port Rowen – 20% commercial/80% recreational
- Long point & Booth Harbour – 100% recreational

NOTE: Changes would be driven by development needs or larger-scale planning such as cross-lake passenger ferry service or shipment of goods at a lake port.

9. Broadband Communications

Elgin has full coverage. Middlesex is implementing county-wide coverage. Norfolk and Oxford seeking provincial funding to achieve full coverage. Brant has significant coverage at present.

10. Public Utilities

SWEA recommends the development of utility infrastructure corridors (water, natural gas storage/distribution, electricity transmission) in conjunction with transportation corridors to attract new business to SW Ontario.

11. Public Transportation

Inter-city opportunities should be investigated.

Strategic Direction – Tourism (as of 03-09)

Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Leverage and market existing natural assets, authentic small town lifestyle, cultural assets and events and agriculture/food assets to become the tourism destination of choice.
Description of Action
<p>1. Market Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identify market potential and develop tourism products to serve market.▪ Understand customer profile and travel patterns.▪ Increase expenditures per visitor and increase overnight stays.▪ Pursue market development in the following: festivals and fairs; eco-adventure; authentic rural experience; agri-tourism/food/culinary arts; and, weekenders. <p>2. New Product Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Festivals and Events Cooperative – Create a consistent inventory in each county and place into shared regional database. Cooperatively market events. Consider pooling some funds for this purpose. Encourage local development of business(es) to serve the logistical needs of these events.ii) Visitor Accommodation – Seek a range of choices including small scale, rural-based, innovative approaches. Support with tourism products and marketing that increases overnight stays.iii) Waterfront Strategy – Develop an <i>Ontario’s South Coast</i> strategy for residential/tourism development. Support with appropriate land use policies in County Official Plans.iv) Business Development – Through business networking, facilitate identification of sector needs for new/expanded products and services.v) Agri-Tourism Showcase – At a premier site on a 400 series highway, develop a mixed use centre accommodating food wholesaling and retailing, food service; food science and culinary arts education, a travel information centre and more (see Agribusiness & Food Industry Business Plan).

3. Accessing Business Capital

- i) Increase knowledge of sources of investment capital among tourism operators.
- ii) Increase both public and private pools of investment capital.
- iii) Use tools such as Community Improvement Plans to create incentives for investment in new products.
- iv) Attract new investors to the region to develop new products.

4. Investing in Infrastructure

See Infrastructure Action Plan plus the following:

- i) Trails – Develop new/expanded walking/cycling/hiking/adventure trails as well as themed touring routes. Link to value-added services such as guides and overnight accommodation and food service.
- ii) People Mover Strategy – Develop a multi-modal approach to facilitate entry of travelers into and around the region. Promote options that allow visitors to get out of their private vehicles. We need to understand travel patterns.
- iii) Signage & Visitor Information – Each County should work with tourism operators to assess and improve directional signage. Develop a travel information hub (see Agri-Tourism Showcase above)

5. Marketing

- Develop a user-friendly SCOR web site that offers visitor information organized around our five regional themes (see Market Identification).
- On a regional basis, offer products linked to internet and GSP tools.

**APPENDIX B -
Projected Resource Requirements for 15 Priorities for Action**

5. Expanding Research, Development & Commercialization		
i. Diversification of the Agricultural Sector - Centre of Excellence	<p>staff and in-kind contributions from SCOR and other organizations</p> <p>\$200,000 for feasibility and business plan development</p>	<p>SCOR Partners Provincial Gov't (several ministries) Federal Gov't (Agriculture Canada, NRC) University of Guelph University of Western Ontario Corporations Agriculture & Commodity Groups</p>
ii. Centre of Excellence Providing Rural and Agricultural Solutions to Climate Change	<p>staff and in-kind contributions from SCOR and other organizations</p> <p>\$200,000 for feasibility and business plan development</p>	<p>see above</p>
6. Recognizing Youth As Innovators		
i. Provide research scholarships and internships for SCOR youth.	<p>\$250,000 or \$50,000 per annum for 10 scholarships/internships</p>	<p>SCOR Partners Universities/Colleges</p>
ii. Launch a virtual centre of excellence by working with youth....	<p>SCOR Youth Team</p> <p>design funds @ \$5,000</p>	
iii. Launch a youth-driven online campaign to promote a green lifestyle.	<p>SCOR Youth Team</p> <p>design funds @ \$5,000</p>	<p>SCOR Partners Stewardship Councils Conservation Authorities</p>
iv. Foster creativity early in life.		<p>SCOR Partners Cultural Groups Corporations Business Groups School Boards</p>
v. Promote community voluntarism.	<p>Student summer team @ \$12,000. plus Supervisor @ \$12,000.</p> <p>\$150,000 or \$30,000 per annum for stipends</p>	<p>SCOR Partners School Boards Katimavik & other like organizations/programs</p>
7. Accessing the Marketplace	<p>\$60,000 for feasibility study</p> <p>recommendations will trigger resource requirements</p>	<p>SCOR Partners Commodity Groups Individual Producers OMAFRA University of Guelph (George Morris Centre) University of Western Ontario (Ivey School),</p>

		CFDCs
8. Regional Communications Strategy on Skills and Retraining	Communications Officer for a minimum of 18 months to implement the Communications Strategy across SCOR - \$90,000.	SCOR Partners Business Groups & Large Employers Media MTCU Local Training Boards Educational and Social Service Institutions
9. Enhancing the Quality of Life of Our Communities		
i. Support voluntarism.	Summer student team - \$12,000 plus Supervisor - \$12,000.	SCOR Partners
ii. Engage our youth. (See priority #6 - Recognizing Youth as Innovators)		
iii. Enhance access to public facilities for community and cultural activities.	\$20,000 for best practices review	SCOR Partners
10. Fielding a Winning Team	\$55,000. for communications expertise for agri-biomass team	SCOR Partners MPPs MPs Renewable Energy Proponents Regional Power Corporations
11. Advancing the Rural Role in Renewable Energy	see above	see above
12. Reducing Our Carbon Footprint	expansion of ALUS staffing/operation & Advisory Cttee \$6M or \$1.2M per annum for region-wide delivery (some funds in place for Norfolk) offset revenue (Cap 'n Trade) anticipated by 2012	SCOR Partners MNR Stewardship Councils Conservation Authorities Foundations Agricultural Groups Individual Farmers/Processors Norfolk ALUS Advisory Cttee

13. Protecting Drinking Water	strategies may trigger resource requirements	SCOR Partners CAs & Source Water Protection Cttees MOE Agricultural Groups
14. Promote Themed Touring Routes	\$140,000 for professional services \$1.25M for marketing buys in 2010 will trigger marketing buys in subsequent years	SCOR Partners Tourism Operators Provincial Gov't (MOT)
15. Develop An Agri-Tourism Showcase	\$60,000 for business case development recommendations will trigger resource requirements	SCOR Partners Tourism and Agricultural/Commodity Groups Provincial Gov't (OMAFRA & MOT)
<p style="text-align: center;">Projected Investment \$760,118,000. over 5 years 15,500 jobs created over five years</p>		