

[Place Region Name Here]

[PLACE REGIONAL PHOTO HERE]

This is your cover page, so a photo that depicts something unique about the region would be a good option.

[date]

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# Executive Summary

Summarize what the reader will discover as they read this plan. For example, you might start the summary by expanding on the following text:

# Stronger Economies Together Initiative

Launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the nation’s Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their Land-Grant University partners, the purpose of Stronger Economies Together (SET) is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. SET builds collaboration between communities in a region, provides economic analyses that is tailored to help capture the region’s current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages, and furnishes technical support over a period of many months through the presence of coaches provided by Land-Grant University Cooperative Extension Service and USDA Rural Development professionals.

# About the [NAME] Region

Points you may want to cover here:

* Briefly describe the region
* Explain how you came together as a region (brief history)

# [Region’s] Regional Economic Development Plan

* Provide a short description of the time frame of the planning period
* Provide an overview of the key information gathered in the SET sessions
* Summarize the goals your region has embraced moving forward.

Remember, keep this section to just a few paragraphs.

[Region’s] Regional Economic Development Plan

# Introduction

# The Stronger Economies Together Initiative

Launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the nation’s Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their Land-Grant University partners, the purpose of Stronger Economies Together (SET) is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. SET builds collaboration between communities in a region, provides economic analyses that is tailored to help capture the region’s current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages, and furnishes technical support over a period of many months through the presence of coaches provided by Land-Grant University Cooperative Extension Service and USDA Rural Development professionals.

This Regional Economic Development Plan serves as the roadmap for the future economic development efforts of [PLACE REGION NAME HERE]. Regional stakeholders have embraced a spirit of regionalism in their support of this initiative. Actively working to implement the action items described in this document will strengthen the ability of [PLACE REGION NAME HERE] to secure its economic future and position it as a nationally competitive region. This plan is an outcome of a five module planning process that welcomed and embraced the active participation of a good mix of business, civic, and community leaders. Both significant research and extensive discussions were instrumental in the development of this plan.

# [Region Name] Description

Insert a brief description of the region, including geographical span, history of working together, why this set of counties is a logical economic region. What do you share in common?

[PLACE MAP OF REGION HERE]

# Regional Collaboration

[PLACE PHOTO HERE SHOWING COLLABORATION

[TRAINING SESSION / GROUP PICTURE /CIVIC FORUM]

Provide an overview of the collaboration that went into writing the plan. Then use the headings below to provide additional details.

Broad Participation – Describe how the plan was designed with input from a broad range of institutions and highly active persons. Points to consider:

* Describe the planning sessions (Sessions 1-4)
* Provide an explanation of who served on the planning team (participated in Sessions 1-4). How did this group keep others informed and involved?
* You may want to list participants by name, by organization, or describe in more general terms. However, whether here or in an appendix, consider listing people by name, indicating the sector they serve (i.e. business, education, government) and county at a minimum.

Public Input:Explain how input on the plan was collected from the general public, including a range of other people and institutions not directly engaged in SET planning. For instance, describe how the plan was influenced by residents in the region (such as the civic forum). Points to cover:

* What events were held to gain public input?
* Who attended (numbers, counties represented, sectors present [business, education, faith-based, etc.])
* Why was public input important to the process?
* What follow-up activities did you undertake to keep the public informed/engaged (such as public comment periods, plan roll-out meetings, email follow-ups with the public, etc.)

Buy-In – Describe evidence that the plan has buy-in from decision makers in the region. Consider including lists of organizations/individuals that are supporting the plan. Also, describe how key decision makers explicitly expressed commitment to support the plan’s implementation (such as: proclamation, letter, participation in planning, etc.)

* Who has offered support?
* What evidence do you have of their support? (i.e. letters, proclamation, direct participation)
* Have they directly contributed resources? If so, describe.

The Public Value & Benefit of a Regional Plan: Provide information that can help inform interested citizens (with no engagement in the development of the plan) of the value and benefit of pursuing a regional approach to economic development.

# Support for the Process

The [Region Name] Region would like to thank the staff from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Regional Rural Development Centers, the Purdue Center for Regional Development, and [Land Grant University] Extension Service for their support throughout the course of this project. We would also like to show our appreciation to [List local sponsors and/or organizations here], the distinguished individuals that took part in the training sessions, and numerous other individuals, for their invaluable insight and ideas that led to the creation of this plan.

# Evidence Basis for Plan

# Regional Input: Civic Forum Findings

What did you learn from the civic forum that helped shape this plan? What particular strengths, challenges, or opportunities surfaced that were woven into the final plan?

# Regional Demographic Data

In this section and the ones below, demonstrate how the plan is based upon a strong understanding of the region’s current and/or emerging assets and challenges, as well as the demographic and economic features that are unique to the region. Insert demographic data that supports or shows evidence of need for the plan’s selected goals. What did you learn (or verify) from examining the data that helped shape the direction of the plan?

# Regional Assets

Add information on the available assets in the region that are being committed in support of the plan. What unique regional assets do you have that will help the plan be successful? You can draw some of this information from the civic forum as well as from Session 3.

Potential Challenges

Describe any significant challenges that the region will need to overcome and discuss how these shaped the direction of the plan. For instance, do any of your goals specifically address some of the concerns identified? Or are you planning goals/strategies that are intended to circumvent these challenges? The Civic Forum and Session 3 will provide some ideas.

# Regional Comparative Advantage:

Describe the regional economic data that helped impact the content of your region plan. Present workforce and cluster data that show support or evidence for the goals that have been included in your regional plan. Show how the plan builds on unique strengths of the region. Talk about areas that helped shape the plan’s directions. For instance:

* In Session 1: What did you learn that helped shape the region’s plan? What clusters did you decide to explore further for Session 2 and why?
* In Session 2: How did exploring these clusters help influence the plan? Did you decide to set goals specifically to address these clusters? If so, explain why that was the direction. If you did not pursue a goal around the clusters, explain why not? What was more pressing that needed your more immediate attention, or what was impacting the region that took precedence over strengthening your key regional clusters? Be sure to emphasis the region’s economy as you write this section.

# Regional Economic Goals

# Overview: Based on this input from the region coupled with the resources explored throughout the Stronger Economies Together process, the [region] planning team has selected the following goals:

Goal One in SMART format

Goal Two in SMART format

Goal Three in SMART format

….

REPEAT THE GOAL SECTION BELOW FOR EACH GOAL YOUR REGION HAS IDENTIFIED
[Make sure you are focused upon a small number of goals reasonable to the size of the region and its resources. Be sure to demonstrate how the set of goals is well suited to the regional team's capacity in terms of available resources, including but not limited to person-power, regional assets, and funds. (A good rule of thumb is a maximum of five goals for a group with substantial resources available for plan implementation.)

# Goal 1: Insert goal 1 – in SMART format

Regional Economic Benefits

Describe how this goal will benefit the regional economy.

Evidence Base for Goal

Describe the evidence to support the need for this goal. Why did the region select this goal? What data, assets, challenges, or input from the public led the team to choosing this path?

Describe how the goal’s major strategies are intended to build on the region’s comparative economic advantages, especially its key current and/or emerging economic clusters.

Strategies:

List key strategies designed to reach the goal.

Target Outcomes: Explain how the strategies are designed to achieve the region's clearly stated goals by influencing attitudes, knowledge, and skills to motivate behavior. These come from Session 4, Regional Economic Development Planning Chart, last three columns. Be as specific as you can, providing target numbers where possible. Avoid ambiguous wording that is difficult (or impossible) to measure.

Short Term: (Typically, this is what can be accomplished in the first 12 months.)

Intermediate: (What can be accomplished in 1-4 years?)

Long Term: (What can be accomplished in 5+ years?)

Plan of Action:

Provide a step-by-step description of the initial tasks that you will be pursuing over the next 6-12 months to get the plan underway. An easy way to do this is to insert the Plan of Action table from Session 4. Be sure to describe steps to be taken, deadlines/timelines for each step, and who will be responsible. Be specific about who will take responsibility for the various steps. If it is a team, indicate who will take lead in coordinating.

Evaluation Plan

How will you know you have been successful with this goal? What key strategies will you track? How will you track them? Be sure to include steps along the way (short, intermediate, and long) in your measurement plan. See the Measurement Plan chart from Session 4. You could even insert that table here to answer these questions.

Key Contact(s)

If the goals are organized under work teams or leaders, be sure to include contact information for each goal so the reader could see how to get involved.

REPEAT THE GOAL SECTION ABOVE FOR EACH GOAL YOUR REGION HAS IDENTIFIED

# Moving Forward as a Region

# Guiding the Plan Moving Forward:

Describe how the planning team will work together through implementation. Questions to explore could include:

* How will the work be organized during implementation (will there be work teams, regular meetings with the team, etc.)?
* Where will progress be showcased? Is there a website? Social media? Other?

# **Getting Involved:**

How can someone new become involved or learn more? How do you plan to recruit and on-board new members in order to maintain a high level of commitment to implementing the regional plan and tracking its key outcomes?

# **Summary:**

# Write a brief paragraph or two that emphasizes how this work will strengthen the region, with an emphasis on the economy.

# Appendix

Below are some ideas of things you may want to put in the Appendix if you have not already included them.

* List Planning Group Members and affiliations
* List Training Team Members– USDA-RD and LGU Extension
* Regional Economic Development Planning Chart
* Plan of Action
* Measurement Plan(s)
* Letters of commitment/support from key stakeholders
* Other relevant information or reference documents

# Region’s Contact Information

# Leadership name, contact

# Website

# Phone number

# Email

You may want to include logos from regional or state partners in the space below.

National Partnership for Stronger Economies Together