



# Together Creating a Community Where All Can Belong and Grow

ISIS Annual Report | June 2010

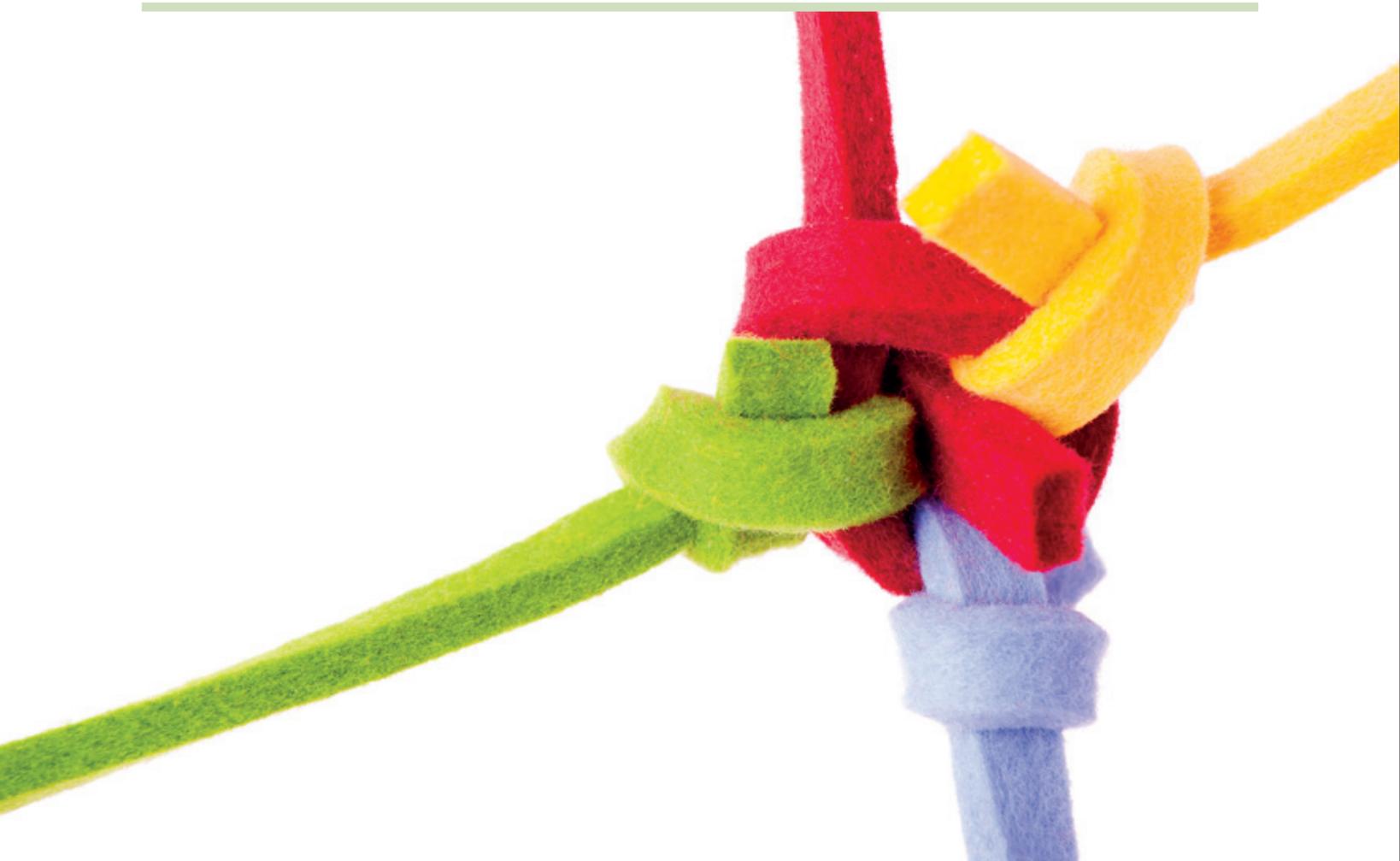
**isis** | Immigrant Settlement  
& Integration Services

---

### **The vision of ISIS is a community where all can belong and grow.**

ISIS is a leading community organization that welcomes immigrants. Working in partnership, ISIS offers services and creates opportunities that enable immigrants to participate fully in Canadian life.

---



### **Message from Chair of ISIS Board.**

This was an historic year that saw the merger of HILC and MISA and the creation of ISIS. The merger introduced significant and unprecedented change: a new organization, a new name, a new structure, a new location, new policies, and a new board. However, our dedication and passion for helping newcomers to participate fully in Canadian life has remained unchanged and will continue to guide our decisions.

I would like to acknowledge the staff and many volunteers for your unwavering focus on our clients. Thank you to the managers for supporting your teams and making this transition as smooth as possible. I also want to recognize our two directors for your professionalism and leadership in the face of uncertainty and challenge. And finally, I want to thank our board members for your expertise, guidance and advice, particularly last summer when many hours were invested in our merger efforts.

The newly formed ISIS will allow us to deliver more integrated and holistic services that better meet client needs and reflect our client-centric values. Congratulations on an extraordinary year, one that marked the birth of a new organization. We have successfully combined the strengths of two great organizations, making us even better, together!

Joe Malek

### **Message from ISIS Directors.**

It has been our privilege this year to lead two professional and caring organizations through a merger that was both inevitable and immensely successful. The motivation for the merger, to provide the best service that we can to our clients, is one that we aspire to every day.

This annual report describes what ISIS does through the lives of our clients. It tells the stories of eight immigrants to Nova Scotia with different backgrounds and different goals who represent the diversity of the over 3,000 immigrants that ISIS supported last year. The theme of this report is based on the new vision of ISIS and we would like to thank each and every ISIS staff and board member, volunteer, client, partner and funder for contributing their skills, commitment and determination in this special year to creating that vision of a community where all can belong and grow.

Next year, in 2011, all labour force growth in Canada will be through immigration and by the year 2031 all population growth will depend on immigrants. ISIS is now well positioned and is looking forward to working in partnership with others to respond and to welcome immigrants to ensure their successful integration and contribution to our communities across Nova Scotia.

Claudette Legault, Director of Programs and Services  
Gerry Mills, Director of Operations

## A Long-Term Relationship.

Hong Wang landed with her husband at the Halifax airport in June 2008, looked in a reference book and found ISIS. Having operated clothing stores in Russia, Romania and Kuwait, Hong was anxious to start her own business here.

At ISIS she was introduced to a “nice and professional” business counselor. “I didn’t know laws on how to import goods. She introduced me to the border office, showed me how to fill in papers, information about taxes—everything,” explains Hong. “If she didn’t know something, she pointed me in the right direction.” Hong’s Canadian

business knowledge was so basic that she was scared to answer the telephone.

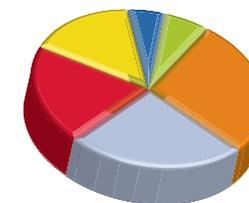
Hong was assisted through ISIS English in the Workplace and Business Development Services. A few months later, this fast learner opened a women’s clothing store—2008 New Century Trading Company. Hong now has two stores and, with ISIS encouragement and support, won a “Watch Me Grow” award from the Centre for Women in Business.

Hong attends social events such as Supper Nova and considers her relationship with ISIS as long term. “I can still ask for advice,” she says, adding that ISIS helped her write a business plan and takes her to business shows. “Life for a new immigrant is hard. Without ISIS, I wouldn’t have survived.”

**127** full- and part-time staff from **over 30 countries of origin** work at ISIS.



## ISIS Immigration Categories in 2009



- Provincial Nominees (28%)
- Family-sponsored (16%)
- Skilled Workers and Business Immigrants (25%)
- Canadian Citizens Born Abroad (5%)
- Refugees (20%)
- Other (6%)

## Good Memories.

Alexander Movshovich has a job he loves because of support from ISIS. Alexander, who’s from the Ukraine but lived in Israel for 20 years, arrived in Halifax in 2009. Because of connections from a previous visit, he and his wife were met by friends who immediately recommended ISIS.

“I landed a good job in my profession and I love it,” says Alexander. “I owe that to ISIS. And I very much appreciate it.” Alexander works as a computer programmer at Metals Economics Group. “They are very nice people and a very professional staff. It’s a pleasure to work for them.”

Alexander says after a few months in Halifax he spent a month job hunting with

the help of ISIS Employment Services. His first interviews didn’t go well, but his counselor assisted him and ensured he had a good chance at a job.

Meanwhile his wife took ESL classes at ISIS as well as presentations on law and banking. She also found a computer programming job through ISIS Employment Services. “They are very professional,” says Movshovich, adding that immigrant friends in Toronto are jealous of such excellent assistance.

Movshovich explains that to stay in the community, he had to find a job quickly. “ISIS is very organized and smart. We have good memories and we’re thankful for the help and advice.”



## Hard Work Pays Off.

Iliana Sundstrom was one of the first participants of ISIS Online Programs and Services. "It was about networking, how to sell yourself in the market—little tricks to fit in the culture and get a job," explains Iliana. And although home is Canning, 1.5 hours from ISIS, distance was not an issue. "People from all over were able to interact with each other on our own time, and benefit from the course."

This was already a few years after Iliana's arrival from Cuba in 2000 with her daughter and Canadian husband-to-be. "It was really tough. I didn't know how to do things."

Iliana says ISIS helped her immediately prepare for employment and assisted her in writing a resume. "It's the same one I still use." ISIS also invited her to a conference for professionals wanting to work in their chosen field.

Iliana had been an engineer in Cuba for ten years and it took four more years to register here, including five exams. The hard work paid off, as she landed a job at Michelin Canada as an automation engineer.

"I know how tough it is for new immigrants," says Iliana. Every time she meets a newcomer, she sends them to ISIS. I know they can help them very much. Some people call me back and thank me for sending them!"



ISIS clients  
come from  
**90**  
different countries  
and live in  
**34**  
different communities  
across Nova Scotia.

## A Dream Come True.

When Patrick Kaswara first climbed into a small airplane in the Congo at the age of six, he knew he wanted to be a pilot. Now, many years later, with the help of ISIS, he's making that dream come true.

After living as a refugee in Uganda for five years, Patrick came to Nova Scotia with his mother and two brothers in August 2009. "I was worried about what came next," says Patrick. "But right away I felt safe." ISIS Settlement Services helped him learn about life in Canada. "They showed us around, helped us with buses, finding a doctor, everything."

Patrick uses other ISIS services including Employment Counseling and Business Development Services.



He has a Ugandan pilot's license, but wants to get his Canadian commercial license. The ISIS Mentorship Program Coordinator arranged for Patrick to meet an Air Canada pilot to learn about being a pilot in Canada and take a test flight at the Greenwood Flight Centre.

"I come to ISIS and say I need this. I've never been disappointed." To save money to go to flight school, ISIS assisted him in applying to a Tourism Essentials program, resulting in a job in the Westin Hotel housekeeping department.

Patrick remains in touch with ISIS staff. "These people have been and still are of great significance in my resettlement process in my new home Canada."

[ ISIS staff ] have been and still are of great significance in my resettlement process in my new home Canada.

—Patrick Kaswara, ISIS client

## New Beginnings.

Heizer Marval believes ISIS became part of his new identity as an immigrant to Canada. He arrived from Venezuela with his mother in 2002 and was impressed by ISIS services. "Changes in you bring excitement. And as I changed I could see the organization growing to meet the needs of immigrants," he explains.

Heizer's career path was influenced by ISIS and he even met his wife at an ISIS seminar on healthcare services for immigrants.

His beginnings here started with the New Beginnings Workshop. "I spent my life in university. It was interesting to learn things I hadn't been exposed to." He also took a TOEFL prep course.

His mother was matched in a volunteer work experience that resulted in a job with the provincial government.



ISIS Employment Services helped Heizer, a medical graduate, find work. And while a volunteer at Connections Clubhouse, a mental health support program, he decided to pursue psychiatry.

Heizer met physicians through ISIS and in 2005 they worked together to form the Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia to assist professionals practice here. In June 2010 Heizer graduated and became a fellow in child and adolescent psychiatry at the IWK.

"There were so many unknowns," says Heizer. "Having someone to coach and help you was important. This is a very caring organization."

ISIS would like to thank the over **450 trained and active volunteers**, coordinated by the Volunteer Services team, who contributed over **51,000 hours** to helping immigrants last year.

## Tackling Challenges.

Imagine for a moment that you cannot speak English and you cannot hear. This was life for Noor Al-Anbagi when she arrived in Canada in September 2009. Thanks to ISIS, she is tackling both challenges.

Noor, who is Iraqi, came to Halifax with her parents and three younger sisters. As part of ISIS Settlement Services and Language Services, she met with a caseworker who quickly realized Noor needed to connect with the deaf community. ISIS hired an interpreter, Alice Mailman, recruited through the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians. For Noor this relationship was life-changing.

Each day she takes the bus from Clayton Park to ISIS where she spends a few hours in English as a Second Language classes and learning American Sign Language with Alice. "I like it here," she says. Noor, 20, has little formal education and is happy to be studying. And through the society she also attends a club and cooking and crafts classes.

"At first I was afraid in Canada," Noor says. "But after two or three months, I got used to it little by little—except for the cold." Alice says although Noor's vocabulary is limited, she is keen, naturally curious and a pleasure to be around.

What will Noor's future bring? "When my English gets good, I'd like to work at ISIS!"

Last year, ISIS online services had **560 registered users** and hits to the ISIS website exceeded

**50,000**



## Creating Self-Confidence.

Because he loves to study, Mohamed Ranj will have an on-going relationship with ISIS. The ambitious engineer came to Canada from Iran in 2009 to join his wife who was a student here. At her recommendation he came to ISIS.

Mohamed took the Writing for Professionals course and received employment counseling including Workplace Culture and the Work Placement and Wage Subsidy Programs which resulted in a six-week job placement at SNC-Lavalin.

“At first I didn’t know anything about finding jobs here or the culture of the work environment,” says Mohamed, who has also worked in Dubai. “ISIS is very helpful.”

Following his job placement, Mohamed was

offered a position as a structural engineer at Pinto Engineering.

He still attends ISIS workshops, such as one on tax returns. And he appreciates its social community as well. “I have a lot of friends I found in ISIS. Some of my best friends I found here,” he explains. “To leave home and see each other here—it creates self-confidence.”

Mohamed has a Master’s degree and plans to eventually earn his PhD. And he says he will always keep his eye out for useful workshops. “If there is something interesting to me, I will come here. This is a fantastic place and very supportive to newcomers.”



Nova Scotia welcomed  
**2,424**  
new immigrants in  
2009, and **74%** of them  
settled in Halifax.

## Adapting to a New Community.

Anna Nilova landed in Canada with her husband in 2007 and, having found ISIS on the Internet in her native Russia, came here the next day. “I was nervous about my future. It was a stressful time. I needed to find a job.”

Her husband, a lawyer in Russia, started a new career as a massage therapist. Anna, a registered nurse, spoke no English so she attended ISIS ESL classes that she describes as “pleasant and relaxed.”

An ISIS staff member in Employment Counseling helped her to enroll at the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia to get Canadian nursing credentials. “She went with me and it was very helpful. I had to send papers to Russia and wait for them to come back.” Nilova proudly adds that she earned As and Bs, with no mark below B-.

At the suggestion of ISIS, she searched the Capital Health website and soon applied for 26 positions. The first to call was Camp Hill Veterans’ Memorial, where she now works as a registered nurse, specializing in dementia and geriatrics. Anna worked with children in Russia, but is happy with this challenge.

Anna says adapting to a new community is hard but with support from ISIS, she is doing well. “People here are always ready to help. I am very grateful.”

In 2009–2010,  
ISIS served over  
**3,000**  
immigrants; **1,600** were  
new clients.



## ISIS the Organization.

ISIS was created by the merger of Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC) and Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), and has a total combined experience of over fifty-two years serving immigrants.

ISIS is the primary contact in Nova Scotia on refugee, settlement and immigration issues for 2,000+ organizations, employers, government departments and individuals annually.

## ISIS Board Members.

Joe Malek, Chair

Olaf Berghaus, Vice-Chair

Jim Donovan, Treasurer-Secretary

Ross Mitchell

Sue Mercer

Colin McLean

Paul Schwartz

Russell Walker

Mark Larson

Ellen Pilon

Gerry Mills

Claudette Legault

## HILC and MISA Board Members Prior to Merger.

Norma Oyler

Jeanne Comeau

Hugh Wright

Najma Sharif

Alexandre Pavlovski

## ISIS Funders.

Thank you to our funding partners:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Health Canada

Service Canada

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration

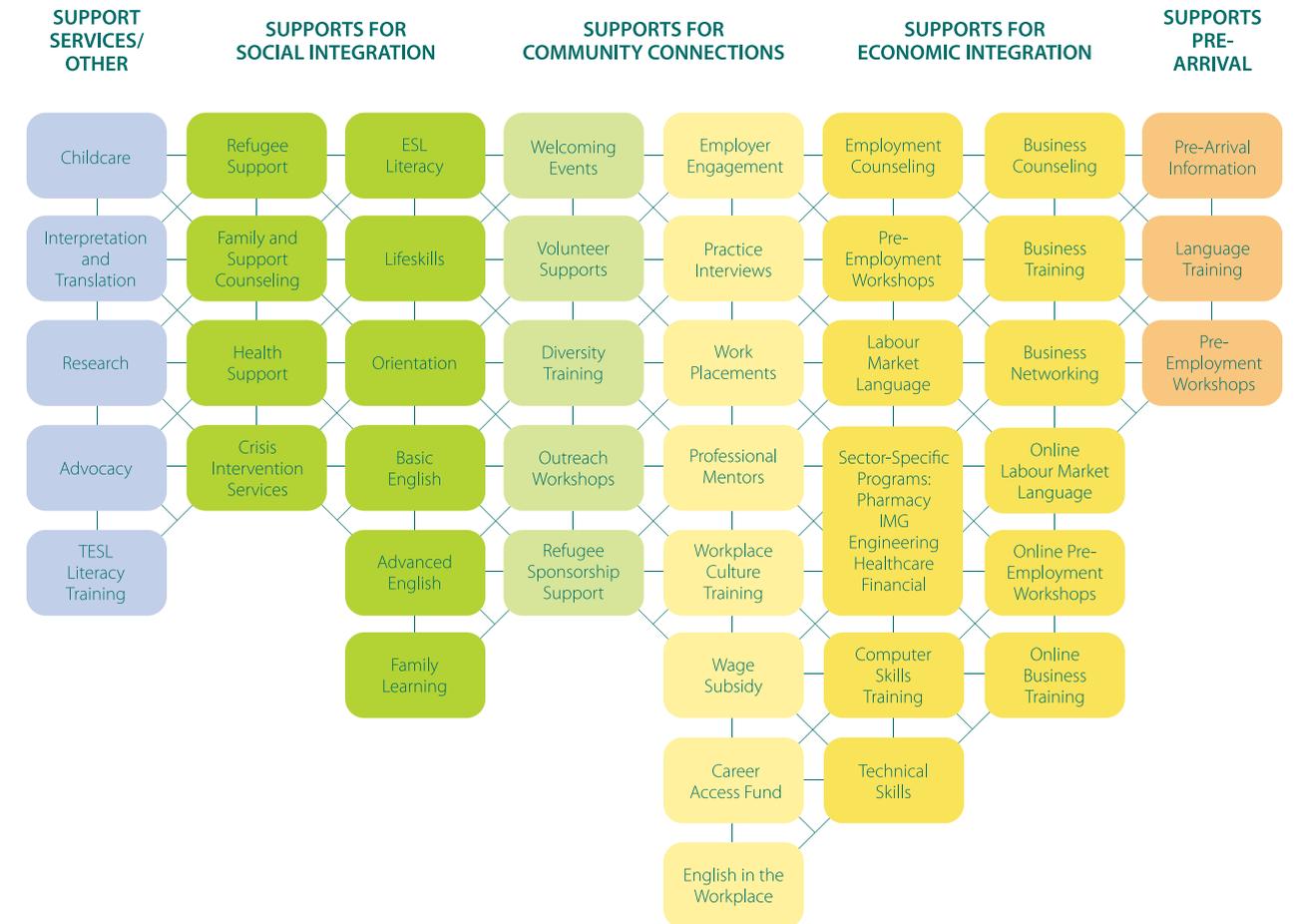
Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development

United Way

Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund

## What We Do.

### INTAKE AND REFERRAL, ASSESSMENT AND COUNSELING



## Highlights from the ISIS Financial Report for the Year Ending March 31, 2010

### REVENUE

	2010	2009	Increase/Decrease
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	\$3,324,524	\$2,918,880	13.90%
Health Canada	\$192,720	\$341,659	-43.59%
Service Canada	\$517,044	\$354,898	45.69%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – LMA Funding	\$1,120,152	\$286,286	291.27%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – Settlement Funding	\$928,997	\$938,889	-1.05%
Nova Scotia Department of Labor and Workforce Development	\$424,573	\$501,160	-15.28%
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	\$310,399	\$316,990	-2.08%
Other Funding Sources	\$285,974	\$312,410	-8.46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,104,383</b>	<b>\$5,971,172</b>	<b>18.98%</b>

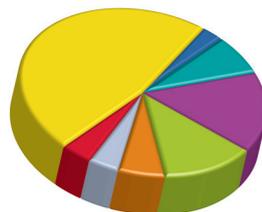
### EXPENSES

	2010	2009	Increase/Decrease
Language and Skills Development Services	\$2,519,880	\$2,400,219	4.99%
Employment Services	\$2,052,553	\$1,014,438	102.33%
Business Development Services	\$450,780	\$382,216	17.94%
Settlement and Community Outreach Services	\$1,813,869	\$1,570,561	15.49%
Amortization and Others	-\$18,750	\$333,515	-105.62%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,818,332</b>	<b>\$5,700,949</b>	<b>19.60%</b>

Excess of Revenue over Expenses	<b>\$286,051</b>	<b>\$270,223</b>	
---------------------------------	------------------	------------------	--

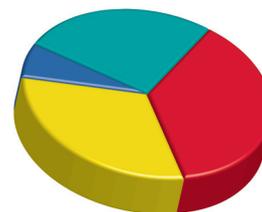
#### REVENUE \$7,104,383

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (47%)
- Health Canada (3%)
- Service Canada (7%)
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – LMA Funding (16%)
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – Settlement Funding (13%)
- Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development (6%)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (4%)
- Other Funding Sources (4%)



#### EXPENSES \$6,818,332

- Language and Skills Development Services (37%)
- Employment Services (30%)
- Business Development Services (7%)
- Settlement and Community Outreach Services (26%)





---

6960 Mumford Road • Suite 2120  
Halifax • Nova Scotia • Canada • B3L 4P1  
**Phone:** 902.423.3607 • **Fax:** 902.423.3154

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



**Mixed Sources**

Product group from well-managed  
forests and other controlled sources  
[www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org) Cert no. SW-COC-000952  
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council