

# Environmental funding opportunities in Atlantic Canada

October 8, 2024 | Presented by Dana Decent



# Agenda

- **Report Presentation** – 30 mins
- **Q&A Session** – 30 mins
- **Trip Planning Discussion** – 30 mins



# Context

# Navigating change in Atlantic Canada

**Atlantic Canada is currently experiencing a pivotal moment, marked by:**

- Rapid population growth driving economic growth
- Advancements in clean technology
- Strong pro-climate attitudes and facing increasing climate devastation

# Characteristics of the region

## **Small, close-knit communities with a strong sense of belonging**

This cohesion enables strong relationship-building and capacity-building opportunities, leading to potentially greater systemic impact

## **Economic challenges, such as ongoing poverty and affordability concerns**

It will be important to prioritize affordability and food security in messaging over direct climate change initiatives

## **Varying land ownership across provinces (private versus public)**

Tailored protection strategies are needed focusing on landowners in regions with private land and on government in areas with public land



# Characteristics of the region

## **Home to diverse Indigenous nations (Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Innu, and Inuit Peoples)**

- Supporting Indigenous-led initiatives and understanding local historical contexts will be vital

## **A rich history of African Nova Scotian settlements**

- Tailored funding approaches that recognize distinct histories and needs will be required for effective partnerships and environmental initiatives



The region gets only 2% of non-MUSH foundation gifts, despite having 7% of Canada's population

# Methodology



# Methodology

**A qualitative analysis of funding in the region was conducted through interviews with over 20 individuals across multiple sectors**

- Interviewees were identified through personal networks and snowball sampling

**The sectors represented included:**

- Private sector, including cleantech
- Non-profit sector
- Government
- Philanthropy
- Academia

# Methodology

**During each interview, the author explored the following questions:**

- What gaps exist in advancing environmental action in Atlantic Canada?
- Where are the greatest opportunities?
- Are silos a challenge? And, if so, what are some ways to break them down?
- What are innovative examples of successful environmental action in the region?
- If a funder asked you where money should go, what would you say?



# Funding Opportunities

See the full list of organizations mentioned in the report on page 28 & 29



# Key opportunities for funders

The insights gathered for this report converged on six key focus areas for funders:

1. Connecting the dots
2. Impact investing
3. Indigenous sovereignty
4. Ocean conservation
5. Building clean economies
6. Advancing policy and advocacy



# Fostering trust and reconciliation

Across the six areas of focus, there are general approaches funders can take to foster trust, strengthen relationships, and advance reconciliation.

Trust-based philanthropy

Community-led solutions

Youth-led solutions

Multi-year funding

Unrestricted funding

# Connecting the dots

The need to support convening and strategic networking was identified as a significant opportunity in Atlantic Canada

This recommendation includes two main steps:

1. **Ecosystem mapping** of who is advancing environmental action in the region
2. **Convening and capacity-building** among environmental organizations, and between social and environmental groups

# Ecosystem mapping for collaboration

Mapping who is doing what is the first step to enhance collaboration among grassroots organizations, identify partners, and prioritize efforts.

## Funding opportunities:

- Support comprehensive mapping of environmental organizations or expand on existing maps (e.g., CLIMAtlantic, Engage Nova Scotia's SDG Map).

# Factors for mapping success

**To effectively support mapping, the following should be included:**

- A clear audience and purpose for the map
- Straightforward details about organizations and how to get into contact
- Grassroots organizations working on the frontlines, particularly Indigenous-led, Black-led, and African Nova Scotian-led organizations
- Sustained funding for the next steps - convening and collaboration



# Convening and capacity-building

There is a critical need for collaboration between social impact and environmental leaders to have a unified strategy.

## Funding opportunities:

- **Support gatherings and capacity-building for both social impact and environmental organizations to connect**
- **Fund a ‘climate connector role’**
- **Fund people’s time to attend convenings**
- **Provide sustained funding for multiple convenings**
- **Fund monitoring and evaluation**

# Impact investing opportunities

- Impact investing interest has increased since EFC's 2014 report
- There are fewer public investment opportunities in the region compared to larger provinces
- Need to engage with organizations and build relationships to identify creative investment opportunities beyond traditional grants (e.g., loans, bonds, debt)

## Funding opportunities:

- **Purchase order financing**
- **Community micro-lending**
- **Development of impact funds**

# Indigenous sovereignty

Returning land and waters to Indigenous governance promotes justice, protects biodiversity, and advances climate solutions

# Investing in Indigenous communities

## Funding opportunities:

### Sespite'tmnej Kmitkinu Conservancy

New Mi'kmaq-led land trust in Nova Scotia, seeking funding for land purchases, assessments, and operations

### Oceans North

Partners with Indigenous groups on marine conservation and policy, focus on Atlantic and Arctic

### Ulnooweg

Supports Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada with resources, education, and entrepreneurship

# Asitu'lisk

# Ocean conservation and connection

- The ocean is central to Atlantic Canada, with its 42,000 km coastline supporting major industries, significant contributions to the economy, and leading ocean research institutions.
- Non-profits, research institutions, Indigenous-led partnerships, and specific projects across the region.
- Connect with: Ecology Action Centre, East Coast Environmental Law, SeaBlue Canada, COVE, Ulnooweg Development Group, Oceans North, WWF, Oceana, Sierra Club Canada, and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

# Building clean economies

- Canada requires a sustainable, equitable shift to clean energy, demanding sustained investment across all sectors.
- The philanthropic sector has a significant role to play in opposing extractive projects and supporting policy, advocacy, and projects for a just transition.
- Focus on Newfoundland and Labrador:
  - Key for building a clean economy due to heavy reliance on oil and gas (25% GDP, 40% exports) and high climate vulnerability

# Clean economy funding needs

- **Build on political power momentum**
  - e.g., Support Neighbours United's deep canvassing project
- **Support community engagement**
  - e.g., Dr. Angela Carter and the Harris Centre at Memorial University to promote community support for a clean economy
- **Fund evaluation**
  - Create impactful case studies for broader application



# Advancing policy and advocacy

## Opportunities to support policy advocacy:

- Build power: Invest in key ridings for progressive environmental policies.
- Support campaigns: Fund advocacy on affordability and security.
- Facilitate convenings: Enhance collaboration between social, environmental sectors, and government.
- Support national policies: Fund local initiatives that are informing national policy

Atlantic Canada's current economic momentum offers unique opportunities and challenges, making it **a crucial time for funders to invest in creating a just and sustainable future.**

# Thank you!

Contact Info: [dana.decent@gmail.com](mailto:dana.decent@gmail.com)

