2023 Environmental Grants DataLandscape Snapshot Report



DARO

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Introduction

The goal of this research is to gain an informed snapshot of the environmental grantmaking landscape in Canada.

This is the second year that Environment Funders Canada (EFC) has collected environmental grants data from members and other funders in the sector. We are very excited to build on the data received last year to generate deeper insights. As more funders contribute their data year after year, we will be able to get a more accurate picture and see trends over time.

In 2023, EFC reached out to its members with a request to share their environmental grants data for the 2022 calendar year. In 2024, EFC asked its members—as well as other funders who are funding environmental work in Canada—to share environmental grants data for the 2023 calendar year.

The initial data collection has focused on establishing a baseline of data from funders to perform exploratory analysis. During the 2022 and 2023 data collection, we prioritized flexibility for funders to submit data, with a big picture objective of seeing trends over time, rather than ensuring total accuracy of the data.

This year, we added new questions and analysis to begin assessing some important elements of **trust-based philanthropy**.

Data collection for 2023 grants data took place from **June 2024 through January 2025**. We received data submissions from 68 organizations for a total of **2,779** grants added to our database. Within the 68 data submissions, EFC received data from collectives with multiple funders within one submission. Those funders are counted individually in the total number of funders, but as one data submission. Therefore, for 68 data submissions, there are 80 total funders in the 2023 analysis. Please see Appendix A for a list of funders who contributed 2023 grants data.

Currently, the raw data is internal to EFC and our research partner DARO. Only aggregate data is shared in this report.

Reflections on 2023 Grant Data Collection Process

Overall updates

- 25 more dataset submissions than the previous year, an increase of 58%
- 862 more grant submissions than the previous year, an increase of 45%
- Data collection fields were divided into required and optional, with quite a few funders answering the optional questions (please see Appendix B for a list of all the data fields collected)
- Data submitted using EFC's data submission template was typically more comprehensive and cleaner for our analysis, and we saw fewer missing data fields than the previous year

Added new data fields

- Whether the source of funds was self-funded or regranted
- If regranted, the name of the organization that provided funding (to avoid double counting these amounts in the analysis)
- Funder-selected optional questions:
 - Primary environmental category
 - Whether grant had an Indigenous focus
 - Whether grant had a reporting requirement
 - Whether grant was unrestricted or for program funding

Data consistency in year two

- Conversion from USD to CAD:
 - o Several grants that were submitted in USD were converted to CAD using an average of the 2022 and 2023 exchange rates
- French to English translation:
 - When applicable and as needed, grants were translated from French to English using Google Translate

Highlights and Observations

Average grant size for each funder

The average amount most funders (23) are awarding per grant is \$25,000-\$100,000. Very few funders (3) reported average grant sizes of \$1M+.

Number of grants per funder

Most funders (26) awarded 1-5 environmental grants in 2023.

Most funded categories

Conservation remained the most funded environmental category by total dollars awarded in 2023, and the category that the highest percentage of funders supported. The next most funded environmental category by total dollars awarded was Climate Change, followed by Environmental Education.

Least funded categories

Pollution, Toxics & Waste Reduction and Other were the least funded environmental categories and had the lowest percentage of funder support.

Overwhelming amount of funding is restricted

For the grants with data on whether funding was restricted or unrestricted, 90% of the grant amounts awarded was for restricted program funding and only 10% was unrestricted.

Most grants require reporting

For the grants with data on reporting requirements, 61% required reporting and 39% did not.

Indigenous focused grants

28% of grants (representing 31% of the value of grants) had an Indigenous focus. Of the total of just over \$90M in grants with an Indigenous focus, 44% were in support of Conservation efforts and 31% were in support of Climate Change work, which follows similar trend lines compared to all grants reported.



Future Plans for this Research

Looking ahead, EFC won't be collecting data from funders again in 2025. Instead, EFC and DARO will focus on providing funders with direct access to the data we have collected so far, to help inform their work. Funders who have submitted datasets will have the opportunity to request that their data be anonymized before the data hub launches.

In 2026, we will collect grants data for both the 2024 and 2025 years to provide the next data analysis report. We plan to repeat this process bi-annually.

Environmental Category Analysis Overview

The environmental category analysis for the 2023 data collection builds on the methodology and analysis from the first year that relied on *grant titles* and *grant descriptions* to understand the focus of the environmental grants we received. These two fields continue to be the primary basis for our environmental category analysis. We use these fields to determine the key search terms for the database and to generate useful insights. For the 2023 data collection, we added new fields to the data request template sent to funders that helped us further refine our analysis, including a funder-submitted environmental category of focus.

2022 Foundational Environmental Categories and Keywords

In the first year of data collection, we categorized grants into seven environmental categories. To develop these categories, we:

- Did an initial exploration of the database using keywords that we thought would be the most likely focus areas.
- Developed an initial keyword search for each category and then reviewed how many grant titles and descriptions were returned for each keyword.
- Reviewed the grant titles and descriptions for grants that were not captured in this process and created additional categories. We also reviewed the grants and our starting keywords to remove words that were too broad, overlapped with multiple categories, and keywords that only returned a few grants in the database.
- Through multiple iterations of refining keywords and reviewing results to make adjustments, we developed environmental categories and a list of relevant keywords that were distinct for each category.
- For more detail, read the full methodology in the 2022 grant data collection.

2023 Environmental Categories and Keyword Refinement

Using our keywords from the 2022 data collection, we ran an initial analysis to explore each category with the new 2023 dataset and determine whether the 2022 categories and keywords needed to be adjusted in light of our expanded dataset.

We ran a comparative analysis between categories to determine whether our keywords continue to return distinct and accurate results for each environmental category. We also ran a comparative analysis between our environmental categories and the funder-submitted environmental focus for their grants to review discrepancies between keyword-generated and funder-submitted categories.

Using the 2023 grant titles and descriptions, as well as the funder-submitted environmental focus for grants, we updated our environmental categories and adjusted the keywords and excluded terms to better capture the larger dataset.

Please see Appendix C for a full list of the environmental categories and related search terms used.

Category Overlap and Manual Review

For grants where our initial analysis either was unable to determine the primary category or returned multiple environmental categories, we performed a manual review of that subset of data. Through this manual analysis, we determined the appropriate categories for these grants, where possible. Where grant descriptions were limited and the funder-submitted environmental focus was provided, we relied on the funder-submitted category to categorize the grants.

Grant descriptions contain some overlap between more than one category (for example, conservation grants could involve references to climate change adaptation or mitigation). While there is crossover in the terminology used in descriptions, most grants have a clear primary focus and did not belong in multiple categories. **We categorize grants based on the main focus of the work.** To create an effective search and capture the primary focus, we exclude key terms from other categories to limit the amount of crossover terminology used in grant descriptions that could lead to grants being miscategorized.

Grants lacking sufficient titles and descriptions to be categorized, as well as grants with a truly broad environmental focus, were labelled as Other.

Comparing 2022 and 2023 Analysis

Using the 2023 grant data, we refined our environmental categories from the seven environmental categories that we created for the 2022 grants to six environmental categories with more precise keywords. To compare the 2022 and 2023 grant data in this analysis, we applied our updated keywords and environmental categories to both data sets.

2022 Categories

- Conservation
- Climate Change
- Nature Education
- Food and Agriculture
- Pollution & Toxics
- Waste Reduction
- Other

2023 Categories

- Conservation
- Climate Change
- Environmental Education
- Food and Agriculture
- Pollution, Toxics & Waste Reduction
- Other

In addition to the updated environmental categories, we maintained the category for Indigenous focused grants from the 2022 analysis. The Indigenous categorization is an additional layer that purposely overlaps with the categories listed above.

Notes on Data and Graphs

Overlap counting in locations

Grants can be organized in the database by "geographic focus", which includes International, Canada, and the Canadian provinces and territories as locations. Grants can have multiple locations of focus, which is reflected in the total award value for each location. For example, if a grant has a geographic focus of both Alberta and Canada, the full value of the grant will be reflected in both locations.

Overlap counting in environmental categories

The environmental categories are mostly distinct, but there is a small amount of overlap between categories. This reflects the fact that there are grants that are designed to achieve outcomes in multiple areas. For example, a grant to support an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) located in an ecosystem that is also one of the largest carbon sinks in the world may be deliberately put in both the Conservation and Climate Change categories, with the full value of the grant reflected in the total grants awarded in both categories.

Funder-to-funder giving

Within the database, EFC determined grants to be funder-to-funder giving when a funder awarded a grant to another funder who submitted grant data to the database and where the purpose of the grant was to further regrant the funds. There are 22 grants in the database that are tagged as funder-to-funder giving for a total of \$7,760,250. This amount was excluded from our analysis. It represents roughly 3% of the total value of grants reported.

Corresponding data request fields

Throughout the analysis, we have outlined the data fields (as submitted by funders) that were used to create each graph.

2023 Grants Data Analysis



\$291.8M



Grants Submitted

2,779



of Datasets Submitted

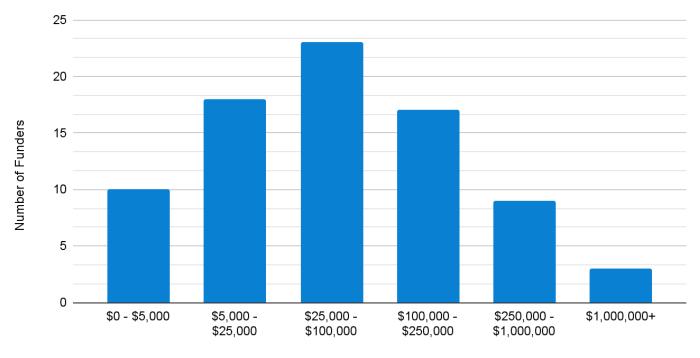
68

2022 \$185.4M

2022 1,917

2022 43

Chart 1. 2023 Average Grant Amount Awarded by Each Funder



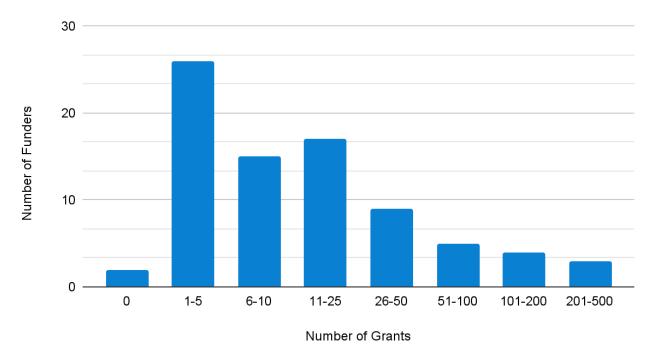
Average Grant Amount Awarded

Notes on number of funders: EFC received 68 data submissions, including some submissions from collectives with multiple funders within one submission. Those funders are counted individually in the total number of funders, but as one data submission. Therefore, there were 80 funders for 68 data submissions.

Corresponding data request fields:

- Grant award amount
- Grant identifier number
- Name of funder

Chart 2. 2023 Number of Grants Awarded Per Funder

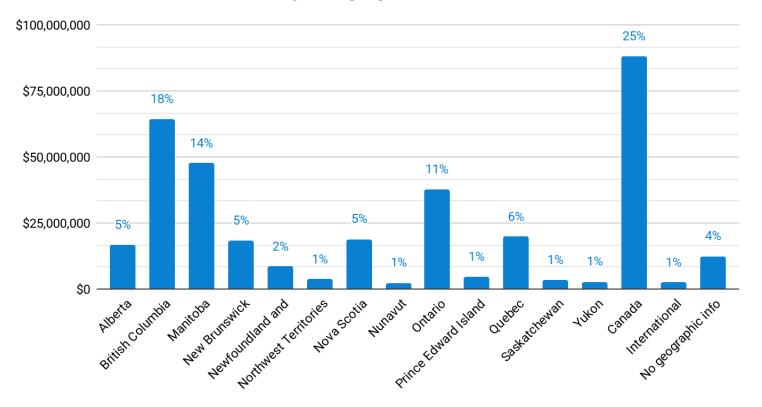


Corresponding data request fields:

- Grant identifier number
- Name of funder

Notes on number of Funders: EFC received 68 data submissions, including some submissions from collectives with multiple funders within one submission. Those funders are counted individually in the total number of funders, but as one data submission. Therefore, there were 80 funders for 68 data submissions.

Chart 3. 2023 Grant Dollars by Geographic Focus

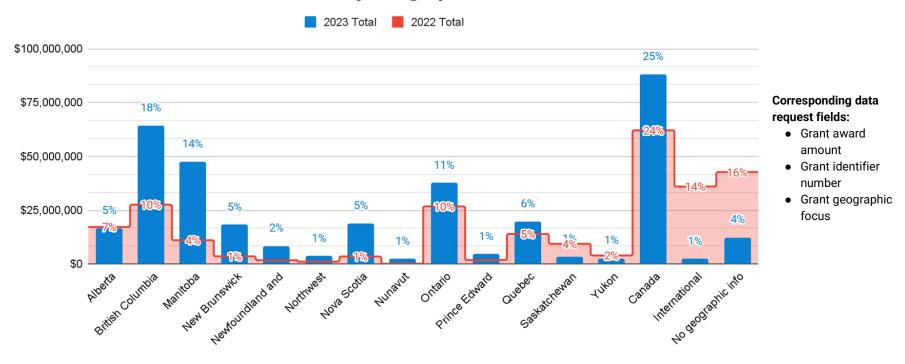


Corresponding data request fields:

- Grant award amount
- Grant identifier number
- Grant geographic focus

Overlap in counting locations: Grants can be organized in the database by "geographic focus", which includes International, Canada, and the Canadian provinces and territories as locations. Grants can have multiple locations of focus, which is reflected in the total award value for each location. For example, if a grant has a geographic focus of both Alberta and Canada, the full value of the grant will be reflected in both locations.

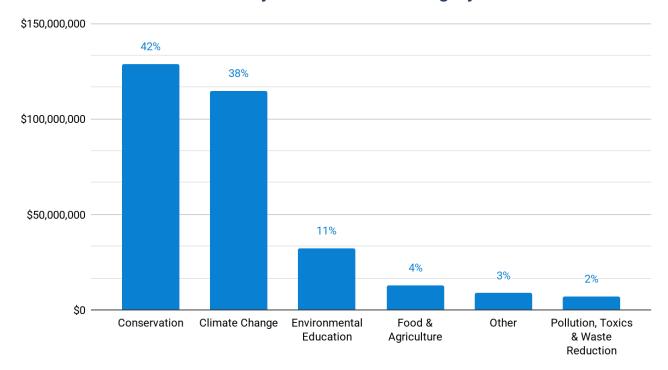
Chart 4. 2022 and 2023 Grant Dollars By Geographic Focus



Overlap in counting locations: Grants can be organized in the database by "geographic focus", which includes International, Canada and the Canadian provinces and territories as locations. Grants can have multiple locations of focus, which is reflected in the total award value for each location. For example, if a grant has a geographic focus of both Alberta and Canada, the full value of the grant will be reflected in both locations.

In 2022, the International data showed grants amounted to over \$33 million. This largely reflected contributions from a single foundation toward Arctic conservation focused both in Canada and internationally. These grants were categorized as Canada and International. Similar grants were not reported to EFC in 2023.

Chart 5. 2023 Grant Dollars by Environmental Category



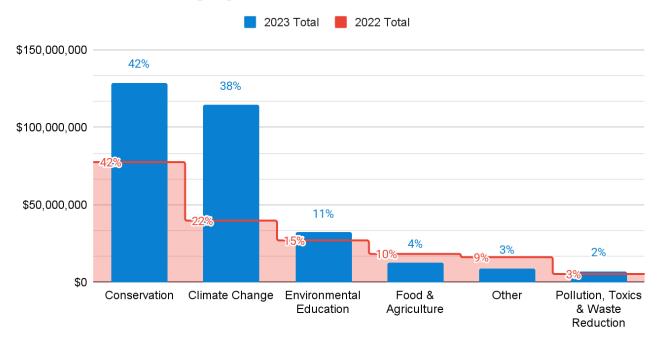
Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- Grant identifier number
- Grant award amount
- Name of grantee
- Grant title
- Grant description
- Primary environmental focus of the grant

Overlap counting in environmental categories: The environmental categories are mostly distinct, but there is a small amount of overlap between categories. This reflects the fact that there are grants that are designed to achieve outcomes in multiple areas. The full grant amount is reflected in each category.

Grants in "Other" are grants that are not captured by the six environmental categories. These grants have a broad environmental focus, or did not have detailed enough grant titles and descriptions to be categorized through our analysis.

Chart 6. 2022 and 2023 Environmental Grant Dollars by Environmental Category



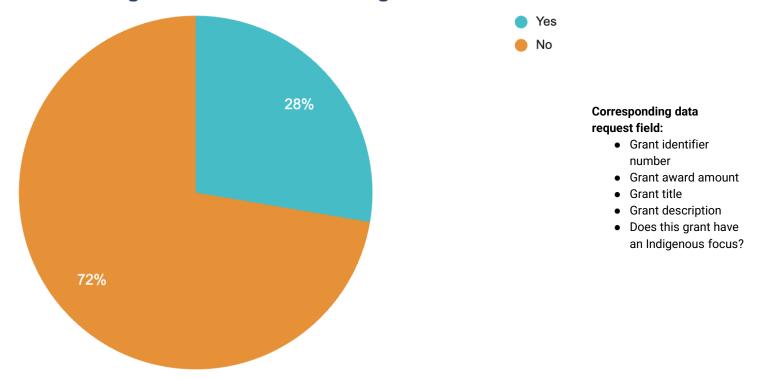
Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- Grant identifier number
- Grant award amount
- Name of grantee
- Grant title
- · Grant description
- Primary environmental focus of the grant

Overlap counting in environmental categories: The environmental categories are mostly distinct, but there is a small amount of overlap between categories. This reflects the fact that there are grants that are designed to achieve outcomes in multiple areas. The full grant amount is reflected in each category.

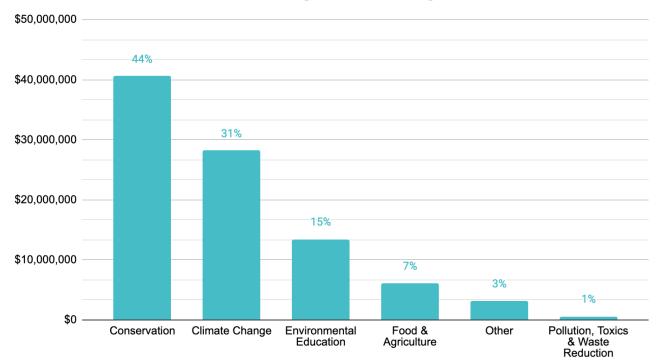
Grants in "Other" are grants that are not captured by the six environmental categories. These grants have a broad environmental focus, or did not have detailed enough grant titles and descriptions to be categorized through our analysis.

Chart 7. 2023 Percentage of Grants With an Indigenous Focus



Percentage of grants with an Indigenous focus: 28% of grants had an Indigenous focus, inclusive of all environmental categories. Overall, there are just over \$90M of grants with an Indigenous focus, representing 31% of all grant dollars reported.

Chart 8. 2023 Breakdown of Categories for Indigenous Focused Grants



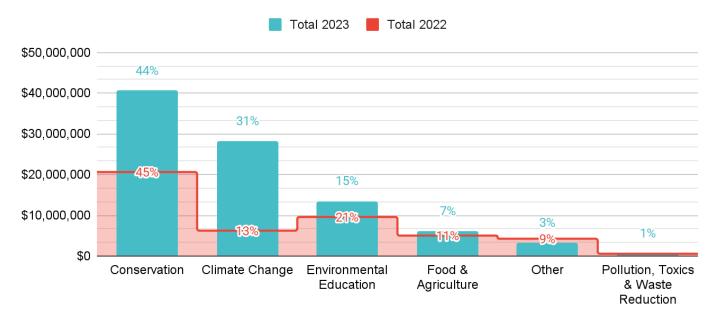
Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- Grant identifier number
- Grant award amount
- Name of grantee
- Grant title
- Grant description
- Primary environmental focus of the grant
- Does this grant have an Indigenous focus?

Breakdown of Indigenous focused grants: This breakdown looks at the grant dollars by environmental categories through the lens of Indigenous focused grants. For example, for all 2023 grants awarded that included an Indigenous focus, 44% of those grants were for conservation.

Other: This represents grants that are only Indigenous focused and do not overlap with other environmental categories.

Chart 9. 2022 and 2023 Breakdown of Categories for Indigenous Focused Grants



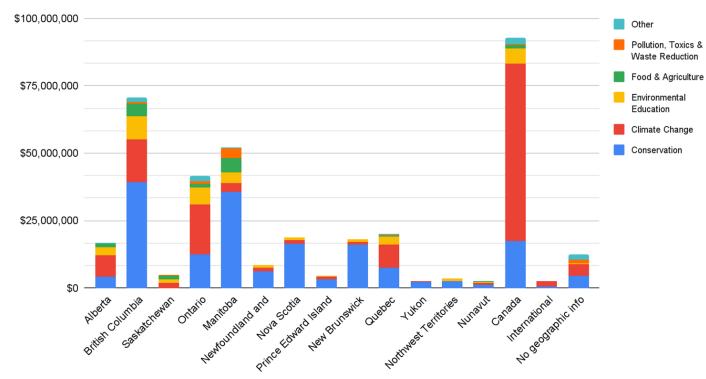
Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- Grant identifier number
- Grant award amount
- Name of grantee
- Grant title
- Grant description
- Primary environmental focus of the grant
- Does this grant have an Indigenous focus?

Breakdown of Indigenous focused grants: This breakdown looks at the grant dollars by environmental categories through the lens of Indigenous focused grants. For example, for all 2023 grants awarded that included an Indigenous focus, 44% of those grants were for conservation.

Other: This represents grants that are only Indigenous focused and do not overlap with other environmental categories.

Chart 10. 2023 Grant Dollars by Geographic Focus and Environmental Category

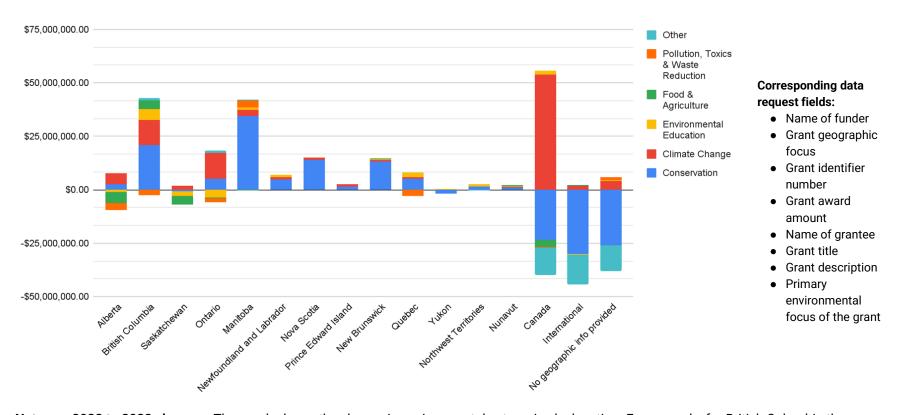


Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- Grant geographic focus
- Grant identifier number
- · Grant award amount
- Name of grantee
- Grant title
- Grant description
- Primary environmental focus of the grant

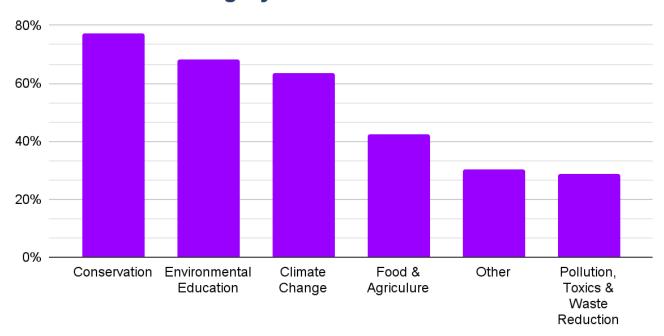
Overlap counting in locations: Grants can be organized in the database by "geographic focus", which includes International, Canada and the Canadian provinces and territories as locations. Grants can have multiple locations of focus and this is reflected in the total award value for each location. For example, if a grant has a geographic focus of both Alberta and Canada, the full value of the grant will be reflected in both locations.

Chart 11. 2022 to 2023 Change in Grant Dollars by Geographic Focus and Environmental Category



Notes on 2022 to 2023 changes: The graph shows the change in environmental categories by location. For example, for British Columbia there was an increase in funds submitted for every category in 2023, except Pollution, Toxics & Waste Reduction. Additionally, In 2022 the International data reflected contributions largely from a single foundation toward Arctic conservation focused both in Canada and internationally. Similar grants were not reported to EFC in 2023, and the negative Conservation value in International and Canada grants reflects that change.

Chart 12. 2023 Percentage of Funders Supporting Each Environmental Category



Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- Grant identifier number
- Name of grantee
- Grant title
- Grant description
- Primary environmental focus of the grant

Notes on number of funders: EFC received 68 data submissions, including some submissions from collectives with multiple funders within one submission. Those funders are counted individually in the total number of funders, but as one data submission. Therefore, there were 80 funders for 68 data submissions.

Chart 13. 2023 Number of Environmental Grants Requiring Reporting from Grantee

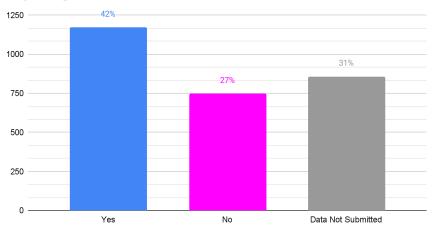
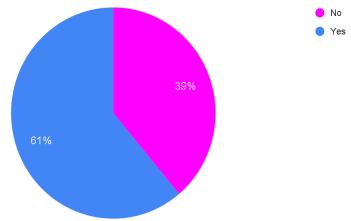


Chart 14. 2023 Percentage of Environmental Grants Requiring Reporting from Grantee



Most grants require reporting: Out of the grants with information on reporting requirements, 61% required reporting and 39% did not.

Corresponding data request fields:

- Grant identifier number
- Reporting requirement

Chart 15. 2023 Environmental Grant Dollars for Unrestricted and Program Funding

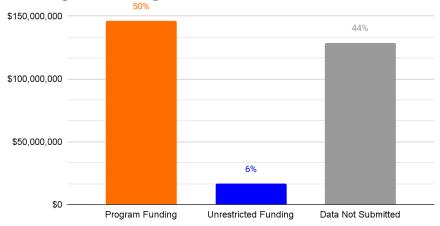
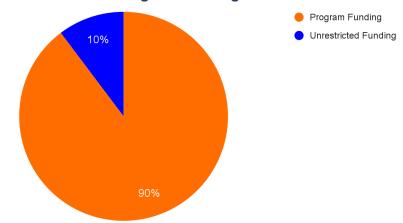


Chart 16. 2023 Percentage of Environmental Grant Dollars for Unrestricted and Program Funding



Overwhelming amount of funding is restricted: Out of the grants with information on whether funding was for restricted programming use or for unrestricted use by the grantee, 90% of the amount awarded was restricted program funding and only 10% was unrestricted.

Corresponding data request fields:

- Name of funder
- · Grant identifier number
- Grant award amount
- Unrestricted or program funding

Appendix A: 2023 Grant Dataset Submissions

Thank you to all funders who submitted their data. The analysis contains data from the following funders:

444S Foundation

Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

Arc'teryx Equipment

Aster Foundation Inc

Audain Foundation

Calgary Foundation

Catherine Donnelly Foundation

Chamandy Foundation

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Chawkers Foundation

Chisholm Thomson Family Foundation

Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Family Foundation

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

Consecon Foundation

de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation Definity Insurance Foundation Dickhout Family Foundation

Donner Canadian Foundation

Dragonfly Ventures
Echo Foundation

Edmonton Community Foundation

Environment Funders Canada

Fondation Béati

Fonds climat du Grand Montréal

Foundation of Greater Montreal

Fundy Community Foundation

Glasswaters Foundation

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Gosling Foundation
Greenbelt Foundation

Hilary and Galen Weston Foundation

Houssian Foundation

lvey Foundation Laidlaw Foundation

Lawson Foundation

MakeWay

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

McConnell Foundation
McLean Foundation
Metcalf Foundation

Metro Vancouver Zero Emissions Innovation Centre

Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation for the Americas

Niagara Community Foundation

Oceankind

Okanagan Basin Water Board Ottawa Climate Action Fund Peter Gilgan Foundation

Power to Give Foundation

RBC Foundation

Real Estate Foundation of BC

Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation Schad Foundation

Sitka Foundation

Small Change Fund/Great Lakes Funders

Collaborative

T.R. Meighen Family Foundation

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

The Atmospheric Fund
Thistledown Foundation
Toronto Foundation
Trebek Initiative

Trottier Family Foundation
Vancouver Foundation

W.C. Kitchen Family Foundation

Waltons Trust

Weston Family Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation
Winnipeg Foundation
Woodcock Foundation

Appendix B: 2023 Data Collection Fields - Required

* New fields added for 2023 data

Data Field	Definition
Name of funder	Name of funder
Business number or charitable number of funder	Funders will have either a business number or a charitable number. Charitable numbers end in RR001. A business number is a nine-digit number with no letters.
Location of funder	Head office (city, postal code)
Grant Identifier Number	Identifying number for the grant, if available
Grant amount	Total dollar amount awarded for the grant. If the grant is a multi-year grant, please put the total amount of the grant across all years.
Grant currency	Currency of the grant awarded (e.g., CAD, USD)
Is this a single-year or multi-year grant?	Select whether the funds for this grant awarded will be allocated over a single- year or multi-year time period

Appendix B: 2023 Data Collection Fields - Required

* New fields added for 2023 data

Data Field	Definition
Are you making this grant on behalf of a partner or another funder that has provided the capital (regranted funds) or is the grant coming from internal capital (self-funded)?*	The purpose of this field is simply to ensure we don't double count any funds in this research, in case the original source of the grant capital may also report these funds
If this grant award is regranted, what is the name of the organization that provided the funding?*	Name of organization from which the funds are being regranted
Name of grantee	Name of grantee
Grantee registration number	Grantees will have a registration number of some kind. This could be a business number, charitable number, nonprofit number, etc. Charitable numbers end in RR0001. A business number is a nine-digit number with no letters.
Grant title	Title of environmental grant awarded.
Grant description	Short paragraph about the grant awarded
Grant geographic focus	We are interested in grant data for the Canadian sector. Please list each province and/or territory this grant focuses on. If national in scope, please just indicate Canada.

Appendix B: 2023 Data Collection Fields - Optional

* New fields added for 2023 data

Data Field	Definition
Grant start date	Start date stipulated in the grant agreement, entered as dd/mm/yyyy
Grant end date	End date stipulated in the grant agreement, entered as dd/mm/yyyy
Primary environmental focus of the grant*	Indicate the main environmental focus of the grant from the core categories of Conservation, Climate Change, Nature Education, Food & Agriculture, Pollution & Toxics, Waste Reduction, or Other. If the grant has multiple focuses, please try and select the primary focus.
Does this grant have an Indigenous focus?*	Is this grant provided to an Indigenous community, an Indigenous-led organization, or to support Indigenous peoples?
Grantee location	City and postal code of head office
Do you require any reporting from this grantee?*	For example, a final report, an interim report, an evaluation report, etc.
Is this grant for specific project/program support or general/core/unrestricted support?*	Programming funding is a grant earmarked for a specific project/program area. Unrestricted funding is a grant that can be used by the grantee for whatever purpose they see fit.

EFC used the keywords created in 2022 as the starting point for the 2023 data analysis. Using the 2023 dataset, keywords and

environmental categories were refined to include the terms below.

Foundational Key Words Created in 2022

Added for 2023

Removed for 2023

Terms that were added in 2023 are in blue

Terms that were removed in 2023 are in red

Conservation		
Search Terms Included	Search Terms Excluded	
Land Conserv* (to capture conserve, conservation, conserving) Natur* (to capture natural, nature) Protect* (to capture protection, protecting) Steward* (to capture stewarding, stewardship) Habitat Restor* (to capturer restore, restoration, restoring) Biodiversity Wildlife Tree Species Ecosystem	Education School Learning Food Agriculture Health Pollution Water quality Farm	

Climate Change	
Search Terms Included	Search Terms Excluded
Climate	Conserv*
Energy, wind, solar, geothermal, hydropower, & tidal	Protect*
Building	Steward*
Policy	Restor*
Carbon	Education
Greenhouse gas, GHGs	School
Emissions	Learning
Electric	Health
Oil (With a space before and after)	Water quality
Coal	
Net-zero	

Environmental Education (renamed from 2022's Nature Education)	
Search Terms Included	Search Terms Excluded
Workshop Webinar Education School Learning Students Outdoor	No terms excluded. Environmental Education terms were excluded from other categories.
Teach Children	
Camp (with space before and after) Camps	

Food & Agriculture	
Search Terms Included	Search Terms Excluded
Nutrient	Fisher
Agricultural	Climate
Food	Education
Agriculture	School
Harvest	Learning
Farm	Health
Farmer	
Farming	
Fruit	

The Pollution, Toxics and Waste Reduction category was two separate categories in the 2022 grants data analysis (Pollution & Toxics as one and Waste Reduction as the other). For the 2023 data analysis we have combined the two categories because of the high degree of overlap between the type of work funded and the environmental grant descriptions in each category.

Pollution, Toxics & Waste Reduction	
Search Terms Included	Search Terms Excluded
Landfill Divert Diversion Health Water quality Pollution Plastics Toxins Repair Reuse Circular economy Plastic Recycling Garbage Reusable Upcycle	Education School Learning Climate



About EFC

Environment Funders Canada (EFC) is a national network of philanthropic foundations and other funders working individually and collectively to advance a healthy environment and sustainable future for Canada. EFC catalyzes funders to respond to environmental crises with ambitious and innovative solutions. EFC members work with non-government organizations, community groups, and other charitable organizations to support the development and delivery of programs that can make our communities healthier and more resilient, while protecting vital ecosystem services and the natural world.

www.environmentfunders.ca



About DARO

DARO helps leaders systematize and successfully implement their learning, data, and technology strategies. DARO are ruthless pragmatists that deliver real-world, impactful results. Fascinated by the design and development of innovative systems that power change for good, the team at DARO help social sector organizations take advantage of the new open data movement to increase their individual and collective impacts in the areas of Digital Transformation, Data Strategy & Governance, Open Data & Data Sharing, Data & Information Architecture, and Evaluation & Measurement services.

www.wearedaro.com