



Canada

AND THE GEF

Canada was one of the founding members of the Global Environment Facility, whose creation in 1991 provided the financial means for developing countries to take action on biodiversity, climate change, pollution, ocean health, and the ozone layer.

In the three decades since, Canada's influence at the GEF has grown, as has its remit to address toxic chemicals, support more sustainable cities and food systems, improve the management of forests and waterways, and build a more resilient future, even in the most vulnerable places on Earth.

Canada and the GEF share a close, long-term partnership. The country is among the GEF's largest donors: its more than C\$1.3 billion contributed to date accounts for more than 5 percent of total donor contributions received since the multilateral fund was launched. It has also provided C\$73.5 million to the GEF-managed Least Developed Countries Fund, which helps address urgent climate adaptation needs in the world's poorest nations. This represents more than 3 percent of LDCF pledges to date.

Canada's influence stretches well beyond this financial support, however.

At the GEF Council, whose 32 constituencies represent 185 member countries, Canada has a single country seat, from which it has elevated its international environmental

priorities including the need to mainstream gender equality and youth engagement, and to include Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in decision-making. Canada similarly has a single country seat on the LDCF's governing body, helping translate its focus on climate resilience into quickly delivered support for countries most in need of assistance.

The GEF has benefited from Canadian input, expertise, and leadership across every aspect of its operations. Several Canadians have served the GEF in senior roles, including former Canadian International Development Agency President Leonard Good, who was CEO and Chairperson from 2003 to 2006. Canadian researchers have directly contributed to GEF-funded projects related to marine protected areas, sustainable forest and land management, toxic chemicals, and more, thanks to strong ties between the GEF and Canadian universities and civil society organizations.

For example, a new initiative on nature-based infrastructure – a partnership with the Ottawa-based International Institute for

Sustainable Development – is highlighting Canadian infrastructure projects as examples for others to learn from and replicate. Canadian companies and business leaders are also engaging with the trust fund through initiatives such as the Task Force for Nature-related Financial Disclosures, the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, and planetGOLD, which is working with the Artisanal Gold Council to formalize and improve the safety of small-scale mining. There are also opportunities for stronger ties with Canadian industry and civil society through efforts such as the Global Electric Mobility Program and its work related to lithium

batteries; the Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program focused on the Amazon and Congo Basin; and in efforts underway to make global food systems safer, healthier, and more sustainable.


While the GEF's mandate is to enable developing countries to meet their international environmental obligations – as laid out in the five multilateral conventions to which Canada is a party – because of the scope of its network, some of the organization's support also yields direct benefits for Canada. One example is the Blue Nature Alliance, which is currently working to establish the world's first

large-scale, ecologically designed and Indigenous-led marine protected area along the north coast of British Columbia. The Government of Canada has also made bilateral investments in environmental projects that first gained traction with GEF support, such as in the Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique.

Following is an overview of these and other areas in which Canada has played a significant leadership role in and through the GEF, as well as those where a further deepening of the relationship holds opportunity for the years ahead.

A healthy ocean and blue economy

Canada's commitment to sustainable ocean management, including the establishment of marine protected areas and good governance of international waterways and the high seas, has been reflected in multiple GEF-funded initiatives and programs focused on sustainable fisheries and opportunities to build a blue economy. Canadian researchers and civil society organizations have also been directly involved in GEF projects in this area to support data collection, knowledge management, and results sharing. These have included Oxfam-Quebec; the Hamilton, Ontario-based United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment, and Health (UNU-INWEH); the Canadian International Development Agency; and the University of British Columbia's Peter A. Allard School of Law and its Institute for the Ocean and Fisheries. In one instance, the UNU-INWEH applied lessons from management of the Great Lakes of North America to the improved governance of transboundary water resources in Africa, holding policy dialogues in Entebbe and Niagara Falls.



The Blue Nature Alliance, a partnership between the GEF, Conservation International, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Minderoo Foundation, and the Rob & Melani Walton Foundation, is working to conserve 18 square kilometres of ocean over five years. This includes support for an initiative by the governments of Canada and British Columbia and 16 First Nations to develop a marine protected area network in the Great Bear Sea – the world’s first large-scale, Indigenous-led marine protected area network. The Blue Nature Alliance is providing support with protected area design, governance, and financing, and will help share lessons from this effort with other countries working toward 2030 ocean protection goals.



Biodiversity and other Conventions

Canada is party to all five multilateral environmental agreements that the GEF is mandated to support – the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Its active leadership in each Convention has advanced international negotiations and funding support for a wide range of priorities including those toxic chemicals, persistent organic pollutants, climate adaptation needs, sustainable land use, and the establishment of protected areas.

Canada was the first industrialized country to sign and ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the CBD Secretariat is based in Montreal. Canada's leadership on biodiversity protection has also been evidenced in its support for the G7 2030 Nature Compact and its advocacy for the full partnership of Indigenous Peoples in this work. Adding to this, at the One Planet Summit

this year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said all future global climate finance contributions from Canada will include funds for biodiversity.

Montreal is also home to a protocol that bears its name: The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Protocol retains close ties to the GEF, though its funding comes from the Montreal-based Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The Fund's activities are implemented by UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, and the World Bank.

Finally, there is the Francophonie Institute for Sustainable Development, a subsidiary body of the Francophonie International Organization based in Montreal. This organization is an active partner of the GEF through its engagement at the Rio Convention COPs, and through high-level and technical events the organization hosts on issues including biodiversity in francophone countries.



Climate change and forests

Part of what makes the GEF unique is its ability to address environmental challenges in their entirety, working across focal areas and sectors for greater impact. This has been reflected in Canada's engagement with the GEF around issues of climate change, clean energy, and sustainable forest management.

Canada's boreal forest covers 270 million hectares and is a globally important carbon

sink and regulator of the global climate. The sustainability of this forest, and of other forests around the world, is a major priority for Canada as demonstrated in its support of GEF efforts to improve forest management practices and combat illegal logging globally. Canada was among 40 entities that created Global Forest Watch, an online forest monitoring platform funded by the GEF among other bilateral partners.



In 2020, Canada gave C\$400 million in loans and \$10 million in grants to establish the Canadian Clean Energy and Forest Climate Facility (CCEFCF) at the World Bank, which supports transformative climate projects related to clean energy,

forest management, and sustainable land use. Some C\$75 million of the Facility's funds are earmarked for global forest projects, aiming to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and to foster conservation and

enhancement of forest resources. The CCEFCF has provided co-financing to a GEF project promoting sustainable forest management, improving protected area management, and enhancing livelihoods in Lao PDR.

Reflecting its commitment to climate finance, Canada has been an active partner of the GEF-managed Least Developed Countries Fund, which supports the world's most vulnerable countries in their efforts to adapt

to the effects of climate change. The LDCF is the only fund providing targeted support to Least Developed Countries to meet their immediate needs and enable the development of strong National Adaptation

Programmes of Action that identify their priorities for adaptation actions. The LDCF also focuses on reducing the vulnerability of key sectors including agriculture, health, and water.



Nature-based solutions and climate adaptation

The Canadian government and civil society partners are helping the GEF strengthen global advances in nature-based solutions and climate adaptation. The GEF was on the Steering Committee for the Global Commission on Adaptation action track on Nature-Based Solutions, co-led by Canada and Mexico. Building on Canada's chairmanship of this, Canada, the GEF, the Global Centre on Adaptation, and WRI led a workshop on innovative financing models for private sector investment in nature-based solutions for adaptation. Additionally, to support Canada's call for increased commitment to nature-based solutions, the GEF led political and technical dialogues across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and mobilized Sustainable Cities Program partners Kigali, Freetown, and Lima to join the growing number of cities ready to invest in nature-based solutions.



The new Global Resource Centre for Nature-Based Infrastructure, a joint venture of the GEF and Canada's International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), will use lessons from Canadian projects to inform sustainable urban planning decisions in developing countries. Launched at the COP27 in Glasgow, the Centre supports the valuation of climate adaptation and other co-benefits of nature-based and hybrid infrastructure projects to help investors and urban developers make informed decisions about sustainable options. Two studies are already set for inclusion in the Centre's database:

- **An assessment of Pelly's lake and Stephenfield reservoir in Manitoba:** Highlights the trade-offs between continued maintenance of wetlands and gray construction solutions and includes an estimation of other co-benefits, such as flood protection, carbon sequestration, tourism value, and nutrient removal. Results suggest this project could provide economic value of up to C\$6 billion by 2050.
- **An assessment of the De Salaberry water retention site and the Stepler multi-purpose small dam near Winnipeg, Manitoba:** Offers an integrated cost-benefit analysis to offer practical insights for asset owners and decision-makers. The study indicates a cost-benefit ratio for nutrient and flood reduction benefits alone of around 4.7.

Blended finance and the private sector

Canada's advocacy for the Global Environment Facility to shift from a grant-only model to one that champions blended finance and private sector engagement was a driving force behind the trust fund's leadership in this space. The design of the Non-Grant Instrument pilot program in GEF-6 benefited from the support of Econoler, a global consultancy based in Quebec City. Building on this, the CEO of the Toronto-based blended finance firm Convergence is one of three members of the GEF's Advisory Group of Financial Experts, which advises on, reviews, and selects projects seeking loans, guarantees, and other innovative support from the GEF. Convergence has also contributed to the GEF's Technical Advisory Group discussions about programming priorities for the GEF-8 period.

In 2020, the GEF provided early-stage support to establish the Taskforce on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), a partnership bringing together financial industry leaders focused on biodiversity loss. The TNFD, launched in 2021, is now developing a risk management and disclosure framework for corporates and financial institutions to assess, manage, and report on their dependencies and impacts on nature. The initiative is expected to enable the private sector to better identify and manage nature-related risks in their supply chains and portfolio and inform policymaking on nature risks. The Mining Association of Canada and West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd. both belong to the TNFD Forum, a consultative network that supports the TNFD's work.

In January 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged up to C\$55 million to the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund to support projects in developing countries that use sustainable land management techniques to restore landscapes. The government was joined by other Canadian investors, including the Concordia University Foundation and Montreal-based Fondation, a retirement investment fund. The LDN Fund, created under the framework of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, coordinates public and private efforts to restore degraded lands, reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions, and create jobs for vulnerable populations – particularly women – in developing countries. One of its first projects was supported by Ecotierra, a company based in Sherbrooke, Quebec.



Canada is home to more than half of the world's mining companies and through its engagement with the GEF is playing an international leadership role in efforts to address risks related to small-scale gold mining in the developing world. Canada's Artisanal Gold Council has been actively involved in efforts by planetGOLD to formalize the sector and support cleaner gold mining extraction technologies to displace the use of toxic mercury. The Artisanal Gold Council has been involved in GEF projects related to mercury and mining in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Mali. The planetGOLD program has also benefited from close engagement and support from the Canadian International Resources and Development Institute, which was acquired by the Canadian Executive Service Organization in 2021.

Canadian mining companies have also been involved in community development programs associated with GEF projects. As part of an ecosystem conservation and community livelihood enhancement initiative in Zambia, the Canadian company First Quantum Minerals has been working to support improved community management of forest ecosystems and sustainable agriculture.

Looking ahead, the Canadian mining sector has an opportunity to work closely with the GEF Global Electric Mobility Program as it develops standards for dealing with lithium batteries. The safe disposal of, and recovery of materials from, lithium-ion batteries is an increasingly pressing issue for the country. Projections suggest that one-third of Canadian cars will be electric-powered by 2030.

Several Canadian consultancies work closely and regularly with the GEF and the international environmental conventions it supports.

- Baastel: The Quebec City-based consulting firm was involved in the Biodiversity Program Study of 2004 and was chosen by the GEFIO for a GEF Country Support Program evaluation, presented to the GEF Council in June 2021.

- Stratos: The management consultancy, which is headquartered in Ottawa and specializes in environmental, social and governance issues, was responsible for the Third Review of the Effectiveness of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity which went to COP-9 in 2008.



Gender equality

Canada has played a strong role in the advancement of gender equality as a core part of international environmental action, including through the GEF and the initiatives it funds. The country was part of the working group that developed the GEF Policy on Gender Equality approved at the 53rd meeting of the GEF Council in November 2017: a policy that significantly advanced GEF efforts to address issues of gender inequality and to promote women's empowerment across its operations and in its projects and programs.

The federal government regards gender as a key priority for development efforts. Among the priorities set out in Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy is environment and climate action focusing on adaptation and mitigation as well as on water management.

Women and indigenous peoples are most vulnerable to climate change and biodiversity loss. They are also, as shown by independent GEF evaluations, the most effective stewards of nature.

The GEF and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) often unite to fund projects that advance common goals. In Mozambique, for example, they are supporting the Gorongosa Restoration Project and its efforts to restore wildlife populations and lift surrounding communities out of poverty. GEF funds led to the creation of a native tree nursery and model farm, mostly run by women. CIDA funding will help expand this cash crop model to help women subsistence farmers achieve financial security while providing a forested buffer for the national park.





Canada has played a crucial role in supporting Niger's efforts to pilot, develop, and scale up sustainable land management and combat gender inequality. A GEF/IFAD partnership received funds from the Rome-Based Agencies Programme – \$38 million of which

came from financed by Canada – to strengthen the resilience of livelihoods in areas hit by prolonged crises. This partnership is committed to correcting gender inequity and improving food security and nutrition in vulnerable communities living in fragile and shock-prone ecosystems.

Activities have included the creation and reinforcement of cereal banks managed by women's groups; the acquisition of land tenure documents for farmers, especially women; and nutrition training for women.

Indigenous Peoples

Canada has regularly advocated the importance of drawing upon Indigenous leadership and traditional knowledge as it seeks to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental threats that disproportionately affect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The government has invested more than C\$900 million in Indigenous-led initiatives focused on climate adaptation, food security, clean energy, health, infrastructure, and climate monitoring since the launch of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. It has also been actively engaged with the GEF on the role of Indigenous leaders and traditional knowledge in preserving and restoring the environment.

The GEF has supported Indigenous Peoples since its founding. More than 10 percent of its projects to date have had substantial involvement of Indigenous Peoples and Local


Communities, and this engagement continues to grow. One important avenue is through the GEF Small Grants Programme, which to date has provided support to more than 25,000 community-based and grassroots projects, in close partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

The GEF's commitment to Indigenous partnership as it seeks to restore nature and improve climate change resilience spans many initiatives. In Guyana, for instance, the GEF is supporting community and land use planning in areas affected by gold mining. In Fiji, GEF funds are helping Indigenous fisheries, with government support, to combat illegal fishing by foreign vessels. In the Congo Basin, GEF resources are supporting community forestry, co-management of protected areas by Indigenous Peoples, and the recognition of Indigenous land rights.

In January 2022, the GEF and its partners launched a new Inclusive Conservation Initiative that will provide funding directly to IPLC organizations in support

of their ongoing work to conserve biodiversity. The GEF's Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Group provided essential counsel in the development of the C\$31.9 million project,


directed by an Indigenous Steering Committee. This initiative is expected to grow further in its scope and scale in the GEF-8 funding period.



The Arctic Council, of which Canada is a core member, will play a central role in a GEF-financed effort to improve the management of Mongolian peatlands and bolster the climate resilience of nomadic herder populations. Project teams will encourage herding communities to share experiences with global

stakeholders and environmental decision-making fora and will develop global educational courses to prepare indigenous reindeer-herding youth to play active roles in the Arctic Council and other rangeland and conservation decision-making bodies. Coordinated by the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry and

the Arctic Council's working group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, the project draws upon the Ottawa Principles on Traditional Knowledge. These principles state, in part, that traditional knowledge is owned by its holders, often collectively.

A close-up, profile view of a woman wearing traditional Indigenous jewelry and clothing. She has a yellow and red beaded headband with a feather, large turquoise and red earrings, and a dark, beaded necklace. Her hair is braided and adorned with a green feather. The background is blurred, showing other people in similar attire.

Efforts to tackle Persistent Organic Pollutants under the Stockholm Convention are very important to Canada, particularly given that POPs can travel long distances and tend to accumulate in northern climates. This puts inhabitants of Canada's Arctic, many of whom are First Nations peoples, at elevated risk of exposure to POPs, even though almost none are used in the region. GEF-funded work is aimed at tackling POPs at their source, helping to reduce the bioaccumulation of these chemicals in marine predators such as seals and orcas – traditional foods of First Nations peoples. Canada played a leadership role in the development of the Stockholm Convention, was the first country to sign and ratify the treaty in 2001 and has provided a C\$20 million fund to help developing countries ready themselves for implementation.



Sustainable farming and food systems

Canada's strong experience in farming and agricultural exports, and leadership on food security issues, is also reflected in its engagement with the GEF, particularly through the Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR). The Canadian government supports several FOLUR initiatives through its backing for the Fundacion para la Conservacion del Bosque Chiquitano, a non-

profit organization based in Bolivia. The non-profit is set to assist FOLUR Brazil and may be engaged to collaborate with FOLUR Paraguay. In Nicaragua, one of four countries added to the FOLUR program under an expansion approved in 2020, the team plans to work closely with the Caribbean Coast Food Security Project, which is supported by Canada through the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program.



GEF Results by the Numbers

THE GEF HAS SUPPORTED:

The creation of over 3,860 protected areas covering an area larger than the lower 48 US states (2.3 billion acres).

Conservation-friendly management of more than 1.3 billion acres of productive landscapes and seascapes (an area about twice the size of Alaska).

Sustainable management of 61 of the world's major river basins.

Improved cooperation and governance of more than one-third of the world's large marine ecosystems.

The sound management and disposal of 235,000 tons of highly toxic Persistent Organic Pollutants.



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and strains on land and ocean health. Its grants, blended financing, and policy support helps developing countries address their biggest environmental priorities and adhere to international environmental conventions. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$22 billion and mobilized \$120 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 national and regional projects.

MORE INFORMATION

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