

2022 Work Plans

Economic recovery & growth during a time of transition

The West is a major energy producer in a world where energy from fossil fuels is increasingly being disrupted. It will not achieve its economic, social or environmental goals without addressing dramatic changes in key global forces including the pandemic, trade, energy, the environment and changing workforce requirements.

What we do at CWF

Each theme builds on our past work and expertise. Individual activities may change as different pieces of the puzzle are addressed.

We will continue to produce and disseminate our research through reports, briefs, op-eds, CWF events and speaking engagements. We will also continue to convene experts, opinion leaders and decision makers to find and advance solutions.

In 2022 we will:

- Drive greater impact of our work by placing more emphasis on advancing recognition of problems and adoption of our recommendations.
- Build coalitions of partners among industry associations, governments, other think tanks, civil society and private sector organizations.
- Increase the number of briefings for officials, ministers, and caucus, legislative, house and senate committees.

2022 Work Plan

Trade & Investment Centre

Build capacity to trade & collaborate

The West's economic future largely begins and ends with international trade. February's border blockades, pandemic-related supply chain slow downs and November's severe weather disruptions in B.C. demonstrated the importance of international trade to the Canadian economy. The changing global context of trade will affect the West.

Surviving the new global trade environment: Trade in the world of today, not of 20 years ago

POLICY GOAL

Defend and advance western Canadian trade interests in response to significant shifts in the global trade environment.

China's federal, provincial and sectoral five-year plans (FYP) and the mechanisms that China uses to advance its policy objectives, like the Belt and Road Initiative, will impact western Canadian interests in China and other Indo-Pacific regional markets. The work of the centre will improve the capacity of Canadian exporters to enter and thrive in global markets, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, and articulate trade support needs to federal and provincial governments.

This is an ongoing project funded by long term partnerships.

In 2022 we will:

- Examine the impact of China's FYP on Western Canada.
- Convene running sector table/s to share information and exchange intelligence.
- Monitor major FYP issues.
- Model and report on China and Taiwan's accession to the CPTPP.
- Continue the China brief newsletter.

Surviving the new U.S. trade environment: Keep your friends closer

POLICY GOAL

Improve effectiveness of western provincial engagement in the U.S.

The first Trump administration altered U.S. trade policy toward Canada in ways that persist and will continue with the current congress and the next. For Western Canada, management of trade irritants cannot be left to distant Ottawa and Washington, D.C. An area where improvement can be made is the interactions between heads of government. Currently, the prairie-mountain west region is the only U.S. border region where premiers and governors do not have regular meetings.

In 2022 we will:

- Facilitate the participation of western premiers at the summer 2022 Western Governors Association (WGA) meeting.
- Develop a policy brief on western Canadian alignment and potential cooperation with the WGA's 2022 agenda.
- Host a second western premiers' breakfast at a WGA summer meeting.
- Research potential cross-border pandemic cooperation in the prairie-mountain west region.
- Develop an agenda for continued engagement between Prairie and mountain west provinces and states.
- Develop a new Prairie-Mountain West Brief modelled on the China Brief.

Sustainable, structural changes to improve trade infrastructure: Stop digging, start thinking

POLICY GOAL

Improvement in Canada's international reputation on trade infrastructure

CWF's Trade and Investment Centre (TIC) has spent eight years understanding the problems and developing a solution to repair weaknesses in Canada's trade infrastructure system based on international best practice. The TIC also assembled a national coalition of stakeholders to support its research and advocate for adoption of a data-driven long-term plan for trade infrastructure.

2022 will be spent promoting and facilitating the adoption of this solution.

In 2022 we will:

- Advocate for the adoption of recommendations from our report, *From Shovel Ready to Shovel Worthy* (released May 2022), and
- Seek funding to establish a Trade Infrastructure Executive in Residence position.

2022 Work Plan

Human Capital Centre

Build capacity to work & to improve productivity

The goal of the Human Capital Centre (HCC) is to ensure that the West has the workforce it needs today and into the future.

The HCC has championed a competency-based approach to education, training, assessment, hiring and labour market information systems for over eight years. It has taken time, but a competency-based approach to workforce development is gaining traction with governments, organizations, educators, employers and individuals.

The final piece of the competency puzzle: Engage employers

POLICY GOAL

A competency-based system driven by the demand side (employers), rather than the supply side (educators).

This missing link in our advocacy for a competency-based training and education ecosystem is pull from employers. For years, employers have expected that education and training providers would supply the workforce they needed. In a competency-based system, they must actively contribute.

We will focus on how to further implement a competency-based system designed to improve Canada's workforce development.

In 2022 we will:

- Identify how policy can support employers to become more engaged in determining competency requirements and the development of their own workforce training solutions.
- Identify new approaches to extend apprenticeship and experiential learning more broadly using competency design and assessment.
- Provide research support, reporting and recommendations, including policy recommendations that arise from participation in an 18-month project with lead partner Work Based Learning Consortium. Through this project, funded through the Future Skills Centre, we will determine manufacturing sectors with technical skills and competency shortages and develop on-the-job training programs specifically to fill technical competency gaps.
- Provide support for a 22-month, national, multi-sectoral project to upgrade basic workforce skills and measure the impact on individuals and on productivity for employers. (Project subject to final federal funding approval.)

Collaborative capacity in civil society

POLICY GOAL

More effective and efficient collaboration among non-profit agencies by applying competency frameworks.

There are more than 26,000 non-profit agencies working to improve lives in Alberta alone. In 2021, we began research into the civil society sector with the goal of assisting agencies to improve their capacity to collaborate.

In 2022 we will:

- Build competency frameworks including organizational, relational and digital capacity issues to support a new funding and delivery model of outcomes procurement.
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Youth talent & retention

POLICY GOAL

Reverse the loss of young people from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

In 2021 we explored why it is difficult to retain and attract youth to Alberta.

In 2022 we will:

- Engage with economic development agencies and other institutions to share our findings and support implementation of our recommendations. (Funding is required to extend this work to other provinces with youth talent challenges.)

It's not only energy systems: Energy workers & communities need a smooth transition too

POLICY GOAL

A smooth transition for energy workers and the communities disrupted by climate policies.

In 2022 we will:

- Use a competency-approach to develop policies to help workers in traditional oil, gas and coal extraction sectors face a transition to new careers.
- Apply a competency approach to assist economic development agencies in smaller communities most affected by this transition seek investment from new employers. A critical aspect of investment attraction is a workforce with the right combination of skills. An adaptive competencies pathway to connect labour market information, investment attraction and available training will be tried and tested if funding permits.

2022 Work Plan

Natural Resource Centre

The changing rules of resource development

The rules of resource development are changing rapidly, leaving governments, businesses, large industry, communities, the financial sector and others scrambling to understand how to prosper in a sustainability-focused world where the goalposts and rules keep changing.

Although parties may agree on the desired outcomes, there is often disagreement on how to get there – which depends on the rules. Rules shape who wins, who loses and even dictate who can join the game.

Emerging legislation & regulation

POLICY GOAL

Ensure that climate, emissions and environmental policies are designed and implemented in ways that make sense for Western Canada.

Western Canada is particularly sensitive to the effects of climate and carbon policies, such as clean fuel regulations, offset markets, carbon sequestration tax credits and impact assessment legislation.

In 2022 we will:

- Continue to identify where national and provincial legislation and regulations get it right and where they get it wrong. We'll also identify how the West can prosper in this rapidly changing environment.
- Keep a close eye on the implications of evolving U.S. legislation on energy and climate, and what can be done to ensure Western Canada's interests are aligned with our giant neighbour to the south.

Communities & Indigenous groups surviving & thriving the transition

POLICY GOAL

Identify how local communities and specific groups can mitigate the negative impacts of climate policy and take advantage of new opportunities.

There are opportunities as well as costs in the energy transition and part of our job is to help policy-and decision-makers create the conditions for opportunities to thrive.

In 2022 we will:

- Partner and convene to assist Indigenous groups' involvement with offsets projects and other environmental opportunities,
 - Create a better understanding of the potential impacts of energy system transformation on communities and regions and how to mitigate the negative impacts and support opportunities, and
 - Produce policy recommendations for how the West and Canada can capitalize on emerging opportunities with nuclear energy, hydrogen, a more integrated electricity grid and other evolving technologies.
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Targets, measurement & modelling

POLICY GOAL

Ensure that the models that drive policy are built on provincially representative assumptions and data in order to produce transparent and meaningful outputs.

All governments use models to estimate the impact of policies to achieve emissions goals and their economic impact. But models aren't reality and different assumptions and datasets can lead to very different results. Ultimately, the entity that controls the model is the one that controls inputs into policy decisions.

In 2022 we will:

- Continue to critique federal "black box" modelling of policy impacts on emissions and the economy so that all affected parties can understand how the rules impact them.
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Environmental & social governance: The intersection of finance flows & policy

POLICY GOAL

Resource sector businesses and western provinces capitalize on their strengths to respond to changing environmental and social governance (ESG) investing practices.

ESG reporting sits, for the most part, outside traditional regulatory compliance, but is strongly influenced by government policy. The centre will build on its past work that described the state of ESG reporting in the Canadian energy sector as well the use of performance management practices beyond ESG reporting to build trust with various publics.

In 2022 we will:

- Fill a critical knowledge gap on how ESG intersects with provincial responsibilities and how those governments should respond.
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2022 Work Plan

The West in Canada

Cooperative federalism has had a bumpy ride in recent years. CWF was founded to advocate for a strong West in a strong Canada. CWF participates in two national collaborative efforts.

The Confederation of Tomorrow project

POLICY GOAL

Canadians agree and disagree on important policy issues: where can policy respond to this diversity?

Ongoing survey research and reports with Environics Institute; le Centre d'analyse politique: Constitution et Fédéralisme (CAP-CF) à l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM); Institute for Research on Public Policy; the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government at St. Francis Xavier University; and the Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy at University of Saskatchewan.

In 2022 we will:

- Participate in a national survey and multiple reports on Canadians' perceptions of fairness and respect in the federation, federal transfers, Indigenous rights, environmental policy and other major concerns.

Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Commission

POLICY GOAL

Develop a system of fiscal arrangements that fund the government supports Canadians require in ways that are financially sustainable, fair and achieve their policy goals.

The Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Commission is an ongoing collaboration to study and recommend changes to federal, provincial and municipal transfers – including equalization, economic stabilization program, and health and social transfers. The Commission's work is housed on CWF's website <https://cwf.ca/series/intergovernmental-fiscal-relations-commission/>.

In 2022 we will:

- Participate in an examination of the problems with Canada's current system of fiscal arrangements: e.g., a backgrounder on tax point transfers; the problem of siloed funding for interdependent challenges; and more to be determined.

Indigenous capacity support

In 2022, CWF will explore an appropriate role for the Foundation supporting Indigenous people and their governments with research and analysis. Projects that support but don't tell Indigenous people what they need or how they should govern themselves will be considered.

In 2022 we will:

- Collaborate with Indigenous groups to explore the capacity Indigenous groups need to participate in nature-based offset credit opportunities. (Natural Resources Centre)