

# Canada West Foundation

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## Work Plans 2023

### What we do at CWF

**Canada West Foundation** is an independent, non-partisan public policy think tank that brings a uniquely western Canadian perspective to research, convening and analysis of the issues of multiple sectors and governments. We propose new policy and regulatory recommendations as well as suggestions as legislation is implemented.

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

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

#### **In 2023 we will:**

**Drive greater impact** of our work by placing more emphasis on 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.

# Trade & Investment Centre

## Work Plan 2023

In 2023 the prosperity of Canada's export-dependent economy depends on two factors: increasing market access and surviving in the markets we already have access to. The breakdown of the global rules-based trade order, the rise of trade irritants that shut entire markets for crops like canola, and an increase in the volume and intensity of trade disputes with the U.S. require a shift in policy and focus to prioritize the defence of existing trade. Part of this shift includes assurances that Canada can get goods to markets that pay top dollar but doubt our ability to deliver. Surviving the new global trade environment will require understanding how the changing context will impact our interests and what can be done about it. Increased attention to security and protectionism in the United States will create challenges for Canada in its relations with the U.S. and other trading partners.

### Policy Goals

**Improve the resilience of Western Canada's trade-based economy to be able to survive in the new global trade environment (including North America) and ensure that western interests are represented in the implementation of the federal government's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS)**

### Indo-Pacific Trade

- Continue [China Brief](#) with expanded focus to include the Indo-Pacific.
- Become a go-to source of information for western Canadian stakeholders on China's most recent five-year plan.

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**There is no economic growth without trade and no trade without trade infrastructure.**

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- Assure that western stakeholders are informed about the federal government's Indo-Pacific strategy and that western interests are represented in the plan's implementation. The Canada West Foundation is well positioned to provide the kind of trade intelligence for the region needed in the West including:

- Provincial complementarity index with Indo-Pacific countries of interest.

- Continue to pursue secretariat role for Indo-Pacific trade intelligence platform (if funded).

- Help western business avoid becoming cannon fodder in the U.S.-China trade war – expect short timely pieces.
- Provide a Western Canada voice on working groups and initiatives related to Indo-Pacific trade.

### North America Trade

- Continue [North America Brief](#), one of the only information sources to include information on Mexico, a top five trade partner for most of the West.
- Continue to identify opportunities for sub-national engagement (provinces and states) including those on the trade infrastructure file.
- Continue work with U.S. state government associations that have western Canadian membership.
- Active western voice on Canada-U.S.-Mexico competitiveness through participation in various tri-national working groups.

## Trade Ahead Speaker Series

- In partnership with World Trade Centre Winnipeg, Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, Calgary Economic Development, Choose Lethbridge, Edmonton Global and Vancouver World Trade Centre, convene three webinars with global experts for partner organization members on emerging trade issues.

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## Policy Goal

### **Enable Canada's trade infrastructure to lead the next generation of economic growth**

*Advocacy to drive adoption of Shovel Worthy solution.*

- Executive in Residence John Law to continue working with federal and provincial officials to include Prairie priorities in national infrastructure planning.
- Organize a national trade infrastructure conference in Ottawa.
- Support inclusion of trade infrastructure at the July 2023 meeting of the Council of the Federation.
- On-going advocacy and public speaking.

*Trade infrastructure intelligence secretariat – if funded.*

- Public and private data sharing and analysis – information collection, dissemination and consultation.

*Model trade infrastructure impact based on updated Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) modelling.*

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## Policy Goal

### **Speed up removal of barriers to internal trade in Canada**

- Commentary / support as required by provinces. Participation in the national internal trade working group.

## Other

Emerging issues tied to the Centre's areas of competence

# Natural Resources Centre

## Work Plan 2023

A desirable energy future doesn't just solve for one problem – it must strive for multiple outcomes, all of which are important.

Substantially lower GHG emissions and “cleaner” production are critical. At the same time, Canada also needs to: ensure domestic and global energy security; achieve energy affordability; support integrity of land use, water supply and food production; and deliver strong economic outcomes—objectives that are inextricably intertwined with the choices we make about how to achieve reduced emissions.

In 2023, the Natural Resources Centre will focus on the intersection of energy, the environment and the economy to ensure that policies make sense for Western Canada while also working to solve for “all of the above.” And we will keep our eye on making sure that technologies that can make a difference are affordable, that timelines are sufficient, and that political conditions support their implementation.

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### Policy Goal

**Help the western provinces capitalize on emerging opportunities in energy of all forms in ways that enhance both prosperity and sustainability**

Western Canada contains all the main building blocks for thriving in the evolving energy context – vast expertise in producing and transporting energy of all types, a highly-skilled workforce, an entrepreneurial mindset and phenomenal natural resources. Success will rely on smart planning, smart policies and good timing. Our work will advance all of the above.

- Continue [Energy Innovation Brief](#) to highlight innovations

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**A desirable future for the West involves solutions that address the environment, energy systems and the economy—all at the same time.**

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in the energy sector and broaden readers' understanding of sustainable energy.

- Host workshops, roundtables and other events that help our audiences understand the evolving picture of global energy transformation and energy security.
- Continue to produce recommendations for policy and regulatory changes that enable western Canada to capitalize on emerging opportunities with LNG, CCUS, nuclear energy, critical minerals and metals, hydrogen, future-fit hydrocarbons and other evolving technologies.
- Update our very popular 2021 publication on ESG and the Canadian Energy Sector.
- Engage in deep analysis of the important questions underlying energy transformation success—including how to pay for the transition, and how our emissions accounting practices both support and undercut global CO<sub>2</sub> reduction objectives.

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### Policy Goal

**Improve impact assessment processes in Canada to ensure timely, robust and fair outcomes**

Canada's current federal regulatory process for major projects is perceived as slow, untested, uncertain and unpredictable. Our work will produce recommendations for how to improve the process in a way that increases timeliness, predictability and competitiveness, while still maintaining a robust system that protects the environment and society.

- Focus on the current federal *Impact Assessment Act*, identifying problems and potential solutions – including both “tweaks” and substantive changes to address those problems. And we will sensitize those solutions with people who have power to effect or influence change in the legislation / regulations.

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## Policy Goal

### **Ensure that Western Canada’s electricity systems can meet future demand—reliably, affordably and with low emissions**

Across Canada, electricity systems are evolving to prepare for future demand. This demand is not only for a grid with fewer emissions, but for a system that reliably and inexpensively supports higher electricity demand. The challenges in reaching those objectives are not just technical, but also logistical and political. We will build on our past work in this area to identify and address these multiple challenges.

- Review current provincial electricity governance and operational contexts.
- Review the wide range of supply and demand electricity forecasts and scenarios.
- Assess assumptions in federal decarbonization plans and associated modelling.
- Recommend policy actions for provincial governments to reduce western Canadian electricity emissions in the context of providing safe, affordable and reliable electricity.

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## Policy Goal

### **Ensure that energy, emissions and environmental policies are designed and implemented in ways that make sense for Western Canada**

Western Canada’s industry mix makes it disproportionately sensitive to the impacts of energy and emissions policy. Our research and recommendations to government encourage a balanced approach that considers environmental performance objectives alongside economic prosperity, Indigenous reconciliation and other goals.

- Continue to identify where national and provincial legislation and regulations get it right and where they get it wrong. We will identify how the West can prosper in this rapidly changing environment, and provide analysis and commentary that helps different audiences understand the real-world implications of government policy.
- 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.

## Other

Emerging issues tied to the Centre’s areas of competence

# Human Capital Centre

## Work Plan 2023

The Human Capital Centre has advocated for a competency-based approach to workforce development and deployment since 2015. The need for competency frameworks to facilitate better matches between people and jobs and to inform education and training providers of the competencies they need to build in students has reached a critical stage. More than ever, employers and policy and decision makers think about required competencies when they look for solutions to the severe labour and skills shortages experienced by major industry sectors across the West.

### Policy Goal

#### A competency-based lens for experiential learning, including apprenticeship

- Work Integrated Learning (WIL) can assist students to build job skills while still in school. WIL can also assist young people to become attached to the workforce sooner and encourage employers to become part of the education and training ecosystem. Current WIL programs often do not have measurable goals or assessment of what has been learned. The Centre will research and make recommendations about how a broader view of work-integrated-learning can build job related competencies in a range of careers so that more students are better equipped for work upon graduation.
- Apprenticeship represents the most established model for WIL. We will identify the potential of apprenticeship to build skills quickly and efficiently in a variety of job roles beyond the traditional skilled trades.
- This year we will complete work on a work-based training project which demonstrates the full competency-based workforce development cycle. This cycle will be explained fully in a paper to be released in Q1.

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**Matching people with jobs and jobs with people in a world where upskilling and reskilling competencies underly success for employers and employees.**

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### Policy Goal

#### Competency-based solutions for young talent development, retention and attraction

- Governments and post-secondary institutions are proposing micro-credentials as the solution to quickly upskill and reskill the workforce. However, the implementation of micro-credentials has been hit and miss at best. We will report on the success of specific micro-credentials designed to build an inventory of best practices.
- We will extend our 2021-2022 research about young talent attraction and retention in Alberta to young talent development and retention in Manitoba.

### Policy Goal

#### Competency-based solutions for competitiveness and the global competition for talent

- In partnership with the Bush Institute and NASCO (North American Strategy for Competitiveness), the Centre will use a competency approach to assess Canada's workforce preparedness and competitive advantage amid supply chain restructuring and an increasingly global competition for talent. With input from Canadian manufacturing and logistics organizations, our work will identify opportunities for collaboration across Canada, the United States and Mexico on training, credentials and assessment. This work is important for the West as it competes for talent in the growing bio-medical, hydrogen and fuel cell, ship building and agri-food manufacturing sectors, and in the perpetually short-of-workers warehousing and transportation sectors.

Continue [The Future of Work and Learning Brief](#)

### Other

Emerging issues tied to the Centre's areas of competence

# The West in Canada

## 2023 Work Plan

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.

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### Policy goal

#### **Canadians agree and disagree on important policy issues. Where can policy respond to this diversity?**

Participation in the Confederation of Tomorrow project – 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.

- 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.

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### 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 Fiscal Federalism Policy Network 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 Canada West Foundation's website: [cwf.ca/series/fiscal-federalism-policy-network/](http://cwf.ca/series/fiscal-federalism-policy-network/)

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

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