

# CWF 2024 Work Plans

Canada West Foundation has a 50-year reputation as a trusted voice helping policy decision makers understand the unique issues that impact western Canadians. The competitive challenges facing Western Canada are complex and growing; CWF is poised to address these complexities.

In this rapidly changing world, our three policy areas of Trade and Trade Infrastructure; Resources, Environment and Economy; and Skills, Innovation and Productivity represent sectors of economic and social importance to the West. We identify problems and develop useful solutions that lay the groundwork for good public policy.

## **We create change, not chatter**

Governments, businesses and individuals count on our sound, pragmatic solutions as they develop new programs and address tough issues. We build on our research and engagement activities with actions that further their impact: presentations, briefings and outreach. Our work produces pragmatic solutions that create value for all Canadians, but especially western Canadians.

# Trade & Trade Infrastructure

**If you can't move it, you can't sell it.**

The West is a trade dependent region in a trade dependent country with transportation routes longer than our competitors. Canada's declining trade infrastructure reputation is hurting our ability to succeed in competitive export markets. With partners in the private sector, we have identified and advocated for a long-term national trade infrastructure and corridors plan which was supported by Canada's Premiers at the Council of the Federation in 2023. We continue to develop implementation of this solution in the West and across Canada.

Where our trade infrastructure work is a very focused problem-solution-adoption oriented approach with a dedicated industry coalition, the trade work is much broader. We are an important competency builder in a market that's not as easy to navigate as our neighbour to the south.

**Policy Goal: Identify opportunities and strategies to mitigate challenges and strengthen Western Canada's exports.**

We will:

- Conduct research and analysis to identify Western export opportunities in the Indo-Pacific for key economies by product on a province level. Agriculture and agrifood opportunities will be highlighted and advanced with governments and stakeholders.
- Provide Indo-Pacific strategy recommendations to advance Western interests.
- Continue the [China / Indo-Pacific Brief](#) and Trade Ahead webinar series to provide targeted advice and capacity building for exporters in complex markets.
- Monitor and analyze Canada, U.S. and Mexico trade policy activities to prepare for the review and possible renegotiation of NAFTA / CUSMA in 2026.

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## **SIGNATURE PROJECT PROFILE**

### **NAFTA Western Agenda**

To identify shared interests and priorities between Canadians and Americans living in the Prairie / Mountain-West, regional surveys will be conducted using a proven methodology in collaboration with the University of Nebraska Policy Institute. The results will provide the intelligence and language to advance Western interests at the center of North American trade.

**Policy Goal: Improve the West’s ability to move what we sell through the development of a National Trade Infrastructure Plan.**

Trade infrastructure is critical to the West’s competitiveness to get products and people where they need to go efficiently and reliably. The Canada West Foundation, with a coalition of stakeholders, proposed a framework for a long-term strategic national trade plan based on international best practices. Our report, From Shovel Ready to Shovel Worthy: The Path to a National Trade Infrastructure Plan for the Next Generation of Economic Growth, was supported by Canada’s Premiers at the Council of Federation in July 2023.

We will:

- Map Western Canada’s transportation infrastructure overlaid with priority industry locations, for example in critical mineral mining, to identify infrastructure strengths and weaknesses. (Report)
- Provide lessons from the Asia Pacific Gateway and National Trade Corridors Initiatives. (Report)
- Support the implementation of the Trade Infrastructure Memorandum of Understanding agreed upon by the western provinces.
- Continue to advance a National Trade Infrastructure Plan and ensure that the West’s interests are represented in National Trade Infrastructure funding to improve the West’s export competitiveness.
- Influence the revision of the National Trade Corridor fund to introduce prairie concerns.
- Continue with the North America Brief.



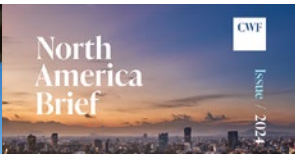

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**SIGNATURE PROJECT PROFILE**

**Shovel Worthy 2: Moving Toward Implementation – Bridging international best practice with past Canadian experience**

During research for the *Shovel Ready* report, the Asia Pacific Gateway Initiative (APGI) of 2006 and the subsequent National Corridors Initiative were often cited as Canadian success stories. However, the research identified that there was not a clear sense of why or how people thought it was successful. Shovel Worthy 2 will derive the Canadian lessons from the APGI that can be applied to the proposed long-term strategic planning process proposed in Shovel Ready.

**TRADE & TRADE INFRASTRUCTURE**

REPORTS	COMMENTARY	NORTH AMERICA BRIEF	CHINA BRIEF
			

# Resources, Environment & Economy

**We have what the world wants and we can produce it sustainably and economically if given the chance.**

Pursuit of decarbonization objectives without addressing other environmental and economic impacts harms the competitiveness of Canada's resource sector (including agriculture) and may induce undesirable outcomes in terms of social effects. These adverse consequences extend throughout the Canadian economy and globally. The Canada West Foundation is in a unique position to bring a respected western voice to the debate – not just in the West, but within the federal government as well.

**Policy Goal: Ensure timely and robust project approval and authorization processes at the federal and provincial levels.**

The problem goes beyond federal impact assessment. We see regulatory and permitting challenges in energy, mining and the infrastructure to serve them. The demand for critical minerals has opened a window for regulatory change.

We will:

- Continue to identify problems with overlapping and even conflicting assessment processes.
- Propose and advance practical fixes that respect the environment, economy and indigenous rights to enhance competitiveness of Canada's energy and mining resources and contribute Canada's critical minerals to supply our global partners. Solutions based on the September 2023 report, [Competitive Canada: Recommendations to improve federal assessment for major projects](#), will be advanced and tested with stakeholders.

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## **SIGNATURE PROJECT PROFILE**

### **What's baby and what's bathwater?**

To improve impact assessment, it will be important to identify what is necessary to maintain a robust process while getting rid of those elements that add cost without value. Reports have identified weaknesses – the next phase is to advance practical solutions, including collaboration within and across orders of government to reduce overlap, uncertainty and repetition, while maintaining the integrity of assessments and permitting as they relate to communities, indigenous rights and the environment.

**Policy Goal:** Ensure Western Canada’s electricity systems can meet future demand with energy that is reliable, affordable and with low emissions.

We will:

- Explore practical solutions that work within the unique context of each Western province, building on our comprehensive analysis of that context – [Electricity Systems Across Western Canada: A Landscape Analysis](#) (July 2023).

**Policy Goal:** Identify competitive opportunities and challenges at the intersection of resources, the economy and robust environmental regulation.

We will:

- Identify how Canada can enhance the energy security of our allies and help reduce global greenhouse gas emissions – starting with the value of Canada’s LNG exports to B.C., Canada and the world.
- Identify new areas where CWF can make a unique contribution to national leadership from a Western perspective in the areas of forestry, agriculture and water.
- Continue the [Energy Innovation Brief](#).

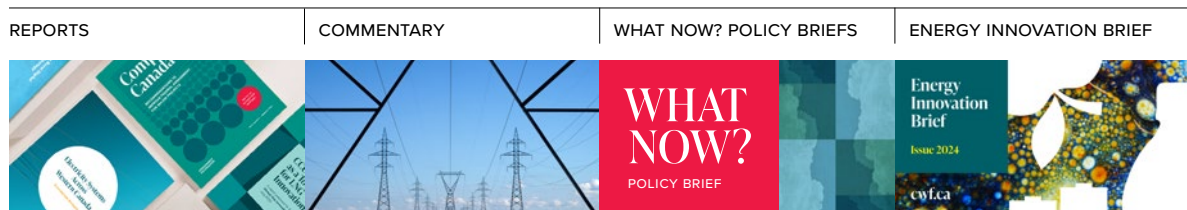
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## SIGNATURE NEW INITIATIVE

### Intersecting value chains in forestry, agriculture and energy

In forestry and agriculture, new value chains in renewable energy will change markets for both value-added and waste products. Two examples are the increased use of canola oil crushed in the west for renewable diesel and bio-waste from forestry and agriculture transformed into renewable jet fuel. How will these new value chains change the economics and management of the production and processing of primary products? What are the implications for infrastructure – for example CO<sub>2</sub> pipelines, as well as for water, and electricity?

## RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY



# Skills, Innovation & Productivity

## Matching people with jobs and jobs with people for a robust and competitive economy.

The ability to develop the required workforce is a necessary competitive strength to keep our economy strong and attract talent as well as investment. Bridging the gap between people (students and workers), post-secondaries, employers and innovation is the key. A competency approach is that bridge.

**Policy Goal:** Develop Western Canada's workforce with the competencies required to create economic growth through the adoption of innovations and improved productivity.

We will:

- Work with employer and industry associations to expand the apprenticeship model beyond trades to other occupations to build job-ready competencies in new workers and the existing workforce.
- Promote the removal of barriers within existing trades apprenticeships to improve attraction and retention in the skilled trades workforce. A competency-based approach builds the workforce faster, certifies capacity to perform job tasks and improves productivity.
- Continue the [Future of Work and Learning Brief](#).

**Policy Goal:** Reduce friction in the labor market through the use of competency-based workforce development and employment systems that better match people with jobs and jobs with people.

We will:

- Work with stakeholders to propose a systems approach that starts with government but brings along employers, labour market information, education providers and individuals.

**Policy Goal: Attract and retain international talent through effective and efficient credential and competency recognition.**

We will:

- Demonstrate how competency assessment can help qualify and pre-qualify immigrants for jobs in Canada.

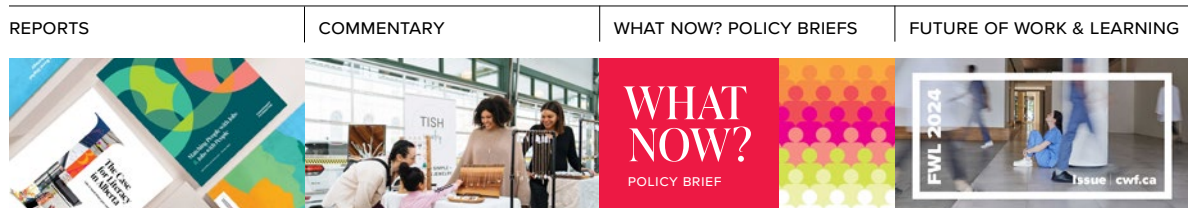
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## **SIGNATURE PROJECT PROFILE**

### **Competency to adopt innovation**

Canada's productivity lags as does its adoption of innovations in new plant and equipment and processes. A competency approach can not only improve workers' productivity in their current workplace, but it can efficiently and effectively improve their ability to perform in the next workplace. This work will provide evidence for the link between competency-based training and assessment, and firm-level adoption of innovations.

## **SKILLS, INNOVATION & PRODUCTIVITY**



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