

IVEY foundation



CONSERVING CANADA'S FORESTS PROGRAM

FIVE YEAR EVALUATION
(2003 - 2007)

Report Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ivey Foundation (“the Foundation” or “Ivey”) is a private charitable foundation located in Toronto, Canada. It was incorporated as The Richard Ivey Foundation on December 31, 1947, under the laws of the Province of Ontario by the late Richard G. Ivey, Q.C., LL.D. and his son, Richard M. Ivey, Q.C., C.C., LL.D. Since 1947, the Foundation has made grants totalling \$69.4 million.

The family-run Ivey Foundation has evolved and kept pace with an increasingly demanding and sophisticated grant-seeking community. With roots in London, Ontario, it helped establish that city as a centre of health-care excellence and home to a leading research-intensive university. Today, the Conserving Canada’s Forests Program (CF Program) provides critical support for environmental sustainability across Canada.

The Ivey Foundation’s Theory of Change

- Bases grantmaking decisions on scientific information but recognizes that lack of scientific certainty does not preclude action.
- Builds collaborative partnerships across organizations and sectors, including non-traditional allies.
- Engages stakeholders in a compelling, broad-based forest-conservation vision.
- Increases organizational capacity by providing substantial, multiyear support to organizations where warranted.
- Tracks and reports on accountability at three levels: (1) government to public, (2) grantees to the Foundation, and (3) Foundation to the public.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Foundation’s Biodiversity in Forest-Dominated Ecosystems Program

Ivey’s commitment to healthy, sustainable forests began in 1992, when it instituted its Biodiversity in Forest-Dominated Ecosystems Program.

Transition to the Conserving Canada’s Forests Program (CF Program)

In January 2003, the Foundation hosted a discussion forum with leaders of the conservation movement in Canada. This forum confirmed the importance of supporting both (1) *an increase in the extent of protected forest ecosystems* and (2) *an expansion in the adoption of sustainable forest practices in Canada*.

Since 2003, the Foundation’s primary programmatic goals have been to protect forests and forest values in Canada by the following means: (1) *protection* of an adequate amount of forests, including representative and intact ecosystems and (2) *sustainable use* (best practices for sustainable forest management in Canada).

The Foundation then established the framework for the Conserving Canada's Forests Program, which was developed as a ten-year initiative, starting in 2003, including:

- measurable five and ten years conservation targets,
- a baseline study,
- detailed measures of outcomes of the work of those receiving grants from the Foundation, and
- program granting within three clusters: Markets, Policy and Law, and Applied Science.

After a year of active funding, Foundation staff observed that a broadly supported forest conservation vision had emerged for Canada's largest forest ecosystem, the *boreal forest*. This vision had been developed by leading industry, First Nations, and conservation organizations. Called the Boreal Forest Conservation Framework, it was adopted on December 1, 2003.

This caused the Foundation to focus its grantmaking primarily on initiatives that would achieve change in markets or policy that supported conservation outcomes in Canada's boreal forest.

The Five-Year Program Review (2003 to 2007)

An evaluation of the Conserving Canada's Forests Program has been commissioned by the Ivey Foundation consistent with its policy to undertake independent evaluations of its programs, and specifically the commitment to evaluate the CF Program after five years of granting. The review covers the years 2003 to 2007, inclusive.

The objective of the review/evaluation is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the CF Program with a view to modifying the grant allocation strategy in order to maximize the achievement of the Foundation's conservation goals. The evaluation includes an assessment of the program within a broader conservation and sustainability context.

Key Strengths of the Ivey Foundation and the Conserving Canada's Forests Program

Overall, the Foundation has made substantial progress in fulfilling the purpose of the Conserving Canada's Forests Program and in meeting the program's goals and objectives. It has also done so in a way that has been consistent with its expressed theory of change and its strengths as defined through extensive consultations with the Canadian forest conservation community.

Market-Based Solutions for Forest Sustainability

- There has been dramatic, measurable progress as a result of the Ivey Foundation's focus not only on the conservation of forests, but on the less visible issue of forest sustainability through support for market-based solutions. Notably, through its support of the Forest Stewardship Council of Canada (FSC Canada), Ivey has been instrumental in achieving a dramatic increase

in the number of hectares committed to FSC certification, a voluntary, market-based tool. The FSC uses its logo to identify products that are responsibly harvested and/or from verified recycled sources.

A Leader among Canadian and International Donors

- The Foundation “brand” is highly regarded within Canada and among international donors and non-governmental organizations engaged in conservation issues in Canada.

Politically Effective

- The Foundation has maintained an effective balance by being both an activist funder and a respected presence among senior-level holders of political office (especially in Ontario) and among industry representatives.
- Ivey is seen by its peers, and by others, as having excellent political reach, which it is “not afraid to use.” Examples of effective use of this political reach is evidenced in the Foundation’s successful support of Ontario’s Greenbelt (about one million acres of natural and agricultural land surrounding Toronto and protected by Ontario government legislation in December 2004, the Ontario *Endangered Species Act* and its leadership in the Priorities for Ontario initiative, and finally the political commitment in Ontario to protect 50 percent and the northern boreal forest.
- The Foundation has demonstrated an ability to move strategically, identifying opportunities that require more support or sustained support (e.g., Québec and Ontario) and pulling out of areas where success seems slim (e.g., Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and New Brunswick).

Maximum Results from Modest Investments

- The Foundation has been effective in achieving maximum results from modest investments, largely because of the abilities of the Foundation’s professional staff. They are open, available, and extremely well informed on conservation issues. They also have effective access to key government decision-makers.

A Linchpin for Collaboration among Conservation Groups

- The Foundation is acclaimed for its willingness to constructively support the work of other groups “without having to take credit for it.”
- Ongoing consultations convened by the Foundation have established a communications bridge for conservation groups who often do not have the resources to maintain ongoing contact among themselves.

Evaluation Methodology and Summary of Results

The evaluation was based on both qualitative and quantitative measures, including the following: interviews with a targeted set of representatives from conservation groups, foundations, governments and industry; analysis of earlier studies of boreal forest conservation; a questionnaire for grantees and others familiar with the work of the Foundation or with current sociopolitical and economic trends in Canada; a review of written materials describing the work of the Foundation through its CF Program; baseline data materials gathered by the Foundation when the CF Program was first established; and two reports authored by Wendy Francis, Cathy Wilkinson, and Scott Highleyman: *Canada's Boreal Forest: An Assessment of Opportunities for Protection of Northern Wilderness* and *Protecting Canada's Boreal Forest: Recommendations for the First Year of the Canadian Boreal Project*.

Levels of Evaluation

- Cluster evaluation reports (reports on grants issued through the three Foundation clusters—Markets, Policy and Law, and Applied Science) were conducted by staff and reviewed by the evaluator.
- The primary focus of the assessment, however, was undertaking a program evaluation that included a higher-level strategic review of the Foundation's granting strategy.

Summary of Results

The report gives a summary of the results of this five-year (2003–2007) evaluation of the Foundation's Conserving Canada's Forests Program. The summary emphasizes the following aspects of the Foundation's work:

- program context (including an environmental scan of the economic and sociopolitical issue landscape),
- a retrospective analysis of grantmaking strategy and implementation at the Foundation (including grant evaluation; an evaluation of clusters of grants relating to Markets, Policy and Law, and Applied Science, including coordination among grantees in different clusters; and an assessment of the clarity and relevance of the program guidelines available to grant applicants),
- an assessment of the grantmaking decision process,
- assessments provided by grantees,
- evaluations of the Foundation's reputation and leadership, and recommendations.

The Issue Landscape

Economic Issues

- Although current global economic conditions will likely result in some reduction in Canadians' concern for the environment in relation to the economy, environmental issues will probably remain of serious concern to Canadians.

- The continuing decline of the Canadian forestry industry will offer ongoing opportunity for conservation groups to incorporate “conservation first” approaches in their interactions with forest companies and governments.
- Mining and natural gas and oil exploration and development have increased in the boreal region and may threaten attempts to realize the 50 percent boreal conservation target.
- Granting to forest conservation is declining. The largest boreal conservation grantmaker of the past 10 years, (the U.S. based Pew Environment Group), may diminish its direct grants into Canada. Other large Canadian funders are no longer supporting forest conservation.
- There is a need to increase awareness of the positive correlation between sustainable conservation practices and community economic benefit.

Sociopolitical Issues

- Federal, territorial and provincial governments have become more aware of the importance of the environment to the Canadian public. Governments have also paid more attention to the boreal region in general and have acted in concrete ways to increase boreal protected areas.
- Governments are becoming more willing to make environmental concessions to gain votes in key areas such as Québec and Ontario.
- Forest-related issues have declined significantly as an area of concern for Canadians—a trend that began in the late 1990s. This led to a concerted effort to expand media coverage of the boreal issue. These efforts have paid dividends in the extent, and arguably the quality, of boreal-related media work.
- Experienced forest campaigners are being lost to other issues, for example climate change work.
- Since the late 1990s, collaboration between grantees has become increasingly important.
- It is also becoming more important for conservation groups to work with First Nations, especially in the northern landscape of the boreal which has yet to be allocated for forestry operations. First Nations, for instance, are showing more interest in supporting and participating in the work of the Canadian Boreal Initiative (CBI) and the Government of Ontario’s Far North planning initiative, which aims to protect half of the province’s northern boreal forest before development decisions are made.

Grant Evaluation

Grant Monetary Values

The total number of CF Program grants from 2003 through 2007 was 91 and the total granted amount was \$8,829,256. The average grant size was just over \$97,000. The Policy and Law Cluster contains 59 grants totalling \$5,020,756 (just under 57 percent of the total) and averaging just over \$85,000 per grant. The Markets Cluster contains 26 grants totalling \$3,003,500 (just over 34 percent of the

total), with an average grant size of just over \$115,500. The Applied Science Cluster contains six grants totalling \$805,000 (just over nine percent of the total), with an average grant size of just over \$134,000.

Many grants were issued through the Strategic Opportunities Program (SO Program). Over the five-year period under review, 66 grants were made through the SO Program. Totalling \$1,131,270, they had an average size of just over \$17,000.

Grantmaking Practice

- Respondents praised the Foundation for being able to react quickly to opportunities and for its flexibility in funding those opportunities. (This is largely the result of using SO Program funding.)
- The Foundation's approach to grantmaking has been called thoughtful, strategic, and participatory.
- Through collaboration with the Canadian Boreal Initiative (the Pew program in Canada) and the Boreal Forest Conservation Framework (the forest conservation vision that had been developed for Canada's boreal forest by industry, First Nations, and conservation organizations), the Foundation has helped create and communicate a compelling forest conservation vision for Canada.
- There is a need to ensure that conservation planning is a key element in devising implementation plans for Ontario's Far North planning commitment. For example, tools supporting ecosystem-based decision making (including scientific, technical, and socioeconomic information) need to be applied in a targeted way to support this initiative.

Grantmaking Clusters: Markets, Policy and Law, and Applied Science

The Markets Cluster

- Results in this cluster have been particularly impressive - and they have been decisive in moving forest companies to support improved forest management practices.
- Success has been particularly notable in the work of FSC Canada through the Markets Cluster, which used grant money to dramatically increase the number of hectares committed to forest product certification.
- The CF Program has facilitated clear and measurable targets and standards through multiyear support given to the FSC Canada through the Markets Cluster.
- It would be advisable to pay increased attention to market strategies and community economic development to consolidate gains and create partnerships with companies and to allow ENGOs to identify and recruit potential buyers of certified product and discourage buyers of non-certified products.

The Policy and Law Cluster

- Significant Policy and Law successes have been achieved, notably in Nova Scotia land-use planning and parks protection, Québec protected areas, the Ontario *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*, and Ontario's Far North commitment.
- This cluster would benefit from inviting grant applications related to ensuring that policy, legislative, and regulatory actions on the ground are consistent with the gains being made in policy and law formulation.
- Despite these achievements, success in this cluster has been uneven. For instance, targets and achievement have not been as clear as in the Markets Cluster, especially the success of FSC Canada.

The Applied Science Cluster

- In the Applied Science cluster, targets have not been as clear and measurable as in the Markets Cluster.
- The intent of this cluster is to supply information to be used by the Markets and Policy and Law Clusters.
- This cluster has received nine percent of CF Program funds (below the allocation target of 20 percent), but the evaluator deemed this level of support to be appropriate, given the opportunities available in the other two clusters.

Coordination among Grantees in Different Clusters

The most useful coordination among Ivey grantees has come from attendance at Foundation-supported workshops and other such meetings, including Econiche (a forest-campaign meeting in 2006) and Kananaskis (climate/forest discussion in 2007).

The Save Our Species Coalition (which worked on promoting endangered species legislation in Ontario) and the Ontario boreal protection campaigns were notable for the extent to which grantees were required to collaborate.

Clarity and Relevance of Program Guidelines and Other Communications

- Respondents generally indicated that program guidelines are clear, flexible, and designed in a way that is consistent with the most important challenges and opportunities the conservation sector is confronting.
- The Foundation and other groups working on Canadian boreal forest initiatives need to convey a coherent, commonly agreed-upon, boreal-centred message, through media and other communications, focusing on iconic areas and species and creating clear lines of communication between funders. At present, such a high level of integration has not been achieved.

- The Foundation would benefit from investing in creating mechanisms that would allow for the compilation, analysis, and possible distribution of updated scientific socio-political and economic information related to boreal forest conservation. This would allow for quicker Foundation program response.

Assessment of the Grantmaking Decision Process

- The Foundation’s evaluation process appears to be bureaucratic and document heavy, but the evaluator has considered this necessary and effective, given the Foundation’s grant-based model of decision-making.
- The apportionment of grants across the three clusters (Markets, Policy and Law, and Applied Science), with a preponderance of grants in the Policy and Law and Markets Clusters, is effective.
- The Foundation should consider adopting a logical framework (logframe) approach to grantmaking, especially for larger grants, in both the Policy and Law and the Markets Clusters. These logframes should include a broad array of process indicators, to help quantify grantee influence on policy and legislation.

Assessments Provided by Grantees

- Grantees, without exception, praised the Foundation for the role it has played and is playing in the areas of forests conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
- Many respondents observed that one of the Foundation’s strengths is getting maximum results from modest investments.
- According to respondents and the evaluator’s review of documentation, the Foundation provided effective capacity-building support for at least four core support organizations—the Forest Stewardship Council of Canada, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada, Global Forest Watch Canada and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.
- The paucity of funders in Canada means that grantees have difficulty diversifying their sources of funding.

Evaluations of the Ivey Foundation’s Reputation and Leadership

- The Foundation has a solid reputation among senior-level political and industry representatives.
- Ivey is seen as having excellent political reach, which it is “not afraid to use.”
- The Foundation’s peers speak highly of the care it takes in its grantmaking decisions, ensuring that they are well targeted.
- Ivey is viewed by peers and others as a highly respected and successful convener and facilitator.
- The Foundation is respected in the granting sector for being willing to take on issues that other Canadian foundations are unwilling or unable to address.

Recommendations for Building on Successes

Supporting a Canada-Wide Vision for Forest Conservation

- The Foundation should continue to support the vision of Boreal Forest Conservation Framework, which has called on Canadians to work toward a future where at least 50 percent of the boreal forest will be protected from industrial activity and the balance managed to meet globally leading standards of sustainable resource use.

Market-Based Change and Policy Change

- The Foundation should continue to focus its grantmaking on initiatives to achieve change in markets or policies that directly support conservation outcomes in Canada's boreal forest.

Collaboration with Other Grantmakers and Conservation Groups / High Value for Money

- The Foundation should continue its comprehensive and collaborative approach to environmental philanthropy, including being a convener in ongoing consultations with other conservation groups.
- The Foundation may continue to generate good results using modest resources by maintaining a commitment to collaborate with other funders, conservation groups, and related parties.
- Ivey should continue to target “mid-range” organizations with focus and capacity. This has contributed to high-value-for-money outcomes and should continue to do so.

Grantmaking Approach and Mechanisms

- The Foundation should continue to provide multi-year support to grantees, in order to achieve long term policy breakthroughs.
- Where necessary, the Foundation should continue to play a direct role in organizations it has funded that are deemed central to its mission.
- The Foundation should continue to issue grants from the Strategic Opportunities Program, since this program has allowed for flexibility and quick reaction to funding opportunities. In addition, economic uncertainty and resulting diminished funding of conservation efforts will increase the need for the opportunistic use of SO grants.
- The Foundation should continue its thoughtful, strategic, and participatory grantmaking approach.
- The Foundation's reporting requirements should be continued, in order to ensure accountability.
- Although the Foundation's grantmaking process is somewhat onerous, it does ensure that a vast quantity of high-quality information is available, and so this process should continue to be used.

Grant Clusters

- The Foundation should continue evaluating and issuing grants according to the three clusters (Markets, Policy and Law, and Applied Science), as this division is well suited to meeting the two main goals of the Conserving Canada's Forests Program: (1) protection of adequate amounts of forests and (2) the sustainable use of forest resources.
- The Foundation's grants should continue to go to the most productive clusters.

The Markets Cluster

- The Foundation should continue to support market-based solutions.
- Ivey should continue, under its CF Program, to facilitate clear and measurable targets and standards through multiyear support given to the Forest Stewardship Council of Canada.

The Policy and Law Cluster

- The Foundation should continue to move strategically, identifying opportunities that require more support or sustained support.

The Applied Science Cluster

- The Foundation should continue to make grants so that organizations in this cluster can supply information to be used by the Markets, and Policy and Law Clusters.

Coordination among Grantees in Different Clusters

- Ivey should continue to fund workshops and other such meetings, similar to the Econiche and Kananaskis meetings.

Clarity and Relevance of Program Guidelines and Other Communications

- The existing program guidelines should continue to be used, as they are clear, flexible, and consistent with the challenges and opportunities the conservation sector is confronting.

Recommendations for Addressing Perceived Shortcomings and Changes in the Sociopolitical and Economic Environment

CF Program Focus / National Focus

- CF Program focus could be amended to better reflect the fact that conservation and sustainable use of resources have become “mainstream” in Canada and those holders of political office and some within the forest industry are becoming responsive to this trend. Specifically, the CF Program focus could (1) take advantage of opportunities to drive the process of negotiations with the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) on an agreement concerning conservation-based approaches in exchange for supply certainty and (2) take leadership in shaping the details of the Ontario Far North planning commitment.

- CF Program focus could also take into account the need to keep northern communities “whole.” However, the main emphasis should still be on improving provincial and territorial level policy and legislation.
- Ivey should continue to be a funder at the national level and, especially as other funders leave the scene, could consider increasing its presence as a convener and facilitator for the conservation community and among conservation stakeholders. However, this could result in the Foundation losing its focus and stretching its resources if not careful.

Funding of FSC Canada and CPAWS

- The Forest Stewardship Council of Canada and to a lesser extent the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) rely heavily on Ivey for funding. In order to reduce this reliance, matching grant requirements should be considered.

Support from Outside the Foundation: Key Influentials and Advisory Committees

- Key influentials such as conservation-friendly former federal and provincial ministers and distinguished senior conservationists, athletes, and professionals could participate in high-level communications involving media, politicians and bureaucrats.

Advisory Committees

- Foundation staff risk being overwhelmed because of the following: opportunities for work in forestry conservation will increase because of increased public support, experienced organizations are moving away from forestry issues, and the forest industry is facing severe economic struggles. To offset some of this effect, additional advisory committees composed of key influences could be created.

Government Accountability

- Clear processes and/or discrete entities need to be set up by the Foundation and its grantees to track and report on government accountability.

Grantmaking Approach and Mechanisms

- The Foundation should consider adopting a logical framework (logframe) approach to grantmaking, especially for larger grants, in both the Policy and Law and the Markets Clusters.

Grant Clusters

The Markets Cluster

- Increased attention should be paid to market strategies and community economic development to consolidate gains and create partnerships with companies and to allow ENGOs to identify and recruit potential buyers of certified product and discourage buyers of non-certified products.

The Policy and Law Cluster

- The Foundation should invite grant applications related to ensuring that policy, legislative, and regulatory actions on the ground are consistent with the gains being made in policy and law formulation.
- Targets should be made as clear and measurable in this cluster as they are in the Markets Cluster.

The Applied Science Cluster

- Targets should be made clearer and more measurable in this cluster.

Clarity and Relevance of Program Guidelines and Other Communications

- The Foundation would benefit from investing in creating mechanisms that would allow for the compilation, analysis, and possible distribution of updated scientifically political and socioeconomic information related to boreal forest conservation.

Resources and Communications

- The Foundation should consider establishing a process through which to more consistently communicate its priorities, grantee achievements, and other relevant program information to stakeholders.
- The Foundation website could be upgraded to become an information-sharing resource for the conservation community and the general public.
- Staff could explore additional mechanisms for sharing success stories and lessons learned.
- Internal resources could be increased and made available for direct program implementation.

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