



# Finance Committee Brief

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# Finance Committee Brief

*WWF was founded close to 50 years ago, on the strength of Canadians' interest in protecting nature and wildlife in Canada and around the world. Through our global network, WWF tackles the world's most important conservation challenges. We work together with corporations, governments, other NGOs, and local communities to advance solutions that work for nature, for business, and for people.*

*Our experience has taught us that the greatest successes—in conservation, as in business—lie in collaborations and innovative, pragmatic partnerships. We recommend the following three key strategies to revitalize and grow Canada's charitable sector:*

## **1. Enabling stronger partnerships**

Over the years, Canadian charities have proved to be effective partners to Canadian governments in advancing social, environmental, and economic policy objectives. Such partnerships bring additional expertise and resources to government agencies. Examples include the collaboration among WWF, the government of Canada, Dene First Nations, and the government of the Northwest Territories to develop and implement the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy.

As fiscal belts tighten, such collaborations become an increasingly important avenue to ensure that government agencies can draw on all available capacity to drive results. The Massachusetts Ocean Partnership (MOP) provides a recent example of the power of the emerging model of private/public/philanthropic partnerships. The State of Massachusetts worked with a philanthropic foundation to establish a multi-user ocean planning process. The planning process was led by mandated government agencies, while the philanthropic resources supported agreed-upon scientific research and stakeholder consultation. The resulting plan was approved by the State government in 2008 and has been broadly acknowledged to provide certainty for businesses and investors in the state's ocean economy while also upholding social and environmental values. The partnership ensured that policy direction and decision-making authority remained in the hands of the government, while drawing on available external resources to complement state budgets for research and outreach.

Similar models in Canada can promote and support effective stewardship of Canada's natural environment, and the economies and social values that are sustained by healthy ecosystems.

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By taking steps to support and encourage more muscular partnerships, Canada can expand its ability to bring new allies, new ideas, new expertise, and new resources to the task.

Our many corporate partners in Canada and around the world will attest that well-resourced, well-connected NGOs can be powerful and sophisticated allies in a world of changing markets and declining natural capital. Poorly-resourced NGOs, in contrast, are unable to play this role and may adopt more confrontational, obstructionist tactics.

## **2. Affirming Canadian leadership**

Canada has signed on to a range of international conventions and multilateral agreements, including conventions dealing with animals such as migratory birds, polar bears, and whales as well as ecosystem conservation. The most effective way to deliver on these commitments will be through partnerships with organizations that have cross-border networks, drawing on knowledge and resources from sources within and beyond Canada.

As one current example, WWF and the Coca-Cola Company have partnered in the “Arctic Home” campaign that leverages donations from across North America, with a matching grant from the Coca-Cola Company, to support WWF’s Global Arctic Program in its work with the Canadian government, other circumpolar nations and Arctic communities to protect polar bear habitat in the Arctic. In short, this “made in Canada,” cross-border, corporate-NGO alliance enables a team of world-leading science and policy experts in order to achieve Canadian results that have a global impact.

WWF believes that partnerships such as this represent the future of effective conservation and corporate practice – a future in which Canada is poised to assume a leadership role. The track record of Canadian NGO, government and business leadership on significant conservation and sustainability initiatives has helped to establish Canada as a place where big things can happen. This, in turn, has attracted the interest and confidence of donors and investors from other parts of the world.

## **3. Encouraging Canadian and international funding**

In order to better enable Canada to tap this world of expertise and funding, we encourage the Finance Committee to explore ways to support Canadians donors as well as international donors giving in Canada.

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The majority of Canadians will donate more money if they are offered better tax incentives, according to “The Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.” For this reason, WWF would like to express our support for a “stretch” charitable credit. This would encourage Canadians to increase their charitable giving year over year. The stretch credit augments the existing tax credit for individuals who increase their donations above the prior year.

This stretch credit would complement the initiatives of recent years by the federal government, which has encouraged wealthier Canadians to give more. This tax credit will provide a meaningful change to a broad number of taxpayers, including average families and individuals. This would also impact the broadest number of charities, since many small, local organizations and large, national charities derive a significant proportion of their revenues from Canadian individuals.

But we encourage the federal government not to stop there. The percentage of Canadians who donate continues to shrink (30 per cent in 1990 compared to 23 per cent in 2010) while the need for the services of NGOs in all sectors has continued to increase. We believe we need to do more by looking at how we can increase Canadian donations as well as how we can increase charitable donations from outside our borders.

In attracting foreign investment, the government has a successful formula for keeping the Canadian economy strong, stable and growing. By courting foreign investors and working with other countries and governments, the federal government has attracted billions of dollars to Canada. WWF encourages the government to apply this formula to Canadian charities.

Currently, the Federal government does not provide tax incentives to international donors who give to Canadian charities. We would like the Canadian government to offer these donors an incentive to give even more. WWF receives less than two per cent in donations from U.S. foundations, but we would welcome much more. As stewards of some of the world’s richest resources, we think international investment can help us achieve our Canadian – and worldwide - conservation goals.

*If you require further information or wish to discuss this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on these points with the Finance Committee.*

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