

## **Case Study of Canada's Ecofiscal Commission**

### **Three Step Research Process**

**Step One:** Complete an exploration of documents focusing on the work undertaken by Canadian grantmakers to influence public policy. The intention is to develop a brief contextual overview (up to three pages) at the outset of the Case Study Report to situate the exploration of the grantmaker collaboration supporting Canada's Ecofiscal Commission.

Proposed Approach: As there are no secondary source materials about grantmaker collaborations to influence public policy, the literature review will draw from content exploring the role Canadian foundations have played—intentionally and unintentionally (i.e. being a catalyst by funding a study that was used to influence policy)—to impact public policy:

- Alan Broadbent, “Fulfilling the Philanthropic Contract: Mutual Benefit for the Public Good” (2006);
- Allan Northcott and Shelley Uytterhagen, “Practices and Policies of Private Foundations in Canada” (2002);
- Caledon Institute’s report on the Maytree Foundation’s internally-driven campaign to increase refugee access to the Canada Student Loan Program;
- Maytree Foundation launch of the Caledon Institute;
- Philanthropic Foundations Canada case examples of grantmaker impact;
- The Philanthropist’s February 2014 special issue on public policy.
- The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. “In a World of Unpredictable Change, What Canada Needs Most is Resilience.” 2011

An overview of the recent Tides Canada/Canada Revenue Agency issue will also be provided (Ross McMillan, CEO of Tides Canada, would be an invaluable source to speak to about this matter):

- “Separating Fact from Fiction: Political Activities Revisited” Charity Law Bulletin No. 361, February 2016.
- “Tax Audits of Environmental Groups: The Pressing Need for Law Reform” Environmental Law Centre, UVic. March 2015.

*\*Convergence with Cluster #2: “Policy Regimes and Canadian Grant-Making Foundations: A Preliminary Exploration” (Peter Elson and Sarah Hall)*

**Step Two:** Ask Key Informants at Canada's Ecofiscal Commission and supporting grantmakers to provide information about the steps/timeline/actors leading to the public launch in November, 2014. This investigative step will pinpoint the history of the collaboration and set the stage for Step Three.

Proposed Approach: Provide a document with basic information to Key Informants asking for their corrections/enhancements.

**Step Three:** Key Informant interviews with grantmaker representatives and Kool, Topp & Guy.

Proposed Approach: Provide the Key Informant Questionnaire in advance to allow them to recall the information and send the transcribed content following the interviews to ensure accuracy and, if necessary, allow them to add any content.

Considerations to keep in mind when developing the questionnaire?

- Should explore the importance of trust/existing relationships (especially for late joiners)
- How does the breath of the initiative impact the collaboration-building process
- How does the issue of power dynamics influence the gestation of the collaboration
- Who might have been included in the collaboration but was left (and why)
- The line between acting as a philanthropist versus an activist

## **Case Study of Canada's Ecofiscal Commission Project Charter**

Research Design and Outreach (January-May, 2015): Speak with grantmaking-sector experts and potential Key Informants to develop the research plan, surface secondary source content, and accomplish outreach to set the stage for the primary research stage.

Literature Review (May, 2015): Examine existing content on the role Canadian foundations have played in the public policy sphere. Prepare a brief (1-2 page synopsis).

Conference presentation of preliminary findings (June 8, 2015): Present findings of the Literature Review (including sources used) and the primary research plan. Seek feedback on potential missing sources and comments on the proposed research process.

Key Informant research (August-September, 2015):

- Canada's Ecofiscal Commission: Chris Ragan, Stuart Elgi and Andrew Bevin
- Ivey: Bruce Lourie
- Kool, Topp & Guy: TBD
- Max Bell: Allan Northcott
- McConnell: Stephen Huddart and Nicolina Farella
- Metcalf: Andre Vallillee
- Suncor Foundation: TBD
- Trottier Foundation: Lorne Trottier

Draft and submit report (September-October, 2015): Develop a 20 page report showcasing the findings of the Literature Review and Key Informant interviews.

Revision of report (January-March, 2016)

Conference presentation of final findings (June, 2016)

# **Interview Guide for representatives of private, public, or community foundations in Canada and affiliated collaborating organizations**

**1- Context of Collaboration** (Contextualize this choice within the broader social/political/economic context)

- a) Choice of the area/topic of intervention?
- b) Why have you chosen this question, area, or issues?
- c) What are the reasons behind the choice?

**2- Why Collaborate** (Rationale underlying collaborations—contextual elements having led to collaboration. Desired impact—the ‘why’ of collaboration—beyond the achievement of desired goals.)

What were the reasons behind the development of the collaboration and selection of partners?

**3- Portrait of Collaboration (how to collaborate): The nature of the collaboration**

- a) **Technical elements: duration of collaboration (chronology); organizational chart of collaboration; support/resources dedicated to collaboration;**
- b) Ingredients for a strong collaboration (support, responsibilities, leadership)?
- c) Each collaboration brings together different partners yet all are not involved in the same way. Please explain the different roles played in this collaboration (for instance, resource exchange, knowledge exchange, knowledge transfer support...) and whether you would consider this collaboration weak or strong.
- d) Resources mobilized (quantitative support for commitment), how does that translate: e.g. financial, material, and human resources (example: loaning out personnel)
- e) Where there any organisational challenges to the collaborative to influencing public policy? If so, explain.
- f) Where there any factors that facilitated the collaboration?
- g) Do you expect this funder collaborative might have an impact on the culture of collaboration amongst grantmakers in Canada? If so, explain.

#### **4- Impact (what does collaboration do)**

Evaluating the impact of the collaboration:

- a) The main question here is: what does “working together” *do* for target populations and/or for society more generally?
- b) For society in general: what is the impact in terms of public policy, changes in broader societal attitudes or behaviour, and on the creation of new organizations or rules?

#### **5- Catalyzing Impact/Measuring Influence**

Impact on the transformation of practices, behaviours, cultural orientations -- ability to reflect on the ability to make a difference, to influence, to carry or forward the development of innovations able to bring about change. Examine the difference between:

- a) The desired effect: What is the utopic or ultimate vision of the collaboration?
- b) The actual effect as it is perceived: What is the distance between here and the utopic vision?
- c) Constraints/obstacles: What are missing elements, factors preventing or impeding the full realization of desired outcomes?
- d) What can be done, from the point of view of collaborations, to improve catalyzing impact?

#### **6- Influence (in the sense of social change or transformation)**

How collaboration influences or modifies the following spheres:

- a) The political (national, provincial, regional, local)?
- b) The market (private enterprise)?
- c) Civil society (NGOs)?
- d) The population as a whole or specific segments?