

Natural Infrastructure Fund top-up

Natural infrastructure (NI) can protect the natural environment, support healthy and resilient communities, provide economic benefits, and improve access to nature. NI includes projects that use nature to meet infrastructure needs, such as flood control, water filtration, drought mitigation and temperature control. The Green Budget Coalition welcomed the creation of Infrastructure Canada's Natural Infrastructure Fund in Budget 2021. Since then, the initial \$200 million fund has been largely allocated toward select major cities in Canada who have developed NI strategies, such as Toronto and Vancouver.

The Green Budget Coalition recommends additional investments in this Fund in Budget 2023 to enable more communities, particularly small- and medium-sized municipalities, to access funding for NI projects. The forthcoming National Infrastructure Assessment will identify needs and priorities in the built environment and support evidence-based long-term planning toward a resilient and net-zero emissions future. Recommendations for the National Infrastructure Assessment highlight the many co-benefits of greater use of NI. With additional funding in Budget 2023, the Natural Infrastructure Fund will be able to leverage work emerging from the National

Infrastructure Assessment as well as the National Adaptation Strategy to support strategic investments.

The Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB) can also play an important role by providing guidance to infrastructure proponents regarding how to integrate NI. Giving funding preference to projects that combine natural and built infrastructure would expand the capacity to plan and implement NI. CIB financing would complement the Natural Infrastructure Fund (which is limited to municipally-owned lands) and could fund capital and operating costs of NI on non-municipal lands.

Recommended Investment:
An additional \$400 million over three years for the Natural Infrastructure Fund and prioritized funding for infrastructure projects that integrate natural infrastructure into design of built infrastructure.
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