



SYNERGY
FOUNDATION

2023
IMPACT
REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

“Synergy can be defined as the interaction and cooperation between organizations that produce a combined impact greater than their individual effects. As is evidenced in Synergy Foundation’s third annual Impact Report, the name could not be more fitting. Synergy’s expansion of its Green Business collective to a province-wide program, Project Zero’s success in incubating its 50th circular economy venture, and Ecostar Awards maxing out capacity at its 2023 event are all indicators of the positive impact.

The Board of Directors is excited to support the team as it looks to continuously improve, optimize, and scale Synergy’s programs, projects, and systems for even greater success. Keep up the great work!”

- Paul Shorthouse, Board Chair, Synergy Foundation



SYNERGY FOUNDATION

Since its inception in 2013, Synergy Foundation has focused on innovative projects and programs that have pushed the envelope, supported hundreds of businesses, and turned great ideas into action. This Victoria-based non-profit focuses its efforts on green business, circular economy, and food security. Its key programs include [BC Green Business](#), [FED Urban Agriculture](#), and [Project Zero](#).

[synergyfoundation.ca](https://www.synergyfoundation.ca)

SYNERGY
FOUNDATION



OUR MISSION

To share ideas, spark innovation and activate change to steer our economy and communities towards a more regenerative future

OUR TEAM



Jill
Doucette

Executive
Director



Georgia
Lavender

Director of
Program Operations



Brianna
Stewart

FED Program
Manager



Jarret
Klim

Green Business
Program Manager



Emily
Shields

Marketing and
Communications
Manager

OUR TEAM



Deep
Chahal

Green Business
Associate and
Project Manager



Maddy
Best

Circular
Economy Project
Manager



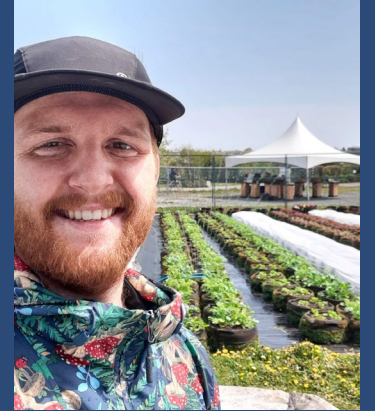
Erica
LeBrun

Operations
Coordinator



Madisen
Druyts

FED Project
Coordinator



Alistair
Howes

FED Project
Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Paul
Shorthouse
Board Chair



Monica
Pohlmann
Vice Chair



Kira
Rochefort
Treasurer



Tessa
Stewart
Secretary



Kris
Ord
Director at
Large

2023 SNAPSHOT



113+
Communities
Impacted



2060+
Workshop &
Event
Attendees



30
Opportunities
for Youth



22
Media
Mentions

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Our work at Synergy ties into nine of the UN SDGs:



STRATEGIC PARTNER

[Vancity](#) is a values-based financial cooperative serving the needs of its more than 543,000 member-owners and their communities in the Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw territories. Vancity has been a leader in environmental sustainability through their internal operations and through the investments they make in the communities they serve.

Vancity and Synergy formed a Strategic Partnership in 2019. Through their financial support and collaboration, we have supported hundreds of small and medium sized enterprises and dozens of new start ups in the green economy.

Vancity



SYNERGY'S CORE PROGRAMS



A provincewide green business certification program that provides practical and affordable ways to reduce business' impact on the planet



A charity dedicated to promoting sustainable food systems, urban agriculture, and community engagement in Greater Victoria



An initiative focused on implementing circular economy concepts in Canada through incubation, innovation, and education

BC GREEN BUSINESS





BC GREEN BUSINESS

BC Green Business supports businesses seeking practical and affordable ways to reduce their environmental impact and enhance their sustainability initiatives. Our one-on-one approach allows us to identify custom solutions that suit each individual business' needs.

We provide assessments, solutions recommendations, and certifications to businesses that value the planet, people, and community.

bcgreenbusiness.ca



BC GREEN BUSINESS METRICS



190
Members



63
Ocean
Friendly
Businesses



52
New
Members



7
Industry-
specific
Checklists



87%
Retention
Rate

ENVIRONMENTAL METRICS



WATER
SAVED

404,490
m³



ELECTRICITY
CONSERVED

4,434,814
kWh



EMISSIONS
REDUCED

17,597
tCO₂e



PAID
VOLUNTEER TIME

6,321
hours



WASTE
DIVERTED

6,458,713
kg



SINGLE-USE
PLASTIC AVOIDED

2,574,036
items



FORESTS
CONSERVED

2,109
trees

This is the collective impact of the businesses certified in BC Green Business. These metrics continue to grow every week.





SUCCESS STORY

2023 marks the year that Synergy Foundation took the green business program province-wide. Formerly known as the Vancouver Island Green Business Collective, we rebranded the program as BC Green Business and began offering the certification to businesses across the province.

To date, BC Green Business has certified 13 businesses in the Lower Mainland, 3 on the Sunshine Coast, and 1 in the Kootenay Region. In an act of reconciliation, participation in the program was also made cost free for Indigenous-owned businesses across the province.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

BC Green Business would like to extend a special thank you to the 2023 funding partners who make this work possible!

The logo for Vancity, featuring the word "Vancity" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for BC Hydro, featuring a stylized blue and green icon of a person or a plant inside a circle.

BC Hydro
Power smart

Fondation
McConnell
Foundation

The logo for BC Green Business, featuring a stylized green icon of a mountain and water inside a circle.

**BC GREEN
BUSINESS**

REGIONAL PARTNER THANK YOU

BC Green Business would also like to thank the 2023 Regional Partners who helped expand the program to new regions.



A photograph of a greenhouse filled with rows of potted plants. The plants are arranged in long, straight lines on both sides of a central aisle. The sunlight is bright, creating a strong lens flare effect on the right side of the image. The plants appear to be young and are growing in dark-colored pots. The background shows the structure of the greenhouse and some trees outside.

FED URBAN AGRICULTURE SOCIETY



FED

FED Urban Agriculture Society is a charity working to address food security by advocating for urban agriculture and a regenerative food economy. Formed in 2013, FED's mission has evolved to create high impact urban food system projects that meaningfully connect people to local food through innovation and genuine engagement.

From creating garden spaces and delivering educational programs to collaborating with local restaurants and farmers, FED continues to expand the scope of work within the local food system.

get-fed.ca



FED METRICS



10
Community
Partners



3,868
Plant Starts
& Seeds
Distributed



1,200 lbs
Food
Growing
Capacity
Added



280+
Community
Engagement
Event
Attendees



157
Volunteer
Hours

FED



SUCCESS STORY

2023 marked the fourth year of delivering the My FED Farm project which provides food gardens to communities facing food insecurity, empowering people to grow their own produce. Originally developed as an emergency COVID response, My FED Farm has continued to address economic hardship and social isolation that persists within our community.

To date, My FED Farm has added over **23,000 lbs** of food growing capacity around Southern Vancouver Island, directly benefitting almost **3,000** underserved community members.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

FED would like to extend a special thank you to the 2023 sponsors who make this work possible!



1% FOR THE PLANET PARTNERS

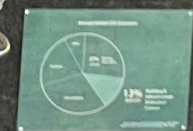
FED would like to thank Alveole and Maple Leaf Tours for supporting FED through 1% For the Planet!



PROJECT ZERO



The Materiality & Spirit
of Seacork





PROJECT ZERO

Since 2019, Project Zero has been catalyzing the transition to a circular economy through business incubation, acceleration, innovation, and education.

Project Zero engages the private sector, local governments, universities and colleges, and non-profits to move toward a regenerative future for British Columbia and beyond.

In 2023, Project Zero presented to delegates at conferences across Canada, launched its 5th BC Incubator cohort, rebranded, and announced its National expansion model!

PROJECT ZERO METRICS



11
Ventures
Incubated



220
Pro Bono
Hours



20+
Jobs
Created



72%
Women
Founded
Ventures



1,260+
Workshop
& Event
Attendees



Photo: Heather Thomson –
Mirkwood Communications



SUCCESS STORY

[Timber Tiles](#) (2022 cohort) manufactures wood tiles from responsibly harvested hemlock on Vancouver Island.

In May 2023, they announced its partnership with the [Huu-ay-aht First Nations](#), which acquired a 75% stake in the company. According to CEO Mark Anson, "This new collaboration is core to the social purpose values of our company. We now have a richer and deeper story that addresses land stewardship, eco responsibility and community care."

Additionally, Timber Tiles founded the Wood for Warmth program in partnership with the Kuu-Us Crisis Centre and Salvation Army. This program distributes wood briquettes made from factory sawdust to Alberni Valley homes in need of warmth.

Timber Tiles is in the process of achieving [SCS Zero Waste Facility Certification](#) and the Living Future Institute's Living Product Challenge.



Photo: Timber Tiles



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Project Zero would like to extend a special thank to our supporters for making this year's incubator a great success!

The logo for Vancity, featuring the word "Vancity" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for the McConnell Foundation, featuring the word "Fondation" in a small, black, sans-serif font above the word "McConnell" in a large, black, sans-serif font. The letter "o" in "McConnell" is replaced by a colorful, circular graphic. Below "McConnell" is the word "Foundation" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.The logo for Project Zero, featuring a colorful, abstract graphic on the left consisting of three overlapping shapes in blue, orange, and green. To the right of the graphic is the text "PROJECT ZERO" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

ECOSTAR AWARDS





ECOSTAR AWARDS

The Ecostar Awards recognize outstanding environmental and social achievements on Vancouver Island. The awards are presented to Island-based businesses, non-profits, governments and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in sustainability.

In November, Synergy hosted the eighth annual Ecostar Awards Gala. This year, 15 awards were given out, ranging from Community Leadership to Inspirational New Venture.

www.ecostarawards.com



SPONSOR SHOUTOUT

Thank you to our sponsors for making this year's event a great success!



2023 AWARD WINNERS

Award Category	Winner	Sponsor
Clean Oceans	Pauquachin First Nation Marine Department	Point Hope Maritime
Climate Action	Focal Engineering	District of Saanich
Community Leadership	Paper Heart Films	4VI
Design & Construction	GRT Resource Regeneration	Seaspan Victoria Shipyards
Ecological Stewardship	Mamalilikulla First Nation	Capital Regional District
Ecopreneur of the Year	Julian Hockin-Grant of Allied Certifications Ltd.	Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation
Experiential Tourism	Homalco Wildlife & Cultural Tours	Destination Greater Victoria
Greenest Retailer	Seaflora Skincare Inc.	Bay Centre

2023 AWARD WINNERS

Award Category	Winner	Sponsor
Innovation	Barnacle Systems Inc.	Schneider Electric
Inspirational New Venture	IntellectuLogy Solutions Inc.	City of Victoria
Leadership in Hospitality	Inn at Laurel Point	Big Wheel Burger
Local Food	LUSH Valley Food Action Society	Camosun College
Social Impact	joni	The Parkside Hotel & Spa
Sustainable Workplace	Campbell River Whale Watching and Adventure Tours	Monk Office
Waste to Resource	SUPPLY Victoria Creative Reuse Centre	Capital Regional District

SPECIAL PROJECTS





SPEAKING EVENTS

2023 was a landmark year for speaking engagements. Synergy shared expertise, inspiration, and impactful examples of the regenerative economy in action with diverse audiences across the country, including at the:

- **IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism Summit**
Victoria, B.C. | January 23-25
- **SWRC Waste ReForum**
Saskatoon, S.K. | May 24-26
- **Canadian Circular Economy Summit**
Toronto, O.N. | June 19-20
- **VIEA State of the Island Economic Summit**
Nanaimo, B.C. | October 25-26
- **Sustainable Finance Forum**
Ottawa, O.N. | November 1-2

CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

In partnership with the Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association (VICEDA), Synergy delivered the Circular Economy Accelerator program to provide support to Vancouver Island and Coast businesses that seek to adopt circular principles, reduce waste and emissions, and develop innovative practices. Funding for the program was provided from the Island Coast Economic Trust and VICEDA regional partners.

As a result of this program, we:



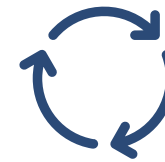
Engaged **16 businesses** across 7 key economic sectors



Identified **712 circular opportunities** that can eliminate nearly **300 tonnes** of waste



Delivered a 4-part **webinar series** that reached **236 registrants**



Identified **4 key barriers** to circularity on the Island and **3 key strategies** for overcoming them



Published a **circular economy guide** for businesses

IN THE NEWS



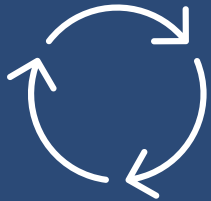
Ucluelet kayaking company's regenerative tourism efforts earn EcoStar nod

Westerly News



Incubator nurtures companies that keep materials out of the landfill

Times Colonist



Evaluating business impact through circular economy lens in Nanaimo

Island Coastal Economic Trust



Make climate action part of your brand with BC Green Business

Vancity

An aerial photograph of a dirt road winding through a dense, lush green forest. The road is light brown and curves through the trees, which are a mix of evergreen and deciduous species. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next year we look forward to building momentum as we continue to expand our geographic reach and build new partnerships.

A few highlights include:

- Running the second year of the Circular Economy Accelerator Program
- Transforming FED's Blanshard Streetscape into a pollinator corridor
- Surpassing 200 BC Green Business certified members from across the province
- Catalyzing the circular economy with our first Project Zero Regional Partner

SYNERGY

FOUNDATION



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