



**SYNERGY**  
FOUNDATION

**2022  
IMPACT  
REPORT**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

“Synergy Foundation continues to demonstrate impact through its engagement with a diversity of stakeholders across British Columbia. This past year saw the organization grow in terms of its programs and reach – including providing support for the CleanBC Plastics Action Fund and by working with businesses that are part of the Vancouver Island Green Business Collective, Project Zero, Ecostar Awards, and the newly launched Circular Economy Accelerator Program.

As Synergy Foundation’s sustainability programming and services mature and expand, the Board of Directors continues to be inspired by the passion and dedication of the staff, as well as by the leadership of local businesses and other organizations they interact with. Congratulations on another stellar year!”

**- 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 the [Vancouver Island Green Business Collective](#), [FED Urban Agriculture](#), and [Project Zero](#).

[www.synergyfoundation.ca](http://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

# OUR TEAM



**Emily  
Shields**

Marketing and  
Communications  
Coordinator



**Deep  
Chahal**

Green Business and  
Circular Economy  
Associate



**Erica  
LeBrun**

Operations  
Coordinator



**Ellie  
Gilchrist**

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

# 2022 SNAPSHOT



43  
Communities  
Impacted



955  
Workshop  
& Event  
Attendees



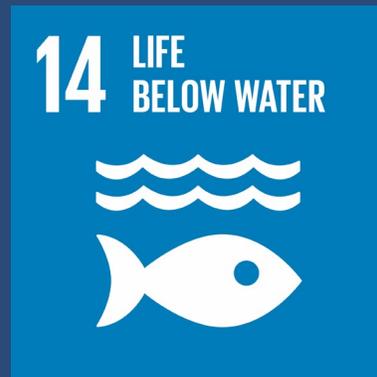
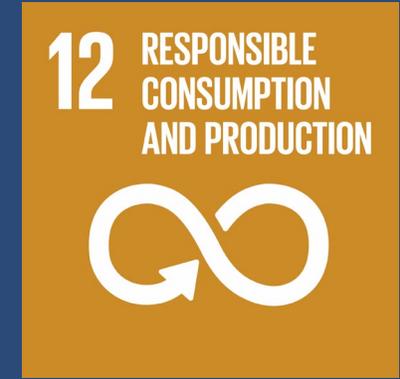
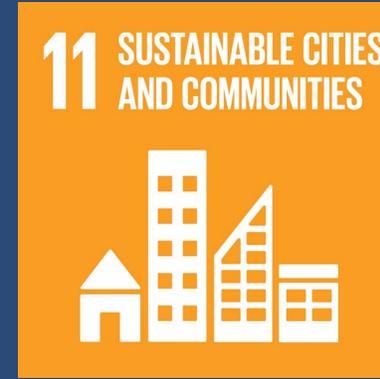
70  
Opportunities  
for Youth



25  
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 green business certification program on Vancouver Island 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 British Columbia through incubation, innovation, and education

# VANCOUVER ISLAND GREEN BUSINESS COLLECTIVE





# VIGBC

The Vancouver Island Green Business Collective (VIGBC) 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.

For businesses it is a guide to greening operations and educating staff. For customers it is a symbol of businesses that are making efforts to be environmentally conscious.

[www.vigbc.ca](http://www.vigbc.ca)



# VIGBC METRICS



160  
VIGBC  
Members



62  
Ocean  
Friendly  
Businesses



35  
New  
Members



7  
Industry-  
specific  
Checklists



91%  
Retention  
Rate



VANCOUVER ISLAND  
**GREEN BUSINESS**  
COLLECTIVE

# ENVIRONMENTAL METRICS

Water Savings



362,325  
m<sup>3</sup>

Energy Savings



2,371,085  
kWh

Emissions Reduced



15,428  
tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Volunteer Time



3,943  
hours

Waste Reduced



5,680,776  
kg

Single Use Plastic Items



2,082,329  
reduced

Trees Saved



1,681

*This is the collective impact of the small and medium sized businesses that make up VIGBC. These metrics continue to grow every week.*



VANCOUVER ISLAND  
**GREEN BUSINESS**  
COLLECTIVE



# SUCCESS STORY

Throughout 2022, the VIGBC team developed two additional sector-specific checklists. In partnership with The Root Cellar, Country Grocer, and 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Grocery, VIGBC is now able to effectively assess and certify grocery stores – a largely overlooked industry in terms of sustainability. Additionally, VIGBC partnered with Whistle Buoy Brewing to develop a checklist aimed at improving the environmental impact of food & beverage processors. The F&B Checklist has been developed and will officially launch at the beginning of 2023.

A photograph of a greenhouse interior. The scene is filled with rows of potted plants, likely leafy greens, arranged on a covered walkway. The plants are in various stages of growth, with some showing vibrant green leaves. The walkway is covered with a dark, textured material, possibly a tarp or a specialized ground cover. The background shows the structure of the greenhouse, including a chain-link fence and some trees outside. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day, and there is a noticeable lens flare effect on the right side of the image.

# FED URBAN AGRICULTURE SOCIETY



# FED

FED Urban Agriculture Society is a charity working to address food security by advocating for urban agriculture and regenerative food economies. With an original goal of increasing awareness by establishing a downtown local food district, FED's mission has evolved to promote sustainable food systems and enhance community 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.

[www.get-fed.ca](http://www.get-fed.ca)



# FED METRICS



15  
Community  
Partners



11,840 sq ft  
Pollinator  
Habitat  
Created



5,664 lbs.  
Food  
Growing  
Capacity  
Added



145  
Community  
Engagement  
Event  
Attendees



564  
Volunteer  
Hours

FED



# SUCCESS STORY

FED built a Mobile Nursery early in 2022 to support their work across all programs. Funding to build the greenhouse was provided by the Local Food Infrastructure Fund, Vancity, Big Wheel Burger Foundation, and the Province of BC. By growing plant starts locally, FED can control their environmental impact by reducing transportation, using recycled plastic pots and researching peat-free growing mediums. The nursery will provide diverse plant species, from easy-to-grow varieties to culturally appropriate food for FED's urban gardens, program recipients, and partners.



# SPONSOR THANK YOU

FED would like to extend a special thank you to the 2022 sponsors who make this work possible!



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada



# PROJECT ZERO



*Photo By: Jeffrey Bosdet*

An aerial photograph showing a circular clearing in a forest. The clearing is filled with dense green trees and is surrounded by a paved path. The surrounding forest is also green, with some brown patches visible.

# PROJECT ZERO

Project Zero is an initiative focused on implementing circular economy concepts in British Columbia. It is changing the narrative about waste to one that is focused on resource efficiency and economic opportunity.

Project Zero supports entrepreneurs, existing businesses and local regions in the transition to a circular economy and provides learning opportunities to build capacity within BC.

In 2022, Project Zero expanded its Incubator Program provincewide.

[www.project-zero.ca](http://www.project-zero.ca)



# PROJECT ZERO METRICS



17  
Ventures  
Incubated



335  
Pro Bono  
Hours



40+  
Jobs  
Created



47%  
Women  
Founded  
Ventures



610  
Workshop  
& Event  
Attendees



# SUCCESS STORY

Since graduating from the Incubator in 2021, [ShareWares](#) has partnered with over 58 retail locations to provide a city-wide reusable cup borrowing platform keeping over 100,000 single-use items out of the Vancouver landfill!

ShareWares has partnered with Return-It to offer street side collection bins and select Tim Hortons locations in Vancouver to launch their own cup sharing program. They have also made 6 Vancouver festivals zero waste, all while creating jobs for individuals facing barriers.

# SPONSOR THANK YOU

Project Zero would like to extend a special thank to all sponsors and partners 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, consisting of 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, multi-colored circular graphic. Below "McConnell" is the word "Foundation" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.The logo for the Vancouver Economic Commission, featuring a stylized graphic of three curved, teal lines on the left and the text "VANCOUVER ECONOMIC COMMISSION" in a bold, black, sans-serif font on the right.The logo for Circular Economy Leadership Canada, featuring a stylized green graphic of a leaf and a curved line on the left and the text "CIRCULAR ECONOMY LEADERSHIP CANADA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font on the right.The logo for Project Zero, featuring a stylized circular graphic with concentric lines in teal, yellow, and black on the left and the text "PROJECT ZERO" in a bold, black, sans-serif font on the right.

# 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 seventh annual Ecostar Awards Gala. This year, 15 awards were given out, ranging from Ecological Stewardship to Inspirational New Venture.

[www.ecostarawards.com](http://www.ecostarawards.com)



# 2022 AWARD WINNERS

Award Category	Winner	Sponsor
Clean Oceans	Salish Sea Industrial Services Ltd.	Seaspan Victoria Shipyards
Climate Action	Eluma Beauty	District of Saanich
Community Leadership	TLC The Land Conservancy of BC	Camosun College
Ecological Stewardship	Rugged Coast Research Society	Ocean Outfitters
Ecopreneur of the Year	Katie Gamble of Nature Bee	Centre for Social & Sustainable Innovation
Greenest Hospitality Experience	The Parkside Hotel & Spa	Big Wheel Burger
Greenest Office	Schneider Electric - Victoria	Monk Office
Greenest Retailer	SUPPLY Victoria Creative Reuse Centre	Bay Centre

# 2022 AWARD WINNERS

Award Category	Winner	Sponsor
Innovation	Power To Be	TRIO Ready-Mix
Inspirational New Venture	Iye Creative Collective	City of Victoria
Leadership in Design & Construction	BC Transit	
Local Food	Harvest & Share Food Relief Society	Vancity Credit Union
Regenerative Tourism	Nootka Marine Adventures	Destination Greater Victoria
Regenerative Tourism	Strathcona Park Lodge	Destination Greater Victoria
Social Impact	City of Victoria – Get Growing, Victoria!	The Parkside Hotel & Spa
Waste to Resource	Salt Legacy	Capital Regional District

# SPECIAL PROJECTS





# YYJ POLLINATOR GARDEN

In September, FED installed their largest garden yet – a 1100m<sup>2</sup> native pollinator garden at the Victoria International Airport. The Airport brought FED on to design and support installation of the garden.

The garden was designed to create pollinator habitat, honour the land’s ecological and cultural history, and provide an opportunity for community engagement. It features:



**2000**  
native  
plant starts



**325,200**  
native  
plant seeds



**15**  
cubic yards  
of mulch



**114**  
cubic yards  
of soil

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACCELERATOR PROGRAM



In partnership with the Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association, the Circular Economy Accelerator Program was created to provide hands-on support to

businesses north of the Malahat and on the Sunshine Coast who seek to adopt circular economy principles, reduce waste and emissions, increase revenue, and develop innovative practices. Business participants receive an on-site assessment by Synergy, a report outlining key circular opportunities, and the opportunity to attend industry-specific webinars. So far, 10 businesses have been accepted to the program.

This program is supported by Island Coastal Economic Trust and VICEDA regional partners:



# IN THE NEWS



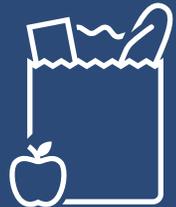
*Garbage In, Profit Out: Our yearly look at sustainability on Vancouver Island*

**Douglas Magazine**



*Vancouver Island charity delivers food-producing soil, plants to vulnerable people*

**CTV News**



*How green is your grocer? New certification helps Vancouver Island stores improve environmental footprint*

**CTV News**



*Organizations honoured for environmental commitment*

**Times Colonist**



# LOOKING AHEAD

Next year is Synergy's 10-year anniversary, and we look forward to celebrating with exciting opportunities across our programs.

Here are a few highlights:

- Expanding VIGBC into a province-wide certification program
- Animating FED's Urban Learning Garden with workshops, tours, and events
- Supporting 16 existing Island-based businesses to adopt circular strategies through the Circular Economy Accelerator Program pilot

# SYNERGY

FOUNDATION



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