

Investing In Our Planet

An Analysis of Climate and Biodiversity Grant-Making

June 2024



Introduction

Climate and nature philanthropy has a unique role to play in ending the global crisis by bringing an ability and agility to allow pioneering research, projects and work which otherwise would not happen.

This analysis by Community Foundation Ireland spotlights the growing role of Irish Philanthropy in empowering communities, driving research, and strengthening the voices of those who hold policymakers to account.

With the support of donors, the Foundation has seen its grant-making in this space increase dramatically over the past four-years with almost €3M in support to be provided in 2024.

With climate and nature now accounting for almost 15% of all grant-making by the Community Foundation as a philanthropic hub we are proud to be ahead of the curve and an international leader. Globally it is estimated that climate philanthropy accounts for 2% of all giving.

The funding is being made available across a whole range of projects as part of a mission to achieve 'Equality For All In Thriving Communities'.

The work outlined covers a broad range from bottom up supports which have seen over 200 communities develop biodiversity action plans to protect plants and wildlife in partnership with expert ecologists, to the creation of dark sky reserves and the development of agenda setting research.

We realise that the climate and nature crisis form the backdrop and is the landscape in which all of our other work with 5,000 voluntary, community and charitable partners takes place. To put it simply, the equality we all strive for cannot be achieved without addressing this crisis.

The analysis is being provided to inform donors and potential donors, to identify trends but also to inform policymakers about the range of projects which are motivating our community partners across Ireland.

Denise Charlton,
Chief Executive,
Community Foundation Ireland

Grants Driving Climate and Biodiversity Action

Increase in Climate and Nature Grant-Making since 2000



€2.95M+

in Climate and Nature Grant-Making in 2024

Ireland's
First Climate
Justice Legal
Centre



200+

Communities
Protecting
Plants and
Wildlife



Research on
Energy Policy

Advocacy on Climate
Commitments



A Philanthropic Hub driving Change

Community Foundation Ireland brings its expertise as a philanthropic hub on an equality mission to grow partnerships, expertise and knowledge in responding to the crisis in climate and nature.

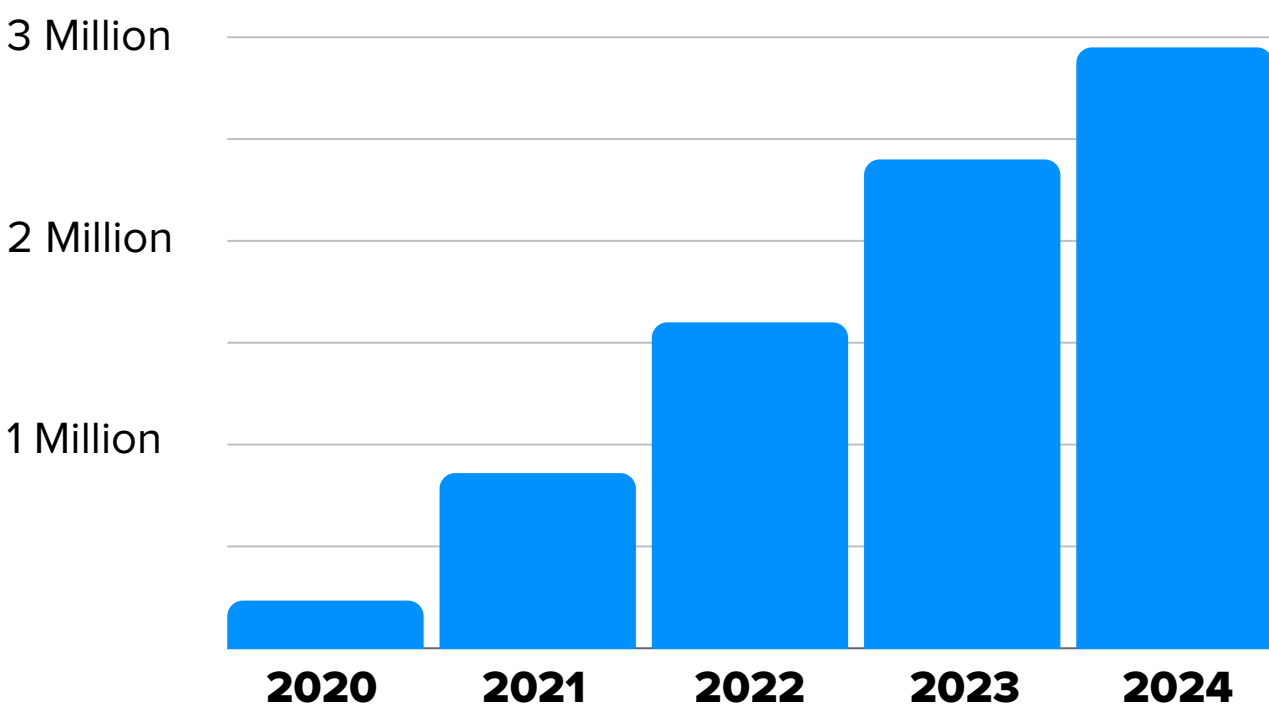
The Foundation’s work is informed by its connectivity to 5,000 voluntary, community and charitable groups, its partnership with top researchers as well as leading advocates and partners. Since the year 2000 this approach has provided more than €130M in grants to communities.

Climate and nature grant-making falls under Sustainable Futures, one of four pillars which support the overall equality mission.

Increasingly donors and potential donors are drawn to the pillar, which although starting from a relatively low base now accounts for 15% of all grant-making – ahead of the global estimate of 2% for giving towards climate.

The growth has been particularly strong since 2020.

Sustainable Futures Grant Making



Supporting the Change-makers

Donors to Community Foundation Ireland are making change happen across a wide range of activities. Together we are the leaders on climate justice, protecting our plants and wildlife and powering the research and the advocacy which makes policy happen.

As a philanthropic hub we have a broad spectrum of partners providing a connectivity which continuously builds our knowledge and insights.

We are proud to share an overview of our work to date.



Climate Action and Justice

Research, advocacy, movement building, direct services and programmes are all drivers of climate action and justice. In Ireland they work because of our donors.

Our partners are strategic and impactful. Often empowered by philanthropy to take pioneering, strategic and impactful approaches.

The Lawyers:

A first for Ireland, Community Law & Mediation's Centre for Environmental Justice offers legal advice to individuals and families who are impacted by environmental harms, The centre also works collaboratively with marginalised and disadvantaged communities, who are often more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, pollution, energy poverty, and other environmental harms.



The Researchers:

The Economic Social and Research Institute are the top researchers in the country, and our partners. Fuel poverty research commissioned in 2022 not only led to direct budgetary measures to support families but now is part of the evidence to move communities to sustainable, cleaner and more energy efficient futures.



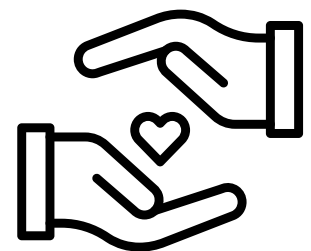
The Advocates:

Friends of the Earth (Ireland) has with our partnership yielded a unique impact by bringing an Irish focused climate justice lens to the UN and COP processes. "The Climate Clinic" a unique tool creates an emissions impact assessment of each political party's manifesto. An annual report card on delivery of climate commitments by Government is also published annually.



The Philanthropists:

With the support of local philanthropists, Community Foundation Ireland using its 'Placed Based Giving' lens has delivered a scoping study for a county fund for Mayo with a climate focus. Recognised by Government as pioneering, the study is now informing the development of such a fund. Watch this space!



The Internationalists:

Ireland's long-tradition of overseas aid is also evident in our grant-making on climate and nature. Vita is an organisation supporting farmers and communities in sub-Saharan Africa. Our partnership with Vita will deliver clean water to over 375,000 people through the repair of existing boreholes and training local community members to maintain those boreholes into the future.



The Grants

**264
Grants**

**in the last 18
Months**

**Community Grants
across 26 Counties**

**All-Island grant-
making Driving
Cross-Border
Climate and
Biodiversity
Action**

**Donors also
making wider
grants to
Europe and
Africa**



**29 Funds Actively
Contributing**

Protecting Ireland's Plants and Wildlife

Across Ireland species, habitats and eco-systems are under attack. The threat is coming directly from human activity. Even in our life-times birds, insects and plants once common are disappearing.

Community Foundation Ireland with our donors and supporters are proud leaders in efforts to reverse the damage done and to protect our wildlife into the future.

We are empowering communities and citizen scientists, supporting large scale bog and afforestation projects and here too also providing the knowledge to inform future policy.

The Community Activists:

In partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service more than 200 communities are delivering local action plans to promote and protect local plants and wildlife. Across ever communities are increasing awareness, accessing the expertise of ecologists and restoring habitats from riverbanks to bogs and green areas.

The Foresters:

Restoring our native woodlands is happening thanks to our donors. The Hometree native tree nursery is a leader in developing a reliable stock of native seedlings. It also helps ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation with a source of income from this social enterprise.

The Mappers:

Community Foundation Ireland has committed €1m to the Co-Centre for Climate, Biodiversity, and Water to support 5 PhD students across the island to increase understanding of biodiversity loss and how to address it. This is crucial work to inform not only our future grant-making but also national policy.

The Citizen Scientists:

From National surveys on birds, bees and bats to increasing awareness on the impact of human activity, we promote citizen scientists. Our partner Leave No Trace is working to examine the rising challenges of increased tourism on Mayo's sensitive natural landscapes, develop site-specific action plans to help protect those areas, and then support communities in delivering the action plans.

The Educators:

The Climate Action Short Course is a junior-level course designed to provide teachers with the information, tools, and resources they need to teach about climate change effectively. Through the course, students are supported to explore and reflect on their lives in the context of global inequality and to deal with their feelings about climate change, think through sustainability principles that apply to their communities and develop a connection to nature.

The Future

Community Foundation Ireland is proud that both its donors and grantees recognise that addressing the crisis in climate and nature is essential to achieve our mission of Equality For All In Thriving Communities.

As a philanthropic hub we bring together and connect those who are committed to drive change – whether at community level from the bottom up to those holding our Government and our country to account in meeting international commitments.

What has been achieved is incredible, however we know too that this is just the beginning if we are truly to reverse the damage done and secure sustainable futures for our communities, our country and our planet.

We invite new donors to be part of our mission to address the biggest challenge of all.

Join Us

If you are interested in being a philanthropists for climate and nature please do contact:
Giving@foundation.ie

