

# Environmental Funding by European Foundations

Volume 6





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Volume 6

PHILEA  
EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL  
FUNDERS GROUP



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the most comprehensive study yet into grants for environmental initiatives from European philanthropic foundations. It builds on the five earlier editions of this research, significantly increasing the number and value of grants being analysed.

The long-term goal remains that set out in earlier editions: to establish as detailed a picture as possible of the state of European foundation funding for environmental issues with a view to raising the profile of environmental funders, building understanding of the sector, improving coordination, and providing analysis that informs discussion of effectiveness in environmental grantmaking.

The report features a detailed analysis of the environmental grants of 126 European public-benefit foundations,<sup>1</sup> as compared to 127 in the previous edition.<sup>2</sup> These 126 foundations include many of Europe's<sup>3</sup> largest providers of philanthropic grants for environmental initiatives, although there are undoubtedly additional foundations that could be included in a report of this kind.<sup>4</sup> The report focuses on the 2021 calendar year<sup>5</sup> as this is the latest year for which comprehensive grants data could be obtained for all 126 foundations.

## Key findings

→ The 126 foundations made 8,518 environmental grants in 2021, worth a combined €1.6 billion.<sup>6</sup> **This is more than double the value of the grants analysed in the previous edition of this research.** This huge jump in the value of the grants in the dataset results both from the addition of some large funders not featured in previous editions, and from a growth in grantmaking on the part of some of the foundations regularly featuring in the research.

→ As in the fifth edition of the research, the **thematic issue category receiving the most funding** from the 126 foundations was *climate & atmosphere*, accounting for 24.4% of grants by value, and for 1,203 grants. The *climate & atmosphere* category ranks third in terms of the average size of its grants, and now benefits from grants from 74 foundations.

→ In past editions we have provided figures for the combined grants in the three thematic issue categories of *climate & atmosphere*, *energy*, and *transport*, seeing these as particularly central to **efforts to mitigate climate change**. In 2021 the grants in these three categories were worth €681 million, nearly three times the €237 million recorded in 2018. In practice there are many grants in other thematic issue categories that are also climate-focused, and we provide some additional data in the text box on page 13.

→ The addition of some large new funders to the dataset, plus increased giving on the part of funders included in earlier editions, has led to **significant changes in the ranking of the 13 thematic issue categories**. Rather than the five "Cinderella" issue categories that we have referred to in successive editions of this research, there are now just three thematic issue categories that receive less than 2% of the grants by value, namely *sustainable communities*, *fresh water*, and *toxics & pollution*. This is the first time that the *sustainable communities* category has featured near the bottom of the ranking, and it comes despite there being 1,744 grants in this category, more than in any other.

→ **Philanthropic funding remains very limited for work tackling over-consumption**, and for more unpopular behaviour changes including dietary transitions and curbs on flying. Meanwhile **funding for "new economy"** initiatives including those questioning economic growth is estimated to be just €11.4 million, or 0.7% of the total value of the grants in the dataset.



**126**  
FOUNDATIONS



**8,518**  
GRANTS



**€ 1.6**  
BILLION  
granted for environmental work

→ Comparison of the grants made by 105 foundations for which we have data in both 2018 and 2021 shows **growth in the total value of environmental grants** from €708 million in 2018 to over €1 billion (€1,047.6 million) in 2021, an increase of 48%, which is extremely welcome. One very large grant made in 2021 somewhat distorts these figures, so caution is required. But the growth in funding is undoubtedly a positive development.

→ When we look at the **thematic focus of the grants** from the 105 foundations for which we have like-for-like data from the last edition to this one, we see that *climate & atmosphere* has been displaced from the top spot by grants going to *biodiversity & species* work. This is due to the very large grant mentioned in the previous paragraph. There are notable increases in the amount of funding going to the categories of *trade & finance* (largely due to finance-focused grants), and *consumption & waste*, (largely for circular economy and industrial transformation work). By contrast, funding to *coastal & marine* work fell back by more than 30%, as did funding in the *sustainable communities* category, and in *toxics & pollution*.

→ Turning to the **geographical distribution of the grants** we see that 148 countries benefitted from at least one grant. A total of 6,734 grants, worth €592.1 million, were directed towards projects in Europe (36.8% of the total). This is the lowest share of grants going to work in Europe across the six editions of this research, and the first time the percentage has fallen below 40%. The main reason for this is that the large climate funders now in the dataset tend to have very global outlooks, funding work around the world, and in multiple countries, which falls into our *international* category. Large one-off *international* grants in 2021 also contributed to this low share of funding within Europe.

→ When we look at the **countries receiving the largest amount of funding** we find that seven of the “top ten” countries also featured in the “top ten” in the fifth edition of this research. There have, however, been some changes to the ranking, with both Germany and India both featuring in the top five for the first time, alongside the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France.

→ The **allocation of grants within the European Union** remains extremely uneven. Within the 27 EU countries, Denmark continues to receive the largest per capita allocation of environmental philanthropy grants, worth €480.97 per 100 people, with the Netherlands remaining in second place with €315.67 per 100 people. At the other end of the scale there were 9 EU Member States where we identified less than €10.00 per 100 people of environmental philanthropy grants. While this represents a slight improvement on the fifth edition it appears that many EU Member States are starved of the philanthropic funding that is so important in environmental change.

→ We have repeated the categorisation of the foundations' work in terms of both **approaches to change and the environmental discourses** in which they operate, refining the methodology for the discourse analysis. We find that *hands-on conservation work*, *advocacy*, and *research* remain widely supported approaches, now joined at the top of the rankings by *community/amenity* initiatives. Turning to environmental discourses, we find an increase in the share of grants directed to *deeper systems change* work, but that the funding directed to the 3 most radical discourses fell back from 4.5% of the grants by value, to just 3.6%.

# METHODOLOGY

€1,609.5  
MILLION

Across the six volumes of this research, we have used a consistent methodology, allowing us to build a rich dataset on environmental funding in Europe. This volume focuses on environmental grants from 126 European philanthropic foundations.

Two types of findings are presented in the report: 1) data that draws on the full dataset from all 126 foundations. This data represents our current best understanding of what is happening across the field of environmental philanthropy in Europe; 2) data that is based on a like-for-like comparison between the 105 foundations for which we have grants data from the last edition and this one (based on 2018 and 2021 data respectively). This data helps us to understand what has been changing in terms of the overall level of giving, and also the priorities of environmental foundations, both in terms of themes and geographies. For each table and chart we highlight which of the two approaches has been used.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, readers should assume that the text refers to the full set of 126 funders: So the phrase “average grant sizes are higher in 2021 than 2018” means the average grant size for environmental grants from this group of 126 foundations.

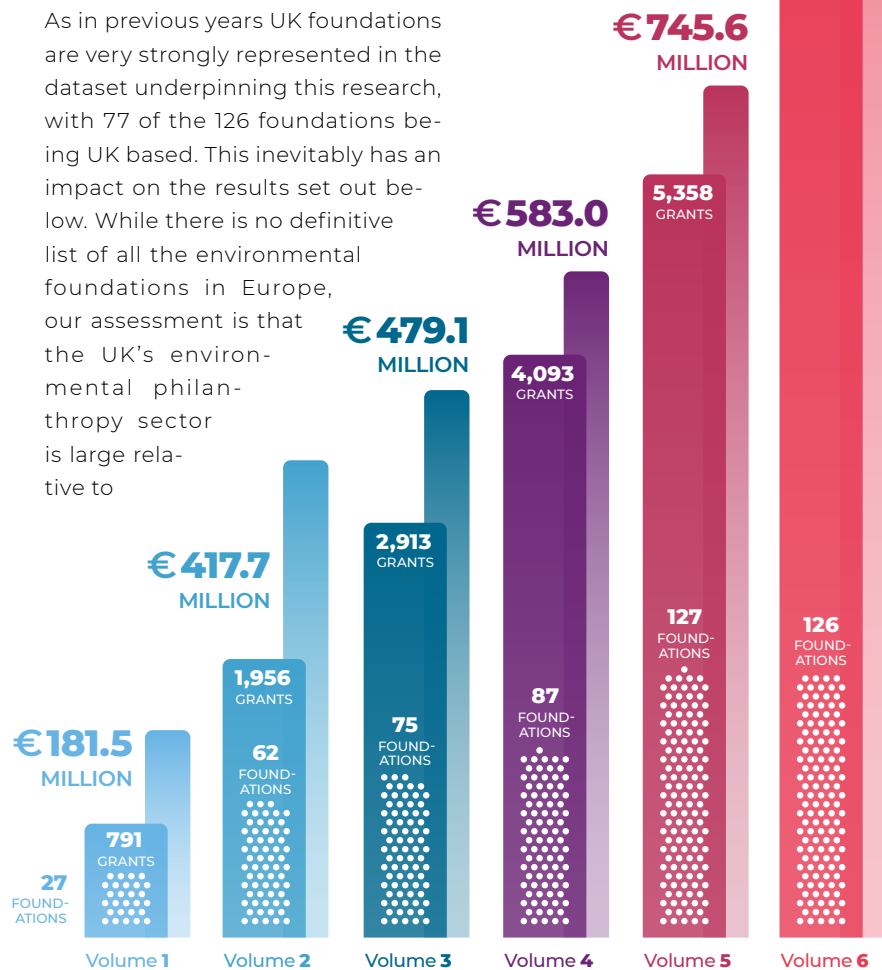
We are aware of additional foundations that we would have liked to include in this research, and we hope that they might be willing to take part in subsequent editions. There are undoubtedly also

foundations that we do not have on our radar, and we would very much welcome suggestions from readers of the report. If you take a look at the list in Annex I and can see foundations that you think are missing from the list, then please contact us at [eefgmapping@philea.eu](mailto:eefgmapping@philea.eu). More detail on our data-gathering methodology can be found in Annex VI.

As in previous years UK foundations are very strongly represented in the dataset underpinning this research, with 77 of the 126 foundations being UK based. This inevitably has an impact on the results set out below. While there is no definitive list of all the environmental foundations in Europe, our assessment is that the UK’s environmental philanthropy sector is large relative to

**Figure 1**

Evolution of the mapping, “Environmental Funding by European Foundations”



that in other European countries, particularly in terms of the number of foundations that are active environmental donors. We note, for example, that more than 270 foundations and individual donors have been involved in the UK's Environmental Funders Network since it was set up in 2003. This, coupled with the availability of grants data in the UK, helps to account for the large number of UK foundations in the dataset.

New foundations were added to the dataset if they made more than €345,000 (£300,000)<sup>7</sup> in environmental grants in 2021. Twenty foundations included in earlier editions whose environmental grantmaking fell below this threshold in 2021 have been retained in the dataset in order to allow comparisons between years. These are foundations where we expect their environmental giving to bounce back in 2022 and beyond, based on our knowledge of their work. Foundations from earlier editions who made no qualifying grants in 2021 have been removed from the dataset.

Although the data for this report is based on 126 foundations (compared to 127 in the fifth edition) both the value of the grants included and the number of grants have jumped significantly. Many of the 20 foundations from the last edition that didn't provide grants data this time round, or that had no qualifying grants in 2021, were making modest numbers of fairly small grants. By contrast, among the 21 foundations included in the research for the first time are some very large funders and some that make a large number of small grants.<sup>A</sup> This explains how the coverage of the environmental grants market as a whole has improved significantly, despite there being one less foundation in the dataset.

**Figure 2**

Explanation of the growth in the value of grants between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> editions of the research

**Value of grants**

The 127 foundations in Volume 5

**€745.6m**

20 "Volume 5" foundations not sharing their grants data or making no environmental grants in 2021

**€-37.5m**

Growth in funding between 2018 and 2021 for 105 foundations<sup>8</sup>

**€339.6m**

Funding from the 21 new foundations added to the research

**€561.9m**

**TOTAL IN VOLUME 6**

**€1,609.5m**

The more than doubling in the value of the grants covered by this report, relative to the fifth edition, can be explained as seen in Figure 2.

Some of the foundations included in the dataset for the first time have only become active since 2018, so they really represent "new money" in the field. Others were active at the time of the last report but not included in the dataset at that point. More detail on the like-for-like funding from the 105 foundations where we have data from both 2018 and 2021 is provided in later sections.

The findings that we present here are the most comprehensive and detailed to date, but this research is best seen as a work in progress in which each edition builds on what has gone before. **The numbers reported here are our best estimates, they should not be seen as definitive data points.**

We find it encouraging that in the last few years an increasing number of reports analysing environmental and social justice philanthropy have been published. At various points in this report we have inserted the words **COMPARISON POINT** and a reference to an endnote with comparative data from relevant research studies.

If you find this report useful then **please help us to improve subsequent editions**, either by **sharing your grants data** with us on a confidential basis, or by **helping us identify and reach out to foundations** that ought to be included in the research.

Contact [eefgmapping@philea.eu](mailto:eefgmapping@philea.eu)

<sup>A</sup> Given that we had 127 foundations in Volume 5, have taken 20 out of the dataset, and have added 21 new foundations for the first time, one might expect the number of foundations covered in this edition to be 128, not 126. In practice this isn't the case due to changes in the way that grants distributed by some of the national Postcode Lotteries have been incorporated in the dataset. In Volume 5 some Postcode Lottery grants had been bundled together, while others were being distributed by more than one "foundation" in the group of 127.

# A DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC SECTOR

As in the fifth edition of the research, the foundations included in this mapping are diverse in terms of the way in which they focus their grantmaking activity, but also in terms of organisational form. We have categorised the foundations using the same **five different organisational forms** used in the fifth edition, as follows:

## A 63 family (or personal) foundations

Members of the founding family remain involved in the work of the foundation, often as board members, or where one individual directs the giving of the foundation.

## B 23 corporate foundations

Associated closely with a particular company, even if operating independently from the management of that company.

## C 16 pooled fund or re-granting foundations

Typically receive their income either from other foundations, governmental sources, or high net worth individuals, and then re-grant these funds.

## D 17 independent foundations

Often started up by an individual philanthropist, and/or are based on the wealth of a company, but as far as we can tell no family members are now involved in running the foundation.

## E 7 “lottery” funders

Making grants using funds donated by the public through regular lottery games or fundraising appeals.

The diversity of funding approaches represented by the grants in the dataset is striking, as this selection of grant descriptions reveals:

*“To support China’s energy transition by providing evidence-based and tailored recommendations for low-carbon energy supply, energy consumption and power systems.”*

*“Every year during the grass harvest tens of thousands of helpless young wild animals are killed or injured by the blades of grass cutters. The fawns lack the flight instinct in the first three to four weeks of life. In case of danger they do not move and wait for their mothers to return. With two drones with thermal imaging cameras, we search the meadows before mowing the grassland, secure the animals and then release them again.”*

*“The sustainable company Smyle sells toothpaste in tablet form to offer plastic-free, healthier and waste-free oral care. In this way, a contribution is made to more sustainable production and consumption of toothpaste.”*

*“By promoting connections between civil society, activists and policymakers, as well as highlighting marginalized voices, the conceived project offers a platform for exchange and intersectional feminist knowledge production and dissemination on the climate crisis.”*

*“The organization of repair workshops for computers, printers or household appliances within the ‘Repair Café’ with the aim of improving the skills of the public and developing the ‘eco-citizen’ spirit.”*



Within the wider ecosystem of foundations we can identify a number of clusters when it comes to approach. These include:

### 1. Conservation funders

focused on practical conservation projects or research

### 2. Community funders

supporting work embedded in communities, often with an educational dimension

### 3. Entrepreneurial funders

seeking to drive change by investing in new approaches to business, start-ups and the like

### 4. Research funders

heavily focused on supporting academic research

### 5. Advocate funders

looking to drive policy change and legislation using a combination of “insider” and “outsider” strategies.

Many of the new and rapidly expanding climate funders fit in that final category, but as is shown on page 27, little of their funding is currently directed to work in more disruptive environmental discourses. It is clear that the foundations whose grants are in the dataset are trying to solve very different problems, and have very different understandings of what success looks like.

The expansion of climate change philanthropy is being accompanied by the development of sophisticated collaborative giving platforms focused on different sectoral challenges and regions of the world. A very useful overview of these is provided in “[Giving Together to Address the Climate Crisis](#)”, from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Climate Leadership Initiative. These platforms tend to focus on aligning the grants from large climate philanthropies, and we think it would be beneficial if more information were shared between these giving platforms and the new climate donors emerging as a result of the initiatives described in the sidebar to the right, many of whom give at a lower level.

With the expansion in giving by large climate philanthropies, the environmental philanthropy sector overall is becoming more “top heavy”, with changes in strategy on the part of these large funders having ripple effects both across philanthropy and for the civil society groups receiving the funding. The creation of collaborative giving platforms increases the “gate-keeping” power of the foundations taking part. We think there may be opportunities for smaller funders to help mitigate this problem, and also to take the lead on work which currently doesn’t receive much philanthropic support (see the sections on thematic issues and approaches below). Better information flows across the environmental philanthropy sector would be valuable in this respect.

So far there doesn’t seem to be a comparable development of philanthropic infrastructure for funders focused on conservation and biodiversity loss, and we wonder whether this is a missed opportunity for the sector, and whether the creation of more infrastructure might help in growing the amount of funding directed to biodiversity related initiatives.

## Environmental philanthropy: Growing fast from a low base

The sixth edition of this mapping research coincides with a period of rapid growth in environmental philanthropy, and particularly climate philanthropy, both at the European level and globally:

→ The ClimateWorks Foundation has calculated that, on a global basis, “Foundation funding for climate change mitigation has more than tripled since 2015, the year the Paris Agreement was adopted – growing from \$900 million to more than \$3 billion in 2021. Funding increased by more than 40% between 2020 and 2021 alone.”<sup>9</sup>

→ The Environmental Funders Network reported a 91% increase in environmental giving by UK foundations between 2016/17 and 2018/19, and that trend has continued during the last few years.<sup>10</sup>

→ The Human Rights Funders Network reported a 43% increase in grants to “environmental and resource rights” between 2018 and 2019.<sup>11</sup>

→ A number of large climate funders have been scaling up their giving, and significant new pledges have been made by wealthy individuals and foundations around the world. See Annex VII to get a sense of these.

→ Donor advisory services focused on climate change are also continuing to expand, for example the [Climate Leadership Initiative](#), [Impatience Earth](#), [India Climate Collaborative](#), and the climate programme at [Active Philanthropy](#).

→ Under the umbrella of #PhilanthropyForClimate, this activity is being underpinned and supported by national climate commitments hosted by the national associations of foundations in the UK, [France](#),<sup>12</sup> [Spain](#),<sup>13</sup> and [Italy](#).<sup>14</sup> Around the world, 635 foundations in 23 different countries have signed up to the international or a national #PhilanthropyForClimate commitment.

→ Philea’s [European Philanthropy Coalition for Climate](#) coordinates #PhilanthropyForClimate in Europe by offering support to the European signatories and national commitments and has updated its [overview of climate philanthropy networks](#).

# PHILANTHROPIC GRANTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: TOP-LEVEL FIGURES

The 126 foundations that are the focus of this report made 8,518 environmental grants in 2021, worth a combined €1.6 billion. This is by far the largest volume of grants analysed across the six editions of this research, both in terms of value and the number of grants categorised.

While the breakdowns in expenditure across thematic issues and geographies provided below are based on a stronger dataset than in previous editions, they are still not comprehensive, since there is no definitive list of all the environmental foundations in Europe, and there are without doubt additional foundations that could have been included in this research.

While €1.6 billion is a significant amount of money, it remains a tiny share of total European foundation giving, and well below the percentage of philanthropic funding going to environmental causes, typically 5-6%, that have been identified in research from environmental grant-making networks in the United States, Canada, Italy, France and the United Kingdom. Recent analysis by the ClimateWorks Foundation in California estimates that philanthropic giving to climate mitigation by individuals and foundations remains below 2% of global philanthropy, despite rapid growth in the foundation component in recent years.<sup>15</sup>

The amount of funding provided by philanthropic foundations also pales into insignificance when compared to the sums needed to tackle biodiversity loss and to de-

*The amount of funding provided by philanthropic foundations also pales into insignificance when compared to the sums needed to tackle biodiversity loss and to decarbonise our economies.*

carbonise our economies; the subsidies provided by governments to environmentally harmful activity; or indeed the profits of fossil fuel companies. For comparison, the most recent annual profits of just five fossil fuel companies (Shell, BP, Chevron, Exxon and Total Energies) were £161 billion.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile research by the Clean Air Fund found that multilateral development banks, bilateral development agencies and governments had committed \$45 billion between 2015 and 2021 to projects that will prolong the use of fossil fuels.<sup>17</sup> On current trajectories the world is still heading for a temperature increase of 2.4°C, far from the 1.5°C outlined in the Paris Agreement.<sup>18</sup>

## Findings of this research

The average grant size for the 8,518 grants reviewed was €188,951, a 35.7% increase on the €139,148 recorded for 2018. The median grant size for 2021 was €20,000, up from €12,000 in the previous edition. There are an increasing number of both large (in some cases very large) and small grants in the dataset, at either end of the distribution. We now have more than 2,600 grants of €5,000 or less, for example, many of them supporting educational projects in schools.

At the top end of the distribution a small number of very large grants continue to account for a significant share of the total expenditure, with the 10 largest grants accounting for 23% of the money given (2018 – 24.8%). There were 260 grants of €1 million or more (2018 – 113), and together they accounted for 66.6% of the €1.6 billion total (2018 – 56.8%). Large grants of €1 million or more are becoming more significant across the sector as a whole.

The 10 foundations with the largest environmental funding programmes from the group of 126 continue to provide a large proportion of the total funding, with their grants accounting for 73.6% of the €1.6 billion (see Figure 3), a jump from 63.8% in the previous edition. These figures correspond well with other recent research.<sup>19</sup>

**COMPARISON POINT**

**126** foundations

**8,518** grants

**€1.6 billion** granted for environmental work

**€188,951** average grant size

**€20,000** median grant size

This concentration of funding among a small number of foundations with very large environmental grants programmes has significant implications both for grantees and for foundations providing more modest amounts of funding, as noted in the previous section.

It is also the case that a handful of countries dominate the provision of the environmental philanthropy grants analysed in this research, and Figure 4 shows the five countries whose foundations are contributing the largest amount of funding.






**Figure 3**

The 10 largest foundations by value of environmental grants (in alphabetical order)

	Children's Investment Fund Foundation
	Deutsche Postcode Lotterie
	European Climate Foundation
	IKEA Foundation
	Laudes Foundation
	MAVA Foundation
	Nationale Postcode Loterij
	Oak Foundation
	People's Postcode Lottery
	Quadrature Climate Foundation

**Figure 4**

Grants from foundations in the 5 European countries providing the largest amount of grants by value

Rank	Country	Value of grants	% of all grants by value	No. of grants
1	 United Kingdom	€ 632,510,489	39.3%	3,255
2	 Netherlands	€ 442,419,341	27.5%	1,502
3	 Switzerland	€ 301,965,969	18.8%	444
4	 Germany	€ 74,333,678	4.6%	723
5	 Denmark	€ 38,945,987	2.4%	106
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>€1,490,175,464</b>	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>6,034</b>

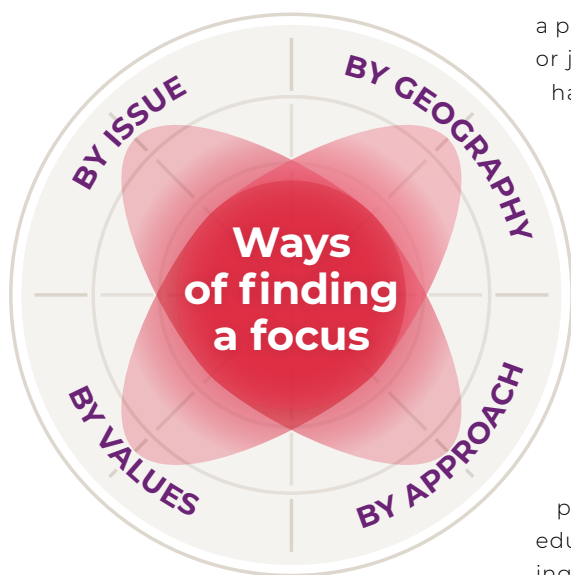






# FOUR WAYS IN WHICH FOUNDATIONS FOCUS THEIR GRANTMAKING

Our research over the years suggests that there are four main lenses that foundations use when developing a focus for their environmental giving. These are represented in the diagram below.



The most common way of finding a focus is **by issue**, so an environmental donor might decide to specialise on, for example, renewable energy, or organic food, or protecting tropical forests. Funders tend to think of themselves as a “food and agriculture” funder, or a “climate” funder, and thematic issues are often the natural framework around which funder affinity groups form.

A second option is to focus on a particular **geography**. Some of the foundations within our set of 126 are restricted by law to making grants in the country where they are located, or have chosen to do this as a matter of policy. Others have an even tighter geographical remit, on

a particular region within a country, or just one city. Other foundations have an international remit, in some cases focusing on a continent, and in other cases being truly global funders (see p. 18). Many foundations find a focus for their grantmaking by combining **issues** and **geography**.

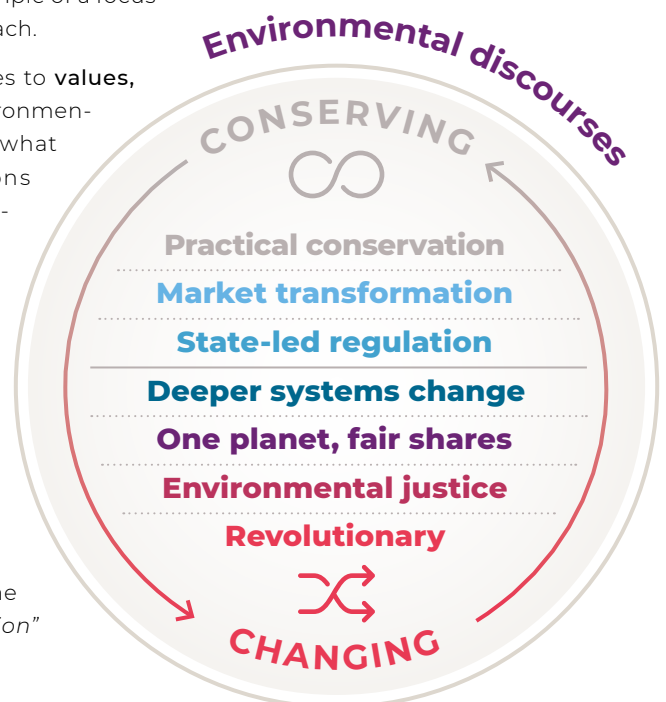
A third option is to focus grantmaking **by approach**. That might mean prioritising scientific research, for example, or focusing on environmental education. A programme supporting youth-led climate movements would be a good example of a focus on a particular approach.

The fourth lens relates to **values**, or discourses of environmentalism, and defines what different foundations and NGOs understand a “win” to be. This can vary widely from one organisation or individual to the next.

The diagram here shows seven different understandings or “discourses” of environmentalism, ranging from the “*practical conservation*”

discourse at the top, to the “*revolutionary*” discourse at the bottom. As one moves down the list of discourses, the challenges to the status quo become more profound, and concerns about democratic reform, equality, justice and rights become more visible. In the section on “Discourses prioritised by European environmental foundations”, we look at how the grants from 97 foundations break down across these discourses.

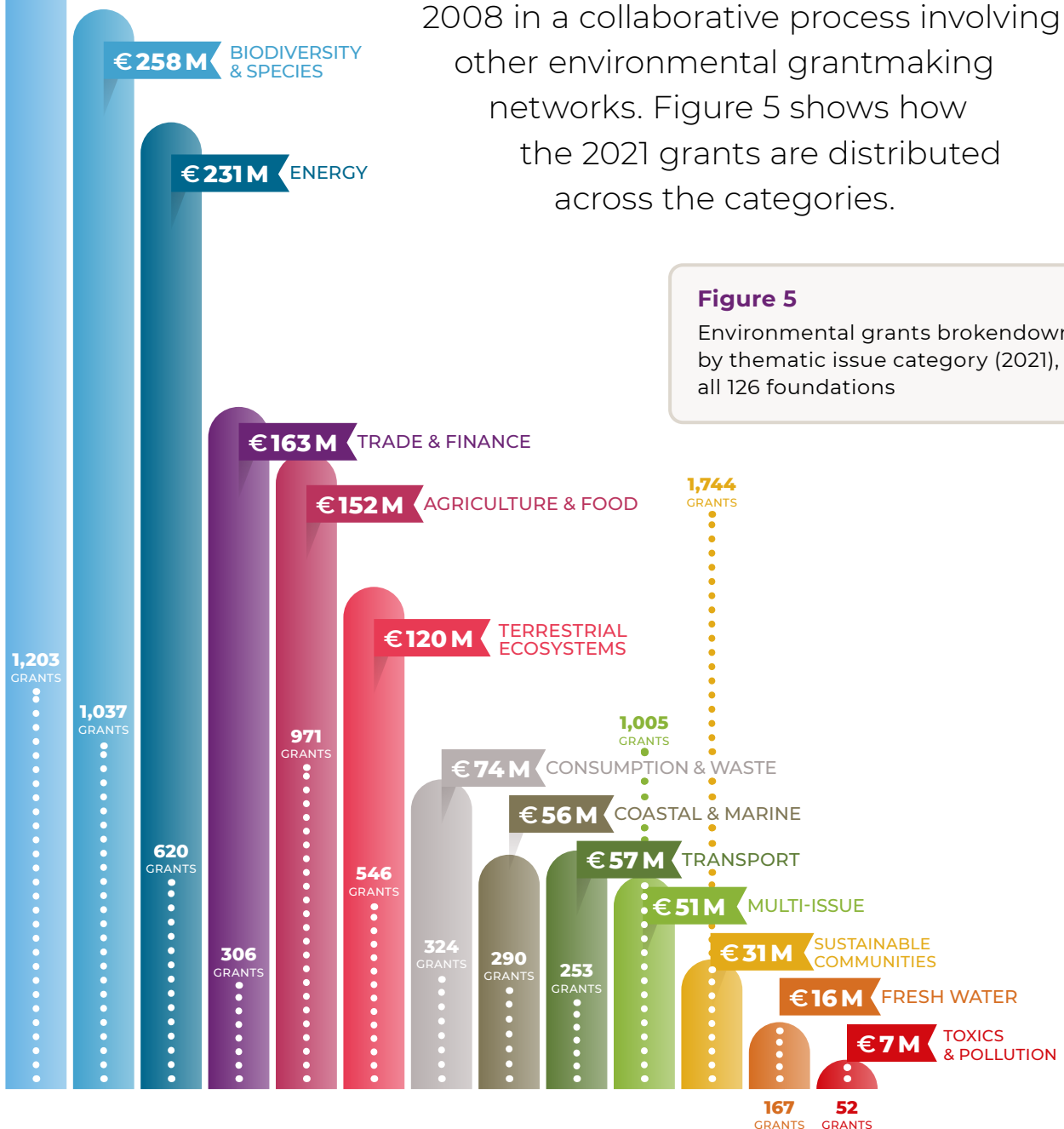
The next four sections of the report explore European environmental grantmaking using these four different lenses.



# THEMATIC ISSUE FOCUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

As in earlier reports, the priorities of the 126 foundations were explored by assigning the 8,518 grants to 13 thematic issue categories.

Annex II of this report provides descriptions of the categories, which were developed in 2008 in a collaborative process involving other environmental grantmaking networks. Figure 5 shows how the 2021 grants are distributed across the categories.



**Figure 5**  
Environmental grants broken down by thematic issue category (2021), all 126 foundations

As in the fifth edition of the research, the thematic issue category receiving the most funding from the 126 foundations was *climate & atmosphere*, accounting for 24.4% of grants by value, and for 1,203 of the 8,518 grants. In the past the *climate & atmosphere* category was characterised by larger grants from a relatively small number of

**Climate & atmosphere** receives 24.7% of grants, and with *energy* and *transport* = €683 million

**Significant changes** to the ranking of the thematic issue categories

**Average grant sizes vary widely** across thematic issue categories

foundations. Now it has the second largest number of grants, behind *sustainable communities*, and ranks third in terms of the number of foundations making grants to the category. However, average grant sizes in this category remain large relative to the other categories. (Please see Annex IV for more detail).

In past editions we have provided figures for the combined grants in the three thematic issue categories of *climate & atmosphere*, *energy*, and *transport*. In 2021 the

grants in these three categories were worth €681 million, nearly three times the €237 million recorded in 2018. Much of this increase results from the addition of new foundations to the mapping, but if we remove the new foundations from the data and compare 2018 and 2021 on a like-for-like basis we still see an increase of nearly 39% in the value of the grants to these three categories. This is a very welcome consequence of the rapid growth in climate philanthropy mentioned above.

Both the totals for the *biodiversity & species* category and the *energy* category were significantly boosted by very large grants. Without these grants they would have fallen down the ranking below a number of the other categories.

**Health warning:** One of the consequences of adding grants from foundations with large environmental funding programmes to the dataset is that there are an increasing number of grants that are large enough to affect the totals shown in the report. For example, the new dataset includes two very large grants, one of more than €100 million, and one of more than €80 million. We have made a comment when these very large grants have an impact on the way in which funding is distributed.

## Climate change philanthropy: Towards a meaningful definition

In this report we have provided figures for the total amount given to work in the three thematic issue categories of *climate & atmosphere*, *energy*, and *transport* (€681 million when combined together). We have used these three categories as a shorthand for giving towards climate mitigation in past editions of the research, but this is no longer a very satisfactory approach as many of the other thematic issue categories include grants that are directly relevant to climate mitigation, and have been made by funders for this reason.

The ClimateWorks Foundation in California has developed a much more detailed taxonomy for climate mitigation grants, which can be seen in the Annexes of the "[Foundation funding for climate change mitigation: Europe spotlight](#)" report, published in October 2021.<sup>20</sup>

We have not been able to categorise all the grants in this new report using the ClimateWorks taxonomy, but in this edition of the research we have made more use of keyword searches to identify grants contributing to climate mitigation in thematic categories beyond *climate & atmosphere*, *energy*, and *transport*. For example we identified:

- More than €116 million of climate finance grants.
- €45 million of grants directed at circular economy and industrial transformation efforts.
- Nearly €61 million directed towards protecting forests and woodlands, plus tree-planting, agroforestry and reforestation initiatives: Of this sum nearly €39 million was being spent on protecting tropical forests.

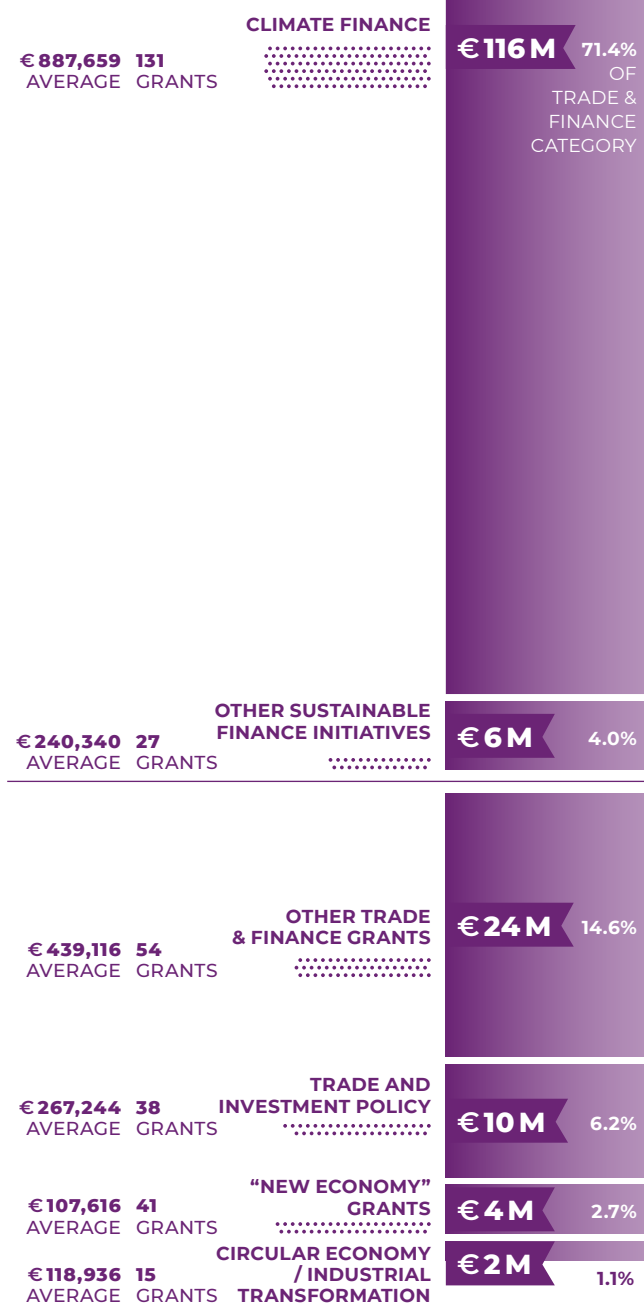
There will be additional grants in the dataset that are relevant to climate mitigation, particularly in the *agriculture & food* category. In future editions of this research we hope to capture more and more of these climate grants.

## TRADE & FINANCE TOTAL GRANT VALUE

# €163 M

**Figure 6**

Trade & finance grants  
broken down by sub-issue



## Cinderella no more?

In earlier editions of this research we have referred to a group of five “Cinderella” issue categories, that routinely occupied the bottom five places in our ranking of grants by thematic issue. These Cinderella categories were *consumption & waste, transport, trade & finance, fresh water, and toxics & pollution*.

Figure 5 shows a very significant change in the distribution of funding, now that we have a more accurate overview of the grants market, and with new areas of work becoming a priority for some of the large climate funders. Below we have provided more detailed breakdowns of sub-issues that are attracting significant funding within the *trade & finance* and *consumption & waste* categories. It is important to note that grants supporting work on a given sub-issue can be assigned to different thematic issue categories, “new economy” grants being a good example. We provide some estimates of the total funding to these sub-issues below.

The change in how funding has been distributed can be seen clearly with the *trade & finance* category, which now ranks fourth in Figure 5 above. Figure 6 provides an overview of funding to some of the sub-issues that fall within the *trade & finance* category.

*It is hard to avoid the feeling that more politically challenging topics such as economic growth, aviation, dietary shifts, and over-consumption are currently starved of resources. These arguably represent the “next frontier” for environmental philanthropy.*

As Figure 6 shows, the jump in funding in the *trade & finance* category is largely a consequence of grants directed at either climate finance work, or other sustainable finance initiatives (a category which includes finance for biodiversity, for example). Together these account for more than 75.4% of the funding in the *trade & finance* category. Grants towards work on trade & investment policy, by comparison, received just 6.2% of the funding in the trade & finance category, and “new economy” initiatives received even less, at 2.7%. However, new economy grants appear in other thematic issue categories as well, so to get a better picture of this type of grant, we give a combined total for this category below.



A similar dynamic can be observed in the *consumption & waste* category (Figure 7), where foundations have made significant investments in “circular economy” and “industrial transformation” initiatives, with a view to trying to transform the way in which industry sectors function.

We identified €45 million of grants to such initiatives, comprising 60.9% of the €74 million shown in Figure 7. Many of the other grants in the *consumption & waste* category promote recycling and reuse projects.

By contrast, we found very few grants that support work tackling over-consumption in a more fundamental way, for example by challenging the advertising and marketing industries, or promoting more low-consumption lifestyles. And when we zoom in on grants directed to dietary transitions and reduced meat consumption, we find just 64 grants worth €15.2 million.

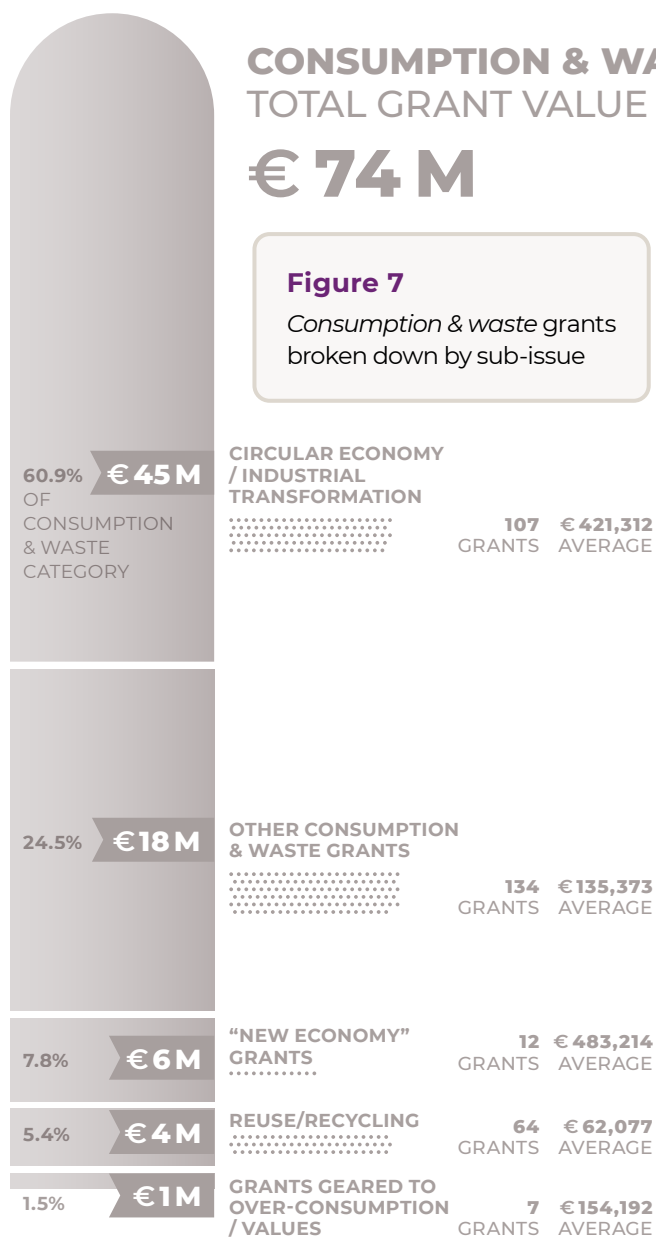
As can be seen from Figure 7, we identified “new economy” grants in the *consumption & waste* category as well as in *trade & finance*. Adding together the figures from Figures 6 and 7, plus a handful of other “new economy” grants we arrive at an estimate of €11.4 million for “new economy” work, just 0.7% of the total value of the grants in the dataset. Even allowing for a fairly tight definition of “new economy” projects, this is a miniscule share of the total funding from the 126 foundations.<sup>21</sup> **COMPARISON POINT** The *transport* category has also climbed up the rankings in this edition, having consistently been a Cinderella issue in earlier research. This is in part due to foundations investing in the transition to electric vehicles and e-mobility more broadly. We identified 73 grants worth more than €26 million being directed to this transition, equivalent to nearly 46% of the funding in the *transport* category.

## CONSUMPTION & WASTE TOTAL GRANT VALUE

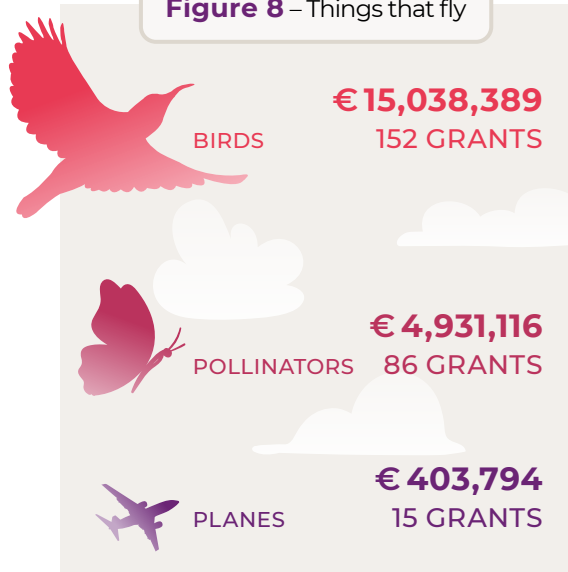
# € 74 M

**Figure 7**

*Consumption & waste grants broken down by sub-issue*



**Figure 8 – Things that fly**



By comparison we found almost no funding being directed at work on reducing aviation demand or tackling emissions from aviation, as can be seen in Figure 8.<sup>22</sup> **COMPARISON POINT**

In summary we can detect programmatic focus areas where significant resources are being invested in trying to transition whole sectors of the economy. The growth in the total philanthropic giving being directed to this work is of course extremely welcome, but it is hard to avoid the feeling that more politically challenging topics such as economic growth, aviation, dietary shifts, and over-consumption are currently starved of resources. These arguably represent the “next frontier” for environmental philanthropy.

The increase in funding to the *trade & finance*, *consumption & waste*, and *transport* categories leaves the two categories of *fresh water* and *toxics & pollution* very isolated at the foot of the rankings in Figure 5. These really are Cinderella issues when judged either by the value of the grants being directed towards them, or the number of grants.

€ 532,145 TRADE & FINANCE

**Figure 9**

Average grant sizes in each thematic issue category (2021), all 126 foundations

€ 372,337 ENERGY

€ 326,450 CLIMATE & ATMOSPHERE

€ 249,201 BIODIVERSITY & SPECIES

€ 228,615 CONSUMPTION & WASTE

€ 227,239 TRANSPORT

€ 219,313 TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

€ 192,619 COASTAL & MARINE

€ 156,564 AGRICULTURE & FOOD

€ 142,795 TOXICS & POLLUTION

€ 94,719 FRESH WATER

€ 50,663 MULTI-ISSUE

€ 17,952 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

As in previous years, the average grant sizes shown in Figure 9 vary considerably from one category to the next, ranging from more than €530,000 in the *trade & finance* category down to less than €18,000 in the *sustainable communities* category. Indeed the average grant size for *sustainable communities* grants is down from

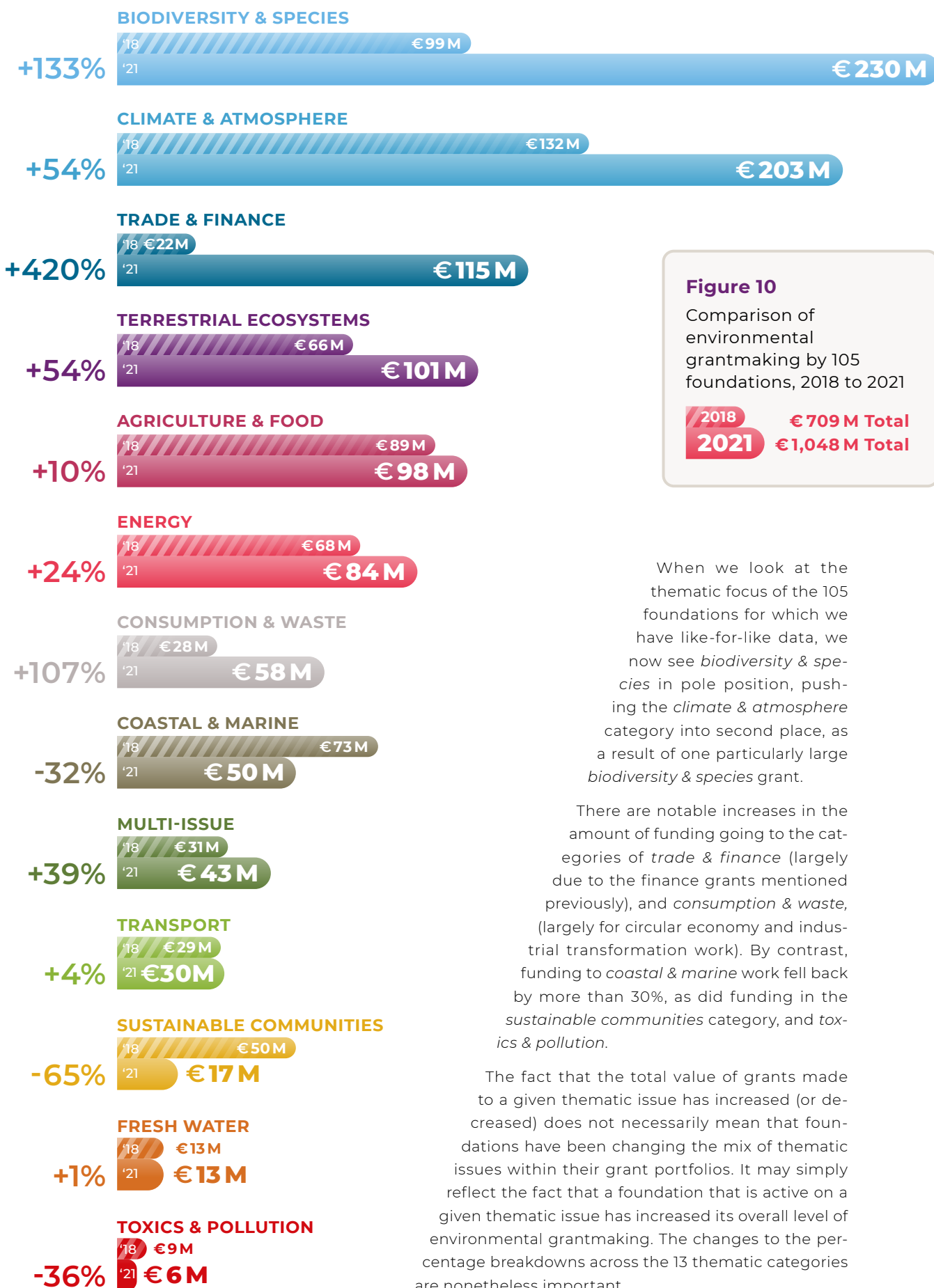
€60,249 in 2018 to just €17,952 in 2021. This is a category in which the number of grants has more than doubled between 2018 and 2021, but many of the new grants are small, and often directed at educational projects of one kind or another (for example a community garden, or an educational project in a kindergarten).

**Like-for-like changes in European environmental philanthropy**

Grants-level data was available for 105 foundations for both the fifth edition of this research and for this new edition, allowing for the direct comparison of their environmental grants in 2018 and 2021.<sup>23</sup>

As Figure 10 shows, total environmental giving from the 105 foundations grew from €709 million in 2018 to a little over €1 billion in 2021, an increase of 48%, which is extremely welcome. In practice, however, the like-for-like giving results vary heavily due to increased grantmaking on the part of a small number of foundations with large environmental grant programmes. The jump from 2018 to 2021 is also impacted by one particularly large grant made in 2021, so caution is required when looking at Figure 10. Regarding the number of grants, these grew from 5,109 to 7,325, and the average grant size increased marginally from €138,585 to €143,020.

Of the 105 foundations, a total of 57 had increased their environmental giving between 2018 and 2021, while for 48 foundations environmental giving had fallen. The 57 foundations that upped their giving contributed €523.9 million more in 2021 than 2018, while the 48 foundations that reduced their grants cumulatively gave €181 million less. This shows that, as in earlier editions of the research, there are large fluctuations in giving taking place behind the scenes.



**Figure 10**  
 Comparison of environmental grantmaking by 105 foundations, 2018 to 2021

2018 €709 M Total  
 2021 €1,048 M Total

When we look at the thematic focus of the 105 foundations for which we have like-for-like data, we now see *biodiversity & species* in pole position, pushing the *climate & atmosphere* category into second place, as a result of one particularly large *biodiversity & species* grant.

There are notable increases in the amount of funding going to the categories of *trade & finance* (largely due to the finance grants mentioned previously), and *consumption & waste*, (largely for circular economy and industrial transformation work). By contrast, funding to *coastal & marine* work fell back by more than 30%, as did funding in the *sustainable communities* category, and *toxics & pollution*.

The fact that the total value of grants made to a given thematic issue has increased (or decreased) does not necessarily mean that foundations have been changing the mix of thematic issues within their grant portfolios. It may simply reflect the fact that a foundation that is active on a given thematic issue has increased its overall level of environmental grantmaking. The changes to the percentage breakdowns across the 13 thematic categories are nonetheless important.

# GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

The geographical distribution of funding is very broad, but in many countries only a handful of grants, or just a single grant, can be detected.

A total of 148 countries could be identified (2018 – 146) where at least one grant was made, and a full list is provided in Annex III.

A total of 6,734 grants, worth €592.1 million, were directed towards projects in Europe (36.8% of the total by value). The 2021 grants to Europe compare to 3,842 grants worth €388.3 million (52.1% of the total by value) in the fifth edition.

This is the lowest share of grants going to work in Europe across the six editions of this research, and the first time the percentage has fallen below 40%.<sup>24</sup> **COMPARISON POINT** The main reason for this is that the large climate funders now in the dataset tend to have very global outlooks, funding work around the world, and in multiple countries, which falls into our *international* category. Large one-off grants in 2021 also contributed to this low share of funding within Europe.

Figure 12 shows the 20 countries receiving the most funding. Only grants that directly benefit one country have been included in the Top 20 ranking in the table.

**148 countries supported**

**36.8% of 2021 grants support projects in Europe**

**Top 5 countries account for 25.8% of funding**

**Allocation of grants within Europe remains extremely uneven**

The heavy concentration of funding in a small number of countries is clear, with 7 countries occupying “top ten” slots in both the previous edition of the research and in Figure 12. The dominant position of the United Kingdom is extremely clear, with environmental initiatives in the UK having received more than twice as much funding as those in any other country, and

with by far the largest number of foundations (73) making grants.<sup>25</sup> Germany and India climb into the top five for the first time ever in this research, displacing Denmark and Italy.

## Like-for-like changes in European environmental philanthropy

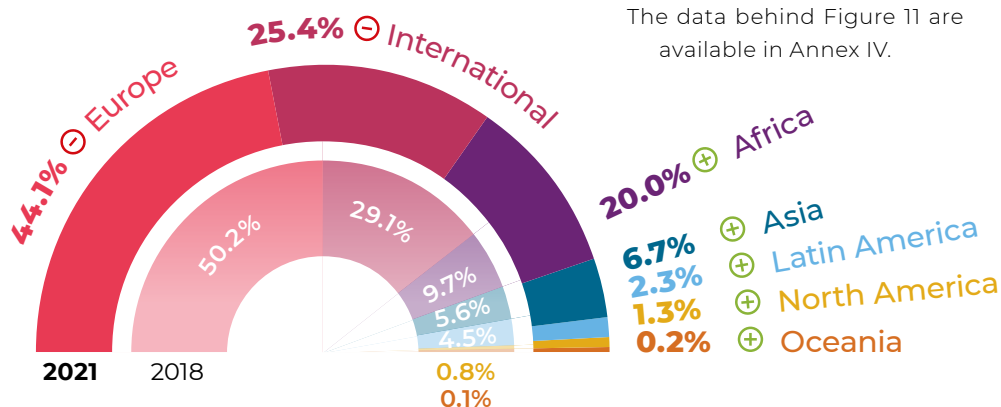
Figure 11 shows how the distribution of grants at the continental level changed between 2018 and 2021, based on a like-for-like comparison of the 105 foundations for which we have directly comparable data (the data tables in Annex IV include breakdowns by continent in 2021 for the full set of 126 foundations).

Figure 11 reveals a continuation of the trends identified in the last edition of the research, namely a fall in the share of grants being directed towards work taking place in Europe, now down to 44.1% on a like-for-like basis. The big jump in funding to Africa is somewhat misleading, as it results in the main from one extremely large grant.

The data behind Figure 11 are available in Annex IV.

**Figure 11**

Distribution of grants at the continental level, 2018 compared to 2021\*



\* For the 105 foundations where we have like-for-like data





**Figure 12**

Geographical distribution of grants by beneficiary countries (2021), top 20 countries, all 126 foundations

Rank	Country	Value of grants	% of all grants by value	No. of grants	No. of fdns. granting to the country	Rank in top 20 in 5 <sup>th</sup> edition
1	United Kingdom	€ 169,926,165	10.6 %	2,336	73	2
2	Germany	€ 73,468,712	4.6 %	842	14	7
3	India	€ 65,409,501	4.1 %	138	21	12
4	Netherlands	€ 55,346,896	3.4 %	159	13	1
5	France	€ 51,639,769	3.2 %	1,043	12	5
6	China	€ 48,301,293	3.0 %	44	13	6
7	Denmark	€ 28,169,085	1.8 %	80	5	3
8	Italy	€ 23,068,329	1.4 %	184	10	4
9	Spain	€ 18,646,381	1.2 %	608	8	13
10	United States	€ 17,483,469	1.1 %	46	16	14
11	Brazil	€ 14,909,919	0.9 %	57	18	11
12	Indonesia	€ 13,740,935	0.9 %	29	14	Not in top 20
13	Finland	€ 12,984,938	0.8 %	176	4	9
14	Belgium	€ 12,068,870	0.7 %	219	8	19
15	Switzerland	€ 9,980,437	0.6 %	88	8	10
16	Senegal	€ 7,609,716	0.5 %	18	8	Not in top 20
17	Sweden	€ 7,218,319	0.4 %	19	6	8
18	Kenya	€ 7,024,914	0.4 %	48	19	Not in top 20
19	Poland	€ 5,931,532	0.4 %	96	4	Not in top 20
20	Rwanda	€ 5,194,087	0.3 %	11	6	Not in top 20
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>€ 648,123,268</b>	<b>40.3 %</b>	<b>6,241</b>		

## International and domestic funders – Two distinct groups

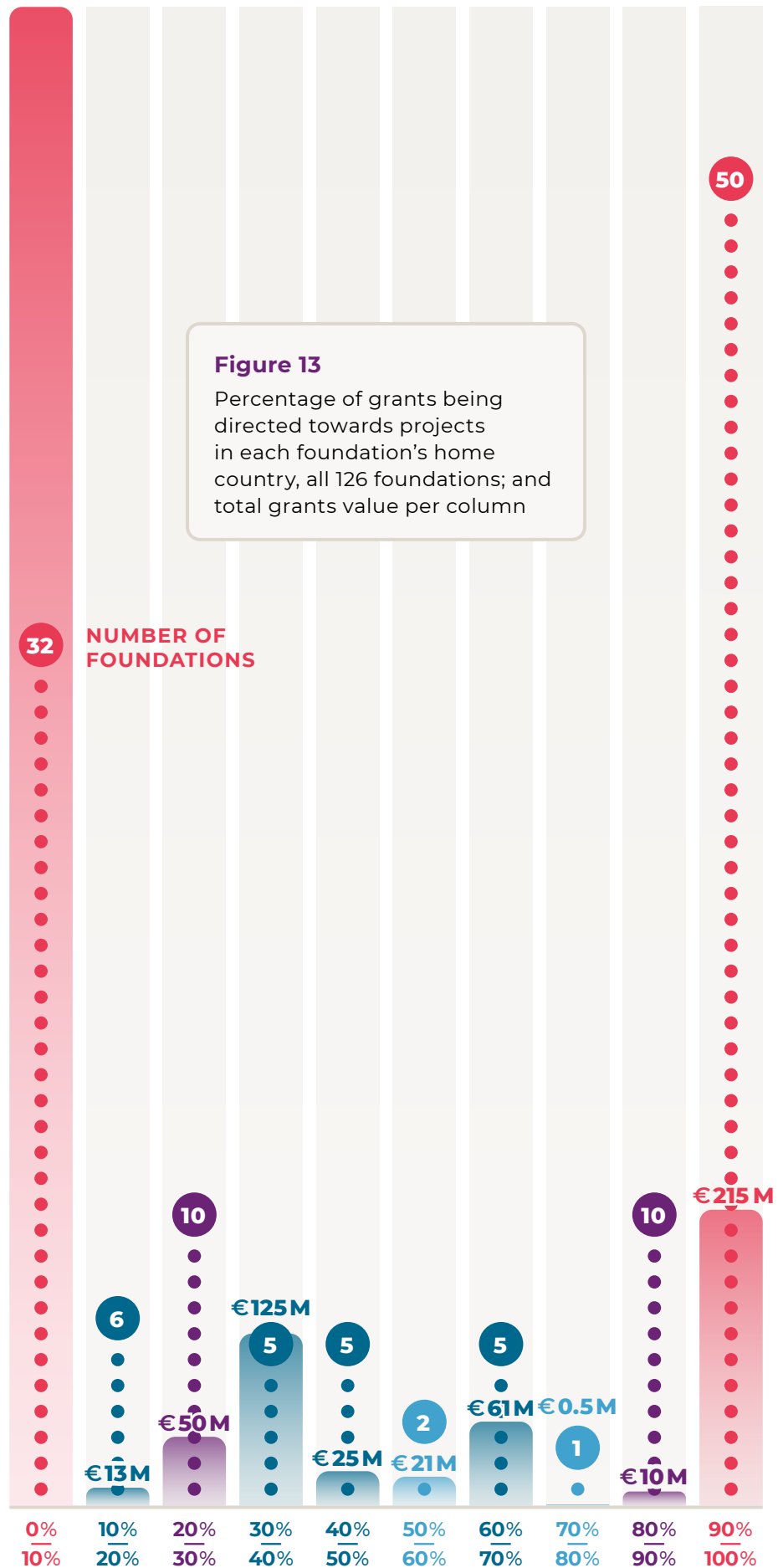
Some 50 out of the 126 foundations are domestically focused, funding initiatives in the country in which they are based. A further 10 foundations made more than 80% of their grants to support projects in their own country.

At the other end of the scale there were 20 foundations that made no grants to projects in the countries in which they are headquartered. Another 18 foundations made less than 20% of their grants to projects in their home country. Figure 13 shows the difference in approach for these international and domestic funders, who are on opposite sides of the graph. We can see that the internationally oriented funders (less than 10% to their home country) account for a much larger share of the grants than the domestically focused funders (more than 90% to their home country).

Elsewhere in this report reference is made to the low level of grants being directed to central and eastern Europe. This is perhaps not surprising, given that nearly half the foundations in the study might be described as domestic funders, with more than 80% of their funding supporting initiatives in the country where they are located, and few of these foundations are in central and eastern Europe.

There are many good reasons for foundations to focus on funding projects in their home countries, and indeed they may be required to do this by their mandates or by national laws. At the same time, it is clear that most environmental

€1,089M GRANTS VALUE €



challenges are international in nature, and require collective responses by nation states. From this perspective, finding ways to strengthen the capacity of environmental organisations in countries where resources are less readily available seems like it should be a priority in future. Philanthropic capital oils the wheels of social change, and has special characteristics relative to other forms of income for civil society organisations. As the following section shows, the availability of this vital capital across Europe is extremely uneven.

## The distribution of grants within Europe

Earlier editions of this research have highlighted the marked differences between countries within Europe with respect to population size, per capita income, environmental performance (measured using various indices), environmental values, and public understanding of environmental issues.

*...most environmental challenges are international in nature... (so) finding ways to strengthen the capacity of environmental organisations in countries where resources are less readily available seems like it should be a priority...*

As Figure 14 (next page) illustrates, grants from European foundations remain very unevenly distributed across the 27 EU Member States, despite the fact that EU environmental policy is made via processes that involve all Member States.

Figure 14 shows the value and number of environmental grants from the 126 foundations that were directed to initiatives in each of the 27 EU Member States, plus 3 other countries. The value of the grants has been divided by the population of each country in order to give a per capita measure that shows the value of grants per 100 people.

The allocation of grants within Europe remains extremely uneven. Within the 27 EU countries, Denmark continues to receive the largest per capita allocation of environmental philanthropy grants, worth €480.97 per 100 people, with the Netherlands remaining in second place with €315.67 per 100 people. At the other end of the scale there were 9 EU Member States where we identified less than €10.00 per 100 people of environmental philanthropy grants. While this represents a slight improvement on the fifth edition, it appears that many EU Member States are starved of the philanthropic funding that is so important in environmental change.






























That said, readers should not attach too much weight to the specific per capita figures, as these are sensitive to the changes in the number of foundations in the underlying dataset, and also to one-off large grants. The more important takeaway is the heavy concentration of grants in a limited number of countries, when looked at either in absolute terms or on a per capita basis. The split between the original 15 Member States of the EU and the 13 New Member States (NMS) is also really clear. The highest ranked of the 13 NMS is Romania, in 13<sup>th</sup> place. Ten of the other 13 NMS occupy the bottom half of the table.



© ADB – Climate Visuals.org

**Figure 14**

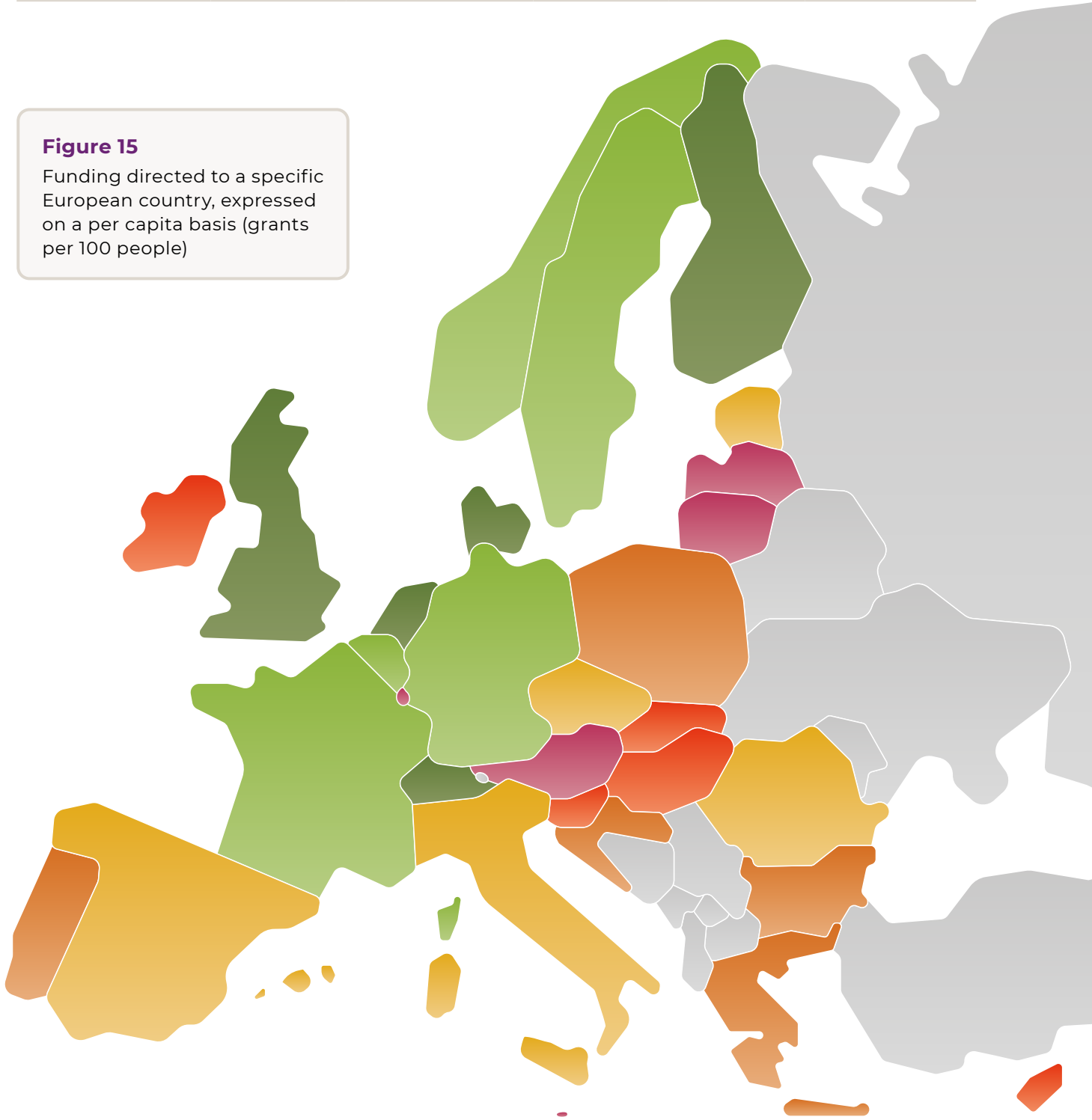
Geographical distribution of grants to EU Member States and selected other countries, compared to population, all 126 foundations

Rank	Country	Value of grants made to the country	Number of grants	% of EU population	2021 grants per 100 people
1	 Denmark	€ 28,169,085	80	1.31	€ 480.97
2	 Netherlands	€ 55,346,896	159	3.92	€ 315.67
3	 United Kingdom	€ 169,926,165	2,336	n/a	€ 252.39
4	 Finland	€ 12,984,938	176	1.24	€ 234.34
5	 Switzerland	€ 9,980,437	88	n/a	€ 114.67
6	 Belgium	€ 12,068,870	219	2.59	€ 104.11
7	 Germany	€ 73,468,712	842	18.60	€ 88.31
8	 Norway	€ 4,195,149	5	n/a	€ 77.57
9	 France	€ 51,639,769	1,043	15.15	€ 76.22
10	 Sweden	€ 7,218,319	19	2.33	€ 69.30
11	 Italy	€ 23,068,329	184	13.22	€ 39.03
12	 Spain	€ 18,646,381	608	10.60	€ 39.33
13	 Romania	€ 4,687,856	59	4.28	€ 24.52
14	 Czech Republic	€ 1,844,299	253	2.35	€ 17.56
15	 Estonia	€ 213,913	3	0.30	€ 16.07
16	 Croatia	€ 614,158	12	0.87	€ 15.75
17	 Poland	€ 5,931,532	96	8.44	€ 15.71
18	 Portugal	€ 1,460,184	25	2.31	€ 14.14
19	 Greece	€ 1,424,881	16	2.38	€ 13.39
20	 Bulgaria	€ 865,703	24	1.54	€ 12.59
21	 Slovenia	€ 249,326	5	0.47	€ 11.83
22	 Cyprus	€ 105,223	3	0.28	€ 8.46
23	 Hungary	€ 817,635	41	2.17	€ 8.42
24	 Slovakia	€ 433,289	16	1.22	€ 7.95
25	 Ireland	€ 377,636	8	1.13	€ 7.50
26	 Austria	€ 451,518	13	2.00	€ 5.04
27	 Latvia	€ 68,360	1	0.42	€ 3.63
28	 Lithuania	€ 94,750	2	0.63	€ 3.38
29	 Luxembourg	€ 0	0	0.14	€ 0.00
30	 Malta	€ 0	0	0.12	€ 0.00
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>486,353,314</b>	<b>6,336</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>n/a</b>

Top 5			Bottom 5		
Denmark	Belgium	Italy	Croatia	Slovenia	Austria
Netherlands	Germany	Spain	Poland	Cyprus	Latvia
United Kingdom	Norway	Romania	Portugal	Hungary	Lithuania
Finland	France	Czech Republic	Greece	Slovakia	Luxembourg
Switzerland	Sweden	Estonia	Bulgaria	Ireland	Malta

**Figure 15**

Funding directed to a specific European country, expressed on a per capita basis (grants per 100 people)





# APPROACHES PRIORITISED BY EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATIONS

As in the fifth edition of this research, we have categorised the foundations in this dataset based on the approaches to environmental work that they prioritise.

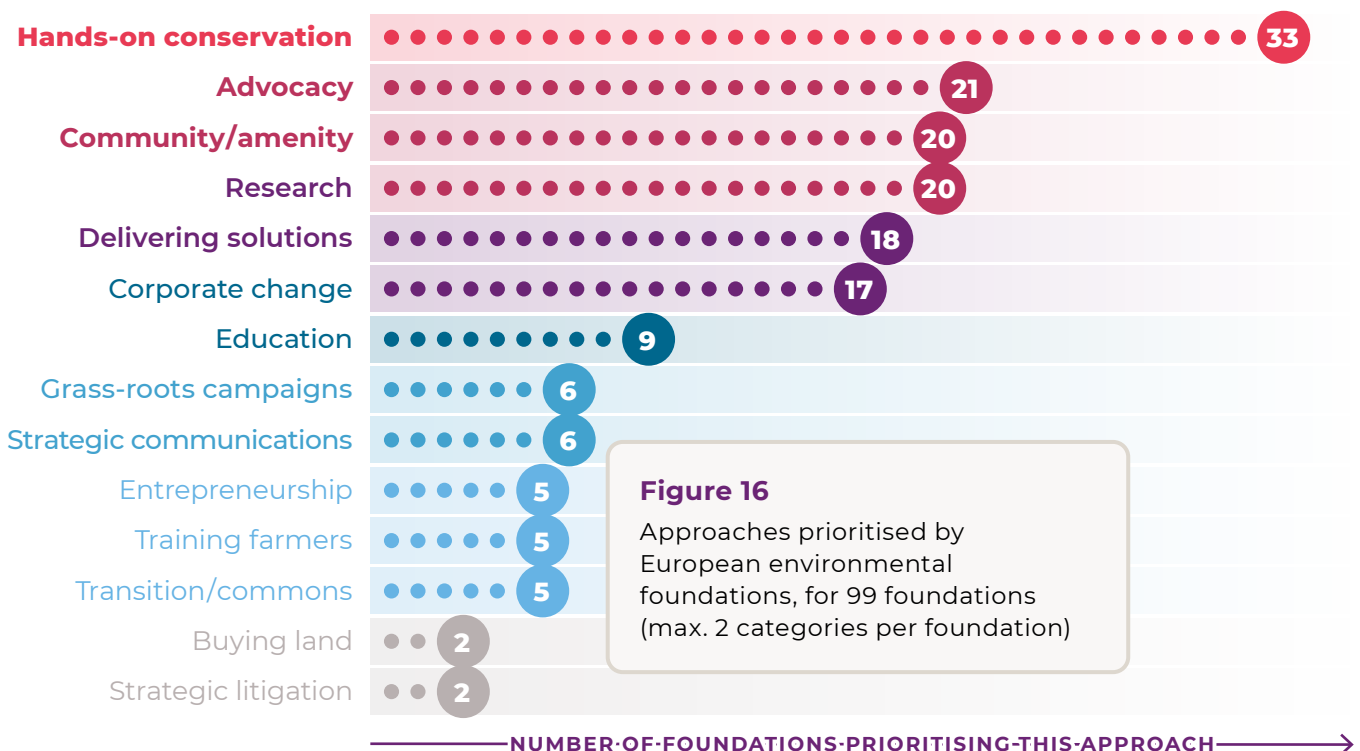
To do this we carefully reviewed the grants from each foundation, and assigned the foundation's overall grantmaking to a maximum of two approach categories. This was possible for 99 out of the 126 foundations.<sup>26</sup> Annex V provides more information on the categories.

Figure 16 shows which approaches are most widely supported. It is important to remember that these figures reflect the main orientations of the 99 foundations, not every individual grant. For example, is

foundation A mainly a funder of advocacy, or does it prioritise environmental education, or entrepreneurship and start-ups?

We can see that *hands-on conservation* remains the most common approach, as was the case in 2018 for the fifth edition. *Advocacy*, *community / amenity* work and *research* occupy the next three positions. The number of foundations supporting *community/amenity* initiatives has increased as a proportion of all the foundations in the

dataset. These funders are among the 41 that made grants in the *sustainable communities* issue category. Not surprisingly, funders granting in the *biodiversity & species* category tend to support a lot of *hands-on conservation* work. By contrast funders prioritising work on *climate & atmosphere*, are more likely to be using *advocacy*, *corporate change* strategies and *strategic communications* as approaches.





For this edition we have made more use of tags and keywords in order to try and generate estimates for the amount of funding going to various approaches. For example we were able to identify 1,737 grants worth €39.3 million that were supporting environmental education in formal educational settings. Many other grants clearly have an educational or awareness-raising component, but these grants were directed to kindergartens, schools, universities and the like.

We also tagged 221 grants worth more than €59.5 million being directed to strategic communications work of one kind or another, including work on shifting narratives, journalism initiatives, and public opinion polling.

Using an expansive definition of “justice” we identified more than 250 grants worth a combined €57.5 million, or 3.6% of all the grants in the dataset. These grants include work on climate justice, environmental justice at a community level, indigenous rights, access to environmental justice, just transition initiatives, migrant rights, gender justice, racial justice, and other aspects of social justice. This leads to a higher value of grants than those

*...we wonder whether foundations are missing an opportunity by providing so little support to youth-led movements and activism. Both have been essential ingredients in social change all over the world...*

assigned to the “environmental justice” discourse category in the following section.

By contrast, we were only able to identify 48 grants worth €2.2 million in support of activists, and just under €6 million in support for youth-led climate movements such as Fridays for the Future. At 0.37% of all the funding in the dataset, this figure is even lower than the 0.76% of climate grants being directed to youth-led climate movements in the [Youth Climate Justice Study](#).<sup>27</sup>

The lack of philanthropic support for activism and grass-roots organising can also be seen in the human rights field, in research on UK social justice grantmaking, and in research focused on European climate mitigation grants.<sup>28</sup>

**COMPARISON POINT**

As with the thematic issues receiving little funding, we wonder whether foundations are missing an opportunity by providing so little support to youth-led movements and activism. Both have been essential ingredients in social change all over the world, whether securing votes for women, defending civil rights, obtaining democratic reforms, promoting feminism or tackling racial injustice... The youth-led climate protests of 2018/19 moved the political dial and contributed directly to ground-breaking legislation and corporate commitments around the world, despite receiving a tiny amount of foundation funding. Imagine what could be achieved with more philanthropic support.

# VALUES: DISCOURSES PRIORITISED BY EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATIONS

We referred earlier to the way in which a foundation's values influence its grantmaking strategy, suggesting that it is useful to think in terms of different discourses of environmentalism, within which understandings of “effectiveness” and what constitutes a “win” vary widely.

We also commented on the huge diversity in the strategies of the 126 foundations whose grants form the basis of this report. In this section we outline seven discourses of environmentalism, using very similar descriptions to those in the fifth edition, and then estimate the proportion of the environmental grants made by European foundations that fall within each discourse. The discourses below draw on research by leading environmental sociologists.<sup>29</sup> Allocating the activity of foundations to the different discourses requires some subjective judgements as there are borderline cases, so the figures should be seen as estimates, but we have taken great care to be consistent in our approach.<sup>30</sup>

## The variety of environmental discourses

Understandings of what constitutes success differ widely within different environmental discourses. Take the example of protecting the orangutan. For a conservation organisation, the establishment of a nature reserve may represent a major success. A climate-change campaigner, by contrast, might question the long-term viability of such a reserve, given the risk that Indonesian forests will be impacted by climatic changes. An environmental justice organisation might not regard the project as positive at all, if it had negative consequences for the rights of forest peoples.

Seven thumbnail sketches of different environmental discourses follow. The first three are described as mainstream, meaning that their recommendations are frequently taken up by governments, businesses and other stakeholders. The other four discourses are categorised as alternative, meaning that they tend to encounter heavier resistance from decision-makers – in other words, they fall outside political, corporate, and societal comfort zones. As one moves from the more mainstream discourses to the more alternative ones, increasing amounts of concern are being expressed in relation to justice, rights, inequality, economic growth, and the way in which political systems function. The demand for transformational change to the status quo also increases.

## Mainstream discourses

**Practical conservation:** Traditionally focused on protecting species and habitats, this discourse is underpinned by science and a sound understanding of good conservation policy and practice. Organisations work at local, national and international levels. There are tensions with government but rarely a focus on seeking far-reaching social and political change, with the emphasis being first and foremost on *conserving* the natural world.

**Market transformation:** This discourse, which emerged in the 1990s, is a version of the sustainable development narrative, often presented as a market-based alternative to regulation and predicated on the idea that voluntary corporate action and/or individual behaviour changes should be prioritised. The emphasis is on making economic growth consistent with environmental protection through a combination of new technology, voluntary standards, and consumer action. Unlike practical conservationists, actors in this discourse typically operate at some distance from the ecosystems they ultimately seek to protect. In our categorisation of the grants from the 126 foundations, grants to localised environmental education and service delivery projects fall within this discourse, along with those aimed at corporate behaviour change.

**State-led regulation:** This discourse focuses on the use of policy and legislation to set market and regulatory signals in a way that mitigates the environmental consequences of economic growth. Familiar concepts include “polluter pays” and cost-benefit analysis. Much work within this discourse is focused on government institutions at the national and international level. Social and political change is pursued, often in incremental terms. Categorising grants into this discourse is difficult, as it is more akin to “inside track” work, i.e. an approach to change, rather than a values-based discourse. For example, groups working in the other discourses may well be making use of legislation and regulation to achieve their goals. Despite this we chose to retain this discourse for the time being, to allow comparison with the fifth edition of this research, and because we continue to believe that work directed to the patient upgrading of legislation (or the defence of existing rules) has a distinctive quality relative to the six other discourses.

## Alternative discourses

**Deeper systems change:** Groups working within this discourse seek to shift societal and system priorities fundamentally, rather than just limit the impacts of business-as-usual. A more politically ambitious discourse than the mainstream discourses, it focuses on changing paradigms in whole sectors of the economy like food, energy and transport. Social change is an increasingly high priority. For example, whereas an organisation operating in the *market transformation* discourse might encourage airlines to offer carbon offsetting schemes, a campaign group working in this discourse might be attempting to stop airport expansion, and indeed flying, as part of a wider re-thinking of the transport system.

**One planet, fair shares:** Organisations working within this discourse explicitly address limits to economic growth and the need to reduce inequality, both within and between countries. Key concerns include curbing consumption, the redistribution of resources, and human well-being. This discourse is strongly global, with specific work carried out from local to international level. The level of social and political change sought is high; and the ideas articulated often encounter strong resistance from policymakers.

**Environmental justice:** Environmental justice organisations focus on the inequitable burden of pollution falling on vulnerable and low-income communities. Their work is framed by the concepts of rights, justice, and empowerment. Some groups focus on global and inter-generational issues, while others concentrate on local impacts arising from sources of pollution. Political change, particularly in the way that democracy is enacted, is a priority. Examples would be fence-line communities living next to industrial sites, or indigenous communities opposing infrastructure development on their ancestral land. The loss of life among environmental defenders working in this discourse has increased markedly in recent years, as one consequence of closing civil society space.

**Revolutionary:** Groups working within this discourse often challenge global capitalism itself, with activists seeking to take back power from corporations and from what are seen as unaccountable elites. Individuals typically belong to national networks of activists, which in turn form part of wider global protest communities, with a revolutionary orientation. Criticisms of the status quo tend to be trenchant, although the alternatives sought are not always clearly articulated. Governments are likely to respond in a hostile manner, with heavy policing.

*Understandings of what constitutes success differ widely within different environmental discourses.*

The descriptions here are deliberately brief, and we recognise that other authors have captured these discourses more elegantly, but we hope readers can see how a “win” for groups working in the *practical conservation* discourse might look and feel very different to one for organisations in the *one planet, fair shares* discourse. Tensions within social movements often arise when organisations are approaching the same set of thematic issues but operating within different discourses.

## How are foundation grants distributed across these discourses?

In order to explore the values-orientation of the foundations in this study we have assigned their approach to grantmaking to one of the seven discourses above, based on a careful analysis of their grants. This was possible for 97 foundations.<sup>31</sup> For this edition of the research we categorised the grants from the 10 largest foundations individually, in order to increase the accuracy of the figures. We also did grant-by-grant coding for a handful of other foundations where it wasn't easy to assign their work to one of the seven discourses. In total more than 3,500 grants were coded in this way. The €1.5 billion of grants break down as shown in Figure 17.

**Health warning:** We did not carry out a direct like-for-like comparison of the breakdown of grants across discourses between 2018 and 2021 as that is difficult to do for various methodological reasons. The fact that the composition of the foundations in the Volume 5 and Volume 6 datasets has changed significantly needs to be borne in mind when comparing the share of the funding to each discourse.

*Should philanthropic foundations be stepping up more to fund work that actively challenges the status quo?*

## Implications for funders

As Figure 17 shows, the amount of funding available from foundations decreases dramatically as one moves towards the more radical discourses of environmentalism. Nearly 67% of the grants that we categorised are found in the three more mainstream discourses, and just over 33% in the four more radical discourses. This compares to 72.7% of the funding going to the three mainstream discourses in Volume 5, with 27.3% directed to the four more radical discourses.

Compared to Volume 5 we see some significant changes in the percentages of the grants allocated to each discourse. These largely result from the addition of large new foundations to the dataset. Some of these funders are heavily invested in local environmental education initiatives, some are big supporters of voluntary industry initiatives, and some are investing heavily to try and secure systems change, for example to transform the

energy supply system, or food systems. The addition of their grants has boosted the proportion of funding going to the *market transformation and deeper systems change* discourses, relative to the others. As noted above there is also a “grey area” where work in the *state-led regulation* and *deeper systems change* categories comes together.

What hasn't changed between the 2018 and 2021 data is the very small share of philanthropic funding being directed to the three most radical discourses, which has actually fallen back from 4.5% of the grants to 3.6%.

Is this an optimal allocation of philanthropic capital, given that it is more flexible and able to take risks than other forms of funding available to civil society organisations? We have very short timeframes (less than a decade in the case of climate change) to secure profound changes to major parts of our economies (agriculture, energy, transport...).

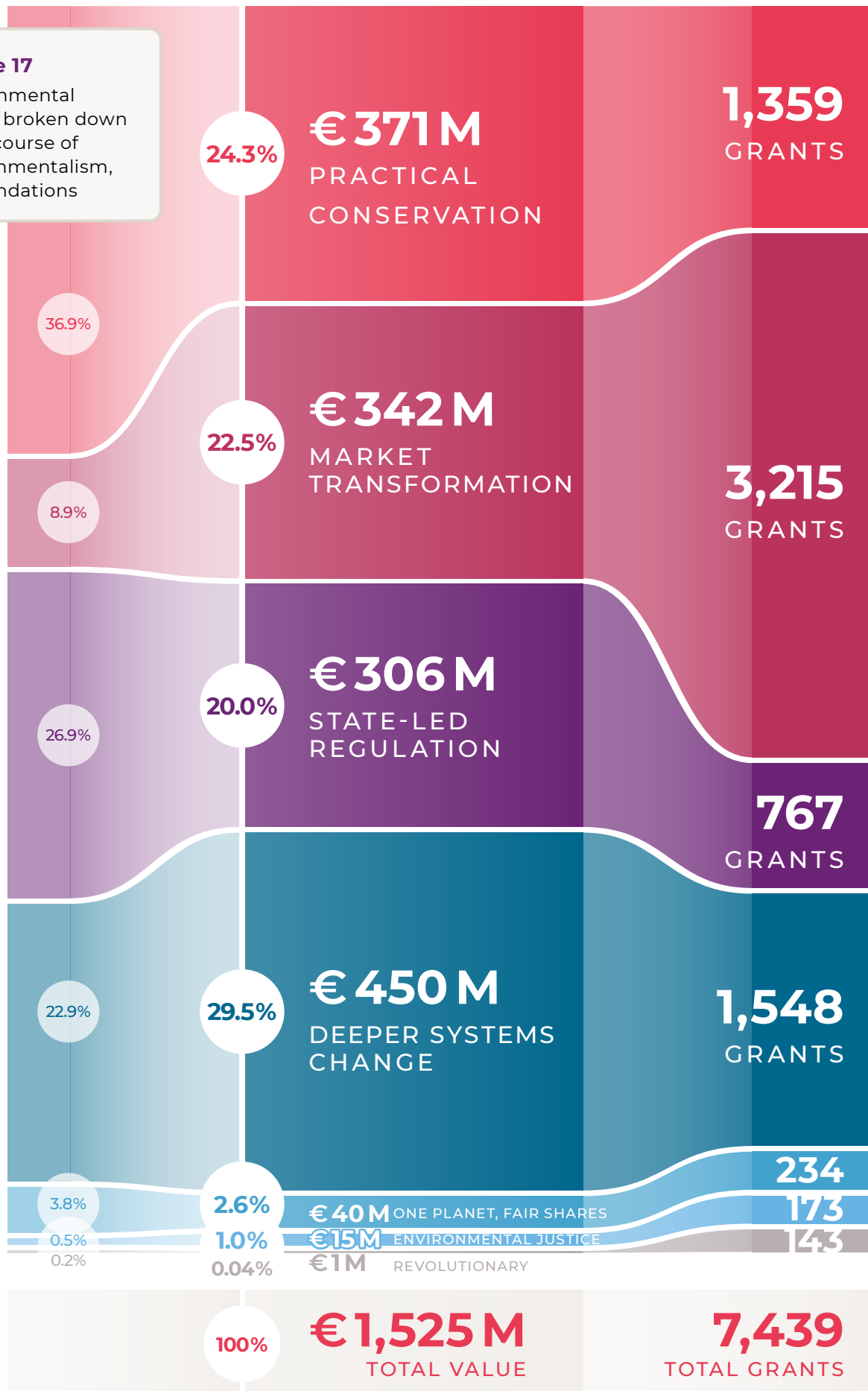
To restate the question we posed in Volume 5: “*Has the time come for foundations to be bolder in the kinds of work they support with a view to accelerating systems change?*”

It feels as though the social movements that are opening up political space to tackle environmental and intersecting social justice challenges are running ahead of philanthropic foundations when it comes to values and discourses. Should philanthropic foundations be stepping up more to fund work that actively challenges the status quo?



**Figure 17**

Environmental grants broken down by discourse of environmentalism, 97 foundations



# ISSUES FOR FOUNDATIONS TO CONSIDER

In this final section we draw together some of the observations made elsewhere in the report, and pose some closing questions.

## Some things change...

Since the last edition of this research was published the environmental philanthropy sector has been undergoing significant growth, with worldwide foundation funding for climate change mitigation increasing by 40% between 2020 and 2021 alone.<sup>32</sup> Like-for-like giving from the 105 foundations for which we have 2018 and 2021 data was up 48%, and the total value of the grants tracked in this research has more than doubled compared to the fifth edition, from €745.8 million to more than €1.6 billion. We find this extremely encouraging, but note that philanthropy directed at environmental causes remains a tiny share of total foundation giving in Europe, even though all the other initiatives that European foundations support are dependent on a liveable planet.

We also welcome the upsurge in activity to encourage foundations that were not previously involved in environmental work to take climate change into account in their grantmaking. The creation of collaborative giving platforms is leading to more sophisticated and coordinated grantmaking, but it seems to us that there may be opportunities to increase the flow of information between these funders and those that are at an earlier stage when it comes to environmental giving.

So far there doesn't seem to be an equivalent development of philanthropic infrastructure for funders focused on conservation and biodiversity loss and we wonder whether this is a missed opportunity for the sector, and whether the creation of more infrastructure might help in growing the amount of funding directed to biodiversity related initiatives.

## Some things stay the same...

While it is important to celebrate the expansion, dynamism, and increasing sophistication of the sector, we wonder whether foundations are really making enough use of their capacity to take risk and to fund work that couldn't be supported in any other way. Philanthropic capital has particular qualities relative to other forms of income for civil society. It can fund work that neither governments nor corporate donors will contemplate,

and which members of the public are unlikely to support via donations. It can take risks, and it is uniquely well-placed when it comes to supporting disruptive change.

We have a climate and biodiversity *emergency* on our hands, and tackling it will require profound changes to the status quo. At the moment it feels that the philanthropy sector, with some notable exceptions, is steering clear of some of the most politically challenging aspects

of this transition, for example work tackling levels of consumption in wealthy countries, alternatives to economic growth (and the broader "new economy" agenda), and some of the more demanding behaviour changes required of us all. We hope that by the time of the next report funders will be taking on these issues more directly, and that the share of funding directed to the more radical discourses set out in the report (particularly *one planet, fair shares* and *environmental justice*) will be on the rise.

Alongside this we think that an increased capacity to track and discuss the geographic distribution of philanthropic grants would be valuable. As we have seen above, the grants that support European-based work are distributed in a very uneven way, with central and eastern Europe receiving a very small share relative to

*We also welcome the upsurge in activity to encourage foundations that were not previously involved in environmental work to take climate change into account in their grantmaking.*



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countries in western Europe. This pattern, which results in part from where foundations are registered, has been a persistent feature in all six editions of this research. This seems to hold also at a global level: ClimateWorks Foundation notes, for example, that while China is responsible for c.30% of global emissions it is the focus of less than 6% of climate philanthropic funds.<sup>33</sup> We would strongly encourage funders to think about where in the world their capital might be able to achieve the most impact, given that time is so short.

To do so, foundations would need to look beyond their national settings, to see how their grants (whether nationally focused or international) fit into wider structures. They would need to think about where philanthropic capital is most badly needed in a different way. Foundations would need to turn their attention to the strength of environmental movements in different countries, and what they lack in terms

*While it is important to celebrate the expansion, dynamism, and increasing sophistication of the sector, we wonder whether foundations are really making enough use of their capacity to take risk and to fund work that couldn't be supported in any other way.*

of resources. And they would need to invest in the networks and infrastructure that can link organisations in different countries together, such that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Philea stands ready to support such conversations, working in partnership with the expanding environmental philanthropy sector. Please contact us if you would like to join us in exploring these new frontiers: [eefgmapping@philea.eu](mailto:eefgmapping@philea.eu)

# ANNEX I

## FOUNDATIONS INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

 15 Juni Fonden (Denmark)	 Fondation BNP Paribas (France)
 Adesium Foundation (Netherlands)	 Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le progrès de l'Homme (Switzerland)
 Aga Khan Foundation (UK)	 Fondation Daniel & Nina Carasso (France)
 Agropolis Fondation (France)	 Fondation de France (France)
 AKO Foundation (UK)	 Fondation Ensemble (France)
 Arcadia Fund (UK)	 Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco (Monaco)
 Aurora Trust (formerly The Ashden Trust) (UK)	 Fondazione Cariplo (Italy)
 Banister Charitable Trust (UK)	 Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Bolzano (Italy)
 Bernard van Leer Foundation (Netherlands)	 Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cuneo (Italy)
 Biffa Award (UK)	 Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo (Italy)
 Biovision (Switzerland)	 Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo (Italy)
 Bulb Foundation (UK)	 Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena (Italy)
 Cadogan Charity, The (UK)	 Freshfield Foundation (UK)
 Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK branch)	 Friends Provident Foundation (UK)
 Children's Investment Fund Foundation (UK)	 Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Portugal)
 CHK Foundation (UK)	 Fundación Biodiversidad (Spain)
 City Bridge Trust (UK)	 Funding Fish (UK)
 Clean Air Fund (UK)	 Gaia Foundation (UK)
 Constance Travis Charitable Trust (UK)	 Garfield Weston Foundation (UK)
 Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation (Czech Republic)	 Gatsby Charitable Foundation (UK)
 David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (UK)	 Generation Foundation, The (UK)
 Denise Coates Foundation (UK)	 Global Greengrants Fund UK (UK)
 Deutsche Postcode Lotterie (Germany)	 Grantscape (UK)
 Dulverton Trust (UK)	 Greenpeace Environmental Trust (UK)
 Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust (UK)	 IKEA Foundation (Netherlands)
 Ernest Cook Trust (UK)	 Jeremy Collier Foundation (UK)
 Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust (UK)	 JJ Charitable Trust (UK)
 Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (UK)	 JMG Foundation (Switzerland)
 European Climate Foundation (Netherlands)	 John Ellerman Foundation (UK)
 FIA Foundation (UK)	 Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (UK)
 Finnish Cultural Foundation (Finland)	

	King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium)
	Kone Foundation (Finland)
	KR Foundation (Denmark)
	Laudes Foundation (Switzerland)
	Leverhulme Trust (UK)
	Linbury Trust, The (UK)
	Lush (UK)
	Maj & Tor Nessling Foundation (Finland)
	Mark Leonard Trust (UK)
	MAVA Foundation (Switzerland)
	Michael Uren Foundation (UK)
	Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe & Africa (UK)
	Montpelier Foundation (UK)
	Moondance Foundation (UK)
	National Lottery Heritage Fund, The (UK)
	Nationale Postcode Loterij (Netherlands)
	Network for Social Change, The (UK)
	Norsk Postkodelotteri (Norway)
	Oak Foundation (Switzerland)
	Oglesby Charitable Trust (UK)
	Open Society Foundations (Germany)
	Ovo Foundation (UK)
	People's Postcode Lottery* (UK)
	People's Trust for Endangered Species (UK)
	Pig Shed Trust (UK)
	Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation (UK)
	Prince Bernhard Nature Fund (Netherlands)
	Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund (UK)
	Quadrature Climate Foundation (UK)
	Realdania (Denmark)
	Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany)
	Robertson Trust (UK)
	Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation (Romania)
	Rothschild Foundation (UK)
	Royal Foundation, The (UK)

	Rufford Foundation (UK)
	Sam and Bella Sebba Charitable Trust (UK)
	Samworth Foundation (UK)
	Schöpflin Stiftung (Germany)
	Schroder Foundation (UK)
	Shell Foundation (UK)
	Sigrid Rausing Trust (UK)
	Sophie und Karl Binding Stiftung (Switzerland)
	Stichting DOEN (Netherlands)
	Stichting Fonds 1818 (Netherlands)
	Stiftung Mercator (Germany)
	Stiftung Mercator Schweiz (Switzerland)
	Svenska Postkod Lotteriet (Sweden)
	Svenska Postkod Stiftelsen (Sweden)
	Synchronicity Earth (UK)
	Tellus Mater Foundation (UK)
	Thirty Percy Foundation (UK)
	TreeSisters (UK)
	Trust for London (UK)
	Tudor Trust (UK)
	Underwood Trust (UK)
	Velux Fonden (Denmark)
	Veolia Environmental Trust (UK)
	Virgin Unite (UK)
	VolkswagenStiftung (Germany)
	Waterloo Foundation (UK)
	Wellcome Trust, The (UK)
	Westminster Foundation (UK)
	Whitley Animal Protection Trust (UK)
	Wolfson Foundation (UK)

\* In earlier editions of the research we included grants from a number of different Postcode Lottery funds in the UK. These are now consolidated in one data submission from the People's Postcode Lottery, so the individual funds are no longer listed here.



# ANNEX II

## ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDING: THEMATIC ISSUES

These “thematic issue” categories were developed in 2008 in consultation with the principal networks of environmental grantmakers from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, in order to promote comparability in analyses of environmental funding patterns. Thirteen main thematic categories are featured, each described and further clarified through a list of keywords and concepts.

As the environmental philanthropy sector has grown and new issues have become priorities for funders, these categories would benefit from being refreshed. For this report we have retained the same definitions as in Volume 5, but going forwards we plan to refresh the taxonomy such that we can generate additional insights.

### **Agriculture & food**

Includes support for organic and other forms of sustainable farming; training and research to help farmers in developing countries; campaigns relating to the control of the food chain; initiatives opposed to factory farming; horticultural organisations and projects; education on agriculture for children and adults (e.g. city farms); opposition to the use of genetically modified crops and food irradiation; work on food safety and on the genetic diversity of agriculture (including seed banks); and soil conservation.

### **Biodiversity & species preservation**

Covers work that protects particular species, be they plant or animal, vertebrate or invertebrate. Included within this is support for botanic gardens and arboreta; academic research on botany and zoology; the protection of birds and their habitats; funding for marine wildlife such as whales, dolphins and sharks; projects that aim to protect endangered species such as rhinos and elephants; defence of globally important biodiversity hotspots, including the use of refuges, reserves and other habitat conservation projects; and wildlife trusts.

### **Climate & atmosphere**

Includes support for work targeted mainly towards climate change and some work directed towards the issues of ozone depletion, acid rain, air pollution and local air quality.

### **Coastal & marine ecosystems**

Includes support for work on fisheries; aquaculture; coastal lands and estuaries; marine protected areas; and marine pollution (such as marine dumping).

### **Consumption & waste**

Includes support for work directed at reducing consumption levels; initiatives that look to redefine economic growth; projects on waste reduction, sustainable design and sustainable production; recycling and composting schemes; and all aspects of waste disposal, including incinerators and landfills.

### **Energy**

Covers work for alternative and renewable energy sources; energy efficiency and conservation; work around fossil fuels; hydroelectric schemes; the oil and gas industries; and nuclear power.

### **Fresh water**

Includes support for all work relating to lakes and rivers; canals and other inland water systems; issues of groundwater contamination and water conservation; and projects relating to wetlands.



### Multi-issue work

Covers grants which are hard to allocate to specific categories, generally because the grant takes the form of core funding to an organisation that works on a range of different issues, or because the grant supports environmental media titles or environmental education projects covering a wide range of issues. In addition, some grants provided to generalist re-granting organisations are captured in this category, as it is not possible to tell which issues will be supported when the funds are re-granted.

### Sustainable communities

Includes support for urban green spaces and parks; community gardens; built environment projects; and community-based sustainability work.

### Terrestrial ecosystems & land use

Includes support for land purchases and stewardship; national or regional parks; landscape restoration and landscape scale conservation efforts; tree planting, forestry, and work directed to stopping de-forestation; and the impacts of mining.

### Toxics & pollution

Covers all the main categories of toxics impacting on the environment and human health: hazardous waste, heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, radioactive waste, persistent organic pollutants, household chemicals, other industrial pollutants, and noise pollution.

### Trade & finance
















Includes support for work on corporate-led globalisation and international trade policy; efforts to reform public financial institutions (such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Export Credit Agencies); similar work directed at the lending policies of private banks; initiatives around the reduction of developing country debt; and local economic development projects and economic re-localisation.

### Transport

Includes support for work on all aspects of transportation, including public transport systems; transport planning; policy on aviation; freight; road-building; shipping; alternatives to car use plus initiatives like car pools and car clubs; the promotion of cycling and walking; and work on vehicle fuel economy.

# ANNEX III

## COUNTRIES RECEIVING AT LEAST ONE GRANT

 Afghanistan	 Costa Rica	 Ivory Coast	 Nigeria	 Suriname
 Albania	 Croatia	 Jordan	 North Macedonia	 Sweden
 Algeria	 Cuba	 Kenya	 Norway	 Switzerland
 Angola	 Cyprus	 Kyrgyzstan	 Pakistan	 Tajikistan
 Argentina	 Czech Republic	 Laos	 Palestine	 Tanzania
 Armenia	 Democratic Republic of Congo	 Latvia	 Papua New Guinea	 Thailand
 Australia	 Denmark	 Lebanon	 Paraguay	 The Gambia
 Austria	 Ecuador	 Lesotho	 Peru	 Togo
 Azerbaijan	 Egypt	 Liberia	 Philippines	 Tunisia
 Bangladesh	 El Salvador	 Lithuania	 Poland	 Turkey
 Belgium	 Eritrea	 Madagascar	 Portugal	 Uganda
 Belize	 Estonia	 Malawi	 Republic of Congo	 Ukraine
 Benin	 Eswatini	 Malaysia	 Romania	 United Kingdom
 Bhutan	 Ethiopia	 Mali	 Russia	 United States
 Bolivia	 Finland	 Marshall Islands	 Rwanda	 Uruguay
 Bosnia & Herzegovina	 France	 Mauritania	 Sao Tome & Principe	 Uzbekistan
 Botswana	 Germany	 Mauritius	 Saudi Arabia	 Vanuatu
 Brazil	 Ghana	 Mexico	 Senegal	 Venezuela
 Bulgaria	 Greece	 Micronesia	 Serbia	 Vietnam
 Burkina Faso	 Greenland	 Monaco	 Sierra Leone	 Yemen
 Burundi	 Guatemala	 Mongolia	 Slovakia	 Zambia
 Cambodia	 Guinea	 Montenegro	 Slovenia	 Zimbabwe
 Cameroon	 Guinea-Bissau	 Morocco	 Solomon Islands	
 Canada	 Guyana	 Mozambique	 Somalia	
 Cape Verde	 Haiti	 Myanmar	 South Africa	
 Cayman Islands	 Hungary	 Namibia	 South Korea	
 Central African Republic	 India	 Nepal	 South Sudan	
 Chad	 Indonesia	 Netherlands	 Spain	
 Chile	 Iraq	 Netherlands Antilles	 Sri Lanka	
 China	 Ireland	 New Zealand	 Sudan	
 Colombia	 Israel	 Nicaragua		
 Cook Islands	 Italy	 Niger		

# ANNEX IV

## DETAILED DATA TABLES

**Data behind Figures 5 & 9** – Environmental grants broken down by thematic issue category (2021)

Thematic issue	Total amount	% of all grants by value	No. of grants	Average grant	No. of fdns.
Climate & atmosphere	€ 392,719,456	24.4%	1,203	€ 326,450	74
Biodiversity & species	€ 258,421,505	16.1%	1,037	€ 249,201	76
Energy	€ 230,849,092	14.3%	620	€ 372,337	57
Trade & finance	€ 162,836,379	10.1%	306	€ 532,145	39
Agriculture & food	€ 152,024,007	9.4%	971	€ 156,564	76
Terrestrial ecosystems	€ 119,744,836	7.4%	546	€ 219,313	74
Consumption & waste	€ 74,071,250	4.6%	324	€ 228,615	48
Coastal & marine	€ 55,859,647	3.5%	290	€ 192,619	39
Transport	€ 57,491,377	3.6%	253	€ 227,239	33
Multi-issue	€ 50,916,457	3.2%	1,005	€ 50,663	65
Sustainable communities	€ 31,308,856	1.9%	1,744	€ 17,952	41
Fresh water	€ 15,818,136	1.0%	167	€ 94,719	38
Toxics & pollution	€ 7,425,351	0.5%	52	€ 142,795	28
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>€ 1,609,486,348</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,518</b>	<b>€ 188,951</b>	<b>n/a</b>

**Data behind Figure 11** – Distribution of grants at the continental level, 2018 compared to 2021

	2018 value of grants	% of total grants by value	No. of grants	2021 value of grants	% of total grants by value	No. of grants	increase or decrease
Europe	€ 355,624,634	50.2%	3,622	€ 462,085,473	44.1%	5,844	+29.9%
International	€ 206,304,898	29.1%	363	€ 266,129,040	25.4%	481	+29.0%
Africa	€ 68,844,349	9.7%	539	€ 209,878,074	20.0%	447	+204.9%
Asia	€ 39,484,336	5.6%	308	€ 70,569,005	6.7%	310	+78.7%
Latin America	€ 31,710,428	4.5%	241	€ 23,593,344	2.3%	177	-25.6%
North America	€ 5,610,287	0.8%	18	€ 13,277,068	1.3%	48	+136.7%
Oceania	€ 451,725	0.1%	18	€ 2,089,172	0.2%	18	+362.5%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>€ 708,030,657</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,109</b>	<b>€ 1,047,621,175</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,325</b>	<b>+48.0%</b>

\* The Africa figure for 2021 was hugely boosted by one grant of more than €100 million. Without this the 2021 figure would be €73.2 million, representing 6.3% growth from 2018 to 2021.

# ANNEX V

## APPROACH CATEGORIES

For the analysis in the section, “Approaches prioritised by European environmental foundations”, we categorised 105 of the foundations based on the approaches to environmental work that they support, allocating each foundation to a maximum of two approach categories. The categories we used are as follows:

### Advocacy

Work aiming to influence public policy or political decision-makers

### Buying land

Land acquisition for conservation projects

### Community/amenity

Projects that help particular communities (often in cities) to live more sustainable lives, often by providing local amenities like green space, or via behaviour change initiatives

### Corporate change

Efforts to change the approach of companies, whether in a confrontational or more business-friendly way

### Delivering solutions

Provision of services on-the-ground, for example energy efficiency advice, or a farmer’s market

### Education

Environmental education for the general public, plus training programmes

### Entrepreneurship

Support for new environmental businesses, or innovation within existing companies

### Grass-roots campaigns

Community-based campaigns, usually in opposition to environmentally damaging infrastructure or activity

### Hands-on conservation

Species-specific conservation work, or sustainable management of land and other environments

### Research

Usually scientific research, but occasionally includes policy analysis

### Strategic communications

Work on framing, narratives, story-telling

### Strategic litigation

Use of the law to protect the environment, through court cases challenging government or corporate practice

### Training farmers

Projects that aim to give farmers new knowledge and skills

### Transition/commons

Projects explicitly seeking a transition to new economic models (often involving re-localisation)



# ANNEX VI

## ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION

This publication was compiled by gathering grants-level data from a select group of public-benefit foundations across Europe. Funders were contacted by email with a request to submit their most recent, complete list of grants for 2021, in the language and currency in which it was available.

The data provided by foundations was complemented by grants lists for English and Welsh foundations sourced from annual reports on the Charity Commission's website, and/or from [360Giving](#).<sup>34</sup>

We are very grateful to the foundations that shared their grants data with us.

Gathering grants-level data from foundations at the European level continues to represent a huge challenge, for a number of reasons:

- Grants-level data is not easily available, as across Europe there are few mandatory public reporting requirements for this kind of information. While data is becoming more available in successive rounds of this research, detailed grants lists are still the exception rather than the rule.
- Most data is available only in the official language of the country in which a foundation is registered; This represents both a translation and conceptual challenge.
- There is tremendous diversity of legal and organisational forms of public-benefit foundations<sup>35</sup> across Europe, due to different cultural, historical and legal traditions. This makes it difficult to identify and engage the relevant actors.
- There is no clear consensus among European foundations, or even the foundations within a single country, on what constitutes “environmental funding”. For example, a foundation that defines itself as focusing on research might not consider itself to be an environmental funder, even if some of its grants would qualify for inclusion in this report.

We have been working hard to address these challenges, and to achieve consistency across the different editions of this research, so that we can build up a dataset that can track changes in environmental funding over time, and that allows for like-for-like comparisons.



# ANNEX VII

## RECENT CLIMATE PHILANTHROPY PLEDGES

As collated by ClimateWorks Foundation <sup>36</sup>

### Waverley Street

**US\$3.5 billion**

Commitment to environmental causes over a decade.

### The UK, Norway, Germany, the US, and the Netherlands, in partnership with 17 foundations

**US\$1.7 billion**

Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) Pledge: Commitment over five years to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities to protect the biodiverse tropical forests that are vital to protecting the planet from climate change, and biodiversity loss.

### Bloomberg Philanthropies

**US\$25 million**

Accelerate satellite and airborne methane sensing technologies.

### Bloomberg Philanthropies / Goldman Sachs

**US\$25 million**

Advance clean energy solutions in South and Southeast Asia.

### Bloomberg Philanthropies / International Solar Alliance

Partnership with International Solar Alliance (ISA) to mobilise \$1 trillion in global investments for solar energy across ISA's member countries.

### Rockefeller Foundation / IKEA Foundation / Bezos Earth Fund

**US\$1.5 billion**

Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet: Foundations each committed \$500 million to a \$10.5 billion fund that will help emerging economies move from fossil fuels to clean energy.

### Mark and Lynne Benioff

**US\$200 million**

Commitment to planting trees and backing ecological entrepreneurs to combat the climate crisis.

### Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

**US\$33 million**

Support to carbon dioxide and past emissions removal and decarbonisation of heavy industries.

### Mike and Annie Cannon-Brookes

**US~\$1.13 billion**

1.5 billion Australian dollars committed to investments in green technology and grants to organisations working on the climate crisis by 2030.

### The Gates Foundation

**US\$315 million**

Commitment over the next three years to help the roughly 500 million small-scale farmers and livestock managers in low-income countries hit hard by climate change.

### Alliance of more than 20 funders

**US\$328 million**

Methane Reduction Pledge: Commitment over three years to support the 75+ countries that signed the Global Methane Pledge.

### Bezos Earth Fund

**US\$2 billion**

Additional commitment from previously announced \$10 billion Bezos Earth Fund to support landscape restoration and food systems transformation.

### Nine organisations

**US\$5 billion**

Protecting Our Planet Challenge: Pledge over the next 10 years to support the global effort to conserve 30% of the world's land and waters by 2030, possibly the largest private funding commitment for biodiversity to date.

### Multiple foundations

**US\$3 million**

Contribution in start-up assistance for prospective Glasgow Loss & Damage Facility to support vulnerable countries suffering from climate change.

Pledges of this kind are being underpinned by initiatives on the part of national associations of foundations, such as the [International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change](#), which has been signed by 635 foundations around the world, and by the work of donor advisory services focused on climate change such as the [Climate Leadership Initiative](#), [Impatience Earth](#), [India Climate Collaborative](#), and the climate programme at [Active Philanthropy](#).

# ANNEX VIII

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDER NETWORKS

This report sits alongside similar research into environmental funding patterns such as:

- Reports from the [ClimateWorks Foundation Global Intelligence](#) team.<sup>37</sup>
- “[Tracking the Field](#)” reports, produced by the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA), based in the United States.<sup>38</sup>
- “[Where the Green Grants Went](#)” reports, produced by the UK Environmental Funders Network (EFN)<sup>39</sup>
- “[Advancing a Sustainable Future: A Profile of Environmental Philanthropy](#)”, produced by the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network (CEGN)<sup>40</sup>

### Other geographically focused environmental funder networks

[Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network](#)

[Biodiversity Funders Group \(United States\)](#)

[China Environmental Grantmakers Alliance](#)

[Environment Funders Canada formerly Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network](#)

[Environmental Funders Network \(United Kingdom\)](#)

[Environmental Grantmakers Association \(United States\)](#)

[Latin American and the Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds](#)

[Philea European Environmental Funders Group \(Europe\)](#)

### Funder networks promoting environment-related activities

[Association of Finnish Foundations - Working group on environment \(Finland\)](#)

[Associazione di Fondazioni e di Casse di Risparmio Funders Commission on Environment \(Italy\)](#)

[Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen, Working Group on Environment \(Germany\)](#)

[Centre Français des Fonds et Fondations, Working Group on Environment](#)

[Jewish Funders Network, Green Funders Forum](#)

[Philanthropy New Zealand, Climate Action Programme](#)

[SwissFoundations Working Group on Environment](#)

[Vereniging van Fondsen in Nederland, Working Group Sustainable Policy](#)

### National associations in Europe hosting a national philanthropy commitment for climate

[Coalition française des fondations pour le Climat, hosted by the French Foundation Centre](#)

[Funder Commitment on Climate Change, hosted by Association of Charitable Foundations](#)

[La dichiarazione d'impegno di fondazioni ed enti filantropici sul cambiamento climatico; Filantropia per il clima: la dichiarazione d'impegno nazionale, hosted by Assifero](#)

[Pacto por el Clima de las fundaciones españolas, hosted by Spanish Association of Foundations](#)

### Data on the European philanthropy sector

[Regularly updated figures on the philanthropy sector in Europe, including number of foundations, assets and expenditures](#)

# ENDNOTES

- 1 A list is provided in Annex I.
- 2 Published in 2021, based on 2018 data.
- 3 When we refer to “Europe” in this report, we mean all countries in Europe, not just the 27 Member States of the European Union. Where we refer to EU countries only, this is noted.
- 4 Twenty foundations that were covered in the fifth edition of this research were removed from the dataset this time, either because they made no environmental grants in 2021, or because they were unwilling to provide grants data. Of the new foundations that were added, 10 are based in the UK. The very “UK-heavy” emphasis from earlier editions remains, with 77 of the 126 foundations being UK-based. This inevitably has an impact on the results.
- 5 The grants analysed were made in 2021. Some foundations use accounting periods based on the calendar year, while others, particularly in the UK, tend to straddle the calendar year. Grants from UK foundations using the UK’s standard 2020/21 financial year (April 2020 – March 2021) have been aggregated together with calendar year 2021 grants from continental foundations.
- 6 Grants made to other foundations within the group of 126 have been removed to avoid double counting.
- 7 Annual average exchange rates have been used to convert currencies throughout the report, with the annual average relating to the financial period in question.
- 8 A note of caution is required here, in that one of the reasons why this like-for-like growth was so large between 2018 and 2021 is that one of the foundations in the study made some very large grants that won’t be repeated in subsequent years.
- 9 Helene Desanlis et al., “[Funding Trends: Climate change mitigation philanthropy](#)”, ClimateWorks Global Intelligence, October 2022.
- 10 Patricia Cremona et al., “[Where the Green Grants Went 8: Patterns of UK Funding for Environmental Work](#)”, Environmental Funders Network November 2021.
- 11 “[Advancing Human Rights: Annual Review of Global Foundation Grantmaking – 2019 key findings](#)”, Candid, Human Rights Funders Network, 2022.
- 12 [Coalition française des fondations pour le Climat hosted by the French Foundation Centre.](#)
- 13 [Emergencia climática y justicia social; Pacto por el Clima de las fundaciones españolas, hosted by Spanish Association of Foundations.](#)
- 14 [La dichiarazione d’impegno di fondazioni ed enti filantropici sul cambiamento climatico; Filantropia per il clima: la dichiarazione d’impegno nazionale, hosted by Assifero.](#)
- 15 Helene Desanlis et al., op. cit.
- 16 Global Witness, “[Crisis year 2022 brought \\$134 billion in excess profit to the West’s five largest oil and gas companies](#)”, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- 17 Climate Policy Initiative, “[The State of Global Air Quality Funding 2022](#)”, Clean Air Fund, 2022.
- 18 Helene Desanlis et al., op. cit.
- 19 We can compare this figure to: a) the 46% of human rights grants being made by the 12 largest human rights funders, in “[Advancing Human Rights: Annual Review of Global Foundation Grantmaking – 2019 key findings](#)” and; b) the 69% of grants from the 10 largest UK environmental funders in “[Where the Green Grants Went 8: Patterns of UK Funding for Environmental Work](#)”, November 2021.
- 20 Hannah Roeyer, Helene Desanlis and Jon Cracknell, “[Foundation funding for climate change mitigation: Europe spotlight](#)”, ClimateWorks, European Foundation Centre, The Hour Is Late, October 2021.
- 21 Ibid. In a detailed analysis of climate mitigation philanthropy in Europe, using grants from 2016, 2018 and 2020, the authors estimated that just 1.8% of funding was being directed to “new economy” work. This is consistent with the findings from the dataset underpinning this report, given that the full dataset includes many grants in thematic issue categories that would not have “new economy” grants in them (e.g. *biodiversity & species, terrestrial ecosystems, coastal & marine, sustainable communities...*).
- 22 Ibid. This finding also corresponds very well to the ClimateWorks/European Foundation Centre/ Hour Is Late report, which identified just 0.1% of European climate grants being directed to aviation.
- 23 In order to avoid complicating the presentation of the figures we have not adjusted the 2021 data for inflation. Inflation in the eurozone from the start of 2018 to the end of 2021 is estimated to have been c. 7.7%.
- 24 Hannah Roeyer et al., op. cit. In the detailed analysis of climate mitigation philanthropy in Europe we estimated 38% of the climate mitigation grants from European funders supported work in Europe, and 62% supported work in the rest of the world, almost exactly the same proportions as in this new dataset.

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**25** As noted in the Methodology section, 77 of the 126 foundations in the dataset are UK based, and this clearly has an impact on the results. Nonetheless we believe that it is true that environmental initiatives in the UK receive considerably more philanthropic funding than those in other European countries.

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**26** We omitted foundations making fewer than five grants from this part of the research, along with any where we judged it was impossible to assign their grants to just two approach categories.

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**27** For the "[Youth Climate Justice Study](#)", the Hour Is Late used ClimateWorks Foundation data to analyse nearly 13,000 grants from 74 of the largest climate foundations in the world.

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**28** See for example: a) "[Advancing Human Rights: annual review of global foundation grantmaking, 2019 key findings](#)", op. cit., where just 3% of grants support grass-roots organising; b) Jon Cracknell & Eliza Baring, "[Funding Justice, Vol 1: social justice grantmaking in the UK](#)", Civic Power Fund, 2022, and c) Hannah Roeyer, op. cit.

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**29** These include Robert Brulle, J. Craig Jenkins, John S. Dryzek, and Riley Dunlap.

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**30** This section of the report draws heavily on research first carried out by the UK Environmental Funders Network and first published in Jon Cracknell et al., "[Where the Green Grants Went 4](#)", Environmental Funders Network, 2009.

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**31** The figures in this section are based on 97 foundations, rather than the full 126. For some foundations we had too few grants to reliably assign the foundation to a discourse, and for a few foundations their grantmaking was so varied that it defied accurate allocation to just one discourse.

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**32** Helene Desanlis et al., op. cit.

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**33** Ibid.

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**34** As in previous years UK foundations are very strongly represented in the dataset underpinning this research. One reason for this is that there are a lot of UK foundations, and relatively speaking a lot of environmental foundations, compared to other European countries. But another important factor is the availability of grants data in the UK, both from regulatory bodies and from initiatives such as 360Giving which are making it much easier to carry out research of this kind.

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**35** Philea defines public-benefit foundations as purpose-driven, asset-based, independent and separately constituted non-profit entities.

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**36** Ibid.

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**37** For example, Helene Desanlis et al., op. cit.; Hannah Roeyer et al., op. cit.

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**38** See for instance, Environmental Grantmakers Association, "[Tracking the Field, Volume 7: Analyzing Trends in Environmental Grantmaking](#)", EGA & Candid, New York, 2021. The full report is only available to members of the Environmental Grantmakers Association, but an executive summary can be found in the reference above.

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**39** For example, Patricia Cremona et al., op. cit.

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**40** For example, Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network, "[Advancing a Sustainable Future: A Profile of Environmental Philanthropy – 2016 data update](#)", CEGN, Toronto, May 2018.

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# ABOUT

## Philea — Philanthropy Europe Association

Our vision is for philanthropy to use its full potential to co-shape and support a pluralistic, just and resilient society that centres people and planet. To achieve this, our mission is to enable, encourage and empower the philanthropic community to build a better today and tomorrow.

We nurture a diverse and inclusive ecosystem of foundations, philanthropic organisations and networks in over 30 countries that work for the common good. With individual and national-level infrastructure organisations as members, we unite over 10,000 public-benefit foundations that seek to improve life for people and communities in Europe and around the world.

We galvanise collective action and amplify the voice of European philanthropy. Together we:

- **Co-create knowledge and learn** from effective practices
- **Collaborate** around current and emerging issues
- **Promote enabling environments** for doing good

In all we do, we are committed to enhancing trust, collaboration, transparency, innovation, inclusion and diversity.

**The Philea European Environmental Funders Group (EEFG)** acts as a hub for connections for funders and funders' associations active or interested in the fields of environment and sustainable development. Its fundamental added value is to provide a safe space for funders to network, exchange experiences, reflect on funding strategies, build synergies, and engage in both formal and informal collaborations strengthening and growing the environmental philanthropic sector in Europe.

### Authors

**Jon Cracknell**

[The Hour Is Late](#)

**Huma Khan**, Philea

**Giulia Lombardi**, Philea

### Philea Coordination team

**Marianne Johnston**

**Angela Pauly**

**Josh Redding**

**Jon Warne**

### Layout & graphic design

**Mikaël Kaiser** [kapsul.be](#)

### Photos


[climatevisuals.org](#)

[unsplash.com](#)

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For further information, please contact **Philea**  
Philanthropy House  
Rue Royale 94, 1000 Brussels, Belgium  
T +32 2 512 89 38 – [info@philea.eu](mailto:info@philea.eu) – [www.philea.eu](http://www.philea.eu)

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# Philea

Philanthropy  
Europe  
Association

Philanthropy House

Rue Royale 94  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

T +32 2 512 89 38  
info@philea.eu

[www.philea.eu](http://www.philea.eu)



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