

Canada announces first federal green bonds as part of its 2021 budget

April 28, 2021

Team North

As part of its 2021 budget, the federal government announced its plan to issue \$5 billion in green bonds to support environmental infrastructure development in Canada. These bonds will be the first federal green bonds to enter the market.

What are green bonds?

Bonds are a fixed-income financing instrument, used to either borrow money or raise funds. **Green bonds are a specific type of bond in which the proceeds are used** exclusively to fund projects with environmental and climate benefits. Through such bonds, funds can be raised for green infrastructure and climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. Green bonds provide investors with an opportunity to support the transition to environmentally sound, low carbon economies while ensuring a steady return on investment. Conversely, projects that support such a transition can obtain the funding they need for their development.

First issued by the World Bank in 2008, green bonds have since seen steady and rapid growth in the financial market. In 2014, the International Capital Market Association published its Green Bond Principles (GBP), guidelines for issuing green bonds and promoting the integrity of the market. The GBP have four core components: (1) use of proceeds, (2) process for project evaluation and selection, (3) management of proceeds and (4) reporting. **These principles provide issuers with guidance on the key** components involved in launching credible green bonds and ensure transparency in the use of funds.

Categories specifically recognized by the GBP include, but are not limited to: renewable energy, energy efficiency, pollution prevention, natural resources management, biodiversity conservation, water management, circular economy adapted products and green buildings. In issuing green bonds, institutions must provide information on their projects and describe the environmental benefits they provide.

Any institution that has the capacity to issue bonds can also issue green bonds. The federal government plans to follow this rule, as announced in the 2021 budget.

The federal green bond

One of the several climate initiatives announced by the federal government in the 2021 budget is the establishment of a green bond. The issuance target is \$5 billion, subject to market conditions. This represents 2 per cent of the total \$286 billion in bond issuance planned by the Canadian federal government for the year. These investments will be used for projects such as green infrastructure, clean tech innovations and nature conservation.

The Department of Finance Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada will lead the development, in cooperation with Natural Resources Canada; Infrastructure Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Transport Canada; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Public Safety Canada; and other related Crown corporations.

In the coming months, a more detailed framework will be published to provide information on how green bonds will be structured and offer any opportunities to finance work to fight climate change and protect the environment in Canada. The framework will serve as the baseline for the “first of many green bond issuances.”

BLG will provide updates on any further developments and investment opportunities as they emerge.

By

[Kristyn Annis, Morgane L. Besner](#)

Expertise

[Banking & Financial Services](#), [Commercial Real Estate](#), [Construction](#), [Corporate Commercial](#), [Environmental](#), [Municipal & Land Use Planning](#), [Team North®](#), [Agribusiness](#), [Energy - Oil & Gas](#), [Energy – Power](#), [Forestry](#), [Government & Public Sector](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Transportation](#), [Renewable Energy](#)

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

blg.com

BLG Offices

Calgary

Centennial Place, East Tower
520 3rd Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB, Canada
T2P 0R3

T 403.232.9500
F 403.266.1395

Ottawa

World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1P 1J9

T 613.237.5160
F 613.230.8842

Vancouver

1200 Waterfront Centre
200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V7X 1T2

T 604.687.5744
F 604.687.1415

Montréal

1000 De La Gauchetière Street West
Suite 900
Montréal, QC, Canada
H3B 5H4

T 514.954.2555
F 514.879.9015

Toronto

Bay Adelaide Centre, East Tower
22 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5H 4E3

T 416.367.6000
F 416.367.6749

The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to constitute legal advice, a complete statement of the law, or an opinion on any subject. No one should act upon it or refrain from acting without a thorough examination of the law after the facts of a specific situation are considered. You are urged to consult your legal adviser in cases of specific questions or concerns. BLG does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy, currency or completeness of this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. If this publication was sent to you by BLG and you do not wish to receive further publications from BLG, you may ask to remove your contact information from our mailing lists by emailing unsubscribe@blg.com or manage your subscription preferences at blg.com/MyPreferences. If you feel you have received this message in error please contact communications@blg.com. BLG's privacy policy for publications may be found at blg.com/en/privacy.

© 2026 Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Borden Ladner Gervais LLP is an Ontario Limited Liability Partnership.