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## Using Altmetric data to demonstrate the impact of Canadian climate science on international policy

### User Profile

Tristan MacLean works at [Evidence for Democracy](#) (E4D) as a climate science funding researcher. He has a background in science and science education and holds a PhD in neuropathology. Originally from the UK, he worked for the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, carrying out public engagement and science communication, including on bioenergy and food security.

Evidence for Democracy is a leading fact-driven, non-partisan, not-for-profit organization promoting the transparent use of evidence in government decision-making in Canada. Through research, education and issue campaigns, they engage and empower the science community while cultivating public and political demand for evidence-based decision-making.

### Objective

Tristan’s role at E4D has been to research the the climate science funding landscape following the cancellation of the Climate Change and Atmospheric Research (CCAR) program that was administered by Canada’s Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

With the cancellation of the CCAR program, there has been concern that there isn’t sufficient government funding for climate science and that this was going to seriously impact the ability of the science community to retain highly qualified experts and continue their research programs. It was important to E4D to investigate the current Canadian funding landscape for climate scientists to determine if it is fit for purpose and if it enables scientists to have an impact on our understanding of the climate.

*“With such an internationally collaborative and globally important topic as the climate, being able to use Altmetric data to demonstrate how Canadian science makes its way into policy documents is very powerful.”*

### **Altmetric data were used to demonstrate the impact of funded Canadian research on climate change policy**

The research led to the publication of a report entitled “[Investing in Canadian Climate Science](#)” which assesses the state of Canadian climate science based on a survey of climate scientists and analytical data from Altmetric and Dimensions.

Although the CCAR program received a very positive evaluation from NSERC in 2016, with top-level numbers of outputs, Altmetric data enabled Tristan to provide greater detail of the policy, news and social media reach of Canadian climate science.

They compiled a list of over 500 publications that arose from a specific funding program and then found their DOIs. This enabled them to use Altmetric Explorer to collate details of appearance in the news, shares on twitter and references in policy documents. Tristan and his team found it particularly useful to be able to also display these results in a variety of visualizations within Altmetric Explorer, such as graphs and geomaps.

With such an internationally collaborative and globally important topic as the climate, being able to use Altmetric data to demonstrate where Canadian science makes its way into policy documents by the WHO, UK government and various non-governmental organizations was very powerful to E4D as their organization strives to contribute to evidence-based policymaking.

The report was covered by several news media outlets, including the Globe and Mail, the Narwhal and the National Observer. The National Observer stated that “The survey by advocacy non-profit Evidence for Democracy and non-partisan charity Canadian Climate Forum has prompted Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna to call for an overhaul of climate science funding as a Liberal party 2019 re-election platform plank.”, proving that E4D’s work has a real impact on policymakers.