Giving Green 2022 annual impact report

Published: May 8, 2023

Who we are

Giving Green is a guide for individuals, foundations, and businesses to make more effective climate giving decisions. We find evidence-based, cost-effective, and high-leverage organizations that maximize the impact of your climate donations.

We make high-impact climate giving easier, for everyone.

What we do

We offer two main products:

1. **For individuals, foundations and other donors**: top nonprofit recommendations and audience-specific recommendations (e.g., for Australian donors)
2. **For businesses**: a comprehensive guide on effective corporate climate actions, including catalytic technology portfolios and carbon offsets & removal recommendations

Our organization consists of three main functions:

1. **Research**: conducts climate giving research and produces recommendations
2. **Communications**: introduce climate giving resources to different target audiences
3. **Operations**: manages the administration of the organization

Our products and functions are guided by our organizational values of truth-seeking, humility, transparency, and collaboration.

Our theory of change is illustrated below:

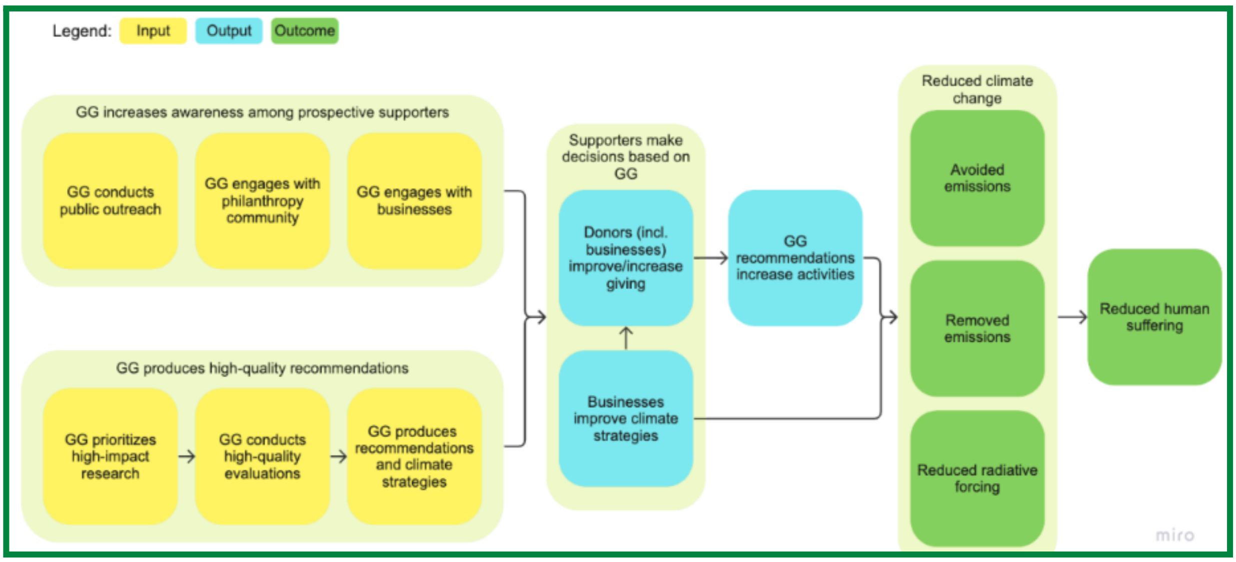

Figure 1: Giving Green's theory of change

Our impact

Our core metric is “money moved”, i.e., donations and purchases directed to our recommendations as a result of our influence. However, this is an imperfect metric because we do not find out about all donations that we influence. We, therefore, also measure intermediate indicators such as press mentions and corporate engagement.

1. **Money moved (in USD)**

- **2022 money moved**

In 2022 Giving Green influenced an estimated $2.836,000 (range: $1.307,000 - $3.587,000) towards our recommendations. Please see the appendix for details on how we calculated these estimates.

Product	Best estimate of money moved	Range
Top recommendations	$2,626,000	$1,111,000 - $3,376,000
Carbon offset and removal recommendations	$24,000	$24,000 - $25,000
Australia recommendations	$186,000	$172,000 - $186,000
Total	**$2,836,000**	**$1,307,000 - $3,587,000**

Figure2: Giving Green's 2022 money moved, divided by product offering

- **Historical money moved**

Since our founding in 2020, we estimate that we have influenced a total of $5,512,000 (range: $2,710,000 - $7,030,000).

Our annual money moved continues to increase year on year. Over 90% of the estimated money moved is donated to our top recommendations. While we make recommendations in a variety of sectors, we believe our top recommendations are the most cost-effective giving opportunities.

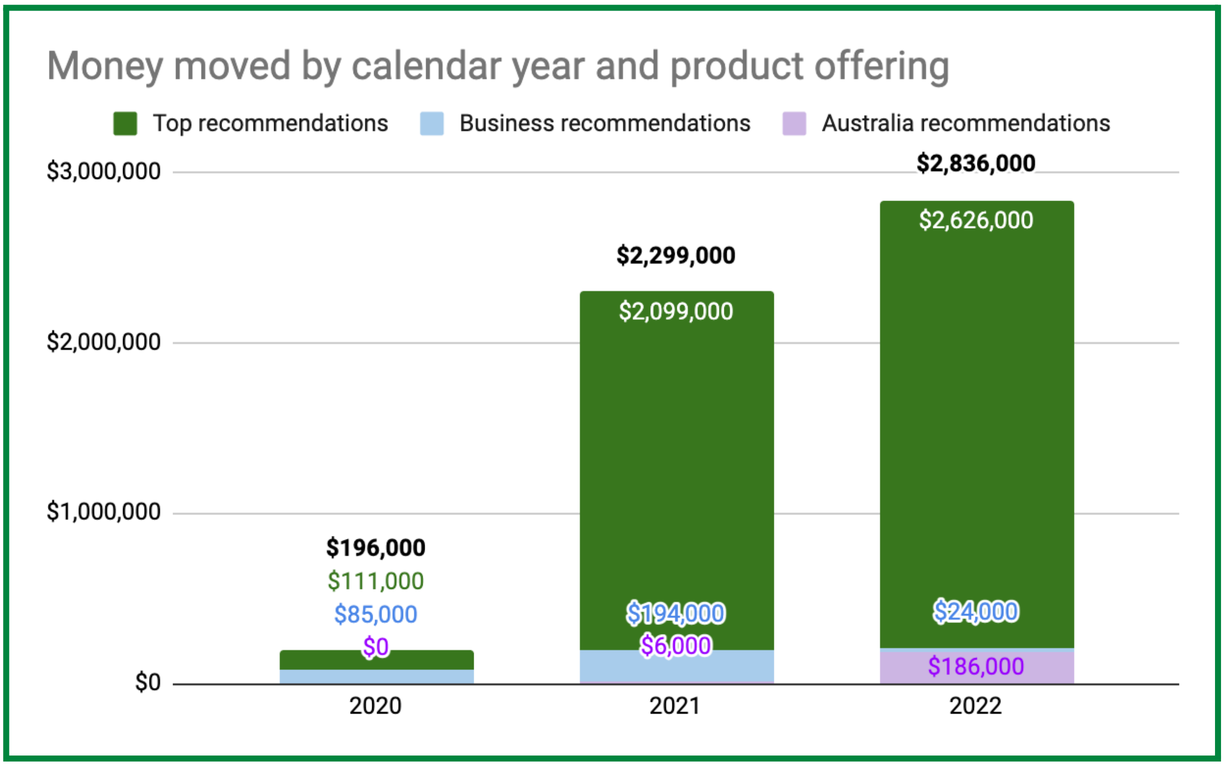

Figure 3: Giving Green's historical money moved, divided by product offering

2. Intermediate indicators

- **Press mentions**

In 2022, we were mentioned in the press 28 times, from our blog post exploring high-leverage opportunities in climate for philanthropists to popular media featuring our top nonprofits. We believe that by making scientific, transparent, and actionable giving opportunities more accessible to the mainstream audience, we are shifting the conversation around climate and money,

- **Corporate engagement**

We think our recently released corporate climate action guide bolsters a growing "beyond net zero" movement, encouraging businesses to go beyond their carbon footprint and advocate for systems change. We have written and spoken about the guide in industry and academic outlets. We anticipate that qualitatively shifting corporate climate strategies is another important impact of our work that will not be fully captured by the quantitative measure of money moved to our recommendations. For example, we may influence a business to expand beyond purchasing carbon offset credits and consider higher-impact options such as engaging directly in meaningful climate policy advocacy. As our business guide was launched formally in 2023, we plan to report on such impact in future annual reports.

2022 highlights

- **Recommended three new top nonprofits**

In 2022, we assessed 20 climate strategies and 50 organizations, leading to three new nonprofit recommendations and bringing the total number of top recommendations to five.

- **Launched a comprehensive corporate climate action guide**

Due to relatively low amounts of money influenced and a rapidly-changing set of norms for businesses, we decided that our 2021 recommendations for businesses were not doing a good job of meeting corporate needs. We expanded our business recommendations to include a comprehensive guide on effective corporate climate action, featuring four evidence-based, actionable strategies, followed by vetted recommendations. The guide, soft-launched in November 2022, aims to help businesses move beyond conventional business climate strategies and maximize their climate impact.

- **Launched the Giving Green Fund**

We launched the Giving Green Fund—a regranting fund featuring our top recommendations—during the 2022 giving season. We update the portfolio dynamically as new evidence emerges, and recommend grants from the Giving Green Fund based on the supported organizations' funding needs. We believe donating to the Giving Green Fund is our highest-impact giving option.

- **Continued to improve research quality**

We expanded our research team from one to three members, which allowed us to improve the quality of our research. Major updates to research quality include:

- Formalizing our theory of change and research prioritization
- Publishing mistakes we have made
- Increasing our reasoning transparency
- Increasing public-facing research

- **Doubled the team**

We doubled our team size after we made three new hires in June 2022. While we still have room to grow, we now have dedicated team member(s) who take ownership of each of Giving Green's three functions.

Giving Green's operations

Giving Green's operating expenses grew significantly in 2022, largely due to adding three new team members. The vast majority of our expenses go to staff salaries and benefits. We have an overhead rate of 11% of expenditures to IDinsight, our fiscal sponsor, which covers finance, legal, and administrative functions.

Historically, about 85% of our funding has come from foundations and 15% from individuals.

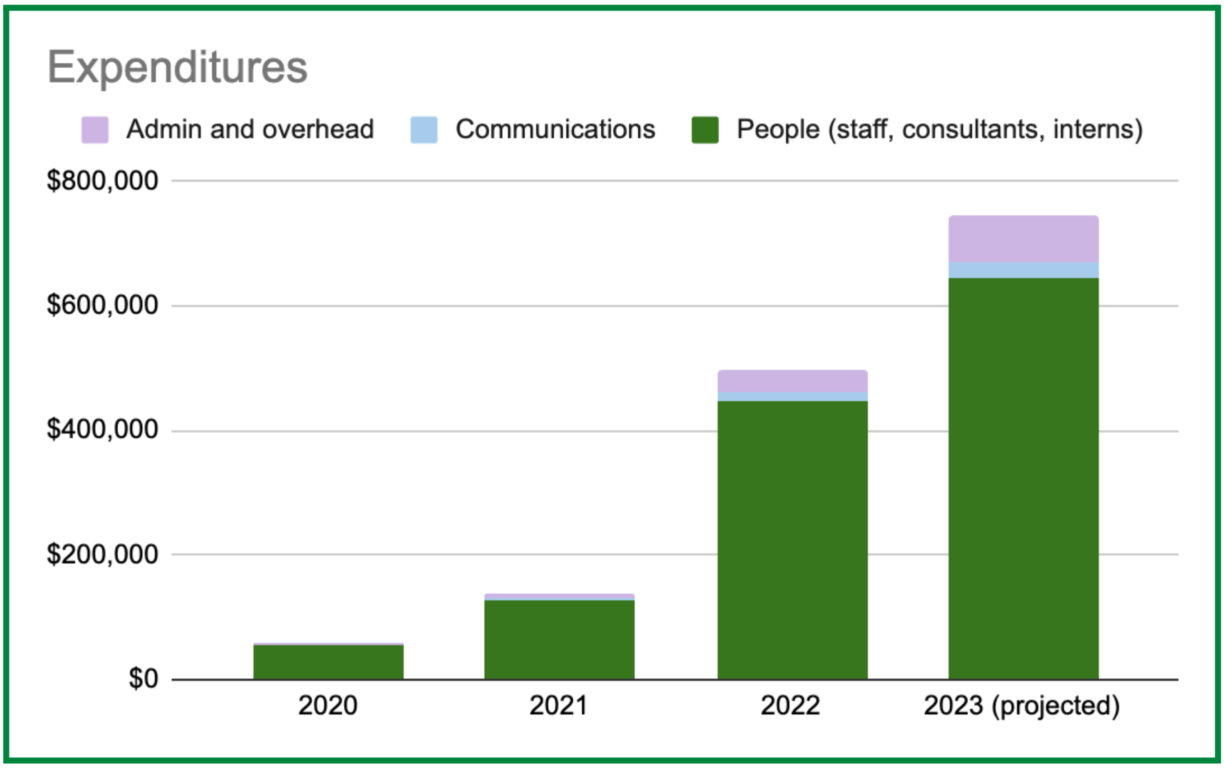

Figure 2: Giving Green's historical expenditures.

Through the end of 2022, we estimate our "impact multiplier"—dollars we move to our recommendations, divided by our own operating cost—at 7.5x. This means that every dollar donated to Giving Green yielded about $7.50 in funding to our recommended high-impact climate organizations.

We note that projected expenditure for 2023 assumes that staffing remains at current levels. We have ambitious growth plans, and believe we could push our research and communications efforts further with additional staff.

Future plans

- **Move $7.5M to recommendations**

For 2023, we hope to influence and move $7.5m to our recommendations, which is 10x of our operating costs.

- **Iterate and promote business recommendations**

As our corporate climate action guide is a new product, we plan to iterate on the product based on user feedback, as well as continue to promote it in front of business networks, business-facing media outlets, and individual businesses of various sizes. We hope to influence multiple businesses in shaping their climate strategies.

- **Continue to improve research quantity and quality**

For 2023, we plan to assess around 30 new climate strategies, such as funding opportunities in geothermal and clean cooling. We will also reassess our current recommendations.

Based on retrospectives on our 2022 research processes, we will also continue to improve research quality and transparency, including:

- ➢ Make early-stage prioritization more transparent by creating a public-facing research dashboard
- ➢ Improve the usefulness of cost-effectiveness analyses e.g. through better framing and/or more accurate inputs
- ➢ Formalize external feedback by soliciting a diversity of feedback and proactively engaging with stakeholders who may have different views to our own

- **Expand communications efforts**

To match our research output and ambitions, we plan to experiment with more distribution channels to increase the reach, engagement, and conversion of potential recommendation supporters.

Planned communications activities include:

- ➢ Continue to implement SEO best practices
- ➢ Continue to refine paid ads strategies across key platforms
- ➢ Testing new top-of-the-funnel channels like webinars and event engagement

Significant uplifts in reach, however, will depend on increased funding for Giving Green's communications efforts, as we currently have limited staff capacity.

Conclusion

It feels like forever, but it was only three years ago that Giving Green was nothing more than a dream, inspired by the recognition that there was a need for more evidence in climate philanthropy. How far we have come! The past three years have validated our theory that with more money activated to the climate fight, expert guidance is needed more than ever to ensure this money really translates to impact. We are thrilled that we have built a strong internal team, and attracted a wide array of supporters and partners.

But it still feels like the beginning of a long journey. We think we have the ability to move to a next level of impact, by working directly with philanthropic decision-makers, gaining influence in corporate boardrooms, and massively increasing our reach across the general public. We thank our supporters and partners for joining us on our journey, and are excited about the next steps.

—Dan Stein, founder and executive director, Giving Green

We find high-impact climate initiatives.
You can turbocharge them.

Giving Green
Incubated by IDinsight
https://www.givinggreen.earth/
givinggreen@idinsight.org

Appendix A: How we measure impact

Data sources

To calculate money moved, we first ask each recommended organization for its best estimate of money directed from sources we have influenced. Example sources include:

1. Donors who clicked to a recommended organization's site from Giving Green's site
2. Donors who proactively mentioned hearing about a recommended organization from a media piece informed by Giving Green
3. Businesses that purchased carbon credits based on conversations with our team
4. Foundations who made a gift after considering several sources of evidence, including Giving Green's research

It is worth noting that different organizations have different tracking methods and capabilities. We try to cross reference data from recommended organizations with other sources, such as our internal tracking, conversations with large donors or business purchasers, and regranters that facilitate donations to our recommendations.

Impact attribution

Once we have this data, we multiply each dollar amount by a percentage that represents our estimate of the share of influence we had over that amount. This is a subjective assessment that encompasses questions like: Were these donors influenced by multiple sources, and if so, does Giving Green only deserve "partial credit"? How certain are we that these donors were influenced by Giving Green versus another source? For example, if a recommended organization raised $50,000 from an effective altruist audience, but it was already well-known in effective altruist spaces, we might assign ourselves just 10%, or $5,000, of impact. However, if no other mention of that nonprofit appears in effective altruist spaces, we might assign ourselves 100% of the impact.

We assign three such percentages:

1. **A "certain" percentage**: what share of this money are we completely certain is attributable to Giving Green?
2. **A "best guess" percentage**: taking into account the above factors
3. **An "optimistic" percentage**: taking an optimistic view of the above factors

By adding all "best guess" amounts together, we reach a total "best guess" for money moved. Similarly, adding the "certain" amounts together and "optimistic" amounts together gives us an estimated range of money moved.

Uncertainties

We are uncertain whether the "money moved" metric adequately accounts for the counterfactual impact of the money. If, for instance, a donor would have otherwise given to a nonprofit that is 50% as effective, should we credit ourselves with 50% of this money moved? Our current assumption, based on limited customer research, is that most donors would have given to significantly less effective nonprofits or not at all, but we recognize that this is a major uncertainty.

We are also uncertain whether our data is capturing all of our donor audience, and it therefore may be a significant underestimate. For instance, it is relatively easy for us to assess our impact on mass-market online donors whose clicks can be tracked. However, it is difficult to assess our influence with larger donors or business purchasers, who may give via check or wire transfer and not proactively mention Giving Green as an inspiration. For example, we have in several cases heard of large gifts many months after the fact.