CIF CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

ACT INVESTMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION AND LEARNING TOOLKIT

Maximizing Transformational Intent and Impact of ACT Investments

// June 2024

E&L TOOLKIT SERIES //

Evaluation and Learning Toolkit

CIF Program:
Accelerating Coal Transition

TOPICS

- Evaluation and Learning
- Coal Transition
- Transformational Change

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This study has been completed by the Climate Investment Funds' Evaluation and Learning Initiative. The study was authored by Michael Ward, Senior Evaluation Specialist, Neha Sharma, Lead for the Evaluation and Learning Initiative, and Alfredo Villavicencio Vieira, Evaluation Specialist. Daniel Morris, Lead for CIF's Energy Programming, and Paul Pulickal Matthew provided technical feedback and strategic guidance.

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Design
Art Direction: Andrea Carega
Graphic Design: Karlien Truyens

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1. CIF Accelerating Coal Transition (ACT) Program

The Climate Investment Funds' (CIF) Accelerating Coal Transition (ACT) Investment Program aims to "tackle key barriers related to governance, people, and infrastructure, and address funding gaps leading to the successful implementation of country-level strategies and associated kick-start projects; building support at the local and regional levels; and accelerate the retirement of existing coal assets (coal mines and coal power plants) together with enabling new economic activities for those impacted by the transition".[1] It does so by focusing on the need for concerted efforts to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts on those affected by coal-to-clean energy system transitions.

1.2. ACT Program Investment Criteria

The ACT program supports the broader CIF impact statement and associated commitment to "Accelerated transformational change and climate finance that enable progress toward net-zero emissions and adaptive, climate-resilient development pathways, in a just and socially inclusive manner."[2] As the program seeks to address underlying governance, people, and infrastructure needs to accelerate coal-to-clean transitions in country energy systems, it also focuses on meeting key CIF investment criteria. These include enhancing the potential for transformational change; GHG emission reduction/avoidance; just transition; financial effectiveness; implementation potential; and development impacts.

1.3. ACT Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

The CIF regards monitoring, evaluation, and learning as distinct but interrelated functions that build on one another to produce evidence, knowledge, and learning in support of its overall goals and program objectives.[3] The ACT Integrated Results Framework sets out the monitoring approach and the evaluation and learning approach, leveraging different tools, methods, and forms of evidence to enhance accountability and learning. The ACT Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit provides operational guidance on how to measure, monitor, and report on the program results. This document, the ACT Evaluation and Learning Toolkit: Maximizing Transformational Intent and Impact, provides guidance on evaluation and learning approaches related to transformational change, just transition, gender, social inclusion, financial effectiveness, implementation potential, development impacts, and other complex-system considerations within the ACT program. The evaluation processes draw on data and insight generated by the M&R system while also generating, analyzing, and interpreting additional information to support learning and change.

1.4. Evaluation & Learning to Support Transformational Intent and Impact

Since its inception in 2008, the CIF has sought to advance transformational approaches to climate action. In 2015, the Trust Fund Committee (TFC) of the CIF endorsed a proposal to establish the Evaluation and Learning Initiative to enhance the use of evaluative processes for the purposes of learning, accountability, and decision-making. CIF's user-focused and demand-led approach to evaluation, guided by an independent Advisory Group and the TFC, ensures timeliness within the program or project lifecycle, and enables the use of a range of methods to generate practical, applied insights.

In 2017, the CIF launched the Transformational Change Learning Partnership (TCLP) which brought together an international community that has developed the concepts, methods, and metrics associated with achieving transformational change. The work of the TCLP has been used by an increasing number of climate finance institutions to inform a range of evaluative approaches designed to deepen the transformational intent and impact. TCLP-developed concepts and tools have been incorporated into the design of CIF's programs, including the ACT program. Incorporating evaluative approaches in program and project design can amplify the transformational intent and extent of systemic change aimed to address the climate crisis. During implementation, evaluation and learning approaches can help programs and projects to reorientate or change approaches to increase their impact by responding to emerging internal and external challenges and opportunities. Programs and projects near the end of their implementation can use summative reviews and other evaluation and learning approaches to enhance accountability and assess transformational impact to enable broader learning. Finally, meta-evaluations that synthesize learning from multiple evaluations and studies can generate insights that deepen both transformational intent and impact of future programs and projects.

2. PURPOSE

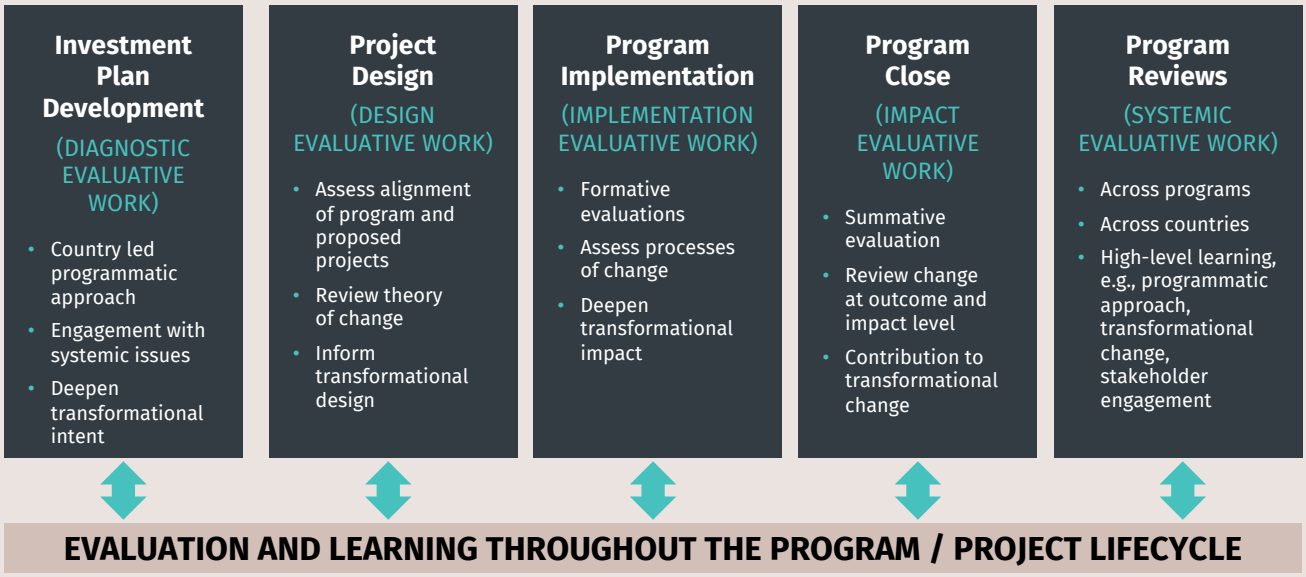
This ACT E&L Toolkit is designed to guide and inform the use of evaluation and learning (E&L) approaches throughout the lifecycle of the ACT program, and associated projects, with the aim of enhancing their transformational intent and impact.

This toolkit uses the terms "evaluation and learning approaches", "evaluative work", and "learning processes" to emphasize the point that evaluation and learning can take place in many ways. Broadly, the purpose of evaluation and learning is to generate credible and useful insight into the value of something (e.g. processes or outcomes) and enhance one's confidence and capacity to make decisions and take action. Thus, while evaluation should be systematic (intentional and purposeful), grounded in key questions — which shape the scope and direction of the evaluation, and inform planning and decision-making — it does not have to be done by an external third party, be time-consuming, or expensive. The intention of this toolkit is to support a variety of stakeholders to use evaluation and learning approaches to enhance the design, implementation and review of the ACT program and associated projects.

CIF has identified key moments throughout the ACT program lifecycle where evaluative approaches can enhance the transformational intent and impact of ACT investments. Key evaluative moments occur prior to Investment Plan (IP) implementation (ex-ante evaluation), during implementation (formative evaluation), and after implementation (ex-post evaluation). Collectively, the evaluative work at these moments contributes to learning and action that can increase the program's potential, and actual results, relevant to key ACT investment criteria, such as GHG emissions reduction/avoidance, just transition, gender equality and social inclusion, development impacts, and transformational change.

Figure 1 summarizes the key evaluative moments, identify by CIF, and the kinds of evaluative work that could be conducted at these moments to support decision making. Additional information will be provided in section 5, discussing the evaluation and learning moments in the ACT program.

FIGURE 1. Evaluation and Learning Approaches for Key Moments in the ACT Program



Source: CIF, 2024

It is important to note that the term "evaluation" refers to a broad range of evaluation approaches that require varying degrees of effort and time intensity. Also, it is possible to undertake evaluative work and answer evaluative questions at each of these phases, without needing to commission evaluations. There are several possible methods with varying degrees of resource and time intensity that can address evaluative questions at each phase. MDBs have their own independent evaluation offices with periodic commitments for accountability at the project level, while the CIF complements these activities with programmatic and thematic evaluations and studies that analyze results and lessons within and across CIF programs, and across CIF-supported projects.

This toolkit provides practical evaluation and learning approaches and tools that can be used to maximize the transformational intent and impact of the ACT program throughout the program and project lifecycle. This includes improving the understanding of what is meant by "transformational change," identifying the dimensions of change that require attention, using questions to help focus attention on these key dimensions, and predicting and tracking expected and unexpected outcomes and impacts through the use of signals and other evaluative methods.

This toolkit includes four sections to guide the E&L approach for ACT countries' programs and projects:

- **Audience and roles relevant to the Toolkit.** This section provides some insight into the interests and roles that a range of ACT program stakeholders may have in supporting evaluation and learning processes across the lifecycle of the ACT program.

- **Maximizing transformational intent and impact in the CIF context.** This section describes an evaluative framework and concepts that equip ACT program partners and stakeholders to deepen the transformational intent and maximize transformational impacts throughout the program and project lifecycle.
- **Evaluation and learning moments in the ACT Program.** This section outlines how evaluation and learning approaches that support transformational change can be incorporated into key stages in the ACT program and projects.
- **ACT questions and signals.** This section identifies specific questions and signals relevant to transformational change that can support partners and stakeholders in determining ways to enhance and track transformational change.

3. AUDIENCE AND ROLES RELEVANT TO THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is tailored to a diverse set of stakeholders engaged in the ACT program. By addressing critical evaluative moments across the ACT program and project lifecycles, the toolkit aims to support both internal stakeholders and external partners.

3.1. Audience for this E&L Toolkit

1 **CIF ACT Program Leads:** Instrumental in providing strategic ACT program oversight, ensuring the cohesive integration of ACT goals, and driving effective implementation aligned with transformational objectives. ACT program managers have an interest in evaluation and learning activities across all the key ACT program moments, with particular attention to evaluating Investment Plans and learning from ACT program reviews that look across ACT country programs and use systemic evaluation and learning approaches across programs, sectors, and thematic areas.

2 **Investment Plan (IP) Authors:** Serve a pivotal role in aligning country needs, MDB support, and ACT objectives and investment criteria. They will translate strategic goals into tangible and technically sound Investment Plans to facilitate transformational outcomes and impacts. Diagnostic evaluation and learning approaches support IP developers to enhance IP's transformational intent and potential for impact.

3 **Investment Plan Reviewers:** Contribute with technical expertise via rigorous assessments to

validate the technical feasibility and alignment of proposed plans, enhancing the program's technical robustness. Familiarity with diagnostic and design evaluation and learning approaches is important for IP reviewers to assess the feasibility and alignment of proposed IPs in achieving ACT program objectives with enhanced transformational intent.

4 **Project Developers:** Through technical design and execution, project developers, such as country stakeholders and MDBs, play a critical role in designing and implementing projects that align with and support ACT Investment Plans. Design evaluation and learning approaches can help them ensure that projects are well designed to advance transformational change goals outlined in the IP, while implementation evaluation and learning approaches can inform the ongoing execution of projects to enhance success and transformational impact.

5 **CIF Thematic Teams:** Such as CIF E&L, Monitoring & Reporting (M&R), and Gender teams, bring technical cross-cutting perspectives, such as integrating gender and other considerations, monitoring and results, and learning into the technical fabric of ACT programs and evaluations to enhance transformational intent. CIF teams engage across all the key ACT program moments, giving particular attention to evaluation and learning approaches that enhance implementation (formative evaluation), impact (summative) evaluations, and systemic evaluations that assess the collective effectiveness and impact of ACT programs across projects and countries.

6 **Case Study and Evaluation Commissioners:** Ensure that a transformational lens is applied on evaluative processes to deepen the transformational intent, maximize transformational impact, and support learning to advance better practices. Case study and evaluation commissioners may have an interest in E&L activities across all the key ACT program moments, with particular attention to implementation and impact evaluations that seek to capture and share insights from ACT programs and projects.

7 **Case Study Developers:** Contribute technically by documenting and disseminating technically rich insights from successful program strategies, offering technical best practices for future ACT initiatives. Case study developers may have an interest in E&L activities across all the key ACT program moments, with particular attention to design, implementation, and/or impact evaluations that seek to capture and share insights from specific ACT programs and projects.

8 **Independent Evaluation Teams (External from CIF):** Bring technical objectivity to the assessment process by conducting independent, technically rigorous evaluations to assess the design, implementation, and impact of the ACT program and identify insights and areas for improvement. External teams may have an interest in E&L activities across all the key ACT program moments, with particular attention to the type of evaluation they are commissioned to conduct.

3.2. Roles for Implementing ACT E&L Toolkit

The *"CIF Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Policy and Guidance*" document outlines general roles for evaluation and learning activities in the context of CIF programs.[4] The policy describes the specific roles and expectations for CIF units, MDBs, recipient countries, and CIF observers relevant to E&L activities in CIF programs. In practice, E&L activities are typically a collaborative endeavor, and approaches and roles should be tailored to the specific needs, opportunities, and capacities relevant to the ACT country program. The specific E&L approach and plan, informed by this ACT E&L Toolkit, should be clearly described in the ACT Investment Plan, as discussed later in this guidance.

4. MAXIMIZING TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT IN THE CIF AND ACT CONTEXT

This section describes a framework for understanding transformational change in the CIF context, which provides a foundation for enhancing the transformational intent and impact of the ACT program, IPs, and projects. The Transformational Change Learning Partnership (TCLP) defines transformational change as ***"fundamental changes in systems relevant to climate action, with large-scale positive impacts that shift and accelerate the trajectory of progress toward climate-neutral, inclusive, equitable, resilient, and sustainable development pathways."***[5] The potential for transformational change is central to CIF's mission and is one of the key investment criteria for the CIF ACT program.[6] Transformational change can also advance other key focus areas included in the ACT investment criteria, such as the potential for reducing or avoiding GHG emissions; the potential to significantly contribute to the principles of just transition; the gender equality and social inclusion impact potential; and the transformational climate finance and development impact potential.

The transformational change framework is used to deepen the transformational intent and impact of CIF programs and projects. It can be used to deepen this transformational intent and impact across the program areas and investment criteria. Thus, for example, the CIF's Just Transition (JT) Framework highlights both procedural justice *(who decides)* and distributional justice *(who gets what).* In addition, the JT framework seeks to deepen the transformational intent across these two aspects of justice, and it is here that the work on transformational change detailed below provides a valuable framework for evaluation and learning. Similarly, the CIF Gender Action Plan (Phase 3)[7] highlights the importance of "gender-transformative change", and the transformational change framework enhances the focus on systemic issues related to gender, and the scale and speed at which change needs to be generated.

4.1. Dimensions of Transformational Change

Transformational change requires attention to five context-specific dimensions — Relevance, Systemic Change, Speed, Scale, and Adaptive Sustainability. To be considered transformational, climate actions are expected to address all five dimensions to at least some extent. Box 1 includes brief descriptions for each dimension, along with key questions relevant to each (see questions in the section below for more information). For a detailed explanation of the TCLP transformational change dimensions and concepts, see the TCLP's Transformational Change Concepts Learning Brief.

BOX 1. Transformational Change Dimensions + Questions

RELEVANCE: Alignment with and attentiveness to goals and context through time

➔ What is required, what is planned, and are they aligned?

SYSTEMIC CHANGE: Fundamental shifts in system structures and functions

➔ What systems need to change and how? Who needs to be involved and how?

SPEED: Accelerate impacts to achieve the appropriate speed of change

➔ What is the relationship between urgency and complexity?

SCALE: Contextually large change processes and impacts

➔ What scaling is required?

ADAPTIVE SUSTAINABILITY: Robustness, resilience, and adaptiveness of change

➔ What capacity will be built to achieve sustainable development pathways?

Source: CIF, 2024

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE IN THE ACT CONTEXT: Illustrative Example

Accelerating transitions from coal-to-clean energy systems requires attention to a wide range of economic, social, and environmental factors to mitigate adverse impacts and to ensure that the transitions address key governance, people, and infrastructure needs. **Relevant** ACT IPs and projects are fully aligned with national development goals and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, and are responsive to additional social, economic, and technical contextual factors. The IPs and projects are also attentive to supporting the needs of women and vulnerable populations to ensure just energy transitions. The ACT IPs and projects address **systemic changes**, such as policy and budgetary frameworks, technical and supply chain capacities, environmental remediation provisions, and workforce development programs that can help affected communities transition to new livelihoods. Concessional financing and engagement of financial intermediaries helps de-risk investments in ways that **speed** and **scale** renewable energy deployment and support alternate economic development pathways for communities affected by coal phase-out. Insights from the program and project implementation inform the **adaptive sustainability** management of programs, and national and local systems are strengthened to support the sustainability of national energy transitions. Sustainability here refers both to sustaining the benefits of initiatives and ensuring ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

5. EVALUATION AND LEARNING MOMENTS IN THE ACT PROGRAM

4.2. Questions to Support Exploration of Transformational Intent and Impact

The contextual, complex, contested, and emergent nature of climate change impacts and responses means that the answers and ways of working are not entirely predictable. Advancing transformational change requires an open-ended, evaluative, and learning orientation. Inquiry is a powerful tool for exploring and characterizing the transformational potential, implementation, and impact of change in specific country program and project contexts "ACT Questions and Signals", set out later in this toolkit, support users to: (1) think through the most important aspects within each dimension of transformational change, with reference to their specific contexts, perspectives, and time frames; and (2) identify clear *signals* that demonstrate transformational progress connected with ACT projects.

TCLP has intentionally used the term, **"signals,"** instead of "indicators," in order to highlight that these signs of change are highly context-specific and temporal. This is because universal measures or metrics are often inappropriate for assessing transformational change across different scales, sectors, institutions, etc. (Williams, Dickman, and Smurthwaite 2020).

This section outlines evaluative work and associated learning approaches that are relevant to each of the key moments in the ACT program, Investment Plan, and project lifecycles. These key moments in the ACT program are summarized in FIGURE 1 in Section 2 of this document. This evaluative work is important for ensuring and enhancing the transformational intent and impact of ACT programs, IPs, and projects. The work should be scoped and tailored to the unique needs and context of each ACT country. The ACT Operational Guidelines for the development of the Investment Plan[8] include a section for providing a clear and tailored description of the evaluation and learning approaches and plan that are anticipated to be relevant during the design, implementation and review of the ACT in each country.[9]

CIF is developing more detailed evaluation guidance and support, for a range of stakeholders, focused on each of these key moments in CIF program, Investment Plan, and project lifecycles. These guidance notes are referenced in each section below as appropriate.

5.1. Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Diagnostic Work: ACT Investment Plan Development[10]

Diagnostic evaluative work plays an important role in helping ACT partners and stakeholders to identify and consider opportunities to enhance the transformational intent of the country-led, MDB-supported ACT Investment Plan.[11] These approaches help ensure that the full suite of ACT program objectives and investment criteria are advanced through the ACT IP development. Diagnostic evaluation is an intentional, systematic process to assess contextual factors, underlying dynamics, and potential solutions that inform the design and refinement of interventions. The transformational potential of an ACT country program is contingent upon robust systems diagnostics at the outset of the IP development and during review processes. Country teams and their MDB partners are encouraged to use a collection of relevant diagnostic evaluation methods to support the development of specific sections in both Scoping Mission Aide Memoires and the ACT Investment Plans.[12]

5.2. Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Design Work: ACT Project Design

Evaluative approaches also play an important role in the design of investments (projects) under the ACT Investment Plan. **Design evaluative work** is particularly useful to assess the extent to which an investment (or portfolio of investments) aligns with the Investment Plan and supports the CIF's intention to advance a **programmatic approach.** This evaluative work assesses program and project design to ensure and enhance transformational alignment and potential. CIF is developing more detailed guidance (forthcoming in 2024) to inform and support the selection and use of design evaluation approaches and methods.

5.3. Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Implementation Work: ACT Program and Project Implementation

Implementation evaluation is useful to assess program and project performance during their execution to determine if they are achieving immediate objectives and progress towards transformational goals. By assessing the operational context and implementation process; identifying successes, challenges, and lessons learned; and integrating stakeholder perspectives, implementation evaluations inform adaptive management that responds to contextual changes and contribute to transformative outcomes. These formative evaluation approaches can directly inform near real-time learning and the design and implementation of other investments. CIF is developing more detailed guidance (forthcoming in 2024) to inform the use of implementation evaluative approaches and methods and show how they can be used to assess progress towards program and project goals and transformational impacts relevant to the ACT investment criteria.

5.4. Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Impact Assessment: ACT Project and/or Country Program Close

Impact evaluative work, broadly understood, is useful to assess both intended and unintended outcomes and impacts of a project-level investment or group of investments, whether positive or negative and direct or indirect. Impact evaluative approaches and methods can also play an important role around the culmination of the ACT country investment program, informing summative evaluative discussions and future work. Impact evaluative work provides a more comprehensive, systemic understanding of broader systemic changes and the underlying factors contributing to observed impacts, offering valuable insights into what triggers transformational learning

and change to inform future programming, strategic decision-making, and change. CIF is developing more detailed guidance to inform the use of impact evaluative approaches and methods and show how they can be used to assess progress towards project and program goals and transformational impacts relevant to the ACT investment criteria.

5.5. Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Synthesis and Systemic Work: ACT Program Reviews

Synthesis or systemic evaluative work can leverage past evaluations across multiple ACT countries. Synthesis evaluation is most relevant to the overall ACT Program to assess systemic transformation beyond discrete programs or projects and over time. Synthesis evaluation approaches help "connect the dots" and synthesize learning from multiple evaluations or studies to generate higher-level insights and learning on cross-cutting issues, thematic workstreams, and longer-term strategies to leverage and drive transformational change. ACT program reviews and synthesis evaluation are most likely to be commissioned by the CIF Secretariat and/or its MDB partners, often as a collaborative effort. CIF will develop more detailed guidance to inform the use of synthesis evaluation approaches and methods and show how they can be used to assess progress towards program goals and transformational impacts relevant to the ACT Program and investment criteria.

6. ACT QUESTIONS AND SIGNALS

This section provides key questions that help to focus attention on dimensions of transformational change in ways that are relevant to the ACT program. Engaging with these questions can help deepen the transformational intent and understanding of the transformational impact for ACT programs, investment plans, and projects.[13] These questions are also useful to explore how attention to the ACT program investment criteria may be enhanced during design and implementation and assessed during project and program close stages.

The questions focus attention on what changes are required and how they may be realized. The **"what" questions** relate to outcome signals, which are aligned with global and country goals and provide direction for action, while the **"how" questions** are connected to the process signals needed for moving toward the identified goals. ACT program and project teams are encouraged to engage with and use these questions throughout the program, IP, and project lifecycles. Changing the tense in questions (e.g., how will/could, how are, how did) can make them relevant at different program and project stages. The "ACT Questions and Signals" section includes specific "what" and "how" questions for each dimension that are relevant to many ACT program investments.

Because the answers to the questions may be more, or less, transformational depending on the levels of understanding, existing structures, and vested interests it is useful to develop shared and explicit statements or expected 'signals of change'. These signals of transformational change are powerful tools that help to clarify anticipated and actual changes in a specific country and program context. Signals can be found in both outcomes and processes. Signals of transformational change are referenced in the evaluative components of the ACT Integrated Results Framework and are separate from, but complementary to, the indicators outlined in the ACT Program Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit.[14]

- **Outcome signals** relate to specified objectives or outcomes and the progress toward transformational impacts. Outcome signals are evident at emerging or advanced stages.
- **Process signals** recognize the complex, non-linear, and emergent nature of many systems and the corresponding need for adaptive management.
- **Emerging signals** suggest that transformational change processes are likely underway and provide a line of sight to connecting lower-level (community and project levels) and higher-level (sector, national, and global levels) systems that may deliver transformational impact.
- **Advanced signals** are those of large-scale positive impacts that can be identified within larger systems, with line of sight to contributions from specific project interventions.

Signals of transformational change can (1) capture change at multiple levels from individual/community-level programs or policies to wider systems levels, such as by sector, country, region, or globally; and (2) evolve over time. Hence, they are not static measures but are able to adapt as the ACT program and projects progress.

The section below summarizes emerging and advanced outcome and process signals that are likely to be relevant in the context of ACT programs and projects.

Periodically engaging with and answering the questions and identifying relevant signals is encouraged to enhance the transformational intent and impact throughout the program, IP, and project lifecycles, and to support expected evaluation and learning activities. The annex to this toolkit includes a fillable template that can be used to further tailor signals of transformation to specific ACT country and project contexts.

RELEVANCE: Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF financing should demonstrate relevance to advancing the strategic objectives and investment criteria of CIF's ACT program through aligning the context, goals, and action. Specifically, the alignment of context (for example, renewable energy resource development potential in the country, environmental stress, technology/finance challenges, economic development, social justice, and policies), goals (for example, ACT 's strategic objectives, national development plans, NDCs, and other country commitments), and action (for example, specific programs and projects) need to be considered. Essentially, ACT investments should be aligned with a country's NDCs and other energy transition or national development priorities, including social inclusion. In addition, ACT investments should ideally be aligned with and complementary to initiatives and investments advanced by other relevant partners and stakeholders to ensure coherence in national energy transition efforts.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What fundamental changes and large-scale positive impacts, relevant to ACT and just, inclusive energy transitions, need to be brought about?	**Outcome (O):** The ACT program's country investment plans, supporting policies, programs, and investments, are aligned with NDCs/Paris Commitments and meaningfully contribute to their achievement, as characterized by progress toward the 1.5C targets, socioeconomic goals (e.g., just transition, positive development impacts, gender equity, and social inclusion), and environmental remediation of former coal facilities.	**Outcome (O):** The country policy/ programs/investments and implementation are aligned with NDCs/Paris Commitments and meaningfully contributing to their achievement, as characterized by progress toward 1.5C targets, socioeconomic goals (e.g., just transition, positive development impacts, gender equity, and social inclusion), and environmental remediation of former coal facilities.
How	**Context:** How is the intervention relevant to global, national, and local priorities? **Proposed Action:** How is the intervention logic (theory of change) relevant to ACT? **Alignment:** How is the intervention aligned with the social, economic, and environmental goals and impacts of ACT, such as equity and inclusion, just transitions, sustainable development, and ecological integrity, and integrating them?	**Process (P):** Transparent, country-led stakeholder engagement and consultation processes to develop country investment plans are aligned with commitments to just, equitable, and inclusive coal-to-clean transitions. **P:** ACT efforts place a priority on inclusive social processes for allocating the benefits and harms associated with the accelerated coal transition. **P:** Policy, regulation, and governance structures are in place and operational for addressing barriers to ACT, just transitions, and coal facility remediation. **P:** Market mechanisms developed that incentivize investments in the remediation, and restoration of ecological infrastructure and repurposing of built infrastructure while also ensuring social benefits to vulnerable communities.	

SYSTEMIC CHANGE: Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF ACT financing should demonstrate how it will lead to fundamental shifts in the structures and functions of energy systems to enhance ACT by identifying and defining strategic systems, removing entrenched barriers, opening new opportunities or pathways, and shifting power dynamics within and between key systems. This requires a process (for example, stakeholder consultations, social and economic planning, and technology reviews) to identify the most strategic coal-based systems (for example, power stations, coal mines, legal and regulatory frameworks, commercial and financial markets, technology systems, governance systems, related social systems, and ecosystems) to address. Within those systems, the most significant barriers to accelerating the coal transition (for example, institutional, regulatory, and policy failures; market failures and financial barriers; as well as knowledge and technical capacity barriers) will need to be addressed, and opportunities for change (for example, through economic diversification, supportive policy and regulatory frameworks, and improved risk perception) will need to be identified.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What systems need to be changed, and what change is required between and within these systems?	**O:** Key governance structures have a clear mandate and associated support to successfully plan for coal-to-clean programs in ways that are socially just and ecologically beneficial. **O:** Early shifts in key systems and structures (including institutions, knowledge, policy, financing, market systems, and technology) that address barriers and advance opportunities to successfully plan for coal-to-clean programs in socially just and ecologically beneficial ways, have occurred.	**O:** Key governance structures are leveraging institutional capabilities to implement major coal-to-clean programs in ways that are socially just and ecologically beneficial, in line with country and global targets. **O:** Developed shifts in key systems and structures (including institutions, knowledge, policy, financing, market systems, and technology) for implementing major coal-to-clean programs in socially just and ecologically beneficial ways, in line with country and global targets, have occurred.
How	**System Identification:** How has the system, including system boundaries, related to the coal-to-clean transition been identified and defined (e.g., systems mapping, market studies, stakeholder consultations, etc.)? **Barriers and Pathways:** How does the intervention remove entrenched barriers and open new pathways for systemic changes required to ensure ACT? **Power:** How does the intervention elevate the influence of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, to contribute to and benefit from an accelerated coal transition?	**P:** Efficient institutional dialogues, along with long-term coordination and planning processes between stakeholders, are identifying the underlying governance, financial, technological, infrastructure, and social barriers and opportunities concerning an accelerated coal-to-clean transition that would be safe and just. **P:** Stakeholder engagement is taking into consideration systems transformation and supports inclusive processes for responsive planning, economic diversification, social justice, and environmental restoration. For example, national capacity development and training programs are developed in key ministries to support ACT.	

SPEED: Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF ACT financing should demonstrate how it will balance the speed of change required by the urgency of addressing climate change with the time required to ensure social inclusion, just transitions, and to address system complexities. Accelerating the energy transition requires identifying and overcoming barriers to change while simultaneously identifying and enhancing enabling conditions (for example, policy coherence, strategic planning, individual and institutional capacity, access to technology, and funding) in ways that are safe and just.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What will it take to achieve the transition from coal-to-clean energy systems in a time frame that is aligned with the urgency and complexity of the climate crisis?	**O:** The required pace of ACT has been identified and align with the country context (e.g., timing for changes in MW of coal fired power stations repurposed, tons of coal mined, and communities supported during the transition).	**O:** The acceleration of ACT is align with national and global plans and commitments (e.g., 2/3 energy from RE by 2050, fossil fuels fall to 1/5 of total energy supply by 2050, and livelihoods supported/jobs created).
How	**Acceleration:** How does the intervention accelerate progress away from coal and towards cleaner sources of energy? **Complexity and Inclusivity:** How does the intervention use safeguards, impact assessments, and socially inclusive processes to ensure adequate and inclusive engagement with complex and contested issues associated with the coal transition?	**P:** Ongoing capacity enhancement is taking place to expedite energy sector reforms, social development, technology innovation, and market incentives associated with a just coal-to-clean transition. **P:** Coordinated actions across stakeholders are accelerated through enhanced institutional structures supporting both top down and bottom-up leadership focused on just transitions and the implementation of appropriate infrastructure projects (ecological and built). **P:** Socially inclusive and gender transformative processes ensure that ACT programs and projects have sufficient time to incorporate just-transition and social inclusion considerations, including the distributional impacts of energy system transformations.	

SCALE: Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF ACT financing should demonstrate how it will deliver contextually large-scale impacts, such as explicit strategies for enabling the subsequent scale-up or replication of CIF-funded interventions and wider sustainability impacts. This may involve a combination of scaling pathways within and beyond the intervention, including: vertical (for example, policy/implementation, such as national budgets for coal facility repurposing projects); horizontal (for example, numbers or geographic spread, such as the number of communities addressed in coal-to-clean transition projects); and depth (for example, understanding and support, such as the demand for renewable sources of energy and the mobilization of private investment).

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What contextually large changes need to be scaled within and beyond the intervention?	**O:** Barriers to scaling ACT programs have been identified, with governance, financial, technological, infrastructure, and social improvements that are in line with the country's commitments. **O:** New and innovative models for repurposing coal facilities and transitioning from coal-to-clean are researched and piloted.	**O:** Just coal-to-clean transitions are accelerated to achieve country and international commitments to climate goals. **O:** New and innovative models for repurposing coal facilities and transitioning from coal-to-clean have been demonstrated to be transformative and are being scaled up and out.
How	**Depth scaling:** How does the intervention deepen the understanding of and support for an accelerated coal transition? **Vertical scaling:** How does the intervention support scaling pathways within and across policy and implementation processes needed for an accelerated coal transition? **Horizontal scaling:** How does the intervention increase the number of people and institutions or expand the geographic areas engaged with an accelerated coal transition or benefitting from it?	**P:** Launch multi-stakeholder engagement processes that build the understanding of and commitment to accelerating just coal-to-clean transitions. **P:** Build policy and governance support through long-term planning, stakeholder engagement, policy coherence, and institutional-capacity development. **P:** Coordinated actions by governments, businesses, labor, and local communities to align their priorities for an accelerated coal transition. **P:** Scaled up, flexible and predictable public- and private-sector finance to drive technological innovation to support an accelerated coal transition, economic diversification in affected areas, and environmental restoration.	

ADAPTIVE SUSTAINABILITY: Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF ACT financing should demonstrate how it will contribute to transformational impacts relevant to ACT Program investment criteria in ways that are sustainable over the long term. This includes considering how progress will be sustained after concessional finance support ends, as well as how investment outcomes and systemic changes are configured to adapt to evolving contexts. It must also consider how integrated ecological, social, and economic sustainability is enhanced through the program and project outcomes and impacts. This involves building the capacity of relevant stakeholders and institutions to understand, formulate, implement, maintain, and monitor coal-to-clean transitions in ways that are ecologically safe, socially just, and economically viable. Interventions should enable experimentation with, new technologies, policies, and business models, along with the flexibility to learn and course-adjust during and after implementation to achieve sustainable development. Programs should also support adaptive capacity of institutions and individuals to prevent backsliding, for example, through the generation of demand for renewable energy via job creation and awareness building, development/support of environmental civil society organizations, and budgeting support. These processes should progressively build, refine, and sustain climate-neutral, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development pathways.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What relevant changes are sustained and advanced beyond the intervention to achieve sustainable development?	**O:** The governance and social systems, together with the financial, technological, and infrastructure systems needed for an accelerated just coal-to-clean transition, are in place and self-sustaining.	**O:** The governance and social systems, together with the financial, technological, and infrastructure needed for an accelerated just coal-to-clean transition, are in place at the levels appropriate to achieving national and international sustainable development commitments.
How	**Flexibility:** How does the intervention enable experimentation and flexibility, including the ability to learn and course-correct when necessary?	**P:** Resilient, responsive, and influential institutions and policies are supported to sustain and accelerate the coal-to-clean energy transition.	
	Capacity: How does the intervention build the capacity of stakeholders and institutions to advance and sustain the transition away from coal and towards cleaner sources of energy?	**P:** Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes, based on multi-stakeholder engagement, are in place, to ensure the enhanced relevance of (and accountability for) targets/impacts, and to enable refining and course-correcting for an accelerated coal-to-clean energy transition in ways that are socially and environmentally beneficial and sustainable.	
	Resilience: How does the intervention insulate change from backsliding due to internal and external pressures or shocks, and enable recovery when required?	**P:** New technologies, market mechanisms, and coalitions are enabled through policies, new business models, and social support to sustain and accelerate investments in accelerating a just coal-to-clean energy transition.	

ANNEX: ACT QUESTIONS AND SIGNALS TEMPLATE

RELEVANCE

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What fundamental changes and large-scale positive impacts, relevant to ACT and just, inclusive energy transitions, need to be brought about?	Outcome (O):	Outcome (O):
How	Context: How is the intervention relevant to global, national, and local priorities? Proposed Action: How is the intervention logic (theory of change) relevant to ACT? Alignment: How is the intervention aligned with the social, economic, and environmental goals and impacts of ACT, such as equity and inclusion, just transitions, sustainable development, and ecological integrity, and integrating them?	Process (P): P: P:	

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What are the systems where change is needed, and what change is required between and within these systems?	O:	O:
		O:	O:
How	System Identification: How has the system, including system boundaries, related to the coal-to-clean transition been identified and defined (e.g., systems mapping, market studies, stakeholder consultations, etc.)?	P:	
	Barriers and Pathways: How does the intervention remove entrenched barriers and open new pathways for systemic changes required to ensure ACT?	P:	
	Power: How does the intervention elevate the influence of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, to contribute to and benefit from an accelerated coal transition?	P:	

SPEED

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What will it take to achieve the transition from coal-to-clean energy systems in a time frame that is aligned with the urgency and complexity of the climate crisis?	O:	O:
How	Acceleration: How does the intervention accelerate progress away from coal and towards cleaner sources of energy? Complexity and Inclusivity: How does the intervention use safeguards, impact assessments, and socially inclusive processes to ensure adequate and inclusive engagement with complex and contested issues associated with the coal transition?	P: P:	

SCALE

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What contextually large changes need to be scaled within and beyond the intervention?	O:	O:
How	Depth scaling: How does the intervention deepen the understanding of and support for an accelerated coal transition?	P:	
	Vertical scaling: How does the intervention support scaling pathways within and across policy and implementation processes needed for an accelerated coal transition?		
	Horizontal scaling: How does the intervention increase the number of people and institutions or expand the geographic areas engaged with an accelerated coal transition or benefitting from it?	P:	
		P:	

ADAPTIVE SUSTAINABILITY

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What relevant changes are sustained and advanced beyond the intervention to achieve sustainable development?	O:	O:
How	Flexibility: How does the intervention enable experimentation and flexibility, including the ability to learn and course-correct when necessary?	P:	
	Capacity: How does the intervention build the capacity of stakeholders and institutions to advance and sustain the transition away from coal and towards cleaner sources of energy?	P:	
	Resilience: How does the intervention insulate change from backsliding due to internal and external pressures or shocks, and enable recovery when required?	P:	

ENDNOTES

CLICK ON ANY NOTE TO GO BACK TO THE REFERENCED PAGE

→ 1 See the CIF Accelerating Coal Transition Program Design Document for more information on the ACT program focus and the types of transformations and barriers that the program works to address.

→ 2 CIF. CIF Results & Impact, n.d.

→ 3 CIF. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Policy and Guidance.* (Washington D.C.: 2022). CIF Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Policy and Guidance | Climate Investment Funds.

→ 4 CIF. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Policy and Guidance.* (Washington D.C.: 2022). CIF Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Policy and Guidance | Climate Investment Funds.

→ 5 CIF Transformational Change Learning Partnership. Transformational Change Concepts Learning Brief (September 2021), p. 6.

→ 6 CIF. Renewable Energy Integration Program Design Document, p. 8.

→ 7 CIF. CIF Gender Action Plan – Phase 3 (June 2020).

→ 8 CIF. Operational Guidelines for CIF Accelerating Coal Transition Program Investment Plan Development Process.

→ 9 See in Section VIII (Monitoring and Evaluation) of the ACT Program Investment Plan outline.

→ 10 The term "Diagnostic Evaluation" will be used from now on to talk about "Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Diagnostic Work" for simplification purposes. It is important to highlight again, however, that the term "evaluation" refers to a broad range of evaluative approaches that will require varying degrees of effort and time. Commissioning of evaluations may not be required to answer evaluative questions at each of these phases. The same point applies to "Design Evaluation" instead of "Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Design Work"; and to "Implementation Evaluation", "Impact Evaluation", and "Synthesis Evaluation".

→ 11 See Operational Guidelines for CIF Accelerating Coal Transition Program Investment Plan Development Process for information on the process and expectations relevant to developing ACT Investment Plans.

→ 12 See the forthcoming publication by the CIF's Evaluation and Learning Initiative entitled "Diagnostic Evaluation Toolkit for CIF Program and Project Partners" that is intended to support a range of stakeholders involved in the development of Investment Plans and associated projects.

→ 13 Changing the tense in questions (e.g., how will/could, how are, how did) can make them relevant at different program and project stages (e.g., design, implementation, close).

→ 14 CIF. ACT Program Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit: Operational Guidance on the ACT M&R System. June 2023.

THE CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) were established in 2008 to mobilize resources and trigger investments for low carbon, climate resilient development in select middle and low income countries. Fourteen contributor countries have pledged over US$11 billion to the funds. To date CIF committed capital has generated an additional US$62 billion in co-financing for mitigation and adaptation interventions at an unprecedented scale in 72 recipient countries. CIF's large-scale, low-cost, long-term financing lowers the risk and cost of climate financing. It tests new business models, builds track records in unproven markets, and boosts investor confidence to unlock additional sources of finance. The CIF is one of the largest active climate finance mechanisms in the world.

CIF CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

The Climate Investment Funds
c/o The World Bank Group
1818 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20433 USA

Telephone: +1 (202) 458-1801
Internet: www.cif.org

@CIF_action CIFaction CIFaction
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