

# NPC INVESTMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION AND LEARNING TOOLKIT

*Maximizing Transformational Intent and Impact  
of NPC Investments*

// June 2024

E&L TOOLKIT SERIES //

Evaluation and Learning Toolkit

CIF Program:  
Nature, People, and Climate

## TOPICS

- Evaluation and Learning
- Nature-Based Solutions
- Transformational Change

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# 1. BACKGROUND

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## 1.1. CIF Nature, People, and Climate (NPC) Program

The Climate Investment Funds' (CIF) new Nature, People and Climate (NPC) program aims to tackle the multiple drivers and impacts of climate change, resulting from human activities on land resources and ecosystems services, in an integrated manner.<sup>1</sup> The NPC program will deploy nature-based solutions that recognize the interdependence among land use, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and the improvement of the sources of livelihoods of rural communities and Indigenous peoples.

## 1.2. NPC Program Investment Criteria

The NPC 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.”<sup>2</sup> As the program seeks to address underlying the impacts of climate change while improving livelihoods through the sustainable use of land and natural resources, it also focuses on meeting key CIF investment criteria. These include enhancing the potential for: transformational change; GHG emission reduction; just transition; financial effectiveness; implementation potential; gender equality and social inclusion impacts; and development impacts.

## 1.3. NPC 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.<sup>3</sup> The NPC 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 NPC Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit provides operational guidance on how to measure, monitor, and report on the program results. This document, the NPC 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 NPC program. The evaluation processes draw on data 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 NPC 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

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

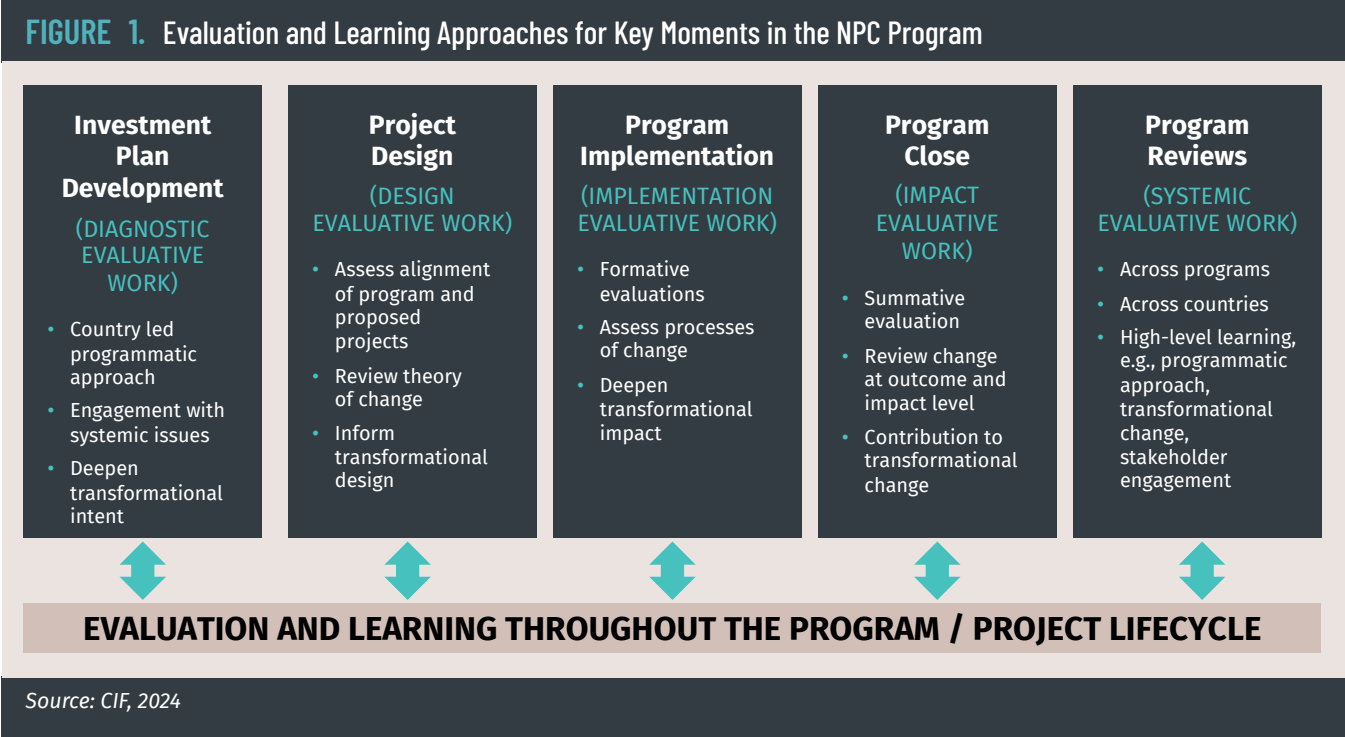
This toolkit uses the terms “evaluation and learning approaches”, “evaluative work”, and “learning processes” to emphasize the point that evaluation and learning can take place in many ways. Broadly, the purpose of evaluation and learning is to generate credible and useful insight into the value of something (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 NPC program and associated projects.

CIF has identified key moments throughout the NPC program lifecycle where evaluative approaches can enhance the transformational intent and impact of NPC 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 NPC 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, identified 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 NPC Program.



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 NPC 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 NPC 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 NPC program stakeholders may have in supporting evaluation and learning processes across the lifecycle of the NPC program.

- **Maximizing transformational intent and impact in the CIF context.** This section describes an evaluative framework and concepts that equip NPC 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 NPC Program.** This section outlines how evaluation and learning approaches that support transformational change can be incorporated into key stages in the NPC program and projects.
- **NPC questions and signals.** This section identifies specific questions and signals relevant to transformational change that can support partners and stakeholders in determining 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 NPC program. By addressing critical evaluative moments across the NPC 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 NPC Program Leads:** Instrumental in providing strategic NPC program oversight, ensuring the cohesive integration of NPC goals, and driving effective implementation aligned with transformational objectives. NPC program managers have an interest in evaluation and learning activities across all the key NPC program moments, with particular attention to evaluating Investment Plans and learning from NPC program reviews that look across NPC 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 NPC 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 IPs' transformational intent and potential for impact.
- 3 **Investment Plan Reviewers:** Contribute with technical expertise via rigorous assessments that



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 NPC 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 NPC 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 NPC programs and evaluations to enhance transformational intent. CIF teams engage across all the key NPC 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 NPC 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 NPC program moments, with particular attention to

implementation and impact evaluations that seek to capture and share insights from NPC 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 NPC initiatives. Case study developers may have an interest in E&L activities across all the key NPC program moments, with particular attention to design, implementation, and/or impact evaluations that seek to capture and share insights from specific NPC 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 NPC program and identify insights and areas for improvement. External teams may have an interest in E&L activities across all the key NPC program moments, with particular attention to the type of evaluation they are commissioned to conduct.

## 3.2. Roles for Implementing NPC 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 NPC country program. The specific E&L approach and plan, informed by this NPC E&L Toolkit, should be clearly described in the NPC Investment Plan, as discussed later in this guidance.





## 4. MAXIMIZING TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT IN THE CIF AND NPC CONTEXT

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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 NPC 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.”**<sup>5</sup> The potential for transformational change is central to CIF’s mission and is one of the key investment criteria for the CIF NPC program.<sup>6</sup> Transformational change can also advance other key focus areas included in the NPC 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)<sup>7</sup> 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 NPC CONTEXT: Illustrative Example

The sustainable use of land and other natural resources to address climate change and improve livelihoods can be achieved through multi-sectoral approaches and models harness the potential of ecosystems and natural resources for climate action. target context-specific barriers to the sustainable use and management of land resources and ecosystems. **Relevant** NPC 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 environmental contextual factors. The IPs and projects are also attentive to supporting the needs of women and vulnerable populations to ensure just transitions relevant to nature-based solutions. The NPC IPs and projects address **systemic changes** that target context-specific barriers to the sustainable use and management of land resources and ecosystems to enhance climate change resilience and mitigation. Specific changes may focus on systems relevant to agriculture and food, forests, and coastal ecosystems. Furthermore, systemic changes may address trade-offs and synergies among stakeholders and between different parts of the prioritized areas and by building collaborative relationships. Concessional financing and engagement of financial intermediaries helps support and de-risk investments in ways that **speed** and **scale** deployment and support for sustainable approaches to natural resource management. 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 efforts to advance nature-based solutions to climate change. Sustainability here refers both to sustaining the benefits of initiatives and ensuring ecological, social, and economic sustainability.



## 5. EVALUATION AND LEARNING MOMENTS IN THE NPC PROGRAM

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### 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. "[NPC 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 NPC 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 NPC program, Investment Plan, and project lifecycles. These key moments in the NPC program are summarized in Figure 1 in 2 section of this document . This evaluative work is important for ensuring and enhancing the transformational intent and impact of NPC programs, IPs, and projects. The work should be scoped and tailored to the unique needs and context of each NPC country. The NPC Operational Guidelines for the development of the Investment Plan<sup>8</sup> 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 NPC in each country.<sup>9</sup>

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: NPC Investment Plan Development<sup>10</sup>

**Diagnostic evaluative work** plays an important role in helping NPC partners and stakeholders to identify and consider opportunities to enhance the transformational intent of the country-led, MDB-supported NPC Investment Plan.<sup>11</sup> These approaches help ensure that the full suite of NPC program objectives and investment criteria are advanced through the NPC 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 NPC 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 NPC Investment Plans.<sup>12</sup>

## 5.2. Evaluation and Learning Approaches to Design Work: NPC Project Design

Evaluative approaches also play an important role in the design of investments (projects) under the NPC 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: NPC 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 NPC investment criteria.

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

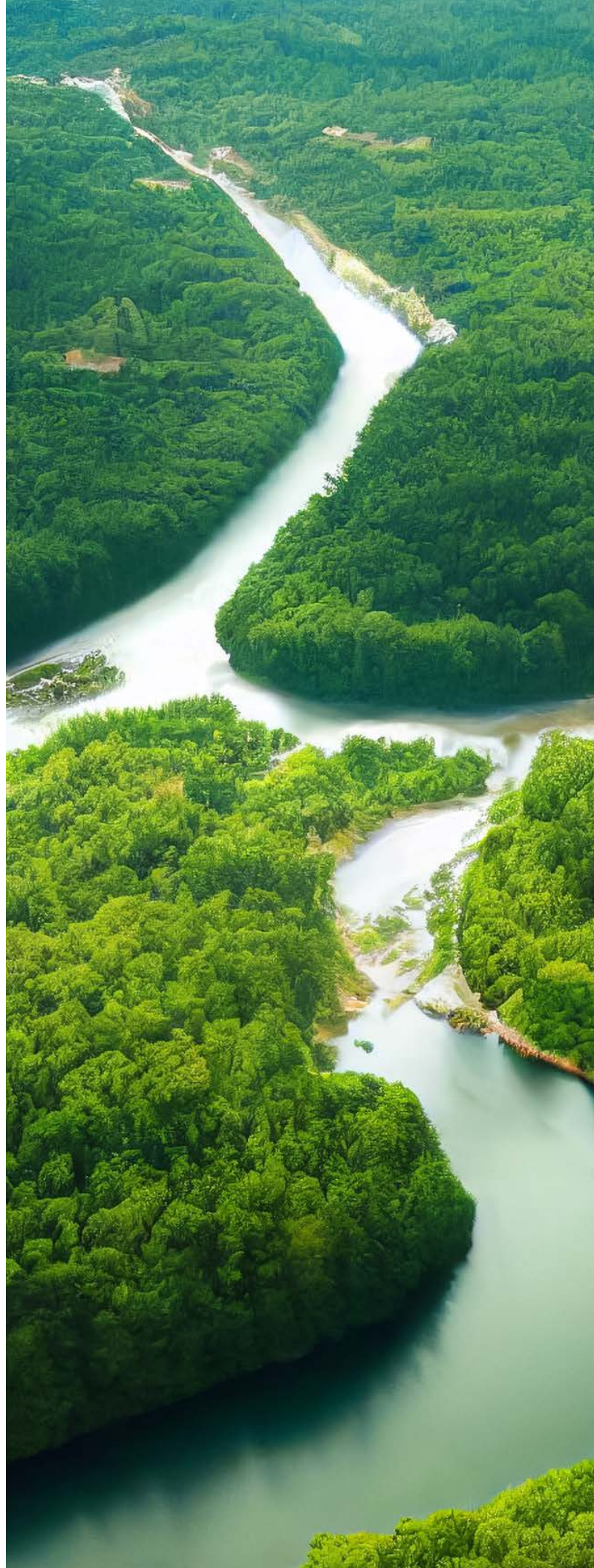
Impact evaluative work, broadly understood, is useful to assess both intended and unintended outcomes and impacts of a project-level investment or group of investments, whether positive or negative and direct or indirect. Impact evaluative approaches and methods can also play an important role around the culmination of the NPC 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 NPC investment criteria.

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

**Synthesis or systemic evaluative work** can leverage past evaluations across multiple NPC countries. Synthesis evaluation is most relevant to the overall NPC 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. NPC 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 NPC Program and investment criteria.



# 6. NPC 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 NPC program. Engaging with these questions can help deepen the transformational intent and understanding of the transformational impact for NPC programs, investment plans, and projects.<sup>13</sup> These questions are also useful to explore how attention to the NPC 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. NPC 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 NPC Questions and Signals section includes specific “what” and “how” questions for each dimension that are relevant to many NPC 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 NPC Integrated Results Framework and are separate from, but complementary to, the indicators outlined in the [NPC Program Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit](#).<sup>14</sup>

- **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 NPC 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 NPC 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 NPC country and project contexts.



**RELEVANCE:** Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF financing should demonstrate relevance to advancing the strategic objectives and transformational change goals of CIF’s NPC program through aligning the context, goals, and action. Specifically, the alignment of context (for example, environmental stress, land use policies, social justice, technology/finance challenges, and economic development), goals (for example, NPC program strategic objectives, existing low-emissions and/

or climate-resilient rural development plans), and action (for example, specific programs and projects) need to be considered. This may include, for instance, investments in nature-based solutions to address agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, food security, social inclusion, economic growth, and poverty alleviation, including as related to and ensuring coherence with other relevant partners, stakeholders, and investments.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
<b>What</b>	<p>What fundamental changes and large-scale positive impacts, relevant to Nature-based Solutions, need to be brought about?</p>	<p><b>Outcome (O):</b> The NPC’s country investment plans, supporting policies, programs, and investments are aligned with NDCs/Paris Commitments and meaningfully contribute to their achievement, as characterized by the progress toward the 1.5C targets and socioeconomic goals (just transition, reducing emissions from agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU), development impact, gender equity and social inclusion impact, and strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards).</p> <p><b>O:</b> Interventions include socioeconomic benefits such as enhancing livelihoods and food security, and household and business resilience.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Rights-based approaches<sup>15</sup> to sustainable development and climate justice<sup>16</sup> are embraced.</p>	<p><b>Outcome (O):</b> The country policy/programs/ investments and implementation are aligned with NDCs/Paris Commitments and meaningfully contribute to their achievement, as characterized by the progress toward the 1.5C targets and socioeconomic goals (just transition, reducing emissions from AFOLU, development impact, gender equity and social inclusion impact, and strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards).</p> <p><b>O:</b> GHG emissions from AFOLU sector and/or coastal areas are reduced.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Country-level interventions successfully operationalize key national climate-related policies (e.g., on sustainable land use, biodiversity, rural development, mitigation, or resilience).</p> <p><b>O:</b> Climate resilience of people, households, businesses, and lands is improved.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Policies and programs reflect rights-based approaches and enable just transitions, sustainable inclusive development, and/or climate justice.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p><b>Context:</b> How is the intervention relevant to global, national, and local priorities?</p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b> How is the intervention logic (theory of change) relevant to Nature-based Solutions?</p> <p><b>Alignment:</b> How is the intervention align with ecological, social, and economic priorities, and integrating them?</p>	<p><b>P:</b> Transparent, country-led, multi-stakeholder engagement and consultation processes to develop country investment plans are aligned with needs and commitments regarding decarbonization, sustainable land- and water-use management, social inclusion, and and/or resilience building.</p> <p><b>P:</b> National landscape and climate policies are coherent across all relevant stakeholders and levels, and agreements are in place to foster a multi-sector approach and overcome silos</p> <p><b>P:</b> NPC efforts place a priority on enabling the adoption of Nature-based Solutions through inclusive social processes that generate benefits to vulnerable communities.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Policy, regulation, and governance structures are in place and operational to address barriers to NbS adoption, just transitions, and drivers of environmental stress.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Carbon and non-carbon benefits are being shared among stakeholders, including women, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), and those from other vulnerable or marginalized populations.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Ecosystem services are valued and prioritized across the program design and implementation plans.</p>	





**SYSTEMIC CHANGE:** Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF financing should demonstrate how it will lead to fundamental shifts in the structures and functions of the socio-ecological system by identifying and defining strategic sub-systems, removing entrenched barriers, opening new opportunities or pathways, and shifting power dynamics within and between key systems. This requires a range of processes (for example, systems mapping, market studies, and stakeholder consultations) to identify the most strategic factors affecting land use systems (for example, legal and regulatory frameworks,

commercial and financial markets, technology systems, governance systems, social systems, and ecosystems related to agriculture, forestry, and water). Within those systems, the most significant barriers to Nature-based Solutions (for example, competing land use interests; 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 coalitions of support, new land use models, and supportive policy and regulatory frameworks) 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?	<p><b>O:</b> Key governance structures have a clear mandate and associated support to successfully plan for NbS and sustainable land use programs in ways that are socially just and ecologically beneficial.</p> <p><b>O:</b> 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 NbS and sustainable land use programs in socially just and ecologically beneficial ways, have occurred.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Key national/subnational/local institutional capacities are strengthened to enable improved climate policy and practice.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Opportunities for meaningful participation in high-level decision-making are elevated, particularly for marginalized stakeholders (e.g., rural and coastal communities, Indigenous Peoples, and relevant women’s organizations)</p> <p><b>O:</b> Valuation of natural resources, ecosystem services, and climate risks/opportunities are integrated within multi-sectoral plans, interventions, and markets</p> <p><b>O:</b> Consumption<sup>17</sup> and production behaviors and systems are aligned with the sustainable use of natural resources</p>	<p><b>O:</b> Key governance structures are leveraging institutional capabilities to implement NbS and sustainable land use programs in ways that are socially just and ecologically beneficial, in line with country and global targets.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Developed shifts in key systems and structures (including institutions, knowledge, policy, financing, market systems, and technology) for implementing NbS and sustainable land use programs in socially just and ecologically beneficial ways, in line with country and global targets, have occurred.</p> <p><b>O:</b> National and local public administration effectively coordinates land-use planning and implements Nature-based Solutions</p> <p><b>O:</b> Local communities are resilient and able to adapt to adverse impacts to climate change</p> <p><b>O:</b> Marginalized actors (e.g., smallholders, IPLCs, and women) have secure land rights and see their livelihoods improved</p> <p><b>O:</b> Sustainable production and consumption systems are achieved in alignment with global goals</p>



	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
How	<p><b>Systems Identification:</b> How does the intervention related to Nature-based Solutions identify and define the system, including system boundaries?</p> <p><b>Barriers and Pathways:</b> How does the intervention remove entrenched barriers and open new pathways for systemic changes required to ensure adoption of Nature-based Solutions?</p> <p><b>Power:</b> How does the intervention elevate the influence of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, to contribute to Nature-based Solutions and benefit from them?</p>	<p><b>P:</b> Efficient institutional dialogues, along with long-term coordination and planning processes between stakeholders, are identifying the underlying governance, financial, technological, infrastructure, and social barriers/ opportunities concerning Nature-based solutions and resilience that would be safe and just.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Stakeholder engagement, capacity development, and planning processes take into consideration systems transformation and support inclusive approaches to sustainable land-use and climate resilience policy and practice</p> <p><b>P:</b> Investments that target the root causes of climate vulnerability and land/coastal GHG emission activities are prioritized through a participatory approach involving diverse stakeholders</p> <p><b>P:</b> Interventions are designed based on a strong and sound theory of change which clearly articulates specific fundamental changes that are being pursued within specific systems (either within the timeframe of an intervention or beyond it), and supported by practical change pathways</p>	



**SPEED:** Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF 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 natural based solutions deployment 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. Accelerating changes in the use of land and other natural systems, in particular, require leveraging multiple financial and non-financial instruments in a timely, ambitious, and strategic way.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
<b>What</b>	<p>What will it take to adopt Nature-based Solutions in a time frame that is aligned with the urgency and complexity of the climate crisis?</p>	<p><b>O:</b> The required pace for achieving GHG emissions reduction targets from AFOLU has been identified and align with the country context.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Agriculture, food, water security, and coastal interventions are enabling the target population to meet livelihoods/food security needs at a pace that is in tandem with measures to fortify ecosystem integrity and climate ambitions</p>	<p><b>O:</b> The acceleration of NbS is align with national and global plans and commitments.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Agriculture, food, and water security are stable and sustainable in the target area and resilient to climate shocks, stresses, and evolving weather patterns</p> <p><b>O:</b> Acceleration of just land-use transitions are aligned with national goals and commitments</p>
<b>How</b>	<p><b>Acceleration:</b> How does the intervention accelerate progress toward adoption of Nature-based Solutions?</p> <p><b>Complexity and Inclusivity:</b> How does the intervention ensure adequate and inclusive engagement with complex and contested issues associated with sustainable land-use/Nature-based Solutions?</p>	<p><b>P:</b> Aligned and coordinated actions across sectors and stakeholders are accelerated through enhanced institutional structures and multi-sectoral policies and agreements.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Concessional resources from international funds/donors converge in a manner that accelerates just and sustainable land-use practices.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Disaster risk reduction measures protect sustainable development progress despite periodic shocks and stresses from extreme weather events.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Socially inclusive and gender transformative processes ensure that NPC programs and projects have sufficient time to incorporate just transition and social inclusion considerations.</p>	



**SCALE:** Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF 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 – vertical (for example, policy/implementation, such as national

budgets for community projects); horizontal (for example, numbers or geographic spread, such as the reach of climate-resilient agricultural technologies/ approaches, use of data-driven spatial planning tools, number of new jobs, and geographical area of land being sustainably managed); and depth (for example, understanding and support, such as a shared vision for land use) – within and beyond the intervention.

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
What	What contextually large changes need to be scaled within and beyond the intervention?	<p><b>O:</b> Barriers to scaling NbS have been identified, with governance, financial, technological, infrastructure, and social improvements that are in line with the country’s commitments.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Opportunities to scale interventions that advance climate resilience and sustainable landscapes are identified and integrated into institutional, regulatory, financial, and social responses in line with country commitments.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Innovative technologies, appropriate market mechanisms, and new business models are researched and piloted.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Governance processes mobilize diverse stakeholders to scale-out transformational interventions across public administration, civil society, and private sectors.</p>	<p><b>O:</b> NbS, climate resilience, and just transitions are accelerated to achieve country and international commitments to climate goals.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Ecosystem services are revitalized in ways that secure and enhance sustainable value chain development, equity, and resilience appropriate to country and international commitments.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Innovative technologies and approaches that have been demonstrated to be transformative are being scaled up and out.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Sustainable economic production increases income opportunities.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Innovative technologies, appropriate market mechanisms, and new business models have been demonstrated to be transformative and are being scaled up and out.</p>

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
How	<p><b>Depth scaling:</b> How does the intervention deepen the understanding of Nature-based Solutions and support for them?</p> <p><b>Vertical scaling:</b> How does the intervention support scaling pathways within and across policy and implementation processes associated with Nature-based Solutions?</p> <p><b>Horizontal scaling:</b> How does the intervention increase the number of people or expand the geographic areas engaged with Nature-based Solutions or benefitting from them?</p>	<p><b>P:</b> Launch multi-stakeholder engagement processes that build the understanding of and commitment to (1) NbS and (2) sustainable use of land and other natural resources.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Build policy and governance support through long-term planning, stakeholder engagement, policy coherence, and institutional-capacity development.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Governments, companies, civil society, and local communities align their priorities and collaboratively seek to mobilize solutions and investments for sustainable food production, stewardship of land, natural resources and ecosystems, and enhancing livelihoods.</p> <p><b>P:</b> There is a clear, accessible, and reliable monitoring and evaluation system that enables the communication of results and scale-up/out of successful practices, models, and systems.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Public and private sector finance is consistently invested in sustainable use and management of land and ecosystems (i.e., of forestry, agriculture, coastal ecosystems).</p> <p><b>P:</b> The (multiple) value(s) of natural capital is(are) incorporated into national capital accounting processes, thus creating economic incentives to build resilience and restoring ecosystems/ landscapes.</p>	





**ADAPTIVE SUSTAINABILITY:** Each Investment Plan and project proposed for CIF NPC financing should demonstrate how it will contribute to transformational impacts relevant to NPC 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 enact climate resilience and

sustainable land use, inclusive processes, and strong institutions. 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 solidifying demand for sustainable land use, building relationships across sectors, 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?	<p><b>O:</b> The governance and social systems, together with the financial, technological, and infrastructure systems needed for NbS adoption and sustainable natural resource use are in place and self-sustaining.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Platforms are in place to collaborate, coordinate, and share emerging knowledge to support resilient communities and sustainable landscapes.</p> <p><b>O:</b> The intervention contributes to global evidence based on effective climate action, enabling internal and external learning.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Interventions are designed with a clear exit strategy and mechanisms to ensure sustained benefits.</p>	<p><b>O:</b> The governance and social systems, together with the financial, technological, and infrastructure needed for NbS adoption and sustainable natural resource use are in place at the levels appropriate to achieve national and international sustainable development commitments.</p> <p><b>O:</b> More sustainable forms of landscape management generate value for and enhance resilience of local communities.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Sustainable land-use strategies and behaviors are internalized within communities, industries, and sectors so that they are self-sustaining and in line with national and international commitments.</p> <p><b>O:</b> Disaster risk reduction (including urban contexts) and livelihoods encompass nature-based solutions and effectively reduce vulnerability to climate shocks and stresses.</p>

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
How	<p><b>Flexibility:</b> How does the intervention enable experimentation and flexibility, including the ability to learn and course-correct when necessary?</p> <p><b>Capacity:</b> How does the intervention build the capacity of stakeholders and institutions to advance change along sustainable development pathways?</p> <p><b>Resilience:</b> How does the intervention insulate change from backsliding due to internal and external pressures or shocks, and enable recovery when required?</p>	<p><b>P:</b> Resilient, responsive, and influential institutions and policies are supported to sustain and accelerate investments in NbS.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Policies, plans, and budget processes ensure that national efforts address capacity building needs at the local level and, conversely, that local conditions, populations, and institutions have opportunity to influence national decision-making, including sustainable landscape management.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Long-term, multi-sectoral planning and investment frameworks articulate a shared vision, align competing priorities, and promote an integrated, systems-based approach to landscapes and ecosystems management.</p> <p><b>P:</b> New technologies, market mechanisms, and coalitions are enabled through policies, new business models, and social support to move financing away from environmental harming activities and towards sustainable nature-based solutions.</p> <p><b>P:</b> Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes, based on multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral engagement are in place to ensure the enhanced relevance of (and accounting for) targets/impacts, and to enable refining and course-correcting for wider and more systemic adoption of sustainable land and ecosystem practices and climate resilience.</p>	

# ANNEX: NPC QUESTIONS AND SIGNALS TEMPLATE

## RELEVANCE

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
<b>What</b>	What fundamental changes and large-scale positive impacts, relevant to climate action, need to be brought about?	Outcome (O):	Outcome (O):
<b>How</b>	Context: How is the intervention relevant to global, national, and local priorities?	Process (P):	
	Proposed action: How is the intervention logic (theory of change) relevant to Nature-based Solutions?	P:	
	Alignment: How is the intervention aligned with ecological, social, and economic priorities, and integrating them?	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:
	<p><b>Systems Identification:</b> How does the intervention related to Nature-based Solutions identify and define the system, including system boundaries?</p> <p><b>Barriers and Pathways:</b> How does the intervention remove entrenched barriers and open new pathways for systemic changes required to ensure adoption of Nature-based Solutions?</p> <p><b>Power:</b> How does the intervention elevate the influence of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, to contribute to Nature-based Solutions and benefit from them?</p>	P:  P:	





## SPEED

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
<b>What</b>	What will it take to adopt Nature-based Solutions in a time frame that is aligned with the urgency and complexity of the climate crisis?	O:	O:
<b>How</b>	<p>Acceleration: How does the intervention accelerate progress toward adoption of Nature-based Solutions?</p> <p>Complexity and Inclusivity: How does the intervention ensure adequate and inclusive engagement with complex and contested issues associated with sustainable land use/Nature-based Solutions?</p>	<p>P:</p> <p>P:</p> <p>P:</p>	



## SCALE

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
<b>What</b>	What contextually large changes need to be scaled within and beyond the intervention?	O:	O:
		O:	O:
<b>How</b>	Depth scaling: How does the intervention deepen the understanding of Nature-based Solutions and support for them?	P:	
	Vertical scaling: How does the intervention support scaling pathways within and across policy and implementation processes associated with Nature-based Solutions?	P:	
	Horizontal scaling: How does the intervention increase the number of people or expand the geographic areas engaged with Nature-based Solutions or benefitting from them?	P:	
		P:	



## ADAPTIVE SUSTAINABILITY

	QUESTIONS	EMERGING SIGNALS	ADVANCED SIGNALS
<b>What</b>	What relevant changes are sustained and advanced beyond the intervention to achieve sustainable development?	O:	O:
<b>How</b>	<p>Flexibility: How does the intervention enable experimentation and flexibility, including the ability to learn and course-correct when necessary?</p> <p>Capacity: How does the intervention build the capacity of stakeholders and institutions to advance change along sustainable development pathways?</p> <p>Resilience: How does the intervention insulate change from backsliding due to internal and external pressures or shocks, and enable recovery when required?</p>	<p>P:</p> <p>P:</p> <p>P:</p>	

# ENDNOTES

## CLICK ON ANY NOTE TO GO BACK TO THE REFERENCED PAGE

- 1 See the [CIF Nature, People, and Climate Program Design Document](#) for more information on the NPC 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 Nature, People, and Climate Program Investment Plan Development Process](#).
- 9 See in Section VIII (Monitoring and Evaluation) of the NPC 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 Nature, People, and Climate Program Investment Plan Development Process](#) for information on the process and expectations relevant to developing NPC 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. [NPC Program Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit: Operational Guidance on the ACT M&R System](#). March 2024.
- 15 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights defines a human rights-based approach as one that seeks to “analyze obligations, inequalities and vulnerability and to redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede progress and undercut human rights.” [“Applying a Human Rights-based Approach to Climate Change Negotiations, Policies and Measures”](#). OHCHR
- 16 The United Nations Development Programme’s Climate Promise initiative refers to climate justice as a reference to “the unequal historical responsibility that countries and communities bear in relation to the climate crisis.” [Explainer: Climate change is a matter of justice—here’s why](#). Climate Promise. June 2023
- 17 Please note that “consumption” here refers to local consumption of natural resources.



# THE CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

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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.



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