

The National Investing Bodies

Approach to Climate Change

A Report for General Synod, July 2021



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



CCLA
GOOD INVESTMENT

 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
PENSIONS BOARD



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National Investing Bodies

The National Investing Bodies (the NIBs) of the Church of England comprise the Church Commissioners for England, the Church of England Pensions Board and the CBF Church of England Funds, managed by CCLA. The NIBs are three separate institutions, under different regulatory frameworks, whose respective trustee bodies ultimately have responsibility for delivering investment returns and our ambitious approach to ethical and responsible investment. We share formal ethical investment policies, we jointly fund the majority-independent Ethical Investment Advisory Group, who provide us with timely theologically based ethical investment advice, and we have all committed to ambitious action on climate change.

Summary of Actions

- Creation of Global Investor tool – Transition Pathway Initiative – to transparently track the transition of major carbon intensive companies – supported by 105 funds with \$26tr in assets under management (AUM)
- Committed to Net Zero emissions portfolios by 2050 at the latest and making substantial progress to achieve Net Zero earlier
- Set deadline of 2023 (or sooner) for all fossil fuel companies to be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement
- In 2020 divested £32.2m from 9 companies that failed to meet interim climate standards, with future standards established in lead up to 2023
- Significant reallocations of capital to low carbon investments (e.g. >£800m to track the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index, £630m into climate solutions)
- Engagement leadership on some of the world's largest companies leading to demonstrable changes in company actions
- Leading the development and creation of the first global Net Zero Investment Framework for investors, across asset classes
- Maintained our exclusion of thermal coal and tar sands companies

Theory of Change and Background

The National Investing Bodies (the NIBs) recognise climate change as a significant crisis, risk and challenge: it is likely to affect every person, business and ecosystem on the planet unless dramatic steps are taken to transition to a low carbon economy, consistent with 'Net Zero' emissions. Achieving Net Zero is vital if we are to limit global warming to 1.5°C relative to pre-industrial levels.

'We all have both a moral and financial responsibility to address the climate emergency and to use those tools available to us to support the goals of the Paris Agreement.'

Archbishop Justin Welby

We also recognise the imperative behind the fourth and fifth Marks of Mission', and that 'the poorest are least able to adapt to climate related extremes yet suffer disproportionately the ecological, social and economic consequences that flow from these changes. It is also the poorest that have contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions and are in most need of strategies that enable growth. In addition to ecological considerations, justice calls for urgent global action to ensure equitable access to enriching and sustainable development'². This means we have urgent ethical and financial reasons to address climate change.

The Real Economy and Transition

Following the theologically-based advice of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, the NIBs committed in 2015³ to be at the forefront of institutional investors' approach to decarbonisation. The core of this commitment is the need for the NIBs, and society, to halt global warming and its damaging effects through assisting, enabling, and making the case for the rapid transition to a low carbon economy. The goal, then, is not primarily to achieve portfolio 'cleanliness', but to adopt strategies that will drive transition in the real economy.

This is reflected by our approach to achieving Net Zero emissions from our portfolios by 2050 at the latest, in line with the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement, and a 1.5°C scenario. We have global and diverse investment portfolios, and recognise the opportunity and responsibility to act as 'universal owners'⁴; working to address systemic risks and injustices like climate change that threaten the planet, society and markets as a whole.

'We have urgent ethical and financial reasons to address climate change'

Our unique role

The NIBs recognise the unusual and important role that we can play in the global financial ecosystem in support of an urgent transition. As an investor that recognises both ethical and financial reasons to address climate change, and because we have made it a priority to resource responsible investment teams, we are in a good position to be 'first movers'. Using our hard-won reputations for being prudent investors with strong track records as well as serious actors on responsible investment matters, we seek to take a leadership role within the sector. We are able to take on a degree of 'risk of failure' in relation to new climate initiatives, be innovative and devote the time and effort needed to convene a broad spectrum of actors on climate change to drive progress, backing this up through investment and stewardship decision making.

The history of our approach

Even before our formal policy was adopted in 2015, the NIBs have long favoured robust engagement as the 'primary focus' of our efforts, believing we can drive companies urgently to transition into businesses that are able to play a viable role in a future low carbon economy, rather than withdrawing our capital from businesses that could transition in line with the science and economics of the Paris Agreement. However, we are willing to disinvest where necessary and have led global approaches to the exclusion of companies generating over 10% of their revenue from thermal coal and tar sands, which have since become common amongst other investors.

The Commissioners and Pensions Board joined the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change in 2007; CCLA launched 'Aiming for A', backed by the Commissioners and Pensions Board, in 2013, which focussed engagement on encouraging disclosure amongst the largest UK carbon emitters; the Pensions Board has led global engagement on corporate climate lobbying. The NIBs have engaged with hundreds of companies on the climate transition, and we all continue our work at the forefront of climate action.

In 2018, General Synod acknowledged our approach to climate change and actions to-date, whilst encouraging a number of further actions set against specific timelines.

July 2018 Synod Motion on climate change

The motion as amended 'That this Synod:

- a) welcome the worldwide agreement in Paris in December 2015 to hold 'the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels' and to pursue 'efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels';
- b) affirm, as it did in 2015, its support for the climate change policy recommended by the EIAG and adopted by the National Investing Bodies ('the NIBs') in 2015;
- c) welcome the NIBs' disinvestment from companies focused on thermal coal mining and the production of oil from oil sands;
- d) welcome the NIBs' establishment of the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) to track whether major companies associated with high carbon emissions are aligning their business plans with the Paris Agreement;
- e) urge the NIBs to engage urgently and robustly with companies rated poorly by TPI and, beginning in 2020, to start to disinvest from the ones that are not taking seriously their responsibilities to assist with the transition to a low carbon economy;
- f) urge the NIBs to ensure that by 2023 they have disinvested from fossil fuel companies that they have assessed, drawing on TPI data, as not prepared to align with the goal of the Paris Agreement to restrict the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C;
- g) urge the NIBs proactively to seek and scale up investment in renewable energy and low carbon technology; and
- h) request the NIBs to report to Synod within three years on progress, with a timetable for rapid continuing action'.



The 2018 General Synod motion built upon the NIBs' existing engagement-led approach (Clauses e and f), whilst recommending timelines by which investments should be withdrawn should companies fail to meet the standards required. Clause g, on scaling up investments in renewables and low carbon technologies also reinforces the NIBs' preference to invest in the businesses of the future, seeing them as good investment opportunities and a key lever to driving the global transition. This approach has gathered momentum as we set interim emissions reduction targets as we seek to achieve Net Zero by 2050 at the latest. While this report covers the NIBs' global and diverse investment portfolios, we are committed to working in partnership with the wider Church in targeting Net Zero by 2030 for the Church's operational emissions⁵.

The NIBs are three separate institutions, under different regulatory frameworks, whose respective trustee bodies ultimately have responsibility for delivering investment returns and our ambitious approach to ethical and responsible investment. We share formal ethical investment policies, we jointly fund the majority-independent Ethical Investment Advisory Group, who provide us with timely theologically based ethical investment advice, and we have all committed to deliver the 2018 motion.

We have divided responsibility for engagement with companies that fall into the scope of this 'Synod Commitment' engagement, and jointly assessed progress made: in Q4 2020 we made the same divestment recommendations to our respective trustee bodies. This has been a successful model and we work closely to develop the annual cycle of hurdles, engagement, and decision-making between now and 2023. This complements other climate decision-making (e.g. asset allocation, green opportunities) that NIBs make individually but on the basis of our joint Climate Policy.

'Scaling up investments in renewables and low carbon technologies also reinforces the NIBs' preference to invest in the businesses of the future'

This report details how we have responded to this motion, and further activities we have undertaken to strengthen our own, and the broader investor community's, efforts to tackle climate change. We collaborate with peers to implement robust and ambitious initiatives and standards so we are able to have a far greater positive influence than by acting alone. An overview of the different initiatives in which we participate are below.

Climate Action 100+ (CA100+)⁶

CA100+ is the largest engagement coalition of investors ever assembled, supported by investors worth \$54tr AUM, roughly half of all professionally managed investments across the globe. CA100+ coordinates efforts to mitigate transition risk at the world's 167 largest and highest carbon-emitting companies, responsible for over 80% of global public market industrial emissions.

The NIBs frequently lead CA100+ engagements, demonstrating our ability to leverage larger peers. The Commissioners have led on CA100+ engagement with ExxonMobil and Bayer, among others. The Pensions Board leads on engagement with Royal Dutch Shell alongside the investment manager Robeco, and co-chairs the CA100+ mining and steel working group alongside UBS. CCLA have led engagement with Rio Tinto.

Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGCC)⁷

IIGCC is a European coalition of over 275 investors (€35tr in assets), including all three NIBs, acting to address climate change. The Pensions Board sits on IIGCC's board, leads on value chain engagement and co-leads a workstream on corporate climate lobbying and the IIGCC Corporate Programme.

The Paris Aligned Investor Initiative⁸

In 2019 the Pensions Board set up a global initiative that it has chaired, together with Europe's largest pension fund, to develop a Net Zero Investment Framework (NZIF). This initiative set out to define a robust approach and practical guidance to help investors achieve Net Zero at the portfolio level (covering all assets), and in 2020 published the Net Zero Investment Framework, which is now supported by over 110 investors with \$33tr AUM. The Board continues to support the second phase of the NZIF, which is broadening its scope to include private equity, infrastructure, adaptation and mitigation.

UN Net Zero Asset Owner's Alliance (AOA)⁹

With 42 members worth \$6.6tr in AUM, the AOA was the original vehicle through which the NIBs committed to achieve Net Zero by 2050, in January 2020. The NIBs contributed to the AOA's Net Zero Target Setting Protocol¹⁰, which helped guide their interim targets, and continue to be involved by leading and contributing to various working groups on policy, corporate engagement and low carbon investment.



‘CA100+ coordinates efforts to mitigate transition risk at the world’s 167 largest and highest carbon-emitting companies, responsible for over 80% of global industrial emissions’

Financing a Just Transition Alliance¹¹

The NIBs are all members of this coalition of 40 investing institutions and banks, coordinated by the Grantham Research Institute at LSE, which works to support a just transition in key energy-intensive sectors so that workers and communities are not left stranded by climate policies.

Developing a global framework to drive sector and value-chain engagement

When a company sets a Net Zero target, it will be dependent on its actions and on the actions of its customers through its value chains or across its industry sector. For example, for Shell to achieve its Net Zero target requires action by those it sells energy to, such as in the aviation, shipping, freight and automotive sectors. Through CA100+, the Pensions Board, the Council on Ethics of the Swedish National Pension Funds and CalPERS have begun to develop a framework to support companies making Net Zero commitments and working through their value chains to implement them. This will include developing an accountability framework through the TPI that can track all the commitments from one company to the next. Once we have such a framework, investors will be able to play an active role in pushing more robustly for meaningful Net Zero commitments and in releasing transition finance that can accelerate the transition.

ASCOR Project¹²: Assessing Sovereign Climate-related Opportunities and Risks

The Pensions Board is co-leading this initiative with BT Pension Scheme, which is backed by the AOA, Ceres (the US investor network), the IIGCC, the Principles for Responsible Investment and the TPI. This will provide climate assessments of sovereign states, contribute to policy maker and sovereign engagement, and inform sovereign debt stewardship.

Net Zero Banking¹³

Banks, like investors, have a vital systemic role to play in the urgent transition to a low carbon economy. The Church Commissioners have co-led the development of an extensive set of investor expectations for banks, with Sarasin and Partners, EOS at Federated Hermes and IIGCC. They are supported by 35 investors with \$11tr in AUM. The expectations are focused on a public commitment to become Net Zero by 2050 with explicit interim targets, withdrawal of finance from recipients that show no evidence of transitioning, and the scaling up of green finance. The initiative targets the world’s 25 largest fossil fuel funders, and is working with TPI to develop a framework for assessing their Net Zero strategies.

Science Based Targets for Nature and Biodiversity

The climate and biodiversity crises are interdependent challenges that must be tackled in tandem. One of the key drivers of biodiversity loss is climate change, whilst the protection and restoration of natural habitats has the potential to sequester significant amounts of carbon and safeguard valuable ecosystems. As a significant land owner, the Church Commissioners are taking an active approach to both crises. Recognising the complexity of the biodiversity crisis and the need for a clear, ambitious framework for tackling it, the Commissioners were the first investor to support the development of the Science Based Targets for Nature¹⁴ methodology.

Ahead of October’s COP15 on Biological Diversity the NIBs are collaborating in encouraging peers, policymakers and NGOs to develop a consistent and impactful global approach to engaging companies on biodiversity. We are moving towards an approach that draws together nascent frameworks like the Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosure¹⁵ and Net Zero plans.

Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI)

Developing the global tool to understand the transition

The NIBs co-founded the TPI with the Environment Agency Pension Fund, and the Church of England Pension Board continues to Chair the initiative. TPI is now supported by 105 investors with more than \$26tr in assets under management (AUM), and provides analysis and support to CA100+.

TPI is an open-access tool that can be used by any investor, or member of civil society, to help understand the transition. This means that the work we put into supporting TPI benefits climate mitigation efforts globally, supporting our ambition of securing systemic change. It has been recognised by industry (winner of Environmental Finance ESG assessment tool of the year 2020) and welcomed by the UK Government in its Green Finance Strategy paper¹⁶ as an initiative by leaders in the financial sector that has galvanised action.

TPI analysis (and our engagement on the basis of that analysis) assesses the quality of 400 companies' climate disclosure and its contents. It looks at whether companies have corporate governance arrangements that take climate into account, and whether they have detailed carbon performance plans and targets that meet independent sector-specific transition pathways.

It forms the cornerstone of our approach, providing tools for engagement with companies and policy-makers, framing the debate on climate in a credible, academically verified way that fits with the need for economy-wide decarbonisation. Importantly, TPI provides its analysis open-access and free of charge, so all stakeholders (investors, corporates, regulators, media and others) can use it. We have collectively incorporated TPI insights into our proxy voting activity, engagement with companies, assessment of our asset managers and engagement with policy-makers. It also plays an important role in helping to inform our investment decision-making through exclusions and allocations to the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index.

Engagement & Divestment

Given that the entire global economy must rapidly transition to a low carbon model, action is needed in all sectors, even those where transition plans are difficult. For example, concrete and steel are carbon intensive sectors, yet we currently lack viable alternative materials. Both will be required by future generations and both are used in construction of wind turbines. Our approach is therefore cross-sectoral and systemic. We believe it is consistent with the transition to hold shares in a company that has high carbon emissions today so long as it has a credible transition plan and targets aligned to the Paris Agreement. This is where TPI plays an important role in determining the basis to make such judgements. We engage not just with oil and gas companies that produce energy but also their customers in shipping, aviation, transport and others that demand the energy they provide.

The NIBs have historically treated divestment as a final resort, utilised only when we have attempted engagement but companies remain intransigent, and their unwillingness to transition and reduce emissions represents a reputational and financial risk to our portfolios. While divestments may improve our portfolios' climate characteristics, divestment merely passes the problem on to whoever purchases our shares. There is also a risk that the purchaser does not share our values or influence, and thus will not be willing or able to engage the company to effect change, resulting in the continuation of behaviour that harms society and the environment.

However, given the increasing urgency of the climate crisis, and the corresponding rise in market and regulatory awareness, the divestment of certain sectors that clearly have no role to play in a low carbon economy has become more common. As previously mentioned, the NIBs restrict thermal coal mining and the extraction of oil from tar sands. Our approach in this area has led to the screens developed by the NIBs, which are being used by investors around the world.

Unlike more conventional oil and gas sources or gas fired power generation, tar sands and thermal coal do not have even a short term role in the energy transition, making engagement with these companies transition extremely challenging. They are two of the highest emitting fossil fuels, with significant accompanying environmental issues, making them priority fuel sources to be removed from the energy system. They both also face increased competition from cheaper, lower carbon technologies worldwide and significant political headwinds, resulting in them carrying significant stranded asset risks in the short term.

These factors resulted in our decision to restrict these sectors as we seek to protect assets on behalf of our beneficiaries and focus our capital and engagement efforts on companies that have an opportunity to play a role in driving the energy transition. This is reflected in the climate change hurdles below, which we use to ensure companies we invest in are developing urgent transition strategies and becoming aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Any companies that fail to meet these standards will face divestment and remain outside of our investable universe.

Climate hurdles

To implement Synod's 2018 motion, the NIBs developed a series of hurdles, which require companies to meet progressively more ambitious climate change performance criteria in order to avoid divestment and exclusion. These hurdles use the TPI's Management Quality and Carbon Performance criteria to ensure companies implement robust governance practices and decarbonisation strategies which will support their efforts to reduce emissions and align with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The approach prioritises the highest carbon sectors and systematically increase the standards required as the 2023 deadline approaches, in a way that maintains continuous pressure on companies whilst enabling fruitful engagement.

'Any companies that fail to meet our standards will face divestment and remain outside of our investable universe'

The programme targets the 167 companies on the CA100+ focus list¹⁷. These are the largest publicly listed emitters in the world, accounting for roughly 80% of the public equity market's emissions.

To maximise the potential impact of engagement and best leverage the NIBs' voice as responsible investors, we have collaborated closely with CA100+ engagements where possible.

Timetable for rapid continuing and coordinated action to 2023

2020

Confirmed Divestments

Targeted power generation companies that did not meet minimal climate alignment criteria for decarbonisation (i.e. alignment with a sector specific decarbonisation pathway indicated by regional Paris Pledges or Nationally Determined Contributions).

All companies must have acknowledged climate change as a business risk and opportunity.

2021

Supply Side

Engaging energy companies to set targets aligned with global governments' emissions reduction commitments.

2021

Management Quality

Encouraging all high carbon companies to integrate climate change into their operational decision making.

2022

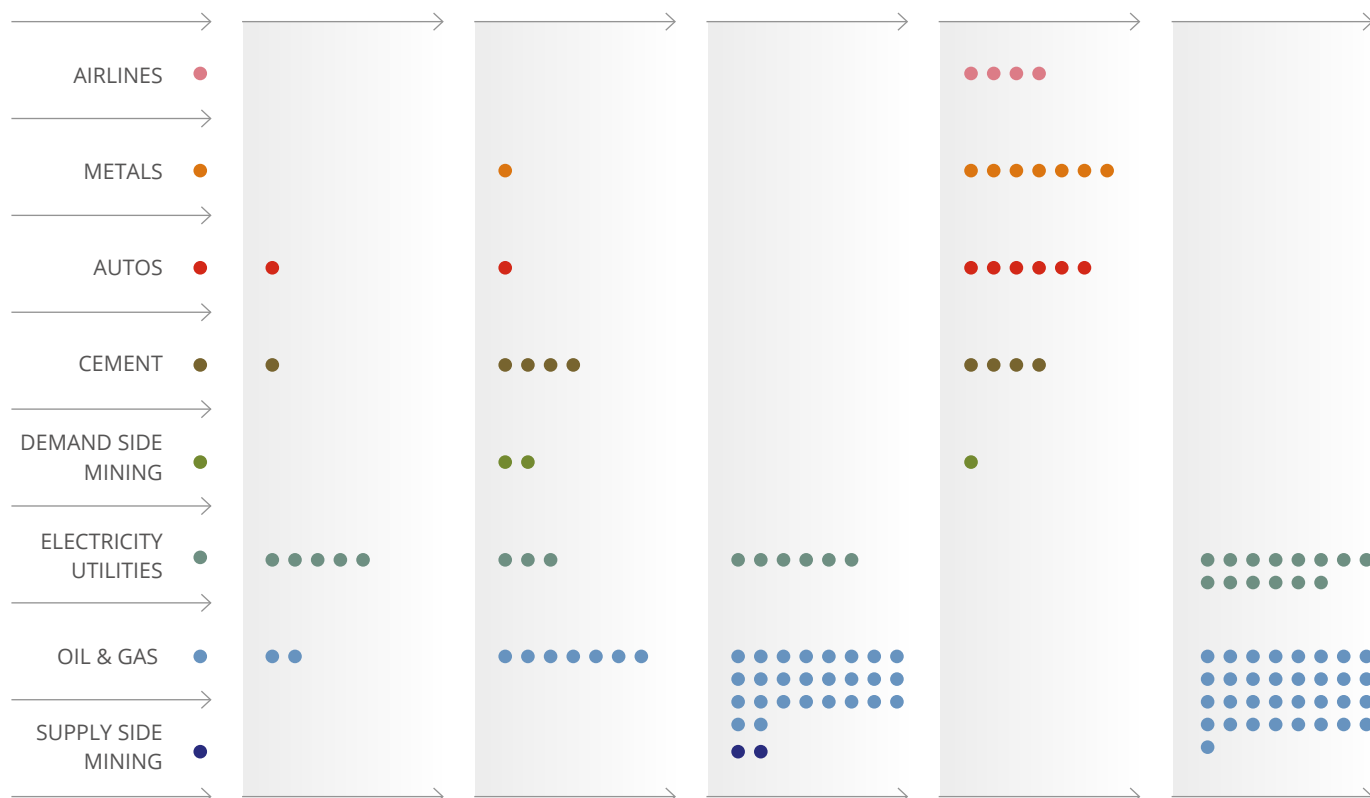
Demand Side

Urging demand side companies to set targets aligned with global governments' emissions reduction commitments.

2023

Paris Alignment

Any fossil fuel company not aligned with the goal of the Paris Agreement will be restricted. Now that the IEA has developed a robust 1.5°C scenario, the NIBs are likely to use this as the benchmark once it has been incorporated into the TPI tool – thus going beyond the Synod resolution.



As illustrated, an increasing number of companies are at risk of failing the hurdles from now until 2023 unless they embrace and show evidence of transition.

'21 companies were identified as being at risk of failing the 2020 hurdles'

Companies at risk of failing upcoming hurdles are engagement priorities. 21 companies were identified as being at risk of failing the 2020 hurdles. However, after intense engagement bilaterally and with CA100+, 12 of these companies improved their performance and avoided divestment in December 2020. Particular highlights included the adoption of Net Zero targets by multiple carbon intensive power producers, such as Vistra Energy and WEC Energy. The nine companies that failed to meet our criteria were:

- American Electric Power (USA)
- Anhui Conch Cement (China)
- Berkshire Hathaway (USA)
- FirstEnergy (USA)
- Formosa Petrochemical (Taiwan)
- Korea Electric Power Corp (Korea)
- Oil & Natural Gas (India)
- PPL (USA)
- SAIC Motor (China)

These companies have been restricted from investment, and we continue to monitor all companies that were in scope but passed our previous hurdles.

Due to climate risks being driven by all high carbon sectors, not just fossil fuel companies, we have gone significantly beyond the original scope of the Synod motion and developed standards for high carbon companies on the 'demand side', for example those in the airline, automotive or cement sectors that fail to disclose adequate emission reduction strategies.

Encouraging climate action across all sectors ensures the right demand signals are sent from corporate consumers to their energy suppliers (such as oil and gas companies), supporting the argument for the energy transition, whilst also reducing the overall physical and transition risks facing our holdings. The NIBs' adoption of clear criteria and a divestment timeline has strengthened our interactions with companies, including a number of high profile engagements that started long before 2018.

CCLA

GOOD INVESTMENT

CCLA: NextEra

Target setting and improving transparency

The CBF Church of England Funds, managed by CCLA, now hold shares in one electrical utility company – NextEra Energy in the US. As the latest Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) Energy Sector report indicated, NextEra Energy currently has one of the best TPI Carbon Performance ratings of US producers of electricity (both now and based on its goal of reducing its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions rate 67% by 2025 from a 2005 baseline). However, the company's overall climate-related disclosures lag peers. This means that the company can often score badly in benchmarking initiatives, including only having a TPI Management Quality score of 2 on a range from 0 (lowest) to 4* (highest).

Last December, CCLA discreetly filed a shareholder resolution for NextEra Energy's 2021 AGM in order to improve accountability to investors, especially given signalling from President Biden's administration about expectations of the US electrical utility sector this decade.

After consultation with the US Climate Action 100+ (CA100+) lead engager for NextEra Energy, the local Ceres team that co-ordinates CA100+ engagement with the sector in the US, and one of CA100+'s key philanthropic funders, we all agreed to encourage NextEra Energy to respond to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) in 2021 as our bottom line for withdrawing the 2021 shareholder resolution. We also agreed to discuss NextEra continuing to leapfrog its peers when announcing later targets and ambitions.

NextEra Energy carefully assessed the CDP questionnaire over the next three months, and the company agreed to respond to it in 2021, allowing the shareholder resolution to be withdrawn. We also had useful discussions about the company's target setting for beyond 2025 (where timings of NextEra Energy's announcements are aligned with local US regulatory processes). Given that CDP responses feed through to TPI's Management Quality and other benchmarking, we expect to see improved ratings in due course and thank NextEra for their constructive engagement.



67%

NextEra's goal for reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2025.

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CCLA: Rio Tinto

Exiting fossil fuels and Say on Transition vote

Rio Tinto is dual-listed in the UK and Australia, with much of its current operations centred in Australia for the Asian markets. For the first three years of the CA100+ initiative, the engagement has been led by AustralianSuper, the largest local pension fund, and CCLA due to pre-CA100+ engagement via the 'Aiming for A' initiative. In the early days of the CA100+ engagement Rio Tinto completed its exit from fossil fuels, announced technological breakthroughs in the decarbonisation of aluminium value chains, and publicly committed to disclosing in line with the recommendations from the Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

However, the diversified mining sector is notoriously difficult to benchmark from a climate change perspective due to the variety of decarbonisation pathways envisaged across multiple downstream value chains. For example, electricity production within developed markets faces much more rapid decarbonisation than primary steel production in China. In addition, in some value chains commodities need to be removed (e.g. thermal coal from electricity production) and in others decarbonisation is likely to change how commodities are processed (e.g. green hydrogen replacing metallurgical coal in the processing of Australian iron ore into Chinese steel). Diversified miners' portfolios also change over time, as new capital expenditure is directed to commodities like copper that aid decarbonisation across various value chains.

From the time of the United Nations Climate Action Summit in the autumn of 2019, we discussed the possibility of the company putting its own evolving TCFD-aligned reporting to investor votes at its Annual General Meetings (AGMs) in the UK and Australia. This has now been agreed for its 2022 AGMs, and discussions are underway about developing a tailored Net Zero standard for the diversified mining sector that will supplement initial benchmarking by the Transition Pathway Initiative and CA100+. In Europe, the CA100+ engagement with Rio Tinto has been handed over to two of the company's largest shareholders.



2022

Rio-Tinto will put its TCFD aligned reporting to a vote at their Annual General Meetings in 2022.

Pensions Board: Shell

Getting Royal Dutch Shell to Net Zero

The Pensions Board together with one of our fund managers, the Dutch firm Robeco, continues to lead global engagement with Royal Dutch Shell as part of Climate Action 100+ (CA100+), the global investor engagement initiative.

However, to get an oil and gas company onto a path to be aligned requires a methodology that is consistent with the science and the economics of the Paris Agreement. Therefore, the first intervention by the Board was to lead the process to develop a methodology by the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) based purely on public disclosures of oil and gas companies. This was achieved and was a breakthrough for investor engagement. The Board are now leading a process to develop a global Standard for Net Zero in oil and gas which embeds in TPI the latest thinking from the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Using this TPI methodology the Board has led discussions with the Chief Executive, the Chair, and various senior executives of Royal Dutch Shell, resulting in a series of commitments that were detailed in the first-ever joint statement between Shell and CA100+. This set out five areas of action by the company including being the first to set targets that included all their emissions, linking achieving those targets to executive remuneration and a commitment to continue to work with TPI in developing its future disclosures. The Financial Times' Editorial Board highlighted the outcomes of the engagement led by the Board as a model for other companies.

During 2020 and following further engagement with the Pensions Board and Robeco, the CEO of Shell set out new commitments to become Net Zero aligned. As assessed by TPI, Shell at the time made one of the most ambitious commitments of an oil and gas company to date. Ambitious, but not sufficient. It does not yet align to 1.5°C of warming, though as noted by TPI, it could do so in future if there can be independent measurement of the company's proposed plan to stop selling its fuel to its customers (for example, in the aviation, road haulage, energy, shipping, auto sectors) that are not themselves committed to Net Zero.

As a result of our engagement Shell was also the first oil and gas company to review its major industry associations and whether they were lobbying governments in line with Shell's own commitment to support the Paris Agreement. As a result of this review Shell was the first oil and gas company to leave an industry association and put various others under review.

Our most recent engagement has led to the first oil and gas company to provide shareholders with an AGM vote on its Energy Transition Strategy, which set out the steps Shell will be taking to achieve Net Zero. 89% of shareholders backed the resolution. The Board welcomed the Strategy, not because it was a perfect transition plan, but because it was a further step by the company in a series of industry leading steps, that sets it towards achieving the objective of alignment by 2023. At the AGM, the Board very clearly outlined its expectation that the company needs to align to the remaining expectations of CA100+ and the Board by 2023 at the latest. We were clear that were they not to do so then we would disinvest our holding in the company.

Since the AGM, a Dutch Court has made a ruling that the 2030 target of Shell needs to be further strengthened. The company has confirmed that it will be rising to this challenge. We expect to see further significant steps from Shell as we approach 2023.

Maximising the benefits of these investor efforts requires a deep, ongoing dialogue, supported by independent analysis from the TPI. We remain hopeful, whilst recognising the steps that still need to be taken, that Shell can get to a position of being aligned with Net Zero in all its short-, medium- and long-term targets and in its capital expenditure by 2023.



5

Areas of action set by Shell, including being the first in their sector to set targets that included all their emissions.



Church Commissioners: ExxonMobil

Challenging an intransigent board

The Church Commissioners have led international collaborative engagements with ExxonMobil since 2015, covering topics including disclosure, governance and climate performance. Engagement with the company on climate change has proven difficult at times due to the board's intransigence and the company's repeated attempts to block resolutions and traditional forms of engagement through the Securities and Exchange Commission, the US securities regulator.

Despite this, in 2017 the Commissioners successfully co-filed a resolution asking the company to report on how its business model would be affected by global efforts to limit the average rise in temperatures, which gained 62% of shareholders' support. This led to some improvements in disclosure, industry collaboration and governance in the following years. However, as Exxon's peers started to adopt emissions targets and more ambitious transition plans it became apparent that the company's refusal to engage meaningfully on climate change, its plans to increase fossil fuel production coupled with poor financial performance meant that, at a minimum, a change in management oversight was required.

At the end of 2020, the Commissioners supported the launch of an activist-style campaign, with the aim of nominating directors with energy, transition and climate change experience to the Exxon board. Targeting the destruction of shareholder value through the company's poor capital allocation, lack of diversification and lack of relevant expertise on the board, the campaign led by start-up activist

investor Engine No 1 was the first to combine ESG issues with traditional activism.

In response, Exxon made a number of concessions in the run up to its 2021 AGM, including updating their emissions targets, reporting on scope 3 emissions and nominating new directors to the board. However, Engine No 1's campaign and its supporters, including the Commissioners (along with some of the world's largest pension funds including CalPERS, CalSTRS and NY State Common Retirement Fund), felt true transformation was needed, leading to a closely-fought proxy contest at the AGM in May.

Ultimately three new directors were elected by shareholders, representing a pivotal 25% of the board, bringing much needed expertise to the board and a mandate to push for the development of a robust energy transition plan. This approach was the first of its kind, and not only does it serve as a warning to other boards reluctant to act on climate change, it also cements the importance of climate change on the investor agenda.



25%

Representation of 3 new directors elected to ExxonMobil's board by shareholders, bringing much needed expertise and mandate to push for the development of robust energy transition plan.

Next phase of engagement

The landscape of climate engagement has developed significantly in recent years, with many engagements moving beyond the need to act on climate change towards the technicalities of what companies must do to align with the Paris goals. The past year has seen two major developments likely to be the focus of the NIBs' engagement activities in addition to the aforementioned hurdles:

The Climate Action 100+ Net Zero Company Benchmark¹⁸

This Benchmark is an extensive company scoring standard that was released in March 2021. It assesses the initiatives' 167 focus companies against three high-level goals: emissions reduction, governance, and disclosure; it is a comprehensive guide to company progress. TPI is the main data provider to the Benchmark, meaning engagement on the framework is closely aligned to the NIBs' existing focus areas. The Benchmark goes well beyond decarbonisation to include responsible corporate lobbying activity, policies that support 'just transition', and investment in renewable energy, mitigation and adaptation. It covers the key aspects of what a comprehensive transition plan looks like, providing a thorough framework for engagement that demands companies achieve high standards by 2023.

Annual Vote on Company Transition Plans¹⁹

Investors have led a movement to push for companies to develop comprehensive plans to manage their emissions and the energy transition, and to put these plans to shareholders for approval at regular intervals. The aim is to enhance shareholders' ability to hold companies to account on their transition strategies and progress. The CA100+ Net Zero Company Benchmark is recommended as a robust framework for these plans, and Transition Plan votes have been central to several CA100+ engagements recently, including Shell.

The NIBs also engage other companies outside of the CA100+ group, identifying the largest emitters in our portfolios and targeting them for specific engagement on aligning with our interim and long-term targets. We are seeking to leverage our membership of collaborative investor organisations like the Asset Owner Alliance to bring larger peers on board with engagements to maximise our potential impact.

Low Carbon Investments

In accordance with Clause g of the 2018 Synod motion and as part of the NIBs' efforts to achieve Net Zero emissions from our portfolios by 2050 at the latest, we actively seek low carbon investment opportunities. Given the different regulatory and returns requirements for our funds, these often differ in nature. All share the overarching principle that allocating capital to low carbon assets and technologies contributes to accelerating the transition, reduces our portfolio emissions and has potential for significant upside.



Church Commissioners' low carbon investments and impact approach

As both a landowner and an endowment with allocations to venture capital and private equity managers, the Commissioners are able to identify low carbon investments across multiple asset classes and structures. This is partly thanks to the integration of climate change into all our investment operations, which has been recognised externally. We were elected to the Principles for Responsible Investment's Leaders' Group²⁰ in 2019 and 2020, and were one of just 16 asset owners globally to achieve this.

As part of our impact investment approach we seek to identify and quantify investments with a positive impact on society and the planet. At year-end 2020, the Commissioners held approximately £630m of climate solution investments, based on our internal classification system (c.7% of total assets under management). This included:

- Several specialist funds focusing on renewables and energy efficiency;
- 31 MW wind power capacity on our timberland, which provides enough electricity for the equivalent of around 20,000 British homes;
- 104,000 acres forestry, with 5 million trees planted since 2019;
- A UK Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure fund, with our £30m investment matched by the government, and;
- Further direct and specialist renewables and energy efficiency funds.

This figure excludes the Commissioners' largest public equity mandate with one of the world's leading sustainability-focused managers and investments in firms that actively drive the transition, such as renewable energy equipment developers and electric vehicle technology providers, that are held via more mainstream managers. Moving towards these sectors has helped us reduce our exposure to oil and gas companies to just 0.5% of the portfolio as

of 31st December 2020, with further reductions expected in 2021.

The Commissioners continually assess new opportunities and have a strong pipeline, including 168MW of additional wind power under construction on our timberland, which would provide enough electricity for the equivalent of 108,000 homes. In addition to renewables installations we are actively investigating the opportunities in improved carbon sequestration from our rural and timber land to help balance emissions in the medium term.

Additionally, the Commissioners are implementing Net Zero strategies across our directly-owned real assets. In 2020 we began working with leading climate and natural capital consultancies to help develop this approach. We are actively identifying decarbonisation opportunities specific to each asset class, such as retrofitting out-of-date buildings to increase energy efficiency or enhancing natural capital in our rural and timberland portfolios to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration.

In 2020 the Commissioners also granted money to and are supporting the Archbishops' Council to create an 'impact first' investment portfolio, which is focusing on particularly impactful investments that the Commissioners are unable to invest in, given our returns mandate, including environmental solutions.





FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index

In January 2019 the Church of England Pensions Board, in collaboration with FTSE Russell and the Transition Pathway Initiative, announced and by the end of 2020 allocated in excess of £800m a new stock index that supports the transition to a low carbon economy.

The Index, which we designed to not only serve our investment needs was made available to the wider market. It was designed to integrate the insights of TPI into the Pensions Board's passive investments, and provide us with further tools for our engagement with companies that need to transition. The index takes account of five measures that relate to climate change in generating the under- and over-weighted stocks, including Fossil Fuel Reserves, Carbon Emissions and Green Revenues.

The index rules establish clear 'carrot and stick' incentives around TPI assessments; if TPI assesses a company as 'not aligned', it will receive a 0% index weight – which means no investment is made in the company. If it is assessed as in line with 'below 2 degrees', part of the index methodology will overweight that company 200% – in effect meaning we double our investment in the company. In order to incentivise future action by companies that do not make the index, they can become eligible for inclusion once their disclosures and carbon performance targets improve and are assessed independently by the Transition Pathway Initiative.

FTSE Russell have called this 'The next generation of Climate Indexes', and the index results in significant improvements in climate metrics relative to capitalisation weighted benchmarks, including:

- ~50% reduction in carbon intensity
- ~40% lower carbon emissions
- ~70% reduction fossil fuel reserves, helping reduce exposure to stranded assets and future emissions

The clarity of messaging that the index rules provide is key. Carbon intensive companies must align their business models to the transition to a low carbon economy; those that do not will be left out of the index, and those that do will be rewarded.

Since its launch the Index has attracted significant further investments, including a number of retail offerings and an allocation from the Church Commissioners. The Pensions Board together with FTSE Russell won the 'ESG Integration Initiative of the Year' award from an independent judging panel convened by the UN Backed Principles for Responsible Investment.

The Pensions Board also aligned all other investments held by our active managers to the approach of the index, and excluded those companies that did not make the index. This has had a significant impact on the profile of the Board investments.

Importantly, the Board has not disinvested sectors, but instead differentiated between those companies that are genuinely beginning to transition and those that are not. TPI has enabled this approach. As an example in relation to fossil fuels, as of 31st December 2020, the Board's £3bn fund invested £8.9m in oil and gas companies, 0.3% of the Board's investments. This represented a 77% reduction in our oil and gas holdings relative to December 2019, at which point the figure was £39m.





GOOD INVESTMENT

CCLA: low carbon investments

CCLA has made a number of low-carbon investments within the CBF Investment Fund that span wind, solar, battery storage and energy efficiency private equity funds and investments.

For example, CCLA was an early investor in renewable energy generation trusts and helped support the growth of the sector through its infancy, making an important contribution to the growth of the clean energy infrastructure in the UK and to it being widely accepted as an investible asset class.

Whilst the supply side of clean energy generation is well-advanced, there is more work to do on the demand side, including the improvement of energy efficiency.

An investment that aims to address this is the Clean Growth fund. CCLA have co-invested 50:50 alongside the government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The fund helps grow early-stage UK-based companies that are commercialising clean growth technologies and services in the fields of energy production, energy efficiency and energy infrastructure. There is a shortage of capital in this area, so we are looking to fill the gap through a specialist fund.

The fund is managed by Carbon Limiting Technologies, who since 2006 has helped more than 350 companies in the clean tech sector launch products and services. They provide business advice, market insights and commercialisation support. CCLA has a seat on the Investment Committee, and has visibility of potential and executed transactions. The fund is still in the early stages of its investment period and has made two commitments so far:



Piclo has developed an online marketplace for trading energy flexibility and helps UK distribution system operators procure flexibility. Our investment will help the company leverage its technology platform to develop other flexibility markets, integrate with other technology providers in the flexibility space and to expand its commercial offerings internationally.



Indra designs and manufactures smart electric vehicle (EV) residential chargers as well as vehicle to grid (V2G) chargers. Indra's smart chargers can be used by all EV types (cars, vans and buses), and are designed to be quickly, easily and safely installed using a standard residential electrical connection. Indra's smart chargers allow users to charge their vehicles during off-peak times, when grid carbon intensity is at its lowest.

The fund invested alongside Gulf Oil who were making their first strategic investment into the electric vehicles sector. This investment will support the company to cement its UK market position, commence international roll out, particularly in India, and further develop its EV charging platform.



How we Influence the Transition

For several years the NIBs' approach has gone far beyond choosing between engagement or divestment as a simple framework for investor action on climate change. The NIBs work individually and collectively, pooling our respective expertise and voting power.

Over time, the NIBs have developed greater sophistication in their approaches, consistent with the different regulatory regimes and obligations under which each operates. This allows each NIB to apply the most appropriate methodologies, frameworks and asset allocations within a common policy. For example, see the Paris Aligned Investor Initiative, the Net Zero Asset Owner's Alliance, and each NIBs' respective reporting.

The NIBs continue to take a leadership position within the responsible investment sector to develop the frameworks, tools and best practice that will drive the transition to Net Zero on a global level.

Policy Engagement

Investment portfolios do not exist within a vacuum; they reflect the real economy. Global political ambitions are also vital for our efforts to ensure global emissions fall, not just those of our portfolios. Without a supportive policy environment, our 2050 timeline will be severely hampered and our efforts potentially fruitless. At a macro level 131 countries, covering 73% of global GHG emissions, have adopted or are considering Net Zero targets.²¹ However, we must see global alignment with a 1.5°C scenario and also the implementation of robust climate friendly policies and regulations to achieve these headline targets.

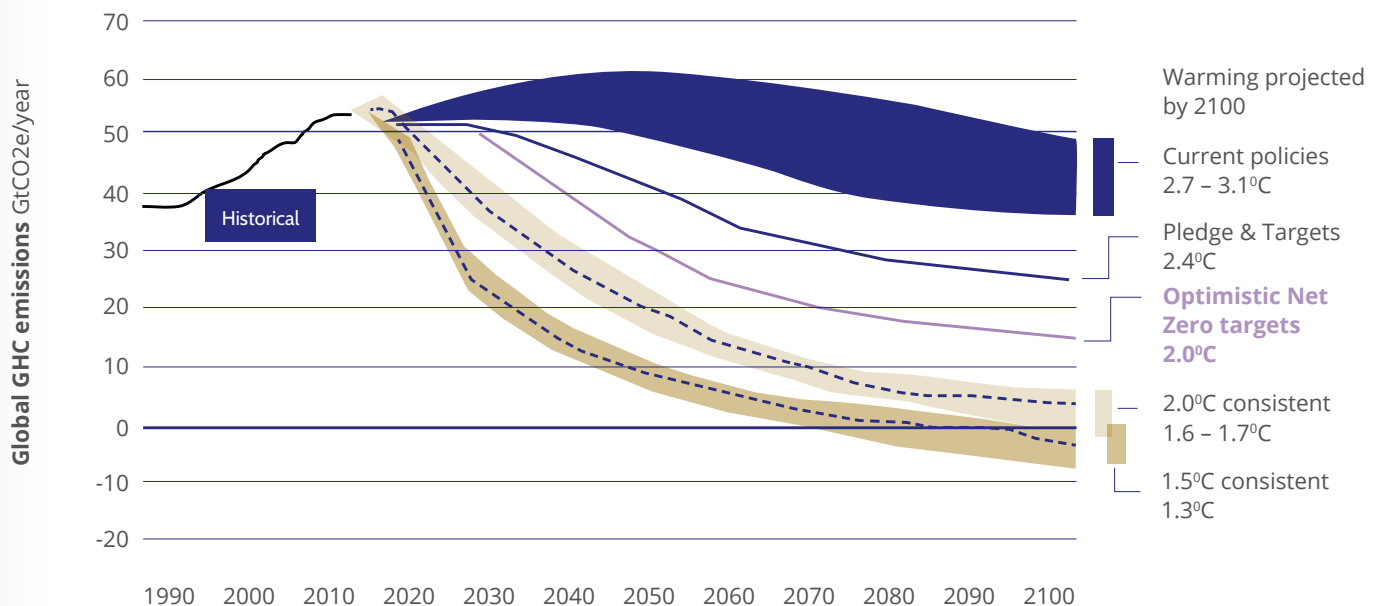
The NIBs have made our Net Zero commitments in the expectation that governments will follow through on their own; the NIBs' policy advocacy will reflect this expectation and goal. As a result, we support investor activities to push ambitious government action²², and are heavily involved in supporting the development of a regulatory and policy environment which enables the investments and transition required. We share the belief that corporate engagement must be supported by a change in regulations, taxes, subsidies and laws that will assist and accelerate the level of ambition needed.

'The NIBs continue to take a leadership position within the responsible investment sector to develop the frameworks, tools and best practice that will drive the transition to Net Zero on a global level'

2100 Warming projections²³

Emissions expected warming based on pledges and current policies

May 2021 update



2.7 – 3.1°C

Current policies

2.0°C

Optimistic Net Zero targets

To this end, alongside responding to government consultations and supporting ad hoc initiatives on specific climate issues as they arise, the NIBs lead structured engagements on a broad range of topics.

Investor Policy Dialogue on Deforestation (IPDD)²⁴



Deforestation is responsible for around 13% of global emissions²⁵, as well as a significant contributor to habitat and biodiversity loss. Exposure to deforestation through companies' operations or supply chains poses significant regulatory and reputational risks, as well as the longer term systemic risks driven by the physical impacts of forest loss. This makes the issue increasingly important for investors and companies.

In the summer of 2020 the Church Commissioners helped found the IPDD, a collective of investors with \$7tr in AUM that aims to engage with public agencies and industry associations to promote sustainable land use, forest management and respect for human rights. The Commissioners are on the overall steering group and co-chair the Indonesian working group.

The group has held successful meetings with politicians, policymakers and ambassadors about deforestation in both Brazil and Indonesia. The IPDD's approach is to build long-term relationships with these key stakeholders to highlight the risks deforestation poses to societies and economic growth as well as our portfolios. By encouraging the adoption and implementation of regulatory frameworks that ensure the protection of such natural assets and human rights we hope to bring about positive environmental and social outcomes as well as protect the value of our holdings in these countries from physical, regulatory and reputational risks.

Corporate Climate Lobbying Standards



In addition to engaging policymakers ourselves as investors, it is vital that companies' lobbying efforts do not hinder progress towards the Paris temperature goals.

Misleading and misaligned corporate lobbying practices undermine the ability of governments to act on climate change and impede a company's own ability to meet their climate targets. The influence of trade associations is often exerted behind closed doors and can act to delay and dilute the implementation of ambitious climate change public policy. To address this issue, in 2018 the Pensions Board worked with the Swedish national fund AP7 and BNP Paribas Asset Management to launch a programme²⁶ to challenge 55 large European companies on their approach to climate lobbying, backed by investors with \$2tr in AUM.

The programme has been hugely influential, with the demand for companies to review and report on how their own activities and those of the trade associations they support aligned with climate goals forming a key part of CA100+ engagements, as well as the CA100+ Net Zero Benchmark. To-date 25 companies globally (15 European) have produced such reports, leading to many suspending or ceasing support for influential trade associations that have actively lobbied against climate policies. The number of disclosures will continue to grow as companies deliver on their transparency commitments. Much work remains, but many companies have leveraged their membership to push these associations towards more responsible climate policies, with bodies like the US Chamber of Commerce and the American Petroleum Institute significantly moderating their positions on climate change in recent years.

To further the initiative, the Pensions Board is working with partners to develop a global industry standard on corporate climate lobbying, which is intended to not only identify good practice on how companies should govern climate lobbying activities, but also how they can lobby responsibly in support of the low-carbon transition.

Powering Past Coal Alliance²⁷

CCLA
GOOD INVESTMENT

The Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) is a coalition of national and sub-national governments, businesses and organisation working to advance the transition from unabated coal power generation to clean energy. Phasing out coal-fired electricity is one of the most important steps to tackle the climate crisis, since coal is the single largest source of global temperature increase.

CCLA, who manages the CBF Fund, was one of the founding members of PPCA and Helen Wildsmith, CCLAs Stewardship Director, has been driving this coalition forward since the Alliance's inception as an active member of the steering committee. PPCA aims to:

- Secure commitments from governments and the private sector to phase out existing unabated coal power;
- Encourage a global moratorium on the construction of new unabated coal-fired power plants;
- Shift investment from coal to clean energy, including by working to restrict financing for coal-fired projects;
- Achieve coal phase-out in a sustainable and economically inclusive way, including appropriate support for workers and communities

The PPCA now counts 111 members, including the Church Commissioners and Pensions Board, 34 national governments, 33 subnational governments and 44 businesses.

An important part of PPCA's work is the ask to sign up to the finance principles which include a commitment to no new financial services and investments for unabated coal-fired power and to additional commit to support advocacy and encourage as many businesses and institutions as possible to promote the phase-out of existing capacity.

The PPCA Declaration includes a commitment to phase out coal by 2030 in the OECD and EU, and by no later than 2050 in the rest of the world.

COP26

The next round of global climate change negotiations, COP26, set to be held in Glasgow in November, will be vital for pressing for increased ambition from governments and finalising key mechanisms for global climate governance and action.

The NIBs are supporting preparations for COP26 across the Church, including the Church Investors Group²⁸ of 70 organisations with £21bn in AUM, to 'Make COP Count'.

There are three key messages from the campaign, which align with our overall outlook on the energy transition and the necessity of an approach that helps the most vulnerable:

- To ask the UK Government, as COP host, to stop subsidising fossil fuels
- Raise the profile of a loss and damage mechanism
- Inclusion of air transport and shipping within accounting of Paris Agreement

The Commissioners have also provided policy recommendations and perspectives into both the COP Unit and UN secretary General's office via the AOA's policy workstream.

Asset Manager Engagement

The Commissioners and Pensions Board set high expectations of their asset managers regarding their approach to climate change, and have developed appropriate selection and monitoring frameworks that consider our managers' performance on climate. We look at what they hold as well as their engagement, policies and processes to decarbonise their portfolios on our behalf.

All three NIBs welcome the launch of the Net Zero asset manager initiative in 2021, of which CCLA is one of the founding members, and the increasing number of asset managers that are making Net Zero commitments.

CBF funds managed by CCLA Investment Management

CBF fund portfolios are directly managed by CCLA Investment Management and thereby have extensive flexibility to select and deselect any company. The CCLA approach has led to the funds currently having no direct investments in companies that focus on the extraction and refining of fossil fuels.

CCLA, as a fund manager, set out its Climate Change and Investment Policy formally in 2019, building on and codifying some aspects of our long-standing practice in order to balance threats and opportunities. The policy includes an annual review of risks related to climate change and transition to a low carbon economy related to 67 different GICs industry sectors. Our current focus is on the impact of prospective regulation, legislation and litigation and the physical effects of climate change (such as the increased regularity of extreme weather events and impacts on the availability of water) upon companies' ability to deliver strong and sustainable returns to investors.

Asset selection was updated to take climate risks into account, in addition to the already restricted investment in companies that generate more than 5% of their revenue from extraction of tar and coal sands (as these are considered to be significantly behind the transition to a low carbon economy).

All oil and gas company valuations are valued negatively to reflect anticipated changes in energy demand during the low-carbon transition. This is informed by the International Energy Agency's (IEA's) Sustainable Development Scenario and the Beyond Two Degrees Scenario and makes particularly oil intensive businesses less attractive in our investment model. CCLA has directed its focus of engagement to other carbon intensive sectors.

In addition to this CCLA conducts a pre-purchase due diligence process for fossil fuel and oil and gas sectors, including a review of the potential investment with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We also have an expanded due diligence approach to look at the impact of climate change on businesses in other exposed sectors, such as banking and insurance, and a set a maximum carbon footprint cap for our equity portfolios as well as implementing stress testing against IEA Energy Scenarios.

Reaching Net Zero

The NIBs were among the first global investors to publicly commit to decarbonising their investment portfolios to achieve Net Zero.

A necessary starting point for setting any targets is to have a credible basis to assess and deliver them. Building on the success of the Transition Pathway Initiative, the NIBs are at the forefront of global initiatives to define Net Zero including the Paris Aligned Investor Initiative and its Net Zero Investment Framework, the Net Zero Asset Owner's Alliance target setting protocol, the Net Zero Asset Manager's Initiative, and other initiatives detailed in this report.

For some asset classes, such as public equities and real estate, methodologies are well developed. In other asset classes, such as infrastructure, this work is still very much in its infancy. A key priority for the NIBs is to continue to drive global solutions that are practical and shape how the whole investor community can respond.

By early 2020, the NIBs had publicly committed to achieving Net Zero no later than 2050. In practice the NIBs hope to achieve this much earlier, making significant reductions along the way. To be in line with a 1.5°C scenario and Net Zero, around half of global emissions must be abated by 2030. This means that immediate action must be taken to 'front load' emissions reductions in the next nine years. This can be achieved through engagement, decarbonisation, policy interventions and other activities.

In their respective stewardship reports, the NIBs have detailed their general Responsible Investment approaches and achievements as well as the decarbonisation strategies and interim targets relevant to their portfolios in the context of their specific regulatory and fiduciary obligations and different mix of assets. All the NIBs are already on track for significant decarbonisation this decade. These targets and our disclosure will continue to evolve as the methodologies become available across all asset classes.

It is vital that the path to Net Zero involves real world reductions in carbon emissions achieved through companies themselves decarbonising. The last three years have shown that investors acting together can catalyse this change and continues to be a focus of the NIBs' engagement plans.

We commit to reporting back to General Synod on our progress towards decarbonising our portfolios and implementing the 2018 Motion within the next three years.

Endnotes

- 1 4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation;
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth
- 2 2015 Climate Change Policy (EIAG and NIBs) section 1.2.3 www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Climate%20Change%20Policy%20.pdf
- 3 <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Climate%20Change%20Policy%20.pdf>
- 4 A universal owner is an asset owner that is affected by and seeks to address market-wide risks
- 5 <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change>
- 6 <https://www.climateaction100.org/>
- 7 <https://www.iigcc.org/>
- 8 <https://www.parisalignedinvestment.org/>
- 9 <https://www.unepfi.org/net-zero-alliance/>
- 10 <https://www.unepfi.org/publications/aoapublication/inaugural-2025-target-setting-protocol/>
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- 12 <https://www.unepfi.org/news/industries/investment/investors-to-develop-new-tool-to-assess-sovereign-climate-change-governance-and-performance/>
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- 28 <https://churchinvestorsgroup.org.uk/the-climate-crisis-and-church-investors-possible-policy-responses/>

Stewardship reports





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