Investing in the Clean Trillion:
CLOSING THE CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENT GAP

A Ceres Report

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In order to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius and avoid the worst effects of climate change, “…investments in low-carbon energy technologies will need to at least double, reaching $500 billion annually by 2020, and then double again to $1 trillion by 2030.”

— International Energy Agency (IEA) —

“Energy Technology Perspectives 2012”
ABOUT CERES

Ceres is a nonprofit organization mobilizing business and investor leadership on climate change, water scarcity and other sustainability challenges. Ceres directs the Investor Network on Climate Risk (INCR), a network of over 100 institutional investors with collective assets totaling more than $12 trillion. Ceres also directs Business for Innovative Climate & Energy Policy (BICEP), an advocacy coalition of nearly 30 businesses committed to working with policy makers to pass meaningful energy and climate legislation. For more information, visit http://www.ceres.org or follow on Twitter @CeresNews.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Editor: Mark Fulton is Senior Fellow, Ceres and a Founding Partner of Energy Transition Advisors, a new consultancy started in 2014. Mark Fulton has had 35 years experience in financial markets spanning three continents in London, New York and Sydney. As a recognized economist and market strategist at leading financial institutions including Citigroup, Salomon Bros and County NatWest, he has researched international economies, currencies, fixed income and equity markets. Mark has also held corporate strategy, finance and management roles. Having a strong interest in the environment and sustainability, starting with a report on climate change and markets in 1991, Mark was head of research at DB Climate Change Advisors at Deutsche Bank from 2007 to 2012, where he produced thought leadership papers for investors on climate, cleaner energy and sustainability topics and advised investment teams in asset management. From 2010 to 2012 he was Co chair of the UNEP Finance Initiative Climate Change Working Group and in 2011 and 2012 was part of the technical committee of the UN Secretary-General’s Sustainable Energy for All. Mark is an advisor to the Carbon Tracker Initiative and Special Advisor to IGCC. He is also a member of the Capital Markets Climate Initiative; UK Department of Energy and Climate Change; Advisor to the Carbon Disclosure Project; and the Climate Bonds Initiative. Mark has a BA in Philosophy & Economics from Oxford University.

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Executive Summary

This Ceres report provides 10 recommendations for investors, companies and policymakers to increase annual global investment in clean energy to at least $1 trillion by 2030—roughly a four-fold jump from current investment levels.

Mobilize Investor Action to Scale Up Clean Energy Investment

1. Develop capacity to boost clean energy investments and consider setting a goal such as 5 percent portfolio-wide clean energy investments
2. Elevate scrutiny of fossil fuel companies’ potential carbon asset risk exposure
3. Engage portfolio companies on the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing, as well as on financing vehicles to support such efforts
4. Support efforts to standardize and quantify clean energy investment data and products to improve market transparency

Promote Green Banking and Debt Capital Markets

5. Encourage “green banking” to maximize private capital flows into clean energy
6. Support issuances of asset-backed securities to expand debt financing for clean energy projects
7. Support development bank finance and technical assistance for emerging economies

Reform Climate, Energy and Financial Policies

8. Support regulatory reforms to electric utility business models to accelerate deployment of clean energy sources and technologies
9. Support government policies that result in a strong price on carbon pollution from fossil fuels and phase out fossil fuel subsidies
10. Support policies to de-risk deployment of clean energy sources and technologies

In 2010 world governments agreed to limit the increase in global temperature to two degrees Celsius (2 °C) above pre-industrial levels to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.1 To have an 80 percent chance of maintaining this 2 °C limit, the IEA estimates an additional $36 trillion in clean energy investment is needed through 2050—or an average of $1 trillion more per year compared to a “business as usual” scenario over the next 36 years.2

These new investments in clean energy—including renewable energy such as solar, wind and geothermal, energy efficiency and energy smart technologies such as power storage, fuel cells and carbon capture and storage—will provide multiple benefits. In addition to cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2050, such investment will yield significant returns in the form of reduced fuel costs. Total fuel savings are an estimated $100 trillion between 2010 and 2050.3 Moreover, the greater job-creation potential of energy efficiency and renewable energy relative to fossil fuels makes clear that quadrupling annual global investment in clean energy will create millions of new jobs worldwide.

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1. For more information, visit UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): http:// unfccc.int/key_steps/cancun_agreements/items/6132.php
3. Assuming a 10% discount rate, such savings have a present value of $5 trillion. IEA, Energy Technology-Perspectives 2012, 147.
This paper refers to the necessary additional investment in clean energy as the “Clean Trillion.” Current annual investment in clean energy falls far short of this goal. In 2012, global investment in clean energy (as defined by Bloomberg New Energy Finance) was $281 billion—and in 2013 this figure is expected to be even lower.4 Simply put, there is a clean energy investment gap.

**FIGURE 1: THE CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENT GAP**

**Annual Investments in Clean Energy to Reach 2°C Goal:**

- **2012:** $281B
- **Goal by 2020:** $500B
- **Goal by 2030:** $1T

**CLOSED THE GAP BY MOBILIZING INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT IN CLEAN ENERGY**

Today’s leading providers of capital to clean energy are primarily commercial banks, national and multilateral development banks and electric utilities. But these sources alone are insufficient to double annual global clean energy investment by 2020 and quadruple it by 2030. Clean energy projects need new and additional sources of capital, and the largest potential providers are institutional investors such as pension funds, insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds, endowments, foundations and investment managers. Globally, these institutional investors collectively manage about $75.9 trillion in assets.5

**FIGURE 2: TOTAL ASSETS BY TYPE OF INSTITUTIONAL INVESTOR (IN TRILLIONS OF 2010 USD) **

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<th>Type of Investor</th>
<th>Assets (Trillions)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance Companies</td>
<td>$24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Managers</td>
<td>$15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Funds</td>
<td>$11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Fund Pension Assets</td>
<td>$2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations &amp; Endowments</td>
<td>$1.5</td>
</tr>
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Note: Excludes $3.9 trillion of assets held by sovereign wealth funds. Figures above have adjusted for double-counting by reducing assets of investment managers by $15 trillion (i.e. to account for pension insurance contracts and pension assets potentially invested in mutual funds, ETFs, hedge funds and private equity funds). Of this total, analysts estimate roughly $45 trillion to be assets devoted to long-term investment.


Current clean energy investment levels by these institutional investors are quite low, especially in regard to equity and debt for asset finance, a key lifeblood for clean energy infrastructure projects. The most recent annual OECD Large Pension Fund Survey found that less than 1 percent of institutional investor assets were allocated to infrastructure projects—and an even smaller share (~0.1 percent) was allocated to clean energy infrastructure projects (investors can, in fact, make investments either directly or through other vehicles in infrastructure projects). Analysts calculated that from 2004-2011, only $22 billion of asset finance for clean energy came from pension funds and insurance companies—or less than 2.5 percent of total clean energy asset finance globally over this period.

Boosting these capital allocations to clean energy is essential to meeting the “Clean Trillion” goal of doubling annual global clean energy investment by 2020 and hitting $1 trillion per year by 2030. Elevating these levels, however, requires that key institutional investor considerations be met: investments must provide competitive risk-adjusted returns that suit their varying risk preferences, regulatory requirements and credit/liquidity constraints; they also must align with their long-term fiduciary duty to their beneficiaries.

Still, global clean energy opportunities are timely and potentially vast, especially as many pension funds seek to boost their infrastructure allocations. The Climate Policy Initiative estimated last year that more than $800 billion of institutional capital is available for investment in renewable energy projects. Bloomberg New Energy Finance is forecasting a potential clean energy bond market of $142 billion, with bond issuances of $18-$40 billion annually, up from roughly $2 billion a year today. More insurance companies and pension funds are already buying up ownership stakes and securitized debt in large-scale renewable energy projects.

INVESTING IN CLEAN ENERGY CAN IMPROVE DIVERSIFICATION & MITIGATE RISK

Increasing investment in clean energy has the potential to yield two major benefits for investor portfolios. The first benefit is the potential to diversify investments and potentially improve portfolio performance. This applies especially to investment in clean energy infrastructure vehicles, whether via debt or equity. Such investments offer stable cash flows that have low volatility, low correlation to other assets, and often are indexed to inflation.

The second benefit is to minimize exposure to climate risk—including both physical risk and carbon asset risk. According to the IEA, more than two-thirds of the world’s proven reserves of fossil fuels will be unusable prior to 2050 if necessary carbon regulations are enacted to limit global temperature increases to 2°C. The next wave of fossil fuel investment, potentially as much as $7 trillion in the next decade alone, may lead to stranded fossil fuel assets that erode long-term shareholder value.

Current and future action to mitigate climate change and improve energy efficiency will strongly affect the valuations of fossil fuel companies—perhaps by as much as 60-80 percent—and is already happening with U.S. coal companies whose valuations have dropped dramatically since 2011. Even companies not directly engaged in fossil fuel production or fossil fuel power generation could be negatively affected.

9 Assuming that over the coming decade annual upstream capital investment in fossil fuels is at least equal to the IEA’s 2012 estimate for upstream oil and gas capital investment of nearly $700 billion.
As the investment consultancy Mercer has noted, certain climate-sensitive investments, particularly those that promote a low-carbon future, may reduce overall portfolio risk, creating “the prospect that institutional investors’ interests can be aligned to both serve their beneficiaries’ financial interests as well as help tackle the wider challenge of climate change by increasing investment in mitigation and adaptation efforts globally.”

It is in the collective interests of institutional investors to mitigate the substantial systemic economic risks posed by climate change, and investing in the necessary transition to a low-carbon, clean energy economy helps mitigate these risks.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drawing on an extensive review of published research and discussion with leading investors and clean energy practitioners, this paper outlines 10 recommendations for investors, companies and policymakers to create a landscape to achieve the interim goal of doubling annual clean energy investment by 2020, and to build the foundation for achieving the “Clean Trillion”—at least $1 trillion in annual investment in clean energy by 2030.

Our primary audience for the paper is institutional investors, but it is also directed at electric utilities, large companies, utility and financial regulators, and policymakers. Most of the recommendations are direct investor activities, but several encourage companies, regulators and policymakers to pursue necessary policies and actions to accelerate clean energy investment.

We acknowledge at the outset that each investor has specific mandates, risk-return requirements and investment processes, and that the recommendations must be implemented in the context of these requirements.

The 10 recommendations fall into three categories. Below we highlight how each impacts the risk and return characteristics of portfolio investments:

**MOBILIZE INVESTOR ACTION TO SCALE UP CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENT**

1. **Develop capacity to boost clean energy investments and consider setting a goal such as 5 percent portfolio-wide clean energy investments**

The heightened commitment resulting from a portfolio-wide goal would give investors the best chance of capitalizing on new clean energy-related opportunities across all asset classes, especially fixed income, as opposed to relegating this clean energy theme to just public equity or venture capital. Bolstering internal and external capacity for increased infrastructure investment, both directly and through other vehicles, will strengthen the potential to pair the necessary cash flows of clean energy infrastructure assets with investor liabilities and funding requirements.

2. **Elevate scrutiny of fossil fuel companies’ potential carbon asset risk exposure**

In a 2011 report, Mercer warned that climate-related government policies could increase portfolio risks by 10 percent over the next 20 years. The potential for reduced demand for fossil fuels driven by non-policy factors such as increased renewable energy, energy efficiency and fuel switching, also creates risks for investors who own fossil fuel companies. Investors should be paying increased attention to carbon asset risks by engaging with fossil fuel firms, including oil and coal companies, on the potential of higher cost, carbon-intensive fossil fuel reserves becoming “stranded,” thus creating long-term portfolio risks.
3. **Engage portfolio companies on the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing, as well as on the financing vehicles to support such efforts**

Encouraging companies to aggressively pursue energy efficiency opportunities can help unlock projects with high returns, thereby creating shareholder value. By using more clean energy resources to reduce fossil fuel dependency and carbon emissions, companies will: 1) reduce vulnerability to volatile fossil fuel prices; 2) reduce exposure to future carbon regulations; and 3) identify new potential low-carbon business opportunities and customer solutions, leading to new revenues. All of these benefits underpin academic research showing that, over the long term, companies with leading environmental performance also deliver superior financial returns for investors.13

4. **Support efforts to standardize and quantify clean energy investment data and products to improve market transparency**

Standardizing definitions of key investment terms, such as what constitutes a “climate bond,” will minimize the due diligence burden on investors and reduce transaction costs of investing in newer clean energy-related investment products. By reassuring potential buyers about what they are purchasing, standardization will also increase the liquidity of climate bonds and other products. Ultimately, better data on clean energy investment will foster easier, more precise benchmarking evaluation of potential deals.

**PROMOTE GREEN BANKING AND DEBT CAPITAL MARKETS**

5. **Encourage “green banking” to maximize private capital flows into clean energy**

Expanded issuance of climate bonds by multilateral banks will broaden the universe of highly-rated fixed-income products attached to clean energy, thereby making it easier for investors to increase allocations to clean energy within existing liquidity/creditworthiness constraints. Investment-grade credit ratings for project bonds, such as S&P’s recent approval of SolarCity bonds, will enable investors to capture the relatively higher yield of these instruments, especially relative to sovereign debt. The $2.5 trillion covered bond market offers attractive products for pension funds and insurers—extra yield relative to sovereign debt, but with less risk than unsecured bank debt or asset-backed securities—and expanding this market into clean energy will increase such opportunities.

6. **Support issuances of asset-backed securities to expand debt financing for clean energy projects**

Asset-backed securities (ABS) for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects offer long-term, low-volatility yields that match well with the liabilities of insurers and pension funds. To reach a scale that is attractive to these investors, however, this market must overcome growing pains that are common to any new capital markets product. Key steps for achieving scale include: 1) minimize the due diligence burden on buyers of clean energy issues by standardizing terms for power purchase agreements; 2) make future cash flows from such issues more stable; 3) enable more accurate rating and pricing of such issues by providing more detailed historical data; and 4) limit downside risk for buyers of early clean energy ABS issues through credit enhancement by public or private banks.

7. **Support development bank finance and technical assistance for emerging economies**

Expanded risk insurance for clean energy investments in developing countries removes a key red flag on otherwise attractive investments. More generally, one of the ancillary benefits from helping emerging economies to embrace a low-carbon future may be significant new investment opportunities for foreign sources of capital. It’s worth noting that development bank financing creates $3-15 of private investment opportunity for every $1 of public funds deployed.14

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REFORM CLIMATE, ENERGY AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

8. **Support regulatory reforms to electric utility business models to accelerate deployment of clean energy sources and technologies**

With a combined enterprise value of trillions of dollars, relatively low volatility and predictable earnings, the debt and equity of electric utilities have long been a significant share of institutional investor portfolios. But many trends are eroding the viability of traditional utility business models, which have long been premised on selling more power rather than helping ratepayers use less electricity. As stewards of trillions of dollars of capital, investors have a strong interest in ensuring that electric utilities remain financially viable in a changing landscape, where energy efficiency and distributed renewable energy are becoming bigger factors. Supporting utilities’ transition to new, more sustainable business models will preserve the electric utility sector as a viable place for investors to put their capital to work.

9. **Support government policies that result in a strong price on carbon pollution from fossil fuels and phase out fossil fuel subsidies**

Climate change has the potential to harm long-term investor returns via 1) physical impacts, such as rising sea levels and more pronounced storms and heat waves, which can severely damage individual companies and entire economies;15 and 2) the implementation of policies to reduce carbon emissions, which, especially if delayed for another decade or so, may come as a drastic and abrupt shock to company business models and economies at large. Adoption of economy-wide carbon prices now helps to prevent both of these risks, and enables investors to plan prudently for the transition to a low-carbon global economy. More broadly, the adoption of carbon prices and removal of fossil fuel subsidies will create supportive tailwinds across all asset classes for low-carbon investments and headwinds for high-carbon investments such as oil, gas and coal production.

10. **Support policies to de-risk clean energy deployment**

Policies that provide stable, long-term cash flows to clean energy projects that do not depend on unreliable and often complicated tax incentives will make clean energy significantly more attractive to institutional investors, especially as clean energy technologies approach cost competitiveness. Moreover, a focus on large-scale deployment will create investment opportunities of the size necessary for investors to justify building expertise in this new area. Finally, the lower project costs that come with increased clean energy deployment will stimulate more investment opportunities potentially worth trillions of dollars.

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Introduction

Climate change poses significant risks to the global and regional economies and to the portfolios of institutional investors that depend on economic stability and growth. Mitigating climate change is in the economic interests of investors, both to reduce systemic risks to their portfolios and to capture new investment opportunities in the necessary transition to a low-carbon, clean energy economy.

Drawing on an extensive review of published research and discussions with practitioners and thought leaders in clean energy, this paper outlines 10 recommendations to increase global investment in clean energy at the scale necessary to avert severe climate change impacts. Our primary audience for the paper is institutional investors, but it is also directed at electric utilities, large companies, utility and financial regulators, and policymakers. Most of the recommendations are direct investor activities, but several call for encouraging companies, regulators and policymakers to pursue necessary policies and actions to accelerate clean energy investment. We acknowledge that each investor has specific mandates, risk-return requirements and investment processes, and that these recommendations must be implemented in the context of these requirements. In this respect, investment consultants, key advisers to virtually all institutional investors, are another important audience for the paper’s recommendations.

To prevent the worst impacts of climate change, there must be substantially more investment in clean energy technologies globally. In 2010 governments from 193 nations agreed to limit the increase in global average temperature to 2 degrees Celsius (2 °C) above pre-industrial levels.¹ To secure an 80 percent chance of maintaining this 2 °C limit, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that an additional $36 trillion in clean energy investment is needed through 2050— or roughly $1 trillion more each year over the next 36 years relative to a “business as usual” extension of current trends.² If these additional investments are not made and current pollution trends continue, the expected increase in global temperatures is likely to reach a level that the World Bank and most climate scientists agree would have dire implications for the global environment, the global economy and human society.³

This $36 trillion of additional investment is 35 percent more than the world would invest in energy infrastructure by 2050 in any event—or about $140 trillion overall, versus $104 trillion if higher-polluting current investment trends continue.⁴ The IEA notes that extra investments in clean energy—including renewable energy such as solar, wind and geothermal, energy efficiency and energy smart technologies such as power storage, fuel cells and carbon capture and storage (CCS)—will have dual benefits. In addition to cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2050, such investment will yield an impressive return in the form of reduced fuel savings. Between 2010 and 2050 net fuel savings are estimated to be $60 trillion (or an average of $1.5 trillion annually);

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1 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): http://unfccc.int/key_steps/cancun_agreements/items/6132.php
2 International Energy Agency (IEA), Energy Technology Perspectives 2012: Pathways to a Clean Energy System, (Paris: OECD/IEA, 2012), 8, 31, http://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsum/ETP2012SUM.pdf. The IEA’s 2 °C scenario (2DS) describes an energy system “consistent with an emissions trajectory that recent climate science research indicates would give an 80 percent chance of limiting average global temperature increase to 2°C. It sets the target of cutting energy-related CO2 emissions by more than half in 2050 (compared with 2009) and ensuring that they continue to fall thereafter.” Conversely, the IEA’s baseline scenario—where controlling carbon emissions is not a priority, and which largely reflects current trends—sees total greenhouse gas emissions more than double through 2050 and average global temperature increase by at least 6 °C (6DS). Relative to the scenarios in the IEA’s 2013 World Energy Outlook, the 2DS is broadly consistent with the 450 Scenario (i.e., 450 parts per million atmospheric concentration of CO2) and the 6DS is broadly consistent with the Current Policy Scenario.
4 IEA, Energy Technology Perspectives 2012, 8, 35.
assuming a 10 percent discount rate, such savings have a present value of $5 trillion and highlight the affordability of moving to a low-carbon energy sector. Moreover, though not explicitly called out by the IEA, the greater job-creation impacts of energy efficiency and renewable energy relative to fossil fuels suggests that mobilizing “Clean Trillion” levels of investment will create millions of new jobs throughout the world. (For more discussion of clean energy and jobs, see the “Clean Energy and Jobs” text box and Appendix A.)

This paper refers to this additional investment as the “Clean Trillion,” an annualized goal that is still a decade or more away from becoming a reality. In 2012, global investment in clean energy technologies (as defined by Bloomberg New Energy Finance) was $281 billion, and in 2013 that amount will likely be lower—far short of the amount needed to keep the climate on a 2°C pathway.

Turning the “Clean Trillion” into a reality, however, will be a tremendous challenge, requiring a combination of 1) comprehensive government policies that incentivize clean energy and fully price higher-polluting technologies and; 2) wide-ranging changes to investment practices and financing vehicles that will attract substantially more institutional investor capital. This latter category is the primary focus of this paper.

Put simply, clean energy projects need new sources of investment capital if they are to scale faster. It is especially critical that allocations from institutional investors—such as public and private pension funds, insurance companies, foundations, endowments and mutual funds—increase dramatically. For example, as of 2012 their cumulative assets of over $75 trillion accounted for only a tiny share—anywhere from .1 percent to 2.5 percent—of the $90 billion in global asset financing for clean energy projects. These investments do not have to be direct but can be also made using other vehicles. Indeed, it is quite likely that these other investment vehicles, particularly securitized bonds, if developed aggressively could prove the most significant source of capital. Significantly boosting these allocations requires investments that achieve adequate risk-adjusted returns as well as alignment with institutional investors’ long-term fiduciary duty to their beneficiaries and clients. Approaches outlined in this paper seek to fulfill those criteria.

This paper provides 10 recommendations for investors, companies and policymakers to create an environment that achieves the interim goal of doubling annual clean energy investment by 2020, and to build the foundation for achieving the “Clean Trillion” by 2030. It focuses primarily on the critical role that institutional investors can play in making and facilitating these investments—increasing both the global supply of and demand for cost-effective clean energy investments. It also calls on other key capital market players—electric power companies, banks, regulators and policymakers—to do their part. Achieving this goal provides tremendous investment opportunities and can be consistent with investors’ fiduciary duty to protect investment returns for present and future beneficiaries.

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5 IEA, *Energy Technology Perspectives 2012*, 38.
In addition to a safer planet, cleaner air and trillions of dollars in fuel savings, realizing “Clean Trillion” levels of investment will yield another benefit: millions of new jobs. Five years after the 2008-2009 financial crisis, the global economy continues to produce far too few jobs and even fewer decent-paying jobs. Achieving the “Clean Trillion” can help to remedy this situation. The points below articulate key elements of the clean energy-jobs connection.

- **Clean energy sources are more job-intensive than fossil fuels:** Focusing on the power sector, clean technologies create 2 to 8 times more “job years per gigawatt-hour (GWh)” than fossil energy sources—specifically, 0.4 job years per GWh for energy efficiency and 0.85 job years per GWh for solar PV versus less than 0.2 job years per GWh for coal and natural gas.

- **Deployment of clean energy sources can create a huge number of new jobs:** A 2012 study, for example, considered the job-creation impacts for the U.S. from widespread investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency and natural gas-fired generation at the expense of coal-fired generation. Through 2030, these cleaner investments yielded an additional 7.9 million cumulative net job-years of direct and indirect employment, and 486,000 net new jobs in place in 2030 compared with the start in 2010. Dozens of other studies have confirmed the large potential for creating new jobs through investment in clean energy (for a review of these studies, see Appendix A).

- **Clean energy sources create good jobs:** The study above estimated new jobs for a wide range of occupations, including well-paid jobs in construction, manufacturing, engineering and related professional services. Workers of all skill levels and educational backgrounds can benefit from the clean energy economy.

- **Need for a “just transition”:** The move towards a low-carbon economy, however, will likely create economic dislocation and job losses in fossil fuel industries. Companies and policymakers must plan and execute programs to assist and retrain workers left behind by the transition to cleaner energy sources. The transition to a low-carbon economy must be a just one that minimizes creation of “stranded people.”

Rather than viewing our needs for new jobs and new energy sources as two separate challenges, businesses, governments and society should recognize the overlap between these issues and accelerate solutions (such as deployment of clean energy sources) that can make progress on both fronts.
The Global Clean Energy Investment Landscape

CLEAN ENERGY ASSET CLASSES

Global clean energy investment includes a wide range of sectors from renewable electricity generation to energy efficiency services to electric vehicles. It also encompasses a range of different asset classes, including public and private equity, fixed income (debt), real estate and infrastructure. Broadly speaking, clean energy investment can be sub-divided into two categories: investment in infrastructure projects directly or through other vehicles and investment in companies. Each of these categories then has two sub-categories, as the paragraphs below explain (note that this discussion draws on the taxonomy of Bloomberg New Energy Finance, and is not the only classification system for clean energy investment).  

Investment in infrastructure projects: Large renewable asset finance and small distributed generation capacity finance

These investments, which can be direct or through other vehicles, are generally called asset finance and finance construction of renewable energy plants, biofuel plants, carbon capture and storage (CCS) plants, power storage projects and other related infrastructure. Asset financing comes in different forms, including financial arrangements specific to individual projects (e.g. non-recourse loans from project finance structures, commercial and other bank debt, securitized bonds) and also from utilities via their balance sheets. In the case of residential and commercial-scale rooftop solar PV projects, such investments are typically called distributed generation capacity finance. Financing for small-distributed generation comes from a combination of bank debt, private equity, and, in the U.S., monetization of the Investment Production Tax Credit (i.e. “tax equity”). This paper covers both categories of infrastructure project investment under the broad theme of clean energy infrastructure.

Investment in companies: Public markets and venture capital/private equity

A second category of clean energy investment involves supplying equity to companies active in pure-play clean energy (e.g. solar, advanced vehicle technology, clean fuels) or CCS. One way this occurs is when companies raise new equity through the public capital markets (e.g. initial public offerings). Companies (typically younger, smaller companies) can also raise new equity through transactions with private investors such as early-stage venture capital (VC) or later-stage private equity (PE) firms.

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11 For more discussion, see Appendix B.
12 Other routes for public markets investment in clean energy include investment in corporate bonds of pure-play clean energy or CCS companies, as well as (to a lesser extent) in the equity or debt of electric utility or diversified industrial companies that are active in clean energy. Though currently excluded from BNEF data (since, for example, pure-play clean energy companies as a whole have relatively little debt), going forward corporate bonds are likely to play a greater role in financing the activities of clean energy companies. Similarly, utility and diversified companies (as opposed to pure-play companies) are likely to account for a larger share of overall clean energy investment.
Note that BNEF numbers include asset finance for renewable power (e.g. wind, solar, etc.), biofuels, and CCS, but exclude asset finance for building/industry efficiency, advanced transportation, hydrogen, and fuel cells. This omission makes the BNEF data not directly comparable with the IEA estimates cited above. See Appendix B.

The IEA's scenario for 6 °C (6DS) of warming corresponds to atmospheric concentration of CO2 more than doubling by 2050 (relative to a 2009 baseline), which the IEA projects will happen should there be no strengthening of climate and clean energy policies from what was in place in mid-2013. The IEA's 6DS is generally consistent with the Current Policy Scenario in its 2013 World Energy Outlook.


Figure 3 illustrates how investment in infrastructure (via asset finance and small distributed capacity) has dominated overall clean energy investment globally, accounting for more than 90 percent of combined total investment across all asset classes (with $165 billion of asset finance accounting for the majority of this 90 percent share). Moreover, were these figures to include asset finance of energy efficiency building retrofits, industry process improvements and advanced transportation, the size of overall clean energy infrastructure investment would increase further.
The clean energy investment figures from BNEF ($281 billion in 2012, for example) are based on a slightly narrower definition of clean energy. The BNEF figure provides a comprehensive picture of power sector investments, but has more limited coverage of the building, industry and transport sectors. Partly this reflects data for certain sectors (i.e. building energy efficiency) lacking the quality and availability to allow for rigorous analysis. The BNEF figures also include sub-categories of investment, such as government and corporate R&D as well as mergers and acquisitions, which are less apt to be captured in IEA's numbers, which are more focused on costs of technology deployment. This paper looks most closely at the clean energy universe based on BNEF’s classification.

For 2012, the Climate Policy Initiative estimated that $297 billion was invested in renewable energy generation and energy efficiency, with several billion more devoted to industry process improvements and sustainable transport. These figures do not include private investment for energy efficiency upgrades, industry process improvements, and sustainable transport. In other words, as with BNEF, the universe covered by CPI's numbers is relatively smaller than is the universe in the IEA forecasts.

A key takeaway from these differing figures is the broad shortcomings of existing clean energy investment data for policymakers and private markets alike. Such limitations underpin our call in Recommendation 4 for more rigorous and comprehensive data on clean energy finance.

For the full list of clean energy technologies in the IEA projections, and further discussion on this overall topic, see Appendix B.

**SOURCES OF CAPITAL FOR THE CLEAN TRILLION—PARTICULARLY INVESTMENT IN CLEAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Recognizing the different asset classes—and the leading role of investment in infrastructure projects, as opposed to investment in companies—the next key issue is who is supplying the capital. Today’s leading providers of investment capital to clean energy projects are commercial banks, national and multilateral development banks (e.g. the World Bank, European Investment Bank, or other quasi-public sector entities), and electric utilities. These sources alone, however, will be vastly insufficient to double global clean energy investment by 2020 or quadruple it by 2030. In the power sector, utility balance sheets are under strain, and in many, cases cannot support billions of dollars of new capital expenditures. Banks, prodded by new capital charges on illiquid assets under Basel III, are becoming less willing to provide long-term, non-recourse project finance loans.

**The critical role of institutional investors**

Clean energy projects need new and substantial sources of investment capital, and the largest potential provider are institutional investors such as pension funds, insurance companies, endowments, foundations and investment managers. Globally, these investors control approximately $75.9 trillion in assets under management (AUM), of which analysts estimate roughly $45 trillion to be long-term assets devoted to meeting long-term institutional obligations.
Out of their $75.9 trillion AUM, however, institutional investors in OECD countries currently hold very little investments directly or indirectly in projects. The most recent annual OECD Large Pension Fund Survey found that less than 1 percent of institutional investor assets were allocated to infrastructure projects—and an even smaller share (~0.1 percent) was allocated to clean energy infrastructure projects. Analysts calculated that from 2004-2011, only $22 billion of asset finance for clean energy came from pension funds and insurance companies—or less than 2.5 percent of total clean energy asset finance globally over this period.

Increasing institutional allocations to clean energy infrastructure projects is essential to meeting the Clean Trillion goal of doubling annual global clean energy investment by 2020. Fortunately, significant opportunities are available to make this happen. Taking into account liability constraints, risk limits (e.g. funding ratios, capital requirements, etc.), and diversification requirements, the Climate Policy Initiative estimates up to $819 billion of institutional capital is available for investment in renewable energy projects specifically (via both direct investments and indirect pooled investment vehicles). More broadly, the World Economic Forum estimates up to $6.5 trillion of potential institutional investment in long-term infrastructure in general (including renewable energy and other clean energy projects). The longer the time frame considered, the greater the potential for investors to reallocate assets toward clean energy. In the near term, the OECD notes cash flows into pension funds as a result of new contributions (estimated at $960 billion annually) and premium income from annuity and life insurance contracts (estimated at $1,843 billion annually) as more readily available sources of funds for new clean energy investment.

Note: Excludes $3.9 trillion of assets held by sovereign wealth funds. Figures above have adjusted for double-counting by reducing assets of investment managers by $15 trillion (i.e. to account for pension insurance contracts and pension assets potentially invested in mutual funds, ETFs, hedge funds and private equity funds). Of this total, analysts estimate roughly $45 trillion to be assets devoted to long-term investment.

FINANCING VEHICLES FOR INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT IN CLEAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

There are a variety of vehicles for institutional investors to increase allocations to clean energy infrastructure. In the discussion below we use the taxonomy set out by the OECD. Though in terms of dollar volume, the largest opportunities by far involve the corporate securities of companies, there is also a critical role for direct and so called semi-direct investments via other investment vehicles in the debt and equity of clean energy projects. Such investments are important because they: (1) lead directly to clean energy deployment; (2) maximize alignment between the cash flow profile of clean energy projects (stable, often inflation-adjusted, over periods of 25-30 years) and the long-term liabilities and funding requirements of pension funds and insurers; and (3) have the potential to reduce the cost of capital for clean energy projects, thereby promoting large-scale deployment. While the recommendations in this paper seek to promote institutional investment in clean energy across all asset classes, there is a particular focus on ramping up allocations to clean energy infrastructure (via direct and semi-direct investments where possible, and via indirect corporate securities where necessary). (See Figure 5, next page)

Direct investment—debt and equity of projects

For some investors there are constraints on direct project investments, in which semi-direct and indirect channels will make more sense. Among other issues, such constraints may include (1) regulatory restrictions on infrastructure investment (e.g. particularly for pension funds in developing countries); (2) insufficient size to make direct investments; and (3) liquidity or risk constraints.

In the case of equity (typically 20-40 percent of total capital for a clean energy project), the main category of direct investment is through ownership of projects:

- **Investment in projects**: This represents direct ownership of a project. Examples of this include global insurer Met Life’s direct investment in a solar PV power plant in Texas, and Dutch pension fund PGGM’s significant ownership stake in a 367-megawatt offshore wind project in the Irish Sea off England.

In the case of debt (typically 60-80 percent of total capital for a clean energy project), categories of direct debt investment include:

- **Clean energy project bonds**: These are bonds whose payments are linked to the cash flows from a clean energy project. Through November 2013, clean energy projects (chiefly involving wind and solar) had issued over $7 billion of project bonds globally. Pension funds and insurance companies—particularly North American insurance companies such as Met Life, AIG, and Allstate—have bought the majority of these issuances. The market for these bonds is poised to grow substantially. On the demand side, Zurich Insurance announced in Nov. 2013 that it would acquire $1 billion of green bonds issued by the World Bank and other development institutions, seeing this as “an opportunity to invest both with impact and at a return fully compensating for the risk.” On the supply side, given a pipeline of 225 utility-scale (typically 95 megawatts and above) wind and solar projects in the U.S. and Europe, Bloomberg New Energy Finance estimates a potential clean energy project bond market of $142 billion, with bond issuances of $18-$40 billion annually, by 2020 (up from roughly $2 billion a year today). Most of these issuances would involve refinancing of project debt.
## Figure 5: Vehicles for Institutional Investment in Clean Energy Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Low/No Connection to Project or Potential to Lower Capital Costs</th>
<th>Investment Fund/Vehicle (Semi-Direct)</th>
<th>Project Investment (Direct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Investment (Indirect)</strong></td>
<td>• Publicly listed equity/corporate bonds, funds, private placement corporate bonds/mezzanine finance.</td>
<td>• Investment in pooled vehicles such as infrastructure venture capital/private equity funds that invest in companies (indirect) or projects (direct); asset backed securities; covered bonds; mezzanine bonds; MLPs, REITs</td>
<td>• Direct investment (principal) in unlisted green infrastructure project through equity, debt (loan or private/public project bond with asset linkage) or mezzanine; Public-Private Partnerships and export order facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>• Highly liquid markets, low transaction costs</td>
<td>• Wide range of fund design and customization</td>
<td>• Reasonably steady, lower risk, predictable returns with potential illiquidity premium of 1-3% for project fin debt (potentially more for equity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Well understood investment by institutional investors, available investment research, established benchmarks, historical data</td>
<td>• Liquid vehicles possible if listed with secondary markets for bonds, illiquidity premium if gated fund</td>
<td>• Direct link to (and control of) asset potential to lower cost of capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher risk/higher return</td>
<td>• Well understood investment by institutional investors;</td>
<td>• Asset/Liability Matching (ALM); inflation hedge; lowest market beta if held to maturity (protection from market volatility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy access for even small estis; investment managers as conduit</td>
<td>• Access for smaller iss, aggregation benefits; private equity or asset manager as conduit</td>
<td>• Large deal size; some ‘tag along’ value for smaller institutional investors; hybrid equity structure can give bond-like payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issues to Scaling Up</strong></td>
<td>• Few ‘pureplay’ green infrastructure companies</td>
<td>• High fees needed to support fund structure high transaction costs for bonds</td>
<td>• Short term investor horizons; illiquidity biases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low/no connection to project and associated benefits; scaling up won’t lower cost of capital for green infrastructure</td>
<td>• Difficult to structure liquidity in funds; low connection to project &amp; associated benefits if liquidity offered; no secondary markets</td>
<td>• Institutional investors need size &gt;$50Bn Assets under Management and deal flow to maintain costly team (with a few exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional corporate and market securities risk (lower for debt)</td>
<td>• Traded funds take on market risk; portfolio &amp; sector diversification limits; bonds need to secure adequate ratings; lack historical data</td>
<td>• Min $100M deal size; expensive and time consuming due diligence; higher transaction costs; competition for capital w/' other traditional infrastructure assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sector diversification limits</td>
<td>• Competition for capital within asset class; returns not as high/stable as traditional infra.</td>
<td>• Lack of project pipeline; diversification restrictions &amp; financial regulation illiquidity restrictions; tax incentive complications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Smaller companies face ratings and index restrictions to issuance (particularly for debt)</td>
<td>• Autonomous private equity funds can create churn (buy/sell) and leverage risk-asset disconnect</td>
<td>• Traditional ALM may not recognize benefits; benchmarking difficulties; mark to market accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased issuances tied to balance sheet fund raising capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 08/13 Pensions Danmark invested $200M in mezzanine finance to Cape Wind Nantucket Offshore Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>02/11 Bright Source (US Solar Thermal) sold Series E preferred shares to CalSTRS after raising $150M Series D venture capital financing partly from CalSTRS and Alstom</td>
<td>01/10 BT Pension Scheme invested £275m in Hermes Private Equity</td>
<td>02/11 PGGM invested equity in Walney Offshore Wind (case study #2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Return Range</strong></td>
<td>Target equity returns: 5-20%; debt: 3-6%; actual returns N/A</td>
<td>Infrastructure fund target returns 7-20%+; actual returns: -51% to 106%</td>
<td>Project equity target returns 12-18%; debt 6-10%; actual returns: -13 -21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-direct investment (in pooled investment vehicles and project-related capital markets products)

For investors unwilling or unable to invest directly in clean energy projects, there are multiple other vehicles for so called “semi-direct” investment in clean energy infrastructure. Many investors see this as the most likely way to major scale up.

- **Private equity funds and publicly-listed infrastructure funds**: These offer another way of investing in clean energy infrastructure, albeit (in the case of private equity) with accompanying fees that do not exist for direct investments. From 2007-2011, “green” private equity funds raised an average of $23 billion in new capital annually. For smaller institutional investors without the resources to undertake project-level investments, private or publicly listed funds will often be the most direct route to supplying equity to clean energy infrastructure.

- **Asset-backed “securitized” bonds**: Though any bond linked to the cash flows from any clean energy project may be called an “asset-backed security,” in this case we are referring to securities whose payments are backed by a specified pool of revenue-generating assets. Most clean energy projects are too small to issue individual bonds; as a result, the best way to link such projects to capital markets is to pool, or “securitize,” them into a “special purpose vehicle,” and then issue bonds backed by the cash flows from this pool. For example, securitization is seen as a promising way to provide debt finance for portfolios of rooftop solar PV projects, a recent example being SolarCity’s recent approval from Standard & Poor’s to sell $54 million of notes backed by residential solar leases.

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Climate Bonds: Though the definition of “climate bonds” usually includes the project bonds discussed above, it also includes plain vanilla “treasury-style” bonds used to raise capital that are then distributed across a variety of “climate-themed” projects. As repayment is linked to the issuer’s overall creditworthiness (as opposed to the cash flows of a specific projects), such issuances often earn AAA credit ratings (though the exact rating depends on the creditworthiness of the issuer). Leading issuers of climate bonds include development banks such as the World Bank and International Finance Corporation. Though still a fraction of the $78 trillion global bond market, the Climate Bonds Initiative tallied $74 billion of new climate-themed bonds in 2012 alone, up 25 percent from 2011. Much of this money, however, went to projects outside this paper’s definition of “clean energy,” such as development of rail transit in China. Still, climate bonds offer a compelling near-term opportunity for pension funds and insurers to invest more in clean energy infrastructure.

Covered Bonds: Between AAA-rated climate bonds issued by multilateral development banks and asset-backed securities reliant on cash flows from clean energy projects, there is a potential middle ground—“covered bonds” issued by banks. Covered bonds use a “dual recourse structure” where bond investors have a claim over: (1) a “cover pool” of assets, the quality of which is strictly regulated; and (2) a general unsecured claim against the issuer. This dual recourse structure enables covered bonds to enjoy superior credit ratings and lower funding costs compared with unsecured debt issued by banks, while also presenting lower risk for investors relative to pure asset-backed securities. The $2.5 trillion covered bond market currently supports lending to designated areas, such as housing and public infrastructure, in nearly 40 countries. This paper explores proposals to extend covered bonds to clean energy infrastructure.

YieldCos: Shifting from debt to equity, a “YieldCo” is a liquid, publicly traded entity that owns cash-generating infrastructure assets. Currently this structure exists mainly in the U.S. market, but resembles publicly listed infrastructure funds abroad. YieldCos typically require an asset base of at least $500 million and an IPO value of $150-200 million. For example, in July 2013 NRG Energy successfully spun off a major portfolio that consists of 15 natural gas, solar and wind facilities, each with long-term power purchase agreements, through a $430 million IPO called NRG Yield. As the name suggests, YieldCos appeal to investors for whom dividends and cash yields are chief investment objectives.

Indirect investment (in corporate equity and debt)

Finally, the least direct (but most accessible) way to invest in clean energy infrastructure is through investment in stocks or bonds of either pure-play clean energy companies or other companies that build clean energy projects. As of September 2013, the 96 companies on the WilderHill New Energy Global Innovation Index had a combined market capitalization of $273 billion. Moreover, as this reflects only pure-play clean energy companies, there is a much broader universe of companies—electric utilities/independent power producers, diversified industrial companies—that also play a role in developing clean energy infrastructure. Particularly with respect to corporate bonds, opportunities for clean energy-related investment involve the bonds of utility/diversified industrial companies as opposed to pure-play clean energy names.

35 Clean energy being just one category of such projects, with other categories including agriculture, forestry, and water.
36 Climate Bonds Initiative and HSBC, Bonds and Climate Change: The State of the Market 2013, June 2013, http://www.climatebonds.net/files/Bonds_Climate_Change_2013_A3.pdf. Note that this $74 billion figure includes many sector categories (e.g. Rail Transport, Agriculture and Forestry, Waste and Pollution Control) not included in the BNEF definition of “clean energy” used in this paper.
37 Note how this is different from pure asset-backed securities, where repayment depends on the performance of a defined pool of assets owned by a special purpose vehicle.
Barriers to Clean Energy Investment

Simply articulating the magnitude of our current clean energy investment gap will do little to mobilize additional capital. Achieving the Clean Trillion will require opportunities for clean energy investment with risk-adjusted returns that suit the varying risk preferences, investment styles and credit/liquidity constraints of different classes of investors. A recent OECD report has rightly emphasized competitive risk-adjusted returns over different time horizons as an “indispensable and essential condition” for institutional investment in clean energy infrastructure.41 This condition, however, applies just as strongly to other classes of clean energy investment (e.g. in the publicly-traded stock or bonds of clean energy companies).

Focusing on clean energy infrastructure, Figure 7 (next page) summarizes current barriers to investment.

Benefits to Investors: Enhancing Long-Term Performance, Minimizing Exposure to Systemic Climate Risk

Recognizing the obstacles above, increasing investment in clean energy has the potential to yield two major benefits for investor portfolios.42

The first benefit is the potential to improve portfolio performance. This applies especially to investment in clean energy infrastructure vehicles, whether via debt or equity. Such projects offer cash flows that have low volatility, low correlation to other assets, and (often) are indexed to inflation. Such stable cash flows are an excellent match for long-term funding needs and liabilities of pension funds and insurance companies (and are particularly attractive given current low yields on government bonds). Many pension funds are currently seeking to increase their infrastructure allocations for these reasons. For more discussion of this point, see the “Risk and Return” text box (page 25) and Appendix C.

The second benefit is to minimize exposure to potential carbon asset risks. According to the IEA, more than two-thirds of the world’s proven reserves of fossil fuels cannot be consumed prior to 2050 under the 2°C pathway.43 The next wave of fossil fuel investment, potentially as much as $7 trillion in the coming decade,44 may lead to stranded fossil fuel assets that erode long-term shareholder value.45 Current and future action to mitigate climate change will strongly affect the valuations of fossil fuel companies—perhaps by as much as 60-80 percent46—and is already happening with U.S. coal companies whose values have
dropped dramatically since 2011. Even companies not directly engaged in fossil fuel production or fossil fuel generation will be negatively affected. For example, in a 2011 Mercer estimated that over the next twenty years climate policy could account for as much as 10 percent of overall risk in investor portfolios.\textsuperscript{47}

Conversely, clean energy investments that benefit from action to reduce carbon emissions and can serve as a “climate hedge” to balance carbon asset risks in investment portfolios. For a typical portfolio targeting a 7 percent annual return, Mercer’s 2011 analysis indicated the potential, under certain scenarios, to manage climate risks by allocating roughly 40 percent of assets to “climate-sensitive” assets such as energy efficiency and renewable energy-related listed equities, private equity, and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{48} Though in a vacuum such investments might be deemed excessively risky, Mercer emphasizes that certain climate-sensitive investments, particularly those that promote a low-carbon future, may in some scenarios reduce overall portfolio risk—creating “the prospect that institutional investors’ interests can be aligned to both serve their beneficiaries’ financial interests as well as help tackle the wider challenge of climate change by increasing investment in mitigation and adaptation efforts globally.”\textsuperscript{49}

Investors are responsible for managing long-term risks and investing in clean energy will help to achieve this objective.

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\textsuperscript{47} Mercer, Climate Change Scenarios—Implications for Strategic Asset Allocation, February 15 2011, 9, http://www.mercer.com/articles/1406410

\textsuperscript{48} Mercer, Climate Change Scenarios—Implications for Strategic Asset Allocation, 2. Note that the full range of “climate-sensitive assets” also included assets not related to clean energy, such as agricultural and timber holdings.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 9.
10 Key Recommendations for Achieving the Clean Trillion

This paper outlines 10 recommendations to ramp up clean energy investment while also meeting investor risk and return requirements. Most of the recommendations call for direct investor activities, but several also call for encouraging companies, regulators and policymakers to pursue necessary policies and actions to expand clean energy investment. Though some institutional investors may view engagement with regulators and policymakers as beyond their purview, analyses of climate risk has concluded that such engagement “can play a vital role in overall portfolio risk management.”

Mobilize Investor Action to Scale Up Clean Energy Investment

1. Develop capacity to boost clean energy investments and consider setting a goal such as 5 percent portfolio-wide clean energy investments.
2. Elevate scrutiny of fossil fuel companies’ potential carbon asset risk exposure.
3. Engage portfolio companies on the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing, as well as on financing vehicles to support such efforts.
4. Support efforts to standardize and quantify clean energy investment data and products to improve market transparency.

Recommendation (1) asks assets owners to develop the capacity to identify and pursue investment opportunities in the clean energy space and consider setting clean energy investment goals across all asset classes within a reasonable time period (such as five years or by 2020). If all global institutional investors were to allocate 5 percent of their portfolios to clean energy, it would amount to $2.25 trillion of additional investment (i.e. an amount equal to 45 percent of required “Clean Trillion” investment through 2020, or 17 percent of required “Clean Trillion” investment through 2030).

Recommendation (2) asks investors to elevate their scrutiny of fossil fuel companies’ carbon asset risk exposure and engage with companies to ensure they are preparing for a low-carbon future and that shareholder capital is not being invested unwisely on high cost, high carbon fossil fuel reserves.

Recommendation (3) examines how through investor engagement with companies, businesses can reduce both operating costs and carbon emissions through greater energy efficiency and renewable energy use. Recommendation (4) emphasizes the need to accurately measure actual investment flows to clean energy, including standardizing definitions of what constitutes a “climate-themed” investment.

Promote Green Banking and Debt Capital Markets

5. Encourage “green banking” to maximize private capital flows into clean energy.
6. Support issuances of asset-backed securities to expand debt financing for clean energy projects.
7. Support development bank finance and technical assistance for emerging economies.

Recommendations (5) and (6) focus on developing the critical bond market products that will likely supply 60-80 percent of total financing for clean energy infrastructure. The most successful outcome would be investment-grade bond issues (whether from individual large projects or aggregations of...
smaller projects) that are sold directly into institutional bond portfolios. Given the dearth of bond issues from clean energy projects, this paper emphasizes providing access to debt markets via asset-backed securities, covered bonds and other instruments capable of providing scalable, liquid investment opportunities. Moreover, since project-based debt will take time to scale up, it is critical in the short term to redouble efforts to harness the $78 trillion global bond market to support clean energy through increased issuance of “green” or “climate” bonds by development banks and corporate issuers. The strong income component of clean energy project bonds and asset-backed securities may particularly appeal to certain liability-driven investors. Recommendation (7) focuses on a related area—development banks—and how to increase North-South flows of clean energy investment from a 2012 level of $10.2 billion to a 2020 level of $100 billion (thereby helping to fulfill commitments made by developed countries under the UN-led Cancun Agreements).

Reform Climate, Energy and Financial Policies and Regulation

8. Support regulatory reforms to electric utility business models to accelerate deployment of clean energy sources and technologies
9. Support government policies that result in a strong price on carbon pollution from fossil fuels and phase out fossil fuel subsidies
10. Support policies to de-risk deployment of clean energy sources and technologies

With the balance sheets of electric utilities accounting for 30 percent of global clean energy investment in 2012, and the power sector accounting for 27 percent of required clean energy investment in a 2°C pathway through 2020, recommendation (8) details changes to business practices and regulatory reforms that investors can support to better prepare the electric power sector for massive new investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy (particularly from distributed generation resources). Recommendations (9) and (10) focus on supporting deployment of clean energy technologies (a prerequisite to creating opportunities for investment). The first step in doing this is to encourage governments to impose carbon-reducing policies that result in meaningful prices on carbon pollution from fossil fuels. Increasing the share of global CO₂ emissions subject to some form of carbon price to 50 percent (from the current share of 7 percent) as will occur if developed countries broaden existing programs and major emerging economies enact already planned initiatives—will create enormous opportunities for clean energy investment. Importantly, in anticipation of broader adoption of carbon-reducing regulations, many companies are already using ‘shadow’ carbon prices in business and capital planning. Investors should support such activity.

Further, given how large-scale deployment lowers the costs of clean energy technologies, leading to further deployment, policymakers should complement carbon prices with other measures to bolster demand for clean energy. This is the area of incentives that markets often focus on first, but needs to be understood in the context of falling clean energy prices and an eventual level playing field. Additionally, with banks currently providing $50 billion per year of loans to clean energy projects, Appendix D explores the implications of new bank liquidity requirements and also discusses other financial regulations relevant to the recommendations in this paper.
1. **Develop capacity to boost clean energy investments and consider setting a goal such as 5 percent portfolio-wide clean energy investments**

The heightened commitment resulting from a portfolio-wide goal would give investors the best chance of capitalizing on new clean energy-related opportunities across all asset classes, especially fixed income, as opposed to relegating this clean energy theme to just public equity or venture capital. Bolstering internal and external capacity for increased infrastructure investment, both directly and through other vehicles, will strengthen the potential to pair the necessary cash flows of clean energy infrastructure assets with investor liabilities and funding requirements.

2. **Elevate scrutiny of fossil fuel companies’ potential carbon asset risk exposure**

In a 2011 report, Mercer warned that climate-related government policies could increase portfolio risks by 10 percent over the next 20 years. The potential for reduced demand for fossil fuels driven by non-policy factors such as increased renewable energy, energy efficiency and fuel switching, also creates risks for investors who own fossil fuel companies. Investors should be paying increased attention to carbon asset risks by engaging with fossil fuel firms, including oil and coal companies, on the potential of higher cost, carbon-intensive fossil fuel reserves becoming “stranded,” thus creating long-term portfolio risks.

3. **Engage portfolio companies on the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing, as well as on the financing vehicles to support such efforts**

Encouraging companies to aggressively pursue energy efficiency opportunities can help unlock projects with high returns, thereby creating shareholder value. By using more clean energy resources to reduce fossil fuel dependency and carbon emissions, companies will: 1) reduce vulnerability to volatile fossil fuel prices; 2) reduce exposure to future carbon regulations; and 3) identify new potential low-carbon business opportunities and customer solutions, leading to new revenues. All of these benefits underpin academic research showing that, over the long term, companies with leading environmental performance also deliver superior financial returns for investors.\(^{58}\)

4. **Support efforts to standardize and quantify clean energy investment data and products to improve market transparency**

Standardizing definitions of key investment terms, such as what constitutes a “climate bond,” will minimize the due diligence burden on investors and reduce transaction costs of investing in newer clean energy-related investment products. By reassuring potential buyers about what they are purchasing, standardization will also increase the liquidity of climate bonds and other products. Ultimately, better data on clean energy investment will foster easier, more precise benchmarking evaluation of potential deals.

5. **Encourage “green banking” to maximize private capital flows into clean energy**

Expanded issuance of climate bonds by multilateral banks will broaden the universe of highly-rated fixed-income products attached to clean energy, thereby making it easier for investors to increase allocations to clean energy within existing liquidity/creditworthiness constraints. Investment grade credit ratings for project bonds, such as S&P’s recent approval of SolarCity bonds, will enable investors to capture the relatively higher yield of these instruments, especially relative to sovereign debt. The $2.5 trillion covered bond market offers attractive products for pension funds and insurers—extra yield relative to sovereign debt, but with less risk than unsecured bank debt or asset-backed securities—and expanding this market into clean energy will increase such opportunities.

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6. **Support issuances of asset-backed securities to expand debt financing for clean energy projects**

Asset-backed securities (ABS) for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects offer long-term, low-volatility yields that match well with the liabilities of insurers and pension funds. To reach a scale that is attractive to these investors, however, this market must overcome growing pains that are common to any new capital markets product. Key steps for achieving scale include: 1) minimize the due diligence burden on buyers of clean energy issues by standardizing terms for power purchase agreements; 2) make future cash flows from such issues more stable; 3) enable more accurate rating and pricing of such issues by providing more detailed historical data; and 4) limit downside risk for buyers of early clean energy ABS issues through credit enhancement by public or private banks.

7. **Support development bank finance and technical assistance for emerging economies**

Expanded risk insurance for clean energy investments in developing countries removes a key red flag on otherwise attractive investments. More generally, one of the ancillary benefits from helping emerging economies to embrace a low-carbon future may be significant new investment opportunities for foreign sources of capital. It’s worth noting that development bank financing creates $3-15 of private investment opportunity for every $1 of public funds deployed.59

8. **Support regulatory reforms to electric utility business models to accelerate deployment of clean energy sources and technologies**

With a combined enterprise value of trillions of dollars, relatively low volatility and predictable earnings, the debt and equity of electric utilities have long been a significant share of institutional investor portfolios. But many trends are eroding the viability of traditional utility business models, which have long been premised on selling more power rather than helping ratepayers use less electricity. As stewards of trillions of dollars of capital, investors have a strong interest in ensuring that electric utilities remain financially viable in a changing landscape, where energy efficiency and distributed renewable energy are becoming bigger factors. Supporting utilities’ transition to new, more sustainable business models will preserve the electric utility sector as a viable place for investors to put their capital to work.

9. **Support government policies that result in a strong price on carbon pollution from fossil fuels and phase out fossil fuel subsidies**

Climate change has the potential to harm long-term investor returns via 1) physical impacts, such as rising sea levels and more pronounced storms and heat waves, which can severely damage individual companies and entire economies;60 and 2) the implementation of policies to reduce carbon emissions, which, especially if delayed for another decade or so, may come as a drastic and abrupt shock to company business models and economies at large. Adoption of economy-wide carbon prices now helps to prevent both of these risks, and enables investors to plan prudently for the transition to a low-carbon global economy. More broadly, the adoption of carbon prices and removal of fossil fuel subsidies will create supportive tailwinds across all asset classes for low-carbon investments and headwinds for high-carbon investments such as oil, gas and coal production.

10. **Support policies to de-risk clean energy deployment**

Policies that provide stable, long-term cash flows to clean energy projects that do not depend on unreliable and often complicated tax incentives will make clean energy significantly more attractive to institutional investors, especially as clean energy technologies approach cost competitiveness. Moreover, a focus on large-scale deployment will create investment opportunities of the size necessary for investors to justify building expertise in this new area. Finally, the lower project costs that come with increased clean energy deployment will stimulate more investment opportunities potentially worth trillions of dollars.

For further discussion of expected and historic returns from clean energy investment, please see Appendix C.

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Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

Develop capacity to boost clean energy investments and consider setting a goal such as 5 percent portfolio-wide clean energy investments

- Capacity: consider developing in-house expertise to make investments in clean energy infrastructure

Institutional investors can help build market capacity for more institutional quality and scale investment products, strategies and opportunities by communicating their interest in increasing investments in this sector across multiple asset classes (e.g., public equities, private equity, real estate and infrastructure.) One way to do this could be by adopting a clean energy investment goal—such as 5 percent of total assets allocated to clean energy within a reasonable time period. *Fulfillment of such a goal would be dependent on the funds’ ability to find suitable investments across asset classes that meet their risk-return and other criteria.* Announcing such goals, even as aspirations, would send a powerful signal to the market and stimulate the development of more institutional quality and scale investment products and strategies focused on clean energy. If applied to the full $45 trillion of assets held by long-term institutional investors, a 5 percent portfolio-wide allocation would amount to $2.25 trillion of additional investment in clean energy (i.e., an amount equal to 45 percent of the “Clean Trillion” investment goal through 2020, or 17 percent of the “Clean Trillion” investment goal through 2030).  

CAPACITY: consider developing in-house expertise to make investments in clean energy infrastructure

For larger institutional investors who actively manage a portion of their portfolios, the most attractive clean energy opportunities may involve direct and semi-direct investments in clean energy infrastructure (e.g., via project equity, project bonds, and pooled vehicles), rather than in the stocks or corporate bonds of companies affiliated with clean energy. Developing the capacity to source and execute investments in clean energy projects should therefore be a priority for institutional investors, particularly for larger funds with $50 billion or more in assets under management (AUM). The Climate Policy Initiative estimates that there are 45 pension funds and 70-100 insurance companies of this size that collectively represent $25 trillion AUM (or 56 percent of total institutional investment assets under management). Equipping this enormous pool of assets with investment professionals experienced in the clean energy space is a critical step for moving the needle on overall clean energy investment and adding desirable clean energy infrastructure assets to portfolios. Pension funds in Canada, northern Europe and Australia, and a number of U.S. insurance companies, have developed the capacity to do direct (and indirect via pooled investments) infrastructure investments (including in renewable energy projects), and U.S. pension funds should seek to develop similar capacity where appropriate.

61 The 45 percent and 17 percent amounts are calculated relative to the additional total investment in clean energy in a 2 degree pathway relative to a 6 degree pathway from 2010-2020 (roughly $5 trillion) and 2010-2030 (roughly $13 trillion).


63 Funds with AUM less than $50 billion might focus on (1) pooling their resources to co-invest in deals, either together or alongside larger funds; or (2) investing in private equity funds focused on renewable energy infrastructure.

Since 10-20 percent of direct investment deals can generally be filled by smaller co-investors, funds too small to support a dedicated clean energy team should focus on (1) collaborating with larger investors to further expand the pool of available capital for clean energy deals; and (2) developing expertise in evaluating external fund managers who specialize in clean energy.

**Role for external investment consultants**

Limited resources will for many investors pose challenges to increasing in-house expertise in infrastructure investment. To this end, there is a pivotal role for external investment consultants to develop expertise in this area that they can then offer to pension funds, insurers, and other institutional investors seeking to invest the space. Whether with respect to sourcing and executing direct investment transactions or evaluating external fund managers, investment consultants should focus on developing the know-how and capability to advise investors on allocations to clean energy infrastructure and other investment opportunities in this sector.

**Regulatory constraints**

Note that for certain institutional investors (e.g. pension funds in emerging markets), reform of national regulation may be required in order to enable direct or semi-direct investment in clean energy infrastructure. Moreover, even for investors without such restrictions, the impact of new regulations (e.g. for European insurers, higher capital charges on infrastructure as a result of Solvency II) may deter increased allocations to infrastructure. For more discussion of these issues, see Appendix D.

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**IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

The heightened commitment and prioritization resulting from a portfolio-wide goal would give investors the best chance of capitalizing on new clean energy energy-related opportunities across all asset classes (e.g. including fixed income), as opposed to relegating this theme to just public equity or venture capital.

As noted above, clean energy projects have the potential to offer long-term, stable cash flows (often with inflation-adjustment). This asset class aligns well with the long-term funding needs and liabilities of pension funds and insurance companies, many of which are seeking to boost their infrastructure allocations for just this reason. Bolstering capacity for direct infrastructure investment will strengthen the potential to pair the cash flows of clean energy infrastructure assets with investor liabilities and funding requirements.
According to the IEA, more than two-thirds of the world’s proven fossil fuel reserves cannot be consumed prior to 2050 under the 2°C pathway.\(^6\) In addition, there is growing uncertainty that future markets will mirror the past due to structural changes in energy systems and a number of existing or reasonably foreseeable market forces. Yet, in 2012 alone, the world’s 200 largest publicly-traded fossil fuel companies spent $674 billion on finding and developing new reserves and associated fossil fuel infrastructure.\(^6\) Indeed, capital expenditures in the next decade to develop new fossil fuel reserves face some of the biggest risks of becoming “stranded assets.”\(^6\) This “stranded asset risk” is part of the larger climate policy risk that Mercer has found could account for 10 percent of overall investor portfolio risk over the next twenty years.\(^6\)

**ENGAGEMENT: ask fossil fuel companies to assess and reduce their exposure to carbon risk and, where necessary, redirect capital away from high-cost, high-carbon fossil fuel projects**

Investors should assess whether their portfolio energy companies are adequately preparing for a low-carbon future and that shareholder capital is not being wasted on new fossil fuel reserves that may become stranded assets. As part of the Carbon Asset Risk Initiative led by Ceres and the Carbon Tracker Initiative, with support from the Investor Network on Climate Risk, the UK/EU Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIIGCC), the AU/NZ Investor Group on Climate Change and other investor groups, 70 institutional investors (representing nearly $3 trillion in assets) recently wrote to 45 of the world’s largest companies in the oil & gas, coal, and electric power sectors, asking for an analysis of how their business plans will fare in a carbon-constrained world versus a world of unmitigated climate change.\(^6\) Specifically, these investors asked for an assessment of the following under both a business-as-usual scenario and a low-carbon scenario consistent with reducing GHG emissions by 80 percent by 2050 to achieve the 2°C goal: the viability of capital expenditure plans for finding and developing new reserves; the risk that some present and future reserves may become stranded assets; and the physical risk that climate change poses to operations.

Where risks are identified, investors should encourage companies to explore strategies to better manage those risks and ensure that future spending will generate sufficient and safe capital returns. Companies may opt in the end to (1) return more capital to shareholders; or (2) in certain cases, redirect capital away from new and potentially unusable fossil fuel reserves and toward clean energy resources that serve as a “climate hedge.”\(^7\)

Redirecting even a small percentage of annual corporate capital expenditures away from fossil fuels toward clean energy will have an enormous impact, helping to protect investments from market uncertainty while

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\(^6\) Mercer, *Climate Change Scenarios—Implications for Strategic Asset Allocation*, 1.


\(^6\) This may be most relevant to sub-sectors of clean energy investment in which the participation of fossil fuel companies can accelerate commercial progress, such as biofuels for oil companies, CCS for coal-heavy utilities.
unlocking a largely untapped resource for clean energy investment. For sub-sectors of clean energy investment in which the participation of fossil fuel companies can accelerate commercial progress—biofuels for oil companies, CCS for coal-heavy utilities, for example—investors should especially press companies on their plans for investment.

**ADDITIONAL MEASURES to Manage Carbon Asset Risk**

In addition to engaging with fossil fuel companies, there are other opportunities for investors to reduce exposure of their portfolios to carbon asset risk. Implementation of such measures is likely to improve the overall framework supporting clean energy investment. For example, following the recommendations of Mercer’s 2011 report on climate implications for strategic asset allocation, investors should consider:

- Including assessment of climate risk in periodic strategic reviews;
- Adopting sustainability-themed indices for passive portfolios;
- Urging investment consultants and external fund managers to proactively evaluate and manage climate risks and seek appropriate clean energy investment opportunities.

Note the essential role of investment consultants and external fund managers in implementing the above measures; if institutional investor portfolios are to be repositioned toward clean energy, all parties in the investor ecosystem must contribute to this goal.

**IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

A number of factors—such as future action on climate change and demand reduction from increased efficiency, renewables deployment and fuel switching—may lead to significant write-downs on the value of fossil fuel assets. In short, the risk of such stranded assets creates a material concern for long-term shareholders. Returning capital to shareholders and shifting capital away from high-cost, high-carbon fossil fuel projects are ways to mitigate this risk and help to preserve long-term shareholder value while also helping to mitigate the systemic economic risks posed by climate change.

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71 For more discussion of these measures, see Mercer, *Climate Change Scenarios—Implications for Strategic Asset Allocation*, 2.

As large and sophisticated energy consumers, companies are well positioned to stimulate demand for renewable energy and energy efficiency—and improve their long-term financials in doing so. Consistent with expectations in the Ceres Roadmap for Sustainability, businesses worldwide seeking to enhance their competitiveness in the emerging low-carbon global economy need to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent from a 2005 baseline by 2020
- Improve energy efficiency of operations by at least 50 percent by 2020
- Reduce electricity demand by at least 15 percent by 2020
- Obtain at least 30 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2020

Recognizing the business case for such action, investors should encourage their portfolio companies to set and achieve such targets and to report to investors on the progress and financial impacts of such efforts. Part of this involves conveying to companies the crucial role that a Board of Directors plays in oversight of corporate sustainability programs; reflecting this reality, sustainability performance results should be a core component of executive compensation packages and incentive plans.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Engage portfolio companies on the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing, as well as on financing vehicles to support such efforts, urging them to:

- Reduce energy use and emissions through investments in energy efficiency
  - When evaluating energy efficiency investments, emphasize internal rate of return instead of simple payback period
- Set targets to generate or procure renewable energy
  - Deploy innovative technology
- Fund investments via retained earnings or consider issuing “climate bonds”

REDUCE Energy Use & Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Investments in Energy Efficiency

Reducing energy use can help both the environment and the bottom line—and, as a result, should be the first priority of any corporate environmental sustainability program. A 2010 McKinsey study found that investing $520 billion in energy efficiency measures could save the United States $1.2 trillion through 2020, with nearly two-thirds of these savings accruing to businesses. To achieve greater energy efficiency, companies should (1) systematically measure energy use in operations; (2) set targets for absolute reduction in energy use (both company-wide and within specific divisions), as well as interim goals; and (3) develop and prioritize energy reduction strategies and allocate sufficient capital and human resources to support long-term investment in energy efficient technologies and processes.

Looking beyond simple payback period to internal rate of return (IRR)

Businesses can expand the universe of attractive investments in energy-efficiency by reducing emphasis on the simple payback period as the metric for judging potential investments. Reliance on a simple payback period (number of years for an initial capital investment to be “paid back” via reduced

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74 Ibid.

operating costs) diminishes the attractiveness of projects that require large capital outlays up-front, even when projects yield cost-savings that are large, stable, and predictable. Surveys show that executives and managers in many industries require rapid payback periods on energy efficiency projects, ranging from less than three years in diversified industrial companies to less than 18 months in commercial real estate companies. Such short time horizons are likely causing businesses to overlook many highly profitable energy efficiency investment opportunities. Encouraging managers to focus on projects with high internal rates of return (IRR)—even at the cost of longer payback of upfront investment—will enable businesses to capture more highly profitable cost-savings opportunities.

Examples of such high potential opportunities are outlined in the CDP’s 2012 Carbon Action Report. Analyzing 860 emissions-reduction activities across a sample of 256 companies, the report shows how investment in building, process, and transportation efficiency yield median IRRs in the range of 40-65 percent. Investments in improving the efficiency of transportation fleets were found to yield both attractive IRRs (median IRR above 50 percent) along with significant carbon emission reductions. Project-level returns on building, process and transportation efficiency investments nearly always exceeded firm-level returns on invested capital. The bottom line: regarding of environmental benefits, energy efficiency investments offer significant opportunities for companies to create shareholder value.

It’s worth noting that across all of its 860 emissions-reduction activities, CDP calculated an average payback period of three years. This finding shows how requiring energy efficiency projects to meet arbitrary payback deadlines (e.g. two years) can cause businesses to miss opportunities for financial gain that are significantly better than their IRR on many core business activities.

**FIGURE 8: RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EMISSIONS REDUCTION ACTIVITIES**

![Diagram](source)

Source: CDP, Carbon Action Report 2012 based on company data. Note: the figures in the exhibit above are based on 238 emissions reduction activities reported by sample of 256 companies in heavy emitting industries. Median IRR and efficiency of CO2e reductions are calculated based on figures reported to Investor CDP in 2012.
**SET TARGETS to Generate or Procure Renewable Energy**

In addition to using less energy, companies should also seek to increase energy sourcing from renewable energy. Diversifying energy supplies to include low or zero-marginal cost renewable resources can benefit businesses by (1) creating a hedge against volatile fossil fuel and electricity prices; and (2) reducing energy-related operating costs. For energy companies, this likely means setting targets for renewable energy production and allocating sufficient levels of capital to boost renewable generation over time. Companies not in the energy business may have the opportunity to deploy on-site renewable generation.

- As part of a partnership with commercial solar provider SunEdison, the office supply store chain Staples hosts 37 active solar arrays on its rooftops. Combined with purchases of green power, these rooftop solar arrays enable Staples to supply 100 percent of its total U.S. electricity consumption through renewable power sources. This is an example for other companies both in retail and other sectors to emulate.
- As part of its commitment to use 100 percent renewable energy, Walmart has completed or is developing 180 renewable energy projects at its facilities, including 150 solar installations in seven countries and 26 fuel cell installations in the U.S.

**Deploying Innovative Technology**

By boosting on-site renewable generation, companies also have an opportunity to deploy first-of-a-kind, innovative technologies. In 2008 Google became the first customer to deploy Bloom Energy’s solid oxide fuel cell ("Bloom Box"), with other major companies such as eBay, the Coca-Cola Co., Honda and Verizon subsequently doing the same. This and other examples illustrate the unique ability of companies to provide high-profile test-beds for innovative clean energy technologies.

**FUND INVESTMENTS via Retained Earnings or Consider Issuing “Climate Bonds”**

With companies sitting on record amounts of capital—over $1 trillion for companies in the S&P 500 alone—most larger public companies should have ample resources on hand to fund the initial cost of energy efficiency and renewable energy investments. That said, to the extent that additional capital is needed, companies might consider issuing bonds linked to specific energy efficiency or renewable projects. For example, the French utility EDC recently issued a $1.9 bond to finance project development by EDF’s renewable energy unit, EDF Energie Nouvelles. Strong demand for such issues—the EDF deal was oversubscribed by 2X, and 13 percent of the investor base came from pension funds and insurance companies—suggests that companies with sound plans for clean energy investment will be able to tap into large pools of external capital.

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**ROLE for Investors**

Investors should engage with companies to encourage greater investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Specific areas for engagement include:

- Reviewing corporate sustainability goals to ensure that goals related to energy efficiency and renewable energy use are in line with best-in-class companies.
- Asking companies to make sustainability performance results a core component of executive compensation packages and incentive plans.
- Developing quantitative targets for devoting a portion of retained earnings to financing energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Encouraging companies to include a “shadow price” on carbon emissions in their long-term financial plans, as 29 of America’s largest companies have recently begun doing.
- Asking companies to demonstrate how they quantify the benefit of reduced exposure to fuel price volatility and incorporate this benefit into project assessments.
- Urging companies to focus on IRR as opposed to simple payback periods when evaluating energy efficiency investments.

**IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

Encouraging companies to aggressively pursue energy efficiency opportunities can help to unlock projects with high return on invested capital, thereby creating shareholder value. Moreover, in using clean energy resources to minimize carbon emissions companies will (1) reduce vulnerability to future carbon regulation (thereby protecting against future cost increases); and (2) possibly identify new business opportunities or customer solutions (thereby increasing future revenues). Both of these reasons underpin the conclusion of academic research that, over the long term, companies with leading environmental performance tend to also deliver superior financial returns for investors.

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87 For more discussion of this point, see Recommendation 9.
For most assets that pension funds and insurance companies invest in—stocks, bonds and commodities—a wealth of data is readily available. That’s not the case for clean energy infrastructure assets, which suffer from a lack of data on historical pricing and even basic asset ownership. Notwithstanding valuable data available from the IEA, BNEF, UNEP Finance Initiative, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), and the Climate Policy Initiative, it is difficult to find data on the underlying source of funds by type of institution (e.g. pension fund, insurance company). Additionally, even for asset classes on which data is available (e.g. bonds), there is no agreed-upon definition for what constitutes a “climate-themed” investment. Indeed, the varying definitions of what is the “Clean Trillion” and how to fully measure it in a timely fashion illustrate the point. To remedy this situation, investors should (1) participate in emerging disclosure initiatives such as the Global Registry of Low-Carbon Investments; and (2) support standardization initiatives such as the Climate Bond Standard and Certification Scheme, the Green Bonds Principles, and the joint multilateral development bank (MDB) approach for reporting on climate mitigation finance.

**Disclosure Initiatives**

One barrier to scaling up clean energy investment is a lack of information. Currently there is available data on the use of funds (e.g. by asset class, technology and region), but insufficient data on the source of funds (e.g. what kinds of investors are supplying the funds). As is the case for many other types of infrastructure, current data on the source of funds for clean energy projects—for example, ABC infrastructure fund supplied $50 million of equity to XYZ wind project—provide only a snapshot at the time of financing and do not show the ultimate underlying holders of the assets (for example, specific investors in the ABC infrastructure fund). Conversely, for other asset classes (e.g. sovereign debt) detailed information on the source of funds is commonly recorded by national statistical offices. Lack of market data stymies investment by making it difficult to assess potential buyers of renewable energy projects should they need to be sold on short notice. This data void, in turn, makes positions in clean energy projects and funds appear less liquid than they actually are, thus deterring investment.

Investors can help resolve this data gap by participating in new disclosure initiatives such as the Global Registry of Low-Carbon Investments. Open to institutional investors from around the world, with participants in the recent *Global Investor Survey on Climate Change* contributing the initial data, the Registry will publish initial data in early 2014 on low-carbon investments. Participants will have the opportunity to report in greater detail on when capital in their portfolios is being allocated to a low-carbon purpose. Evidence of investors putting money to work in clean energy has the potential to start a virtuous circle galvanizing policymakers and other investors to take action that further increases low-carbon capital allocations.

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STANDARDIZATION Initiatives

In addition to the Low-Carbon Investment Registry, institutional investors should also support other efforts to standardize definitions of what constitutes a “climate-themed” investment. Nowhere is this more critical than in the $78 trillion global bond market. As of June 2013, HSBC and the Climate Bonds Initiative estimated there were $346 billion of outstanding “climate-themed” bonds (with issuers ranging from multilateral development banks to electric utilities), and the largest project category being rail transit (largely in China). However, there is no universally agreed-upon definition for what constitutes a “climate-themed” bond. Investors should remedy this by supporting emerging certification standards such as the Climate Bond Standard and Certification Scheme, voluntary guidelines such as the Green Bonds Principles, proposed by banks including Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Citi, and reporting frameworks such as the joint MDB approach for reporting on climate mitigation finance.

By defining criteria for a “climate-themed” bond, the Climate Bond Standard allows for the straightforward certification of project, portfolio, corporate and sovereign bonds tied to assets contributing to a low-carbon economy. Such a straightforward certification process will help make climate-related products more liquid and comparable—traits that “climate-themed” bonds must have if they are to occupy a significant position in investor portfolios. Such standards are necessary to ensure the credibility of “climate bonds” and the growth of the global green bonds market. Additionally, they will help to prevent the likelihood of so-called “greenwashing” by issuing bonds under a climate-themed heading without actually linking use of proceeds to recognized mitigation or adaptation initiatives.

 ROLE for Investors

As holders of much market information, investors—by participating in disclosure initiatives—can play a leading role in making markets for clean energy more transparent. Participation in standardization efforts is just as essential.

 IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments

Standardizing definitions of key investment terms (e.g. what constitutes a “climate bond”) will minimize the due diligence burden on investors and reduce the transaction costs of investing in newer clean energy-related products; similarly, by reassuring potential buyers about what they are purchasing, standardization will increase the liquidity of climate bonds and other products. More data on clean energy investment generally will enable more precise benchmarking and evaluation of potential deals.

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94 Climate Bonds Initiative and HSBC, Bonds and Climate Change: The State of the Market 2013, 2. Note that this $74 billion figure includes many sector categories (e.g. Rail Transport, Agriculture and Forestry, Waste and Pollution Control) not included in the BNEF definition of “clean energy” used in this paper.
96 Euro Week, “Framework for Green Bonds,” http://www.euroweek.com/SpecialReportsArticle.aspx?IssueID=89995&ArticleID=3260887&isAsia=true, accessed December 23, 2013. The Citi/BAML Green Bonds Framework contains seven sections that address: (i) definition of green bonds; (ii) criteria for use of proceeds; (iii) issuer’s process for project evaluation; (iv) management of proceeds; (v) additional assurance; (vi) reporting; and (vii) central forums for defining appropriate use of proceeds.
98 For example, the Climate Bonds Standard proposes that in the case of corporate bonds “a simple, low-cost ring-fencing exercise is required to assure that the funds raised by the bond are backed by a pool of climate-credible assets. Bonds are verified by a third-party provider that they conform with the Standard and then certified by the Climate Bond Standards Board.”
Banks, businesses and policymakers can all take key steps to promote the flow of private capital into clean energy. Key focus areas include (1) development banks and other state-affiliated financial institutions issuing “climate bonds” linked to clean energy projects (with use of proceeds satisfying recognized criteria such as the Climate Bonds Standard or World Bank green bonds criteria); (2) using public funds to provide loan-loss reserve funds, subordinated debt and other measures to enhance the creditworthiness of clean energy asset-backed securities; and (3) passing legislation authorizing banks to finance clean energy projects through the use of covered bonds.

**INCREASE ISSUANCES of climate bonds by both national/multilateral and commercial banks**

With a value of $78 trillion and a 33-73 percent share of institutional investor portfolios, the global bond market offers the greatest opportunity to raise large amounts of capital for clean energy investment. As we discuss below and in Recommendation 6, the most common route to accessing the bond market is issuance of project bonds and asset-backed securities. Through at least 2020, however, an equally important route is through national or international financial institutions like the World Bank, IFC and EBRD issuing “climate bonds” whose proceeds go to projects that help mitigate climate change. Unlike asset-backed securities, these bonds are not tied to the cash flows from specific projects, but instead can benefit from the AAA ratings of the issuing institutions, enabling them to be immediately put into institutional investor portfolios.

Since 2008, the World Bank has issued about $4 billion in green bonds to support solar and wind installations, construction of energy-efficient buildings and other low-carbon development projects. Other multilateral development banks have followed suit, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Export-Import Bank of Korea (Kexim), and the African Development Bank (AfDB), bringing the total amount of outstanding green bonds/climate bonds from multilateral development banks to roughly $10 billion. Given strong investor demand for recent offerings, which were oversubscribed in a matter of hours and included significant demand from mainstream U.S. and European investors, multilateral and government-affiliated banks should substantially increase issuances of climate bonds. Issuances from multilateral banks will help prime the market for climate bond offerings from traditional commercial and investment banks. This latter development has already begun, with Bank of America in November 2013 issuing a $500 million three-year bond to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Adopting a common standard for the use of funds from climate bonds will further stimulate investor demand and help build a credible global green bonds market.
**PROVIDE Credit Enhancement for Clean Energy Project Bonds**

The market for clean energy project bonds is poised to grow. As of November 2013, utility-scale clean energy projects (mostly for wind and solar) had issued over $7 billion of project bonds to insurance companies, pension funds and other investors. Given the pipeline of 225 utility-scale (i.e. 95 megawatts and above) wind and solar projects in the U.S. and Europe, Bloomberg New Energy Finance estimates a potential clean energy bond market of $142 billion, with bond issuances of $18-$40 billion annually by 2020 (up from roughly $2 billion today).

To be investable by institutional investors, however, bonds backed by revenues from clean energy projects must be rated as “investment grade.” Limited performance history, however, can make this rating difficult for some projects to attain. Policymakers can address this problem and accelerate issuance of clean energy project bonds by using public funds to provide “credit enhancement” to such bonds.

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105 BNEF, “Green Bonds Market Outlook 2013: Ripe pickings at the green bond market,” 2013. Note that the $7 billion figure includes only a portion of private placement debt and that the actual figure for outstanding clean energy project bonds could be significantly higher.

106 BNEF, “Green Bonds Market Outlook 2013: Ripe pickings at the green bond market,” 2013. Note that including potential bond issuances from portfolios of rooftop solar PV or onshore wind projects increases the potential market size even further.

issues. By reducing the probability of investor losses, publicly funded subordinated debt or loan-loss reserve facilities will improve the creditworthiness of clean energy project bonds and bolster investor demand. For example, New York State’s new $1 billion Green Bank Initiative, offering subordinated debt and loan-loss reserve facilities to renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, estimates that over 20 years such credit enhancement techniques can leverage $5-10 of total clean energy investment for every $1 of public funds. Similar initiatives are underway elsewhere in the U.S. and U.K., suggesting an emerging model for other countries to replicate. Regional initiatives to provide credit enhancement across multiple sectors, such as the €5bn Europe 2020 Project Bonds Initiative (PBI), should also be modified or expanded to include greater allocations to clean energy projects.

The role of development banks

Key players in financing clean energy investment are development banks at the multilateral (World Bank Group), regional (European Investment Bank), and national (Germany’s KfW, the China Development Bank, etc.) levels. From 2007-2012, these institutions invested $396 billion in renewable energy and energy efficiency, an amount equivalent to roughly 28 percent of global clean energy investment over this period.

Development banks are major players in funding clean energy projects in both emerging and developed economies. From 2007-2012, KfW and the European Investment Bank together deployed $202 billion toward clean energy in Europe. Funding from the China Development Bank ($77.8 billion from 2007-2012) and the Brazilian Development Bank ($46.8 billion from 2007-2012) makes these institutions similarly dominant in the clean energy financing landscapes of their home markets.
This scale and experience positions these institutions to successfully provide credit enhancement to clean energy project bonds. As a complement to their traditional focus on low-cost direct loans and other forms of concessionary finance, these institutions should prioritize opportunities to use their balance sheets in support of clean energy and energy efficiency bonds.  

**PASS LEGISLATION Authorizing Banks to Issue Clean Energy “Covered Bonds”**

Between AAA-rated climate bonds issued by multilateral development banks and asset-backed securities reliant solely on the cash flows from clean energy projects, there is a potential middle ground, “covered bonds,” issued by banks. Covered bonds employ a “dual recourse structure” where bond investors have a claim over (1) a “cover pool” of assets, the quality of which is strictly regulated; and (2) a general unsecured claim against the issuer. This dual recourse structure enables covered bonds to enjoy superior credit ratings and lower funding costs compared with unsecured debt issued by banks. At the same time, because of strict oversight for what can go into the “cover pool,” they generally are safer for investors than pure asset-backed securities. By creating liquid assets with a lower cost of funding, covered bond legislation, which now exists in nearly 40 countries and supports a $2.5 trillion global market, has encouraged lending in designated areas such as housing and public infrastructure. Policymakers should revise covered bond legislation to allow banks to issue covered bonds based on renewable energy loans. Germany, the world’s largest covered bond market, has demonstrated that such legislation can be successfully revised to accommodate new asset classes (most recently, shipping and aircraft assets). Given the vital priority of financing low-carbon infrastructure, policymakers must enable covered bonds to become one of the pathways connecting the global bond market to clean energy investment.

**✓ ROLE for Investors**

- Investors can promote “green banking” in multiple ways.
- Communicate to commercial and multilateral development banks an appetite for climate-themed bonds
- As shareholders and lenders to commercial banks, engage to support activity in green banking
- Make the case to governments about the benefits of extending covered bonds to clean energy

**✓ IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

Expanded issuance of climate bonds by multilateral banks will expand the universe of highly-rated fixed-income products attached to clean energy, thereby making it easier for investors to increase allocations to clean energy within existing liquidity/creditworthiness constraints. Similarly, credit enhancement for project bonds will enable investors to capture the relatively higher yield of these instruments (relative to sovereign debt) while protecting against downside risk that results from a lack of historical data. Finally, the $2.5 trillion covered bond market offers attractive products for pension funds and insurers—extra yield relative to sovereign debt, but with less risk than unsecured bank debt or asset-backed securities—and extending this market to clean energy will increase opportunities for covered bonds in investor portfolios. As noted above, however, increasing allocations to the products discussed in this section would have to be done in the context of each portfolio’s individual risk-return and other requirements.

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113 Recommendation 7 below elaborates on the role of development banks in financing clean energy.
114 Note how this is different from pure asset-backed securities, where repayment depends on the performance of a defined pool of assets owned by a special purpose vehicle.
116 Specific renewable energy covered bond legislation will require many factors to be taken into account. These would include: agreeing which institutions could issue covered bonds; identification of regulatory authorities; definitions of qualifying assets; agreement on loan to-value ratios; cover pool management standards; and requirements for enforceability.
**Recommendation 6**

Support issuances of asset-backed securities to expand debt finance for clean energy projects

- Standardize terms of power purchase agreements and other project documents
- Ensure robust supply of creditworthy operation and maintenance providers
- Develop detailed databases of customer default rates
- Use credit enhancement to develop a track record for securitized clean energy bonds

Current methods of financing clean energy—combinations of bank debt, private equity, tax incentives, utility balance sheets and public funds—are usually still more expensive than fossil fuel financing (although the gap is closing) and currently too limited to support a doubling of annual clean energy investment by 2020. By broadening the pool of potential investors and enabling longer-term debt, access to bond markets will increase the supply of financing and lower capital costs for clean energy projects. Focusing on the case of solar in the US, the figure below illustrates how greater access to capital markets (e.g. via bonds and asset-backed securities) can increase the pool of investors and lower the cost of capital for projects.

**Figure 12: Potential Evolution of US Solar Financing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TODAY</th>
<th>TOMORROW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>CONSTRUCTION</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMMISSION / COMMISSION</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEBT</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>INSURANCE COMPANIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>BANKS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQUITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>VENTURE CAPITAL (VC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIVATE EQUITY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>INFRASTRUCTURE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIVATE EQUITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMALL / MEDIUM DEVELOPERS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LARGE DEVELOPERS / UTILITIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAX EQUITY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BANKS (AND OTHER SELECTED PLAYERS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSTS OF CAPITAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;20% cost of equity (unlevered)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>~15% cost of equity (levered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~7-9% tax equity yield (after-tax, unlevered)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>~14-18% (levered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~6-7% cost of debt</td>
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<tr>
<td>~14% cost of equity (levered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~7% cost of equity (unlevered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~6-7% cost of debt</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;20% cost of equity (unlevered)</td>
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<td>~9-13% cost of equity (levered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~7% tax equity yield (after-tax, unlevered)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>~11% (levered)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>~6% cost of debt (capital markets debt financing)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>~5% cost of debt</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bloomberg New Energy Finance
Some clean energy projects will be large enough to individually issue bonds (as discussed above). Most projects, however, are too small to justify the expense of an individual bond issuance, requiring them to be linked to bond markets via securitization. Asset-backed or securitized bonds are similar to ordinary bonds but have a pool of specific assets whose revenues pay the interest and principal. While ordinary bond payments are generally guaranteed by the government or company that issues them, in asset-backed or securitized bonds a set of revenue generating assets—for example, a collection of solar PV projects—are put into a special purpose company which collects principal and interest payments and passes them through to bondholders.117 Because many developers of clean energy projects lack the credit rating to themselves issue bonds, securitized bonds—where repayment depends on the quality of the assets rather than the creditworthiness of the issuer—have the potential to lower financing costs.

![Diagram of Securitization Process](image)

Source: US National Renewable Energy Laboratory

As discussed above, however, institutional investors can usually buy an asset-backed security only if a credit rating agency has deemed the security to be “investment grade.”118 The typical structure of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects—use of proven technology, long-term contracts with creditworthy off-takers—should eventually enable asset-backed securities linked to underlying cash flows to consistently achieve investment-grade ratings. As with any new financial product, however, there are challenges to establishing the initial market, particularly for portfolios of smaller projects.119

**STANDARDIZE** terms of power purchase agreements and other contract documents

Renewable energy projects generally sell electricity to buyers (e.g. utilities, households, etc.) via long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs). The terms of such agreements, however, tend to vary across markets and geographies.120 If a portfolio of projects is to be combined into a single pool, inconsistency...
in the terms of PPAs complicates the task of assigning a credit rating. Developers of wind and solar projects must focus on standardizing the terms of PPAs. Progress is being made on this front through industry working groups such as Solar Access to Public Capital (SAPC), a forum convened by the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). SAPC having recently completed and released its first set of standardized contract documents for residential and commercial PPAs, the next step is to ensure use of these standardized terms in as many future PPAs as possible.

**ENSURE a robust supply of creditworthy operation and maintenance providers**

Given the long-term nature of the revenue-generating assets in potential clean energy project bonds, cash flows from these bonds rely on the assets operating at an assumed capacity factor for 20-30 years. In many markets, however, there are a limited number of O&M providers capable of providing reliable service, thus undermining the stability of promised cash flows, which means a weaker bond rating. Given the common interest among developers in ensuring a robust supply of O&M services, the industry should consider ways to ensure an active marketplace of O&M providers.

**DEVELOP detailed databases of customer default rates**

As noted above, cash flows from bonds depend on ability to receive PPA payments from customers—which, in the case of rooftop solar projects, are often individual households or businesses. There are weak linkages, however, between the length of PPAs (often 20 years) and historical data on the rooftop solar industry (which has only achieved significant scale the past few years). Lack of data on customer default rates creates a significant barrier to such bonds securing investment grade ratings. Particularly in the case of rooftop solar, the industry should be actively collaborating with financiers, loan service providers and rating agencies to build customer payment datasets that can be used to satisfy the demand for more historic data. Standard & Poor’s recent preliminary approval of SolarCity bonds is an important step in this regard.

**USE CREDIT ENHANCEMENT to develop a track record for securitized clean energy bonds**

To jump-start the market for clean energy project bonds while the above issues are being resolved, banks should also be using their balance sheets to help develop a performance track record for bonds linked to clean energy projects. For example, banks could provide loans to portfolios of wind and solar projects and aggregate these loans into asset-backed securities. To assure an investment-grade credit rating, banks could use a small portion of their balance sheets to provide “credit enhancement” to the securities. Potential credit enhancement mechanisms include a “loan loss reserve fund” (to cover a first portion of losses on the securities) or, where existing legislation allows, use of covered bonds. Moving more clean energy project securities into the marketplace and to the attention of actual investors is critical for accelerating this market while creating new business for the banks themselves.
.raw_text

 ROLE for Investors

✓ Investors can promote asset-backed clean energy securities in multiple ways:
✓ Communicate their interest and demand for such products and help develop them
✓ Engage in venues such as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)’s Solar Access to Public Capital forum to express what investors need to invest in such projects

 IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments

Asset-backed securities for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects offer long-term, low-volatility yields that match well with the liabilities of insurers and pension funds (and hence offer a potentially attractive risk-return profile). To reach a scale that is attractive to these investors, however, this market must overcome the growing pains common to any new capital markets product. The initiatives outlined in this recommendation will (1) minimize the due diligence burden on buyers of clean energy ABS issues (by standardizing PPA terms); (2) make future cash flows from such issues more stable (by strengthening the supply of O&M providers to keep systems in service); (3) enable more accurate rating and pricing of such issues (via more detailed historical data); and (4) limit downside risk for buyers of early clean energy ABS issues (via credit enhancement from banks). For investors participating in such initiatives will be a down payment on the extra-yield they can reap in the future.
Developing economies’ share of global clean energy investment is large and growing rapidly. In 2012, developing (i.e. non-OECD) economies accounted for 35 percent of global clean energy investment ($98 billion). Moreover, of the $740 billion per year in projected global investment in the electric power sector through 2035, developing economies account for more than 60 percent of total investment. Given that the majority of the clean energy investment needed for a 2 °C future will occur in emerging economies, there is much that policymakers can do in terms of direct finance, investment-related policies, and technical assistance to facilitate and expand such investments. Note that institutional investors are a key source of funds for many of the entities (e.g. multilateral development banks) best positioned to strengthen frameworks for clean energy investment in developing countries; as such, investors institutional investors have ample opportunities to champion the recommendations of this section.

EXPAND “North-South” financing of clean energy with the goal of $100 billion per year by 2020

As part of the 2010 Cancun Agreements, developed countries pledged to increase funding for climate change mitigation and adaption in developing countries to $100 billion per year by 2020 from a mix of public and private sources. Assuming (conservatively) that one-third of this amount will be allocated to mitigation in the form of clean energy deployment, this suggests that annual “North-South” flows of clean energy investment must rise from a 2012 level of $10.2 billion to a 2020 level of roughly $100 billion. Since development banks—chiefly the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and Agence Francaise de Development—are currently the source of 97 percent of this “North-South” investment, they will have to play the lead role in scaling up these capital flows. As the World Bank and others phase out support for coal-fired generation in developing countries—a policy that all development banks ought to follow—they should repurpose these resources to support renewable energy and energy efficiency. Given the significant leverage that can be achieved using public funds to support investment in developing countries—between $3-15 of private investment for every $1 of public funds deployed—even small increases in development bank financing will yield valuable impacts.

125 IEA, World Energy Outlook 2013, 192. The $740 billion per year figure is in constant 2012 dollars.
129 This is particularly true as the Green Climate Fund (GCF)—a new multilateral institution intended to help fulfill the Cancun commitments—is (understandably) taking time to capitalize and begin investing.
131 UNEP (2008), Public Finance Mechanisms to Mobilise Investment in Climate Change Mitigation (UNEP, Nairobi).
Fortunately, promising opportunities abound to scale up development bank support for renewable energy in emerging economies. For example, as part of the GET Feed-in Tariff (GET FiT) Program for East African nations (proposed by Deutsche Bank and taken up by KfW), the World Bank is offering partial risk guarantees to support commercial project financing for up to 15 small-scale (1-20 megawatt) renewable energy projects throughout Uganda that will benefit from the country’s feed-in tariff system.\(^{132}\) The GET FiT model—targeted incentives for small-scale renewable energy, in combination with development bank risk guarantees and private sector financing—represents one way to accelerate renewable energy investment that developments banks should explore replicating elsewhere in Africa and beyond.

**PROVIDE effective risk insurance for clean energy—possibly through the Green Climate Fund**

From feed-in tariffs in Africa to reverse auctions in India, government policies play a key role in supporting clean energy investment in developing countries. Reliance on policy, however, creates additional risk for investors—something that investors in clean energy in developed countries have learned all too well, such as in 2010 when Spain retroactively cut feed-in tariff payments to solar PV systems. The sometimes opaque and fragmented nature of energy policymaking in many developed countries exacerbates this risk.

Project developers can mitigate this risk if they have the opportunity to purchase political risk insurance that compensates investors from unforeseen adverse changes in government policy. The U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), for example, recently provided political risk insurance to a small-scale solar PV project in South Asia to protect the developer against “a variety of risks including government default on an arbitration award and government interference with the dispute resolution process provided under the long-term power purchase agreement.” Expanded clean energy deployment in developing countries also increases the need for expanded political risk insurance policies from OPIC, the World Bank and other institutions. The Climate Policy Initiative notes that *effective* policy risk insurance instruments should “(1) streamline and systematically define risks and conditions for coverage; (2) be backed with strong enforcement power from the insurance provider; (3) include developed markets and smaller projects; (4) reduce transaction costs implied by currently available instruments, and (5) improve project creditworthiness.”\(^{133}\)

Widely available political risk insurance for clean energy projects in developing countries, across all clean energy sectors, will be an effective way to leverage public funds to facilitate private investment. For example, political risk insurance could be a key product of the new UN-sponsored Green Climate Fund (GCF), and is something that investors ought to urge the GCF to consider.\(^{134}\)

**DEVELOP BROAD PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS** to provide technical expertise in transition planning, power, buildings, and transport

To realize the full potential for clean energy investment in developing economies, there is also a need for provision of technical expertise in transition planning, socio-economic policy, and the electric power, building efficiency and transport sectors. Like developed economies, for example, power systems in developing countries are being impacted by trends such as growth of distributed generation and demand response, tangible opportunities for end-use efficiency and electrification of the transportation sector. This creates a pressing need for comprehensive power system policy frameworks to address such inter-related issues as operations, transmission and market design.

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Meeting this need requires continuing and expanding multilateral efforts such as the Clean Energy Ministerial 21st Century Power Partnership (21CPP)\textsuperscript{135} “a platform for international efforts to advance integrated policy, regulatory, financial, and technical solutions for the deployment of renewable energy in combination with large-scale energy efficiency and smart grid solutions.” 21CPP is leveraging the technical and regulatory expertise of its members—such as the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory and ENTSO-E, the European grid operator—to provide tools and processes for developing country power systems in areas such as smart grids and intelligent demand. Current 21CPP projects include consultations on large-scale grid integration of solar PV in China and state-level policy approaches to energy efficiency in South Africa. In combination with other public-private partnerships such as the International Labor Organization’s work on green jobs and sustainable development,\textsuperscript{136} the UN Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the World Bank’s Renewable Energy Toolkit, the IEA Electricity Coordination Group, and the Global Green Growth Forum, efforts such as the 21CPP will be essential to meet the goal of “rapidly accelerating energy access in emerging economies, while simultaneously de-carbonizing power systems globally.”

**ROLE for Investors**

Investors can promote the above initiatives in the following ways:

- As holders of the debt of development banks, encourage these institutions to devote more funds to clean energy financing and communicate the benefits to project developers from expanded political risk insurance

**IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

By reducing sovereign risk, expanded risk insurance for clean energy investments in developing countries removes a key red flag on otherwise attractive investments. More generally, one the knock-on effects from helping emerging economies to embrace a low-carbon future is that such economies are (particularly in the case of the power sector) more likely to open new investment opportunities to outside sources of capital (note that development bank financing creates $3-15 of private investment opportunity for every $1 of public funds deployed).


Throughout this document the term “electric utilities” is meant to be inclusive of independent power producers.


The IEA’s 2 °C scenario estimates a need to invest $650 billion in the electric power sector annually through 2020 (27 percent of total required clean energy investment). Simply put, the actions of electric utilities and independent power producers will play a central role in determining whether the world moves onto a 2 °C pathway. The actions of utilities will affect new clean energy investment in several ways. First, utilities are a key source of capital for new clean energy investment. In 2012 utility balance sheets supported roughly $90 billion of asset finance for new clean energy projects—60 percent of total asset finance, or about 30 percent of total clean energy investment. Second, electric utilities have tremendous opportunities to promote more efficient consumption of electricity, but to do so must have financial incentives that reward successful energy efficient programs (or, at least, do not actively discourage them). Third, by virtue of their role as grid operator, utilities’ ability to cost-effectively integrate increasing amounts of variable renewable resources depends to some extent on their investments to make the grid more intelligent and capable of storing energy.

Accelerating utility investment in clean energy, however, will also require modernizing frameworks for utility regulation. At a high level, this means transforming electric utilities from centralized (primarily fossil-fueled) entities with an incentive to sell ever-greater amounts of electricity to customers to energy-service providers who draw from a range of both centralized and distributed energy resources (e.g. distributed generation, energy efficiency, demand response). In practice, this means that policies such as net metering or feed-in tariffs, decoupling, and measures that explicitly reward distributed resources for the net economic, environmental and reliability benefits that they provide to the grid will play a critical role in accelerating clean energy investment.

Given this multi-dimensional relationship between utilities and clean energy investment, increasing utility investment in clean energy must address the multiple roles that utilities can play (as well as the regulatory structures necessary to support each role).

**UTILITIES’ ROLE as developer of clean energy projects**

**Expand investment where possible**

Utilities and independent power producers use their balance sheets to fund billions of dollars of investment in wind, solar and other renewable generation projects. Where possible, such investments should be continued and increased. For example, MidAmerican Energy, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, the

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137 Throughout this document the term “electric utilities” is meant to be inclusive of independent power producers.

conglomerate run by Warren Buffett, has over the last two years invested $5.4 billion in three large U.S. solar projects (with a cumulative capacity of 1,400 megawatts.139 Other utilities with strong credit ratings have the potential to undertake similar investments, and ought to make doing so a top priority.

**Introduce new financing structures where needed**

Many U.S. utilities and independent power producers have the capital and credit rating to expand investments in clean energy, but in other markets utility balance sheets are under more duress. Whereas in 2001 all of Europe’s top 10 utilities had a credit rating of A or higher, in 2012 only one did.140 Utilities with strained balance sheets need new structures to finance additional renewable energy investment. The key is to create new financing vehicles that connect utilities (which have expertise in developing and operating renewable energy projects) with pension funds and other institutional investors that have the capital to fund such projects. Utilities can do this in several ways:

- **New “captive” funds:** Utilities might create their own “captive” capital funds to attract investment from third-party institutional entities; they would then use these funds to develop and operate portfolios of renewable energy assets, with cash flows returning to the investors.

- **Sell-Operate:** After developing renewable energy projects, utilities could unload these from their balance sheets by selling them to pension funds but retain responsibility for operational asset management.141 This is similar to the YieldCo model described earlier in this paper.142

As noted above, a key will be aggregating renewable energy assets to a scale that is attractive to institutional investors.

**Consider ownership of large-scale configurations of distributed generation**

By eroding the rate base of utilities, deployment of customer-owned distributed generation (such as rooftop solar PV) will over time pose financial challenges for many utilities. Aversion to such financial impacts had led some utilities to emphasize the costs that distributed generation can impose on the power grid, in terms of both lost revenue and the need for additional back-up capacity to balance intermittency. Distributed generation, however, can also benefit utilities by reducing congestion, deferring the need for transmission and distribution upgrades and reducing line losses; these monetary benefits are in addition to societal benefits such as reduced air pollution and local job creation.143

Given the benefits of distributed resources and evidence that utility ownership of distributed generation leads to greater deployment,144 utilities should explore ownership of portfolios of distributed generation. In markets where utilities are barred from owning generation capacity, regulatory changes may be needed to enable this development. Where direct ownership is not possible, utilities should find other ways to support investment in distributed generation.

**Extend investment to carbon capture and storage (CCS)**

A second key initiative for electric power companies is to ramp up investment in deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology for power plants. In fact, the IEA projects a need for $7 billion of CCS investment through 2020.145 Achieving this 2 °C pathway requires increasing the number of operational CCS projects (across all sectors) to around 130 by 2020. Currently, however, only two

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144 IEA, *Energy Technology Perspectives 2012*, 142.
large-scale power generation projects with CCS are being constructed around the world, with another 40 in the planning stages.\textsuperscript{146} Even against the backdrop of ambiguous national climate policies, utilities should prioritize finding ways to bring commercial-scale projects to realization, as opposed to the recent trend of projects being cancelled. Given the current costs of this technology, governments should support its further development and deployment. CCS is necessary to allow continued global coal combustion for power generation without causing potentially catastrophic climate change, and commercial-scale deployment is necessary to develop the technology and bring down its costs.\textsuperscript{147}

**UTILITIES’ ROLE in deploying energy efficiency**

**Ambitious targets for energy efficiency savings**

Energy efficiency should be the “first fuel” of choice for electric utilities. Consistent with results achieved by leading utility energy efficiency programs in the U.S., regulators and utilities should agree to pursue all cost-effective energy efficiency and set a target for annual savings equal to at least 1 percent of total annual electricity use.\textsuperscript{148} Such a target reflects the level of savings in leading utility energy efficiency programs and also the crucial role of energy efficiency in least-cost emissions-reduction pathways.\textsuperscript{149} In the U.S. electric utilities deploy almost $7 billion annually into energy efficiency programs, a figure that could double by 2020. Aside from setting ambitious savings targets (which, research has found, typically lower the average cost of each kilowatt-hour saved\textsuperscript{150}), utilities should also fully include energy efficiency in electric system resource planning.

**Regulatory changes to ensure adequate energy efficiency investment**

Targets for energy efficiency are of little use, however, without a regulatory environment that encourages utilities to pursue such activity. Key regulations needed to ensure adequate investment toward meeting energy efficiency targets include:

- **Lost margin recovery (i.e. “decoupling”):** The traditional link between electricity sales and utility revenues—more electricity sold means more revenue—gives utilities a financial disincentive to support energy efficiency measures that reduce electricity use. Decoupling ensures that a utility recovers its commission-approved rate of return regardless of sales fluctuations, thereby severing the link between power sales and profits.\textsuperscript{151} This allows utilities to both pursue large-scale energy efficiency (or distributed generation) programs without threatening profitability and support public policies (such as building codes) required to realize growth in these areas.\textsuperscript{152} Despite its significant benefits, decoupling is still far from the norm for electric utilities. In the U.S., less than half of states currently have (or are considering) some form of decoupling.\textsuperscript{153} Given the importance of enabling financially healthy utilities to co-exist with robust energy efficiency programs, utilities and regulators should prioritize decoupling as a key component of 21st century electricity regulation. Investors, corporate customers and NGOs should actively support the necessary legislation and regulatory reforms.

- **Program cost recovery:** Utilities must be able to recover upfront, fixed costs of administering energy efficiency programs.

- **Performance incentives:** Utilities should be rewarded for exceeding program goals and penalized for failing to meet them.
UTILITIES AS INTEGRATORS of variable renewable energy resources

Prioritize smart grid investments to improve the economics of renewable energy

Energy generated from a wind turbine or solar PV farm is variable—it fluctuates over the course of the day (and year) and cannot be dispatched as needed. The capabilities of existing power grids, however, often limit the amount of variable energy resources that can be integrated without compromising reliability or raising cost excessively. As a result, utilities often must curtail the power output from renewable generators, wasting a low-cost energy resource and harming project economics.154

Fortunately, smart grid technology—such as advanced sensors, communications infrastructure, energy storage and control systems—offer the potential to improve this situation.155 Utilities should prioritize smart grid investments that enable more integration of renewable energy technologies, and seek regulatory support for these improvements. A study by Navigant Consulting estimated that by 2020, smart grid functionality could help increase the penetration of distributed solar PV by more than 60 percent over the reference case with a conventional grid.156 Another recent study by the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory concluded that, given adequate deployment of smart grid technologies, “renewable energy resources accessed with commercially available generation technologies, could adequately supply 80 percent of total U.S. electricity generation in 2050 while balancing supply and demand at the hourly level.”157 Similar conclusions have been reached for Europe and other markets.158

When allocating their capital investment dollars, utilities should emphasize investments that improve the economics and deployment of variable renewable energy resources.

Utilities should embrace the shift from a centralized, fossil fuel based electricity system to a model where utilities become energy service providers integrating both centralized generation, distributed generation and demand-side resources. Regulators also have a responsibility to encourage such decisions. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), for example, recently approved a target for the state’s three investor-owned utilities to procure a total of 1,325 MW of energy storage by 2020 (an amount equal to 1 percent of annual peak loads in 2020).159 Other states and regions should consider replicating this mandate as a way to expand solar, wind and other variable energy resources.
**ROLE for Investors**

Investors can support adoption of pro-clean energy business models by electric utilities via:

- **Engagement with companies:** Engaging with utility companies to encourage greater deployment of renewable energy and investment in energy efficiency. Investors should query utilities on what they are doing in the areas of clean energy generation and capacity, advanced infrastructure, distributed energy resources, and energy efficiency—benchmarking activity against what other leading companies are doing. For companies with healthy balance sheets (i.e., most U.S. utilities), the goal should be to convince utilities to devote more of their balance sheets to these areas. For utilities with weakening balance sheets (e.g., many in Europe), the focus should be on creating new financial structures for institutional investment in utility-operated clean energy projects.

- **Get involved in regulatory proceedings:** As regulated entities, rate cases of public utility commissions are hugely important in determining how utilities operate. Shareholder interests already loom over such proceedings, with the “need to perform for shareholders” frequently invoked by utilities to justify a particular course of action. As major shareholders, institutional investors should more actively engage in such proceedings to emphasize the role of clean energy in creating more sustainable utility business models. On issues such as permitting utility ownership of distributed generation, allowing reimbursement of up-front expenses for energy efficiency programs and decoupling, investors should make clear to regulators the long-term benefits of such changes. As involvement in such proceedings can be costly and time-consuming, institutional investors should consider ways to collaborate—both among themselves and with clean energy advocacy groups—to enable broader participation.

**IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

With a combined enterprise value of trillions of dollars, relatively low volatility and predictable earnings, the debt and equity of electric utilities has long held a significant share of institutional investor portfolios. Many trends, however, are eroding the viability of traditional utility business models. As with any industry that receives trillions of dollars of institutional investment, investors have a strong interest in ensuring that electric utilities remain viable investments. Helping utilities to adopt new, more sustainable business models will preserve the electric utility sector as a viable place for investors to put investment capital to work.
Currently the economics of clean energy are disadvantaged due by a profound market failure—the costs of carbon pollution (in terms of societal damages from current and future global warming) are not reflected in the price of fossil fuels. Ignoring this cost makes fossil fuel energy appear less costly than it really is, and tilts the scales against energy efficiency and clean energy sources. Private-sector efforts will not and cannot be effective absent a strong and consistent policy framework provided by government—the economics of the existing market failures are too strong. Policymakers should correct this market failure by making fossil fuel energy prices reflect the full cost of carbon pollution. The best way to do this is through low-carbon policies that lead to economy-wide carbon prices, supplemented where necessary by sector-specific, technology-neutral mandates such as a low-carbon fuel standard. Investor, company and utility support for smart climate and energy policies is essential to making this happen and mitigating the risks of climate change.

**CARBON PRICE** (via tax or cap-and-trade) should be $20-$50 per ton of (tCO₂e)

Two key questions relating to a design of a carbon price are (1) how high a price?; and (2) in what form? With respect to price level, the short answer is high enough to create a pathway to reducing energy-related CO₂ emissions by more than half in 2050 (compared with 2009 levels) and ensuring that they continue to fall thereafter in line with the IEA’s 2 °C scenario. Specific carbon prices will vary by region and will be influenced by wide-ranging factors, including the presence of voluntary or mandatory energy efficiency or renewable energy targets and the broader credibility that the private sector attributes to carbon prices. Both macroeconomic models and technology-specific analyses, however, suggest that prices in the $20-50/ton of carbon-dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) will make a variety of low-carbon technologies economical and competitive on a global scale.

As for the necessary policy frameworks, a carbon price can take the form of either a carbon tax or a “cap-and-trade” system. If properly designed, both can effectively level the economic playing field between clean and conventional energy sources. Ireland, Sweden, British Columbia and other countries all levy some form of carbon tax—with prices ranging from $3/tCO₂e (in Japan) to $163/tCO₂e (in Sweden). Among cap-and-trade systems, the largest is the European Union's...
Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). Launched in 2005, the EU ETS operates in all 28 EU countries (as well as Iceland, Norway and Lichtenstein) and covers 45 percent of the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions (i.e. emissions from power and heat generation, energy-intensive manufacturing, and civil aviation). Similar systems exist in California, the Northeastern U.S., and several other countries and sub-national entities—including China, which is currently conducting pilot programs in seven cities. Current carbon trading prices for the largest existing carbon cap-and-trade systems, however, are generally well below the $20-$50/tCO₂e range, including California ($14/tCO₂e), Europe ($7/tCO₂e), and especially the Northeastern U.S. ($3/tCO₂e).

**FIGURE 15: MAP OF EXISTING, EMERGING, & POTENTIAL EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEMES**

The World Bank estimates that 40 national and 20 sub-national jurisdictions (across both developed and developing countries)—representing 21 percent of the total of 50 GtCO₂e that are emitted globally each year—already have or are considering implementing explicit carbon pricing. Since these mechanisms usually do not cover all domestic emissions, however, the effective coverage is reduced each year—already have or are considering implementing explicit carbon pricing. Since these mechanisms usually do not cover all domestic emissions, however, the effective coverage is reduced each year.

Note 1: The size of the circles is not representative of the size of the schemes.
Note 2: Costa Rica is working on the design of a domestic carbon market that would contribute to meeting the country’s carbon neutrality goal.
Note 3: Mexico’s Congress passed a General Law on Climate Change, which provides the federal government with the authority to create programs, policies, and actions to mitigate emissions, including an ETS.
Note 4: Australia’s Parliament is currently considering bills to repeal the country’s carbon trading regime.

**EXPAND**

The World Bank estimates that 40 national and 20 sub-national jurisdictions (across both developed and developing countries)—representing 21 percent of the total of 50 GtCO₂e that are emitted globally each year—already have or are considering implementing explicit carbon pricing. Since these mechanisms usually do not cover all domestic emissions, however, the effective coverage is reduced each year.
to around 7 percent of global emissions. Broadening carbon pricing programs in developed countries and enacting planned initiatives in major emerging economies (such as China, Brazil and others), however, could put an effective carbon price on nearly half of global CO₂ emissions. This scope of carbon pricing, half of global CO₂ emissions, is a target policymakers should seek—and investors should support—to achieve by 2020. And these carbon prices should be high enough to spur new investment in clean energy and reduce emissions in line with a 2 °C future.

ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES to adopt internal (“shadow”) carbon prices

In the near future political gridlock will in many countries continue to thwart adoption of an explicit price on carbon. Legislative inaction, however, does not relieve the need for begin preparing for a low-carbon future. Prudent companies are already doing this by implementing a “shadow price” on carbon in their long-term financial plans. CDP recently reported that 29 large companies based or operating in the U.S. across multiple sectors (including Google, Walmart, Exxon Mobil and Walt Disney) are using shadow carbon prices of $6-60/tCO₂e.¹⁶⁸ CDP notes that such companies use a shadow carbon price as “a planning tool to help identify revenue opportunities, risks, and as an incentive to drive maximum energy efficiencies to reduce costs and guide capital investment decisions.” Investors should encourage all companies to adopt shadow carbon prices as a means for properly evaluating the costs and benefits of investments decisions, in particular those related to clean energy.¹⁶⁹

WHERE NEEDED, complement carbon prices with other sector-specific measures

A given carbon price will spur different levels of clean energy investment across different sectors. In particular, whereas investment in the power sector may respond strongly to a carbon price in the range of $20-50/tCO₂e, investment in the transport sector will often require much higher carbon prices in order to shift investment away from petroleum-based fuels (which currently supply 95 percent of the world’s transportation energy). Simply put, there is a need to complement carbon prices with other measures specifically designed to support deployment of biofuels and advanced vehicles (e.g. plug-in hybrids, electric vehicles and fuel-cell vehicles). One example of such a policy is California’s Low-Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS).¹⁷⁰ The LCFS sets performance standards for the lifecycle carbon intensity of gasoline and alternative fuels, as well a separate standard for diesel and alternative fuels; each standard is intended to lower the carbon intensity of California’s statewide transportation mix by an average of 10 percent by 2020. By increasing market demand for clean transport—but allowing such demand to be met by a wide variety of fuels and technologies—policies such as the LCFS (and similar measures enacted by the European Union) are cost-effective ways to accelerate transport-related clean energy investment.

STRENGTHEN POLICY FRAMEWORKS by phasing out government subsidies to fossil fuels

Investors’ risk-return calculus should take into account all manner of relevant policies, not just particular measures that policymakers may currently wish to emphasize. Scrutiny should include policies inconsistent with or contrary to the goal of transforming the global energy system to reduce CO₂ pollution. A notable example in this regard is wasteful government subsidies for production and use of oil, natural gas and coal, all of which have major CO₂ footprints. Aside from distorting the


¹⁶⁹ Note also that some governments have begun adopting a form of shadow carbon price. For example, earlier this year President Obama instructed the EPA to use assume a carbon price of $37/tCO₂e when evaluating the costs and benefits of proposed regulations. Similar to the case for companies, shadow carbon prices for regulatory analysis ensure proper evaluation of all energy-related investment decisions. Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon, United States Government, “Technical Update on the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis—Under Executive Order 13566,” May 2013, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/filesomb/inforeg/social_cost_of_carbon_for_ria_2013_update.pdf

economics of clean energy (particularly in the transport sector), such subsidies—particularly in the developing world—amplify carbon pollution (and other pollutants) and drain limited fiscal resources from lower-polluting activity. Including the negative environmental and health impacts of fossil fuels, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) calculated the cost of fossil fuel subsidies in 2011 at $1.9 trillion—2½ percent of global GDP or 8 percent of total government revenues. Following through on commitments such as those made at the Rio+20 conference, policymakers should phase out subsidies to fossil fuels and fossil-fuel electricity.

**PROMOTE CLEAR COMMUNICATION on the costs of fossil fuel use and provide transitional assistance to groups affected by carbon prices and removal of fossil fuel subsidies**

Examples from multiple countries show that promoting informed debate about the costs of fossil fuel use, planning and executing transitional economic development programs, and integrating carbon price/fossil fuel subsidy measures into broader structural reforms will help improve the transition of pricing carbon pollution from fossil fuels. To achieve public acceptance, policymakers, with investor support, should clearly communicate the rationale and benefits of a carbon price, while also addressing impacts on low-income populations, fossil fuel dependent regions and national competitiveness. Moreover, carbon prices should be phased-in on a trajectory that mitigates negative transitional economic impacts in regions most adversely affected by the transition to cleaner energy.

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**✓ ROLE for Investors**

To promote the above initiatives, investors should emphasize to policymakers the business case for investment in low-carbon energy and the essential role of a carbon price (and other complementary measures such as low-carbon fuels standards) in catalyzing such investments.

**✓ IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments**

Climate change has the potential to harm long-term investor returns via (1) actual physical impacts (e.g. heat waves, storms, etc.) that devastate individual companies and slow the growth of entire economies; and (2) implementation of policies to restrict carbon emissions, which, especially if delayed for another decade or so, may come as a drastic and abrupt shock to company business models and economies at large. Adoption of economy-wide carbon prices now helps to mitigate both of these risks, and enables investors to plan prudently for the transition to a low-carbon future. More broadly, adoption of carbon prices and removal of fossil fuel subsidies will across all asset classes create tailwinds for low-carbon investments and headwinds for high-carbon investments such as oil and gas production.

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To double annual global investment in clean energy by 2020, investments in clean energy must deliver risk-adjusted returns comparable to the returns available on other investments—especially investments in conventional fossil fuels. Governments can help achieve this by enacting policies that provide transparency, longevity and certainty (TLC) to investors in clean energy. Policymakers should seek to “de-risk” clean energy technologies and accelerate their progress toward cost-competitiveness with conventional energy sources. The end result should be a “level playing field” where large-scale deployment makes clean fuels and technologies cost-competitive with fossil fuels.

For many investors, incentives are cited both as a key driver for further investment and as a key risk if they are changed unpredictably. The essential role of incentives for some technologies in some markets notwithstanding, ultimately clean energy sources will scale only as a result of cost-competitiveness with conventional energy sources.

In crafting incentives for clean energy investment, governments should apply the following key criteria:

- **Promote large-scale deployment to reduce technology costs**
  Large-scale deployment of clean energy technologies reduces costs by (1) enabling economies of scale that lower manufacturing and installation costs; and (2) creating a performance track record that allows investors to better understand risk-reward profiles, resulting in lower financing costs. Given the virtuous circle of greater deployment, increased investor certainty and lower technology/financing costs, large-scale deployment of clean energy technologies should be a key goal of policymakers. Note that the evolution of Germany’s feed-in tariffs for wind, biogas and solar PV suggests contractual stability (in the form of standard offer, take-or-pay contracts) rather than a given level of price premium per se, which is key to giving developers and investors the confidence to scale up renewable energy sources. Well-framed electricity market structures, with utility revenues “decoupled” from volume electricity sales, are also essential for large-scale deployment of clean power.

- **Enact policies with appropriate time horizons for specific technologies**
  The lifetime of cash flows from biofuel plants, energy-efficient buildings and other clean energy assets span decades. Investors in these types of assets also require policies aligned with similarly long-term horizons. By enacting short-term policies that make future cash flows unpredictable, thus increasing discount rates that investors apply to those cash flows, policies of inadequate duration create investment uncertainty.

  Technologies of different maturity require different types of private financing, and therefore different kinds of policy incentives. A first-of-a-kind biofuels technology seeking venture capital funding for a pilot plant is quite different from a utility-scale wind farm seeking asset finance. Tailoring policies to the maturity levels and financing requirements of specific technologies makes government support more impactful and cost-effective.
MATCH THE POLICY to the specifics of geographic markets

Clean energy investment risks are partly a function of high upfront capital costs. In emerging markets—where capital costs are generally higher than in developed countries, and high interest rates and currency volatility pose additional financing challenges—high capital costs can be an especially big hurdle. Policies that provide stable cash flows (such as the GET FiT program described in recommendation 7) are useful in such environments.

PROVIDE CERTAINTY to investors by avoiding retroactive policy changes

By lowering the discount rate that investors apply to cash flows from clean energy projects, increased policy certainty is hugely helpful in bolstering clean energy investment. Nothing undermines certainty, however, as much as retroactive changes in government policy. And since investors tend to have long memories, retroactive changes can undermine clean energy markets not just now but for years to come. Clear criteria and timeframes for changes to government policy (and making such changes exclusively prospective) allow for orderly market transitions and, ultimately more cost-effective policy regimes.

USE REVENUE-BASED INCENTIVES (rather than tax-based incentives) to broaden the pool of capital

Effective incentives for clean energy will attract capital from a wide variety of sources. Regrettably, in the U.S. market the key incentives for renewable energy (e.g. the Investment Tax Credit and the Production Tax Credit) are provided via the federal tax code, and are therefore of no use to tax-exempt institutional investors such as endowments and public pension funds. Moreover, even investors with sufficient tax liability must accept significant transaction costs in order to make use of these tax incentives. Rather than complicated tax incentives, an alternative model is to focus on revenue-based incentives such as renewable energy credits, feed-in tariffs and prices on carbon. Moving in this direction would do a great deal to spur more investment in clean energy infrastructure from U.S. pension funds and other tax-exempt entities.

ACHIEVE A “LEVEL PLAYING FIELD” in energy policies

Ultimately, policymakers should pursue integrated frameworks similar to the one illustrated in Figure 16 (next page). In this case, targeted, technology specific incentives (e.g. feed-in tariffs) give way to broader sector-level, technology-neutral mandates and, finally, to a “level playing field” where large-scale deployment makes clean fuels and energy technologies increasingly cost-competitive with fossil fuels. In the end, a carbon price is all the policy support that investors need to continue funding clean energy opportunities.

From the perspective of reducing carbon emissions, it is hugely important to transition away from subsidies and mandates toward technology neutral policies such as low-carbon fuel standards and explicit carbon prices. There are simply too many potential alternatives to subsidize (and too much variance in the costs of those alternatives) to make subsidies for renewable energy and energy efficiency a cost-effective, long-term strategy for reducing carbon pollution. Such policies work best as transitional measures only.

ROLE for Investors

Investors can promote the above initiatives in the following ways:

- Communicate to policymakers how business case for investment in low-carbon energy sources depends on stable and supportive policy frameworks
- Communicate the key elements of effective frameworks in terms of promoting scale, avoiding retroactivity, and matching incentives to technological maturity

IMPACT on Risk and Return of Clean Energy Investments

Policies that provide stable, long-term cash flows to clean energy projects that do not depend on complicate tax incentives will (perhaps more than anything) compensate for manifold risks of such projects and make them attractive to the institutional investors of all stripes. Moreover, a focus on large-scale deployment will create investment opportunities of the size necessary for investors to justify building expertise in a new area. Finally, inasmuch as deployment lowers the costs of clean energy technologies to be competitive with conventional energy sources, further opportunities for investment will arise that are capable of taking in trillions of dollars of institutional capital.
Clean Energy & Jobs

In addition to a safer planet, cleaner air, and trillions of dollars in fuel savings, realizing “Clean Trillion” levels of investment will yield another benefit: millions of new jobs. The daunting complexity of forecasting employment changes for the global economy through 2050, however, makes it difficult to estimate exact job-creation impacts as a result of “Clean Trillion” investments. Previous research on the clean energy-jobs connection does, however, give some insight into how more clean energy investment will expand opportunities for employment.

One notable such effort focuses on the US power sector through 2030, and calculates the job impacts of widespread deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency (as well as natural gas generation) at the expense of coal-fired generation. Key results from this modeling included:

- **An additional 7.9 million cumulative net job-years** of direct and indirect employment; this job-creation occurs as a result of the “job-years per unit of delivered energy” for energy efficiency and renewable energy being 2-8X as large as for fossil energy sources.
- **486,000 net new jobs** in place in 2030 compared with the start in 2010.
- A majority of new jobs created in well-paid existing occupations such as construction, manufacturing, engineering, and related professional services
- Recognition of energy efficiency as the most economical way to create jobs, and solar PV as the energy source that creates the most jobs per unit of delivered energy.

Recall that the job-creation numbers above are for a country that has only 5 percent of the world’s population. Recognizing this underscores how mobilizing new investment on a “Clean Trillion” scale is likely to create new economic opportunities for hundreds of millions—or billions—of individuals throughout the world.

### Table 1: Cumulative Job-Years of Employment, Total During 2010-2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative Change During 2010-2030</th>
<th>CIM Direct</th>
<th>CIM Indirect</th>
<th>O &amp; M Direct</th>
<th>O &amp; M Indirect</th>
<th>Total Direct</th>
<th>Total Indirect</th>
<th>Sum Total</th>
<th>% Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geothermal</td>
<td>56,323</td>
<td>50,690</td>
<td>135,200</td>
<td>121,680</td>
<td>191,523</td>
<td>172,371</td>
<td>363,894</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar PV</td>
<td>1,251,949</td>
<td>1,126,754</td>
<td>359,332</td>
<td>323,399</td>
<td>1,611,280</td>
<td>1,450,152</td>
<td>3,061,433</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar Thermal</td>
<td>25,639</td>
<td>23,075</td>
<td>30,493</td>
<td>27,444</td>
<td>56,131</td>
<td>50,518</td>
<td>106,650</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>749,315</td>
<td>674,383</td>
<td>403,669</td>
<td>363,302</td>
<td>1,152,984</td>
<td>1,037,685</td>
<td>2,190,669</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal – RE</td>
<td>2,083,224</td>
<td>1,874,902</td>
<td>928,694</td>
<td>835,825</td>
<td>3,011,919</td>
<td>2,710,727</td>
<td>5,722,645</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Gas</td>
<td>82,008</td>
<td>73,807</td>
<td>754,260</td>
<td>678,834</td>
<td>836,268</td>
<td>752,641</td>
<td>1,588,910</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipelines &amp; Electricity Grid</td>
<td>363,000</td>
<td>326,700</td>
<td>43,052</td>
<td>38,747</td>
<td>406,052</td>
<td>365,447</td>
<td>771,499</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal, Oil, Coal CCS</td>
<td>40,960</td>
<td>36,864</td>
<td>(578,208)</td>
<td>(520,387)</td>
<td>(537,248)</td>
<td>(483,523)</td>
<td>(1,020,772)</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>107,008</td>
<td>96,307</td>
<td>32,911</td>
<td>29,620</td>
<td>139,919</td>
<td>125,927</td>
<td>265,847</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE (Energy Efficiency)</td>
<td>342,806</td>
<td>291,007</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>342,806</td>
<td>291,007</td>
<td>633,814</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,019,007</td>
<td>2,699,588</td>
<td>1,180,710</td>
<td>1,062,639</td>
<td>4,199,716</td>
<td>3,762,226</td>
<td>7,961,943</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Data refers to number of job-years; that is years of FTE (full-time equivalent) employment (2,080 hrs work, per job, per year).
1. The change in employment is using the DBCCA energy forecast during 2010-2030 (cumulative, adding each year’s total employment).
2. CIM (direct): employment directly related to construction, installation or manufacturing. CIM (indirect): second-round employment that relates to suppliers who are doing the CIM.
3. O&M (direct): direct operations and maintenance employment. O&M (indirect): second-round employment that relates to those who are doing the O&M work.

181 The investments considered include (1) doubling the share of renewable generation (geothermal, hydro, wind, and solar) in the US power supply from 11 percent in 2010 to 24 percent in 2030; (2) significantly increasing power generation from natural gas at the expense of coal; and (3) deploying widespread energy efficiency measures to limit growth in total electricity demand to 0.7 percent per year. Such investments would reduce 2030 lifecycle CO2 emissions by 31 percent relative to a 2005 baseline—generally in line with (if not wholly representative of) a 2 degree C pathway for the US power sector.
182 A job-year of employment is defined as full-time employment for one person during one year (measured by a standard 2,080 hrs of employment/year).
FIGURE 17: CUMULATIVE JOB-YEARS OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR—2010-2030

Source: WPK Model, DB Climate Change Advisors, 2012
## Table 2: Survey of Studies on Clean Energy & Job-Creation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Forecast</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geothermal Industry Employment: Survey Results &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>GEA – Cédric Nathanaël Hance for DEA Geothermal Program</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Survey of 242 companies (60% response rate)</td>
<td>34,175 new jobs</td>
<td>Job-years &amp; Jobs, Sector focus: RE, Timeframe: snapshot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Recovery</td>
<td>PERI / Center for American Progress</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>IMPLAN input-output model with enhancements</td>
<td>2 million jobs</td>
<td>Job-years, Sector focus: RE, EE &amp; transport, Timeframe: 2008-2038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Technology &amp; the Green Economy</td>
<td>California Economic Strategy Panel / Collaborative Economics</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Uses the National Establishments Time-Series (NETS) database based on Dun &amp; Bradstreet business-unit data to estimate employment at businesses identified as working in the green economy</td>
<td>43,476 people</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: Timeframe: snapshot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Infrastructure Investments Support the U.S. Economy: Employment, Productivity and Growth</td>
<td>PERI – Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts &amp; AAM</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>IMPLAN input-output model with enhancements</td>
<td>11,000 new jobs per $1bn invested in energy related infrastructure</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: energy related infrastructure, Timeframe: years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Green Building Council -- Green Jobs Study</td>
<td>Booz Allen Hamilton</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>IMPLAN input-output model with enhancements</td>
<td>8 million jobs</td>
<td>Reads as job-years, but a little ambiguous, Sector focus: EE, Timeframe: 2009-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Prosperity</td>
<td>PERI – Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Minnesota IMPLAN Group (MIG) input-output model model with enhancements</td>
<td>1.7 million net new jobs</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: RE, EE &amp; pollution control, Timeframe: not given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Economic Benefits of Investing in Clean Energy</td>
<td>PERI / Center for American Progress</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>IMPLAN input-output model with enhancements</td>
<td>2.5 million new jobs</td>
<td>Job-years, Sector focus: RE, Timeframe: 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Creation Opportunities in Hydro</td>
<td>Navigant Consulting for the National Hydropower Association (NHA)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>BEA input-output analysis with industry data (20 companies)</td>
<td>1.4 million jobs</td>
<td>Job-years, Sector focus: Hydro, Timeframe: 2009-2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shining Bright – Growing Solar Jobs in Iowa</td>
<td>The Iowa Policy Project</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Input-output model for Iowa with NREL data on costs</td>
<td>5,000 new jobs</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: RE, Timeframe: 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Solar &amp; Wind Energy Chain in Michigan</td>
<td>Environmental Law &amp; Policy Center</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Industry survey</td>
<td>4,000 wind and 6,300 solar related jobs</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: RE, Timeframe: snapshot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jobs – Cleaner Air</td>
<td>CERES / PERI</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>IMPLAN input-output model with enhancements</td>
<td>1.5 million new jobs</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: RE &amp; pollution control, Timeframe: 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sizing the Green Economy – a national and regional green jobs assessment</td>
<td>Metropolitan Policy Project — The Brookings Institute (and Battelle Technology Partnership Practice)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Uses the National Establishments Time-Series (NETS) database based on Dun &amp; Bradstreet business-unit data to estimate employment at businesses identified as working in the green economy</td>
<td>2,675,545 jobs</td>
<td>Jobs, Sector focus: RE, EE, pollution reduction &amp; conservation, Timeframe: snapshot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DB Climate Change Advisors, 2012
Defining the Clean Trillion

IEA DEFINITION BASED ON DIFFERENCE IN ANNUAL ENERGY INVESTMENT BETWEEN 6DS AND 2DS

In a scenario where the global average temperature increases to 6 degrees Celsius (6DS) above pre-industrial levels, the IEA forecasts that from 2010-2050 the world will invest $104 trillion in the energy sector (or $2.6 trillion annually). To secure an 80 percent chance of limiting average global temperature increase to 2°C (2DS), total energy investment over this period must increase to $140 trillion ($3.5 trillion annually). This difference in annual energy investment (i.e. $3.5 trillion - $2.6 trillion) between a 2DS and 6DS world (1) amounts to roughly $1 trillion of additional annual investment from 2010-2050; and (2) goes entirely toward clean energy technologies. As a result, we refer to this additional $1 trillion per year in clean energy investment as the “Clean Trillion.”

The low-carbon energy sources included in the “Clean Trillion” include:

- **Power**: Wind, solar, CCS, other renewables
- **Transport**: Hybrid vehicles, plug-in and electric vehicles, fuel-cell vehicles, liquefied petroleum gas/compressed natural gas (slight increase), plane/ship/rail
- **Buildings**: water heating, space heating, cooling and ventilation, lighting, appliances and other equipment, building shell improvements
- **Industry**: Investment requirements in industrial production plants for the five most energy-intensive sectors (chemicals and petrochemicals, iron and steel, pulp and paper, cement and aluminum).

These investments go toward, among other things, more energy efficient equipment, improved energy management, additional recycling, fuel switching and CCS to capture process emissions.

Figure 18 illustrates incremental annual investment in these technologies in a 2DS world, relative to what the IEA predicts will be invested in a 6DS world. Note that moving from a 6 degree pathway to a 2 degree pathway requires an additional $500 billion of annual investment in clean energy through 2020, with additional annual investment rising to $1 trillion by 2030.

### Figure 18: Additional Annual Investment in Clean Energy in IEA 2 Degree Scenario Relative to 6 Degree Scenario, 2010-2050 ($BN)

![Graph showing additional annual investment in clean energy technologies](source: IEA, Ceres analysis 2013)
Note, however, that the drivers of rising clean energy investment (i.e. replacement/retrofit of aging energy infrastructure in OECD countries and need for new infrastructure to meet surging energy demand in non-OECD countries) will exist to some extent irrespective of climate constraints; therefore to attain a 2 degree pathway overall investment in clean energy must be considerably higher than the numbers displayed above (averaging $1.5 trillion per year through 2020, and rising to $3.5 trillion per year by 2030).

**Figure 19: Overall Annual Clean Energy Investment in a 2 Degree Scenario, 2010-2050 ($BN)**

Source: IEA, Ceres analysis 2013

### Measuring the Current Level of Clean Energy Investment

**Climate Policy Initiative**

Measuring the current level of clean energy investment is challenging—a point we highlight in our Recommendation 4. That said, for 2012 the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) calculates total investments devoted to climate mitigation as $337 billion. At least 88 percent of this (e.g. $297 billion) can be counted as “clean energy investment”, including $265 billion for renewable energy generation, $32 billion for energy efficiency, and at least some portion of the $40 billion in “other mitigation measures” (i.e. the amount devoted to (1) process emissions in industry and fugitive emissions (e.g. industrial process improvements); and (2) sustainable transport modes supporting modal shift (e.g. rail, metro, etc.)). Note, however, that since the CPI data does not include estimates of private investment for energy efficiency and “other mitigation measures”, however, actual 2012 investment in the clean energy sectors covered by the IEA is likely to be higher than the CPI figures suggest.
Bloomberg New Energy Finance

Another estimate of current clean energy investment comes from Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF). BNEF figures are the most widely cited real-time estimate of investment into clean energy; BNEF data is also prized for breaking down total investment figures into specific asset classes.

Table 4 (next page) lists the sectors and asset classes that BNEF includes in its calculation of global clean energy investment. Broadly speaking, the sectors are similar to those for the IEA listed above.

Comparing BNEF’s estimate of actual clean energy investment to the IEA’s forecast of required 2DS investment, however, requires adjusting the IEA and BNEF data sets in order to:

- remove from IEA data low-carbon sub-sectors that BNEF exclude from its data entirely, such as plane/ship/rail (which is easy enough to do).
- account for BNEF excluding from its data asset finance investment for building efficiency, industrial efficiency, and advanced transport (e.g. electric vehicles). This exclusion partly reflects data for certain sectors (i.e. building energy efficiency) lacking the quality and availability to allow for rigorous analysis. It can be problematic, however, as these sub-sectors account for a large share of IEA’s overall required investment (and, as noted, IEA does not break its numbers down into asset classes as BNEF does). Including these sub-sectors in BNEF asset finance data would likely increase 2012 global clean energy investment well above $281 billion.
- consider whether all BNEF asset classes (e.g. R&D, M&A) should qualify as “investment” in the sense meant by the IEA forecasts, or whether this should be restricted to just those asset classes focused on deployment (e.g. asset finance, small distributed capacity, maybe some public markets and VC/PE).

Though extremely valuable, limitations of existing clean energy investment data underpin our call in Recommendation 4 for more rigorous and comprehensive data on clean energy finance.
### Table 4: Components of BNEF Clean Energy Investment Statistics by Sector, as at Q2 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Sector Group</th>
<th>Super Sector Name</th>
<th>Asset Finance</th>
<th>Public Markets</th>
<th>VC/PE</th>
<th>M&amp;A</th>
<th>Re-Invested</th>
<th>SDC</th>
<th>Corp R&amp;D</th>
<th>Gov R&amp;D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Fuels</td>
<td>Biofuels</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ✓ Included in the standard clean energy investment output
- ✓ Included in the cross-border investment output
- ○ Partial inclusion in the standard clean energy investment output
- ○ Possibility for inclusion in the cross-border investment output

Note: only completed deals with a ‘new energy’ relevance are included for Public markets, VC/PE, & M&A.

Source: Bloomberg New Energy Finance

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64 | INVESTING IN THE CLEAN TRILLION: Closing the Clean Energy Investment Gap
**Actual & Target Financial Returns from Investments in Clean Energy**

Target financial returns from investments in clean energy vary across asset classes, technologies, and geographies (and as with any investment, actual returns will often differ from target returns). Table 5 illustrates the high-level risk and return characteristics for different clean energy asset classes; the paragraphs below (1) assess how actual returns have compared with these expectations; and (2) address briefly how each of the 10 proposed Action Steps can improve risk-adjusted returns for clean energy investments.

### TABLE 5. RISK/RETURN OVERVIEW OF CLEAN ENERGY ASSET CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Fixed Income</th>
<th>Public Equity</th>
<th>Private Equity/Venture Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of infrastructure assets</td>
<td>Debt securities issued by projects, banks, MDBs, &amp; corporations</td>
<td>Publicly-traded equity securities issued by corporations</td>
<td>Earlier-stage investment in private companies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Return</td>
<td>12-18 percent (direct) 7-20 percent (fund)</td>
<td>1-6 percent (climate bonds) 3-10 percent (project, ABS)</td>
<td>5-20 percent</td>
<td>20-30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volatility</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquidity</td>
<td>Low/Med</td>
<td>Med/High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>Direct, Fund (Private or Listed), Yieldcos</td>
<td>Project Bonds, ABS, Climate Bonds</td>
<td>Direct, Fund</td>
<td>Direct, Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Infrastructure here refers only to equity investment vehicles; infrastructure-related debt vehicles (e.g. project bonds, ABS, and climate bonds) are included in Fixed Income. Source: DB Climate Change Advisors, OECD, Ceres analysis 2013

Note that an analysis more sophisticated than that in the table above would vary investment horizon and target return by type of investor. For example, for the case of US solar investment, Table 6 (next page) categorizes the investment preferences of different kinds of investors.

**ACTUAL RETURNS VS. TARGET RETURNS**

**Infrastructure**

A recent OECD survey reported actual returns (measured by internal rate of return) for direct clean energy project investments in a range of -13-21 percent; relative to target returns of 12-18 percent, this suggests that direct project investments have often (but not always) met expectations.\(^{184}\) Assessing how frequently target returns have been met is difficult owing to a paucity of public data, a point discussed in Action Step 4.

Relative to direct project investments, more extensive data on the performance of infrastructure funds helps to more accurately compare target and actual performance. For the period 2004-2011, Cambridge Associates analyzed 123 investments in renewable power development (with a combined paid-in capital of $7.4 billion) made by 109 private equity funds.\(^{185}\) For these investments Cambridge Associates calculates a “gross pooled IRR” of 11.1 percent and a “net-to-limited partner” fund-level IRR of roughly 7 percent (i.e. equal to the low end of target returns for such investments). This match between actual and (low-end) target returns strengthens the case for at least the renewable energy portion of clean energy infrastructure funds being able to add value to investor portfolios.

---

184 Kaminker, C. et al., “Institutional investors and Green Infrastructure Investments: Selected case Studies,” 30. Note, however, that projects where a large portion of investor returns derive from tax incentives (e.g. wind and solar projects in the US) place tax-exempt entities such as public pension funds and endowments at a considerable disadvantage. This underscores the need to rethink incentives for clean energy with the goal of attracting more institutional capital, as discussed in Action Step 10.

### Table 6: Characteristics of Different Kinds of Investors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investor type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Preferred asset classes</th>
<th>Investment horizon</th>
<th>Targeted returns&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venture capital</td>
<td>Accel Partners</td>
<td>Early-stage companies and platforms</td>
<td>~10 years (fund life)</td>
<td>~&gt;30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sequoia Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>~3-5 years (exits for individual investments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Development&quot; private equity</td>
<td>KKR</td>
<td>Infrastructure projects</td>
<td>~7-10 years (fund life)</td>
<td>~10-20%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starwood Energy</td>
<td>Portfolios of projects</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure debt funds</td>
<td>Hadrian’s Wall</td>
<td>Direct infrastructure loans</td>
<td>~20 years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macquarie Group</td>
<td>Infrastructure debt securities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hedge funds</td>
<td>Bridgewater</td>
<td>Liquid securities</td>
<td>~1 year</td>
<td>~7-10% for absolute return funds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soros Fund Mgmt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Maximise returns (~20%) for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>JP Morgan</td>
<td>Currently: project finance (construction and term debt), tax equity</td>
<td>~&lt;1 year for ~50% of fixed income on balance sheet</td>
<td>aggressive funds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US Bank</td>
<td>Future: construction finance, tax equity</td>
<td>~&lt;1 year for ~50% of fixed income on balance sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>~1-5 years for most other fixed income holdings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chevron</td>
<td>Short-term commercial paper and notes</td>
<td>Corporate minority equity holdings</td>
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<td>Liquid, low-risk tax credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large corporations</td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
<td>Liquid securities</td>
<td>Quarterly, for some</td>
<td>~7% (overall company earnings)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T Rowe Price</td>
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<td>~1-2 years, for others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>~&lt;10+ for retirement portfolios</td>
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<td>Mutual funds / Retail investors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pension funds / Endowments</td>
<td>National Pension Service of Korea</td>
<td>Various willing to invest in managers (sometimes directly) across broad range of asset classes – eg, venture capital, equities, real estate</td>
<td>Annual (liability matching framework: ensure yearly liabilities are met)</td>
<td>~7-8%</td>
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<td>New York State Teachers</td>
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<td>Yale Endowment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Constellation</td>
<td>Power plants</td>
<td>Quarterly (overall company earnings)</td>
<td>~11% required return on equity</td>
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<td>Tri-State G&amp;T Coop</td>
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<td>~5.6% WACC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>~4% dividend yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance companies</td>
<td>AIG</td>
<td>Fixed income to cover claims</td>
<td>~20 years (long-term assets)</td>
<td>~6% (long-term)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prudential</td>
<td>Riskier assets to grow asset base</td>
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<td>Maximise return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendors / EPC installers</td>
<td>Bechtel</td>
<td>Pipelines / channels for their products</td>
<td>~3-5 years (companies looking to ensure future sales of their products)</td>
<td>~2.5-3% debt spreads over three-month LIBOR&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trina Solar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landowners / Real estate</td>
<td>Ted Turner</td>
<td>Land, buildings</td>
<td>~10 years (fund lifetime)</td>
<td>~20.25% (development)</td>
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<td>developers</td>
<td>Vornado</td>
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<td>~20 years (for individual holdings)</td>
<td>~5% REIT dividend yield</td>
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<td>Other stakeholders</td>
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<td>US Army</td>
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</table>

Source: Bloomberg New Energy Finance
Fixed Income

Returns from fixed-income investments related to clean energy tend to be both lower and less volatile than for equity investments in clean energy infrastructure; exact returns, however, vary across different fixed-income vehicles.186

Across the $4.1 billion in privately placed clean energy project bonds since 2011, these bonds have had average annual coupons (i.e. interest payments) between 4-4.5 percent, or 200-250 basis points (2-2.5 percent) above 10-year yields on US Treasury notes.187 Bonds from several very large projects, however, have offered somewhat higher yields. For example, to finance a portion of the 550-megawatt Topaz solar PV farm in Southern California, in February 2012 Topaz Solar Farms LCC (owned by Warren Buffett’s MidAmerican Energy Holdings) issued $850 million in 27.5 year bonds that pay a coupon of 5.75 percent (or 379.7 basis points above US Treasury notes of similar maturity). Strong investor demand for such bonds has compelled MidAmerican to pursue similar offerings for other large-scale solar PV projects that it has purchased.

Though it is very early days, initial issues from asset-backed securities related to clean energy are offering coupons similar to those discussed above, with SolarCity’s November 2013 $54.4 million issue (tied to its residential and commercial rooftop solar leases) paying a 4.8 percent annual coupon.188

Relative to yields on ABS and project bonds, yields have been somewhat lower for “climate bonds” issued by corporations to fund specific low-carbon activities. For example, Bank of America’s recent $500 million issue of three-year bonds to finance loans to energy efficiency and renewable energy projects carries an annual coupon of 1.35 percent, or only 80 basis points above three-year US Treasury notes.189

Finally, yields have been lowest on AAA-rated climate bonds issued by the World Bank and other multilateral/national development banks (with recent three-year issues from the World Bank paying annual coupons only 4-15 basis points above three-year US Treasury Notes).190 Such instruments do, however, offer at least marginally higher yields at a risk level comparable to that on US Treasuries.

Public Equity

Relative to infrastructure and fixed income, the recent performance of clean energy-related public equities has been challenging. Figure 20 (next page) illustrates clean energy indices over the past five years (i.e. composites of the largest publicly-traded clean energy companies) to have both significantly underperformed the broader market and exhibited nearly 75 percent more volatility. That said, over the last year this picture has changed considerably, with clean energy indices delivering twice the returns of the broader market and several clean energy companies (chiefly Tesla and SolarCity) being among the fastest-growing stocks of 2013. Though clean energy companies will likely continue to exhibit the above-average volatility characteristic of technology-related stocks broadly, the medium-term outlook for clean energy public equity is improving as a result of (1) progress on a long-overdue contraction of supply in solar and wind manufacturing; and (2) continued expansion of the clean energy universe beyond just pure-play wind and solar companies (e.g. into building energy efficiency, LEDs, etc.).
Private Equity/Venture Capital

Similar to the case for public equities, private equity/venture capital investments in clean energy companies have (with notable exceptions) so far often fallen short of expectations. Analyzing 1,100 investments in 652 companies ($15.4 billion in paid-in capital) across 409 funds from 2000-2011, Cambridge Associates calculates the “gross pooled IRR” of such investments to range from 0.8 percent for renewable power manufacturing companies to 5.4 percent for “energy optimization” companies (i.e. building efficiency, LED, smart grid, and advanced transport); using the same adjustment as above, this suggests net-to-investor IRRs of -3.6 percent to 1 percent (a far cry from 20-30 percent target returns). Focusing just on private equity, however, does brighten the picture somewhat, with Preqin reporting in 2012 5 of 24 leading “green” private equity funds to have delivered fund-level net IRRs above 10 percent.

Early disappointments aside, however, there is reason to be optimistic about the prospects for successful VC/PE investments going forward. This is due not only to the progress on breakthrough advances (e.g. via use of graphene and other advanced materials), but also to what one analyst terms the “steady, iterative advancement of products and services that improve the efficiency, waste profile and manufacturing cost of existing analogs, but are not market disruptors… from cheaper, more efficient lighting to advanced heating software.” Investors who finance such advancement now are likely to reap significant gains in the years ahead.

Note: Data beginning at fund inception and ending Sept. 30, 2013. Source: Invesco PowerShares.

HOW EACH OF THE 10 RECOMMENDATIONS CAN IMPROVE RISK-ADJUSTED RETURNS FOR CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS AND PORTFOLIOS

1. Develop capacity to boost clean energy investments and consider setting a goal such as 5 percent portfolio-wide clean energy investments

The heightened commitment resulting from a portfolio-wide goal would give investors the best chance of capitalizing on new clean energy energy-related opportunities across all asset classes (e.g. including fixed income), as opposed to relegating this theme to just public equity or venture capital. Bolstering capacity for infrastructure investment will strengthen the potential to pair the cash flows of clean energy infrastructure assets with investor liabilities and funding requirements. Note, however, that both materially increasing clean energy investments and development of in-house expertise will depend on each individual investor’s ability to identify suitable opportunities across asset classes that meet their criteria for returns, liquidity, etc.

192 Preqin, “2012 Global Private Equity Report, 2012.” “Green” private equity firms include those investing in one or more of the following sectors: clean technology, environmental services, and renewable energy.
2. Elevate scrutiny of fossil fuel companies’ potential carbon asset risk exposure

In a 2011 report Mercer concluded that climate policy risk (of which carbon asset risk is a part) may account for 10 percent of overall risk in investor portfolios over the next 20 years. Moreover, the potential for reduced demand for fossil fuels driven by factors other than climate policy action (e.g., increased renewable energy, energy efficiency, fuel switching, etc.) could significantly affect fossil fuel pricing and company valuations. Investors should be boosting attention to carbon asset risk by engaging with fossil fuel companies on the potential of high cost, high carbon fossil fuel reserves becoming “stranded,” thus creating long-term risks to portfolios.

3. Engage portfolio companies on the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing, as well as on the financing vehicles to support such efforts

Encouraging companies to aggressively pursue energy efficiency opportunities can help to unlock projects with high return on invested capital, thereby creating shareholder value. Moreover, in using clean energy resources to minimize carbon emissions companies will (1) reduce vulnerability to future carbon regulation (thereby protecting against future cost increases); and (2) possibly identify new business opportunities or customer solutions (thereby increasing future revenues). Both of these reasons underpin the conclusion of academic research that, over the long term, companies with leading environmental performance tend to also deliver superior financial returns for investors.194

4. Support efforts to standardize and quantify clean energy investment data and products to improve market transparency

Standardizing definitions of key investment terms (e.g. what constitutes a “climate bond”) will minimize the due diligence burden on investors and reduce the transaction costs of investing in newer clean energy-related products. Similarly, by reassuring potential buyers about what they are purchasing, standardization will increase the liquidity of climate bonds and other products. More data on clean energy investment generally will enable more precise benchmarking and evaluation of potential deals.

5. Encourage “green banking” to maximize private capital flows into clean energy

Expanded issuance of climate bonds by multilateral banks will expand the universe of highly-rated fixed-income products attached to clean energy, thereby making it easier for investors to increase allocations to clean energy within existing liquidity/creditworthiness constraints. Similarly, credit enhancement for project bonds will enable investors to capture the relatively higher yield of these instruments (relative to sovereign debt) while protecting against downside risk that results from a lack of historical data. Finally, the $2.5 trillion covered bond market offers attractive products for pension funds and insurers—extra yield relative to sovereign debt, but with less risk than unsecured bank debt or asset-backed securities—and extending this market to clean energy will increase opportunities for covered bonds in investor portfolios.

6. Support issuances of asset-backed securities to expand debt financing for clean energy projects

Asset-backed securities for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects offer long-term, low-volatility yields that match well with the liabilities of insurers and pension funds. To reach a scale that is attractive to these investors, however, this market must overcome the growing pains common to any new capital markets product. The initiatives in this recommendation will (1) minimize the due diligence burden on buyers of clean energy ABS issues (by standardizing PPA terms); (2) make future cash flows from such issues more stable (by strengthening the supply of O&M providers to keep systems in service); (3) enable more accurate rating and pricing of such issues (via more detailed historical data); and (4) limit downside risk for buyers of early clean energy ABS issues (via credit enhancement from banks). For investors participating in such initiatives will be a down payment on the extra-yield they can reap in the future.

7. **Support development bank finance and technical assistance for emerging economies**

By reducing sovereign risk, expanded risk insurance for clean energy investments in developing countries removes a key red flag on otherwise attractive investments. More generally, one the knock-on effects from helping emerging economies to embrace a low-carbon future is that such economies are (particularly in the case of the power sector) more likely to open new investment opportunities to outside sources of capital (note that development bank financing creates $3-15 of private investment opportunity for every $1 of public funds deployed).

8. **Support regulatory reforms to electric utility business models to accelerate deployment of clean energy sources and technologies**

With a combined enterprise value of trillions of dollars, relatively low volatility and predictable earnings, the debt and equity of electric utilities has long held a significant share of institutional investor portfolios. Many trends, however, are eroding the viability of traditional utility business models. As stewards of trillions of dollars of capital, investors have a strong interest in ensuring that electric utilities remain viable investments. Supporting utilities’ transition to new, more sustainable business models will preserve the electric utility sector as a viable place for investors to put their capital to work.

9. **Support government policies that result in a strong price on carbon pollution from fossil fuels and phase out fossil fuel subsidies**

Climate change has the potential to harm long-term investor returns via (1) actual physical impacts (e.g. heat waves, storms, etc.) that can severely damage individual companies and slow the growth of entire economies; and (2) implementation of policies to restrict carbon emissions, which, especially if delayed for another decade or so, may come as a drastic and abrupt shock to company business models and economies at large. Adoption of economy-wide carbon prices now helps to prevent both of these risks, and enables investors to plan prudently for the transition to a low-carbon future. More broadly, adoption of carbon prices and removal of fossil fuel subsidies will create tailwinds across all asset classes for low-carbon investments and headwinds for high-carbon investments such as oil and gas production.

10. **Support policies to de-risk clean energy deployment**

Policies that provide stable, long-term cash flows to clean energy projects that do not depend on complicated tax incentives will (perhaps more than anything) compensate for manifold risks of such projects and make them attractive to the institutional investors of all stripes. Moreover, a focus on large-scale deployment will create investment opportunities of the size necessary for investors to justify building expertise in a new area. Finally, inasmuch as deployment lowers the costs of clean energy technologies to be competitive with conventional energy sources, further opportunities for investment will arise that are capable of taking in trillions of dollars of institutional capital.
Key Market Consideration

**IMPACT OF BASEL III, SOLVENCY II, AND OTHER FINANCIAL REGULATIONS ON CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENT**

a. Impact of Basel III bank liquidity requirements
b. National regulations that prohibit pension fund investment in infrastructure
c. Solvency II and other risk-based solvency regulations

**BASEL III LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENTS**

Though clean energy projects must begin to access the bond market via such instruments as covered bonds and asset-backed securities, through at least 2020 a more old-fashioned source of debt—bank loans—will continue to play a key role in financing clean energy investment. Bank loans, usually in the form of long-term, non-recourse project finance, currently provide about 1/3 of clean energy asset finance (in 2012 roughly $50 billion of non-recourse project finance, out of $140 billion of total clean energy asset finance).197

![Figure 21: Landscape of Investment Financing Sources for Green Infrastructure in OECD Countries (Illustrative Example)](image)


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196 Project finance loans are characterized by long tenors (from 10 years up to 40 years in some cases) and are serviced by income-generating assets that may not have a ready secondary market during an economic shock.

New regulations on bank liquidity undertaken in response to the 2008-9 financial crisis, however, are causing banks to curtail lending to infrastructure projects, including renewable energy projects. Specifically, implementation of the global Basel III Accord’s new bank liquidity requirements may reduce loan tenors, increase interest rates, and ultimately drive up the cost of financing for clean energy. Such requirements are intended to ensure that banks always have sufficient liquid assets on hand to enable them to withstand periods of market stress (i.e. a “run on the bank”). The Basel III “Liquidity Coverage Ratio” (LCR), for example, stipulates that banks must have a reserve of “high quality liquid assets” sufficient to cover 30 days of estimated cash outflows during a period of market stress. Loans to renewable energy and other infrastructure projects, however, do not help banks to meet their LCR thresholds. To make room for additional holdings of assets that do count toward LCR thresholds, banks are selling off project finance loans and reducing the supply of capital for renewable energy developers.

Another relevant portion of Basel III is the Net Stable Funding Requirement (NSFR), which requires banks to fund a greater proportion of their illiquid, long-term assets—such as loans to renewable energy projects—with longer-term sources of funding such as Eurobonds and customer deposits. Since longer-term funds are more expensive, however, this requirement is causing banks to charge higher interest rates for long-term loans, increasing debt costs for renewable energy projects; and/or shorten loan durations (for example, making 5-10 year loans instead of 10-15 year loans). Shorter loan tenors introduce risk such as whether a project will be able to refinance when its initial loan expires. Since cash flows from a project will be used to repay debt before giving any returns to equity investors, uncertainty about the cost of debt over a project’s lifetime creates greater risk for equity investors (who typically fund at least 20 percent of renewable energy projects). This added risk increases the required return for equity capital, thus further increasing the overall financing cost for renewable energy projects.

Though implementation of Basel III is just beginning (and will stretch from 2013-18), its impacts of on lending to renewable energy projects are already becoming clear, especially for European banks, the dominant lenders to renewable energy projects. To rectify an expected shortfall in long-term liquidity under Basel III of EUR 2.3 trillion, European banks have already unloaded over $11 billion in project finance loans (often at discount prices) to U.S. and Japanese banks. Tenors on project finance loans are also shrinking from 10-15 years to 5-10 years. This contraction in the supply and duration of available bank debt threatens to drive up financing costs for renewable energy projects. Since the dominant renewable energy generating technologies, such as wind and solar, require high upfront costs, any increase in the cost of long-term debt finance will undermine project economics.

Perhaps most challenging is that—by diminishing the portion of bank balance sheets that can be allocated to asset-backed securities—Basel III may discourage banks from securitizing portfolios of loans to renewable energy projects. Since securitization is a key long-term solution to scaling up renewable energy investment, implementation of Basel III may cause short-term pain (as banks curb project finance lending) and also delay progress toward the long-term goal of connecting renewable energy projects with capital markets.
NATIONAL REGULATIONS THAT PROHIBIT PENSION FUND INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Pension funds in many countries face a barrier to clean energy infrastructure investment that is more fundamental than most of the issues discussed in this paper—regulations that prohibit investment in infrastructure outright. For example, Indonesia’s civil servants pension fund (Jamsostek) and nearly all public pension funds in China (with the exception of the National Social Security Fund) are barred from investing in infrastructure. Nor is the issue of regulatory obstacles to infrastructure investment relevant only to emerging markets; for example, many EU countries also proscribe their pension funds from allocating money to infrastructure.

Though regulations on pension investment in infrastructure usually aim to serve legitimate purposes (e.g. preventing pension funds from becoming piggy-banks for government-backed infrastructure projects), they often also are excessive and increasingly unnecessary over time as pension fund fiduciaries become more professional and independent from political meddling. Reforming such regulations will often be necessary to increase institutional allocations to clean energy infrastructure (particularly in developing countries), and is an issue that will have to be reckoned with on a country-by-country basis.

SOLVENCY II AND OTHER RISK-BASED SOLVENCY REGULATIONS

Even for investors allowed to invest in infrastructure, financial regulations still pose considerable challenges to investing in projects related to clean energy (whether via direct or semi-direct means). In a recent BNEF poll of 65 senior institutional investors, asset managers, bankers, utility executives, project developers, and policymakers, 35 percent of respondents cited financial regulation issues as “the most important issue deterring institutions from making investments in clean energy projects” in Europe.\(^\text{204}\) Chief among these issues are proposed “risk-based solvency regulations” (e.g. Solvency II) that limit the ability of funds to use infrastructure assets to balance their liabilities.

Focusing on the European Union, Solvency II—often described as “Basel for insurers”—is an EU directive that seeks to lower the risk exposure of European insurance companies by imposing higher capital requirements.\(^\text{205}\) The directive specifies different capital requirements depending on the perceived riskiness of asset in insurers’ portfolios, with such assets being “marked-to-market” to determine their fair value. To be implemented for insurers beginning in 2014, the risk-based solvency rules at the core of Solvency II are increasingly being applied to European pension funds as well.

Analysts have observed that new solvency requirements may deter investment in longer-term and less liquid assets such as infrastructure, including clean energy infrastructure.\(^\text{206}\) For example, on the debt side, higher capital charges for bonds of longer tenors and/or lower credit ratings may discourage investment in multilateral development bank “climate bonds”, clean energy-project bonds, and the like in favor of AAA-rated, short-term government bonds - thus crimping the ability to ramp up bond market finance of clean energy. On the equity side, critics argue that proposed capital requirements for infrastructure investments are too high relative to the risk of the underlying assets\(^\text{207}\)—again, with the impact being to discourage investment in renewable energy projects.


\(^\text{207}\) Kaminker C. and F. Stewart, “The Role of Institutional Investors in Financing Clean Energy,” 32 notes that “the proposed Solvency II regulation would likely require a 49 percent stress test (i.e. would the insurer still be able to meet its liabilities if these assets declined by this amount) for infrastructure equity and private equity (compared to a capital charge of 39 percent for listed equity) and 25 percent for real estate and infrastructure debt (NB this compares with a 0 percent capital charge for European government bonds—whatever their credit rating).”
IMPACT ON RISK AND RETURN OF CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS

Infrastructure (including that related to clean energy) can offer investors extra yield (relative to core fixed-income) with low volatility and cross-correlation (relative to public equity). Removing or reducing barriers to investing in infrastructure—whether in the form of outright prohibitions or excessively high capital requirements—may therefore expand possibilities to capture higher risk-adjusted returns. As to bank liquidity, ensuring continued bank lending to clean energy projects will preserve the debt slice of the capital stack, reduce refinancing risk, and help clean energy infrastructure projects to deliver attractive equity returns to investors. Regulators therefore ought to consider how to reconcile stronger liquidity requirements with continued bank lending to clean energy. To the extent that new bank liquidity requirements diminishes conventional bank lending to renewable energy projects, this heightens the need to scale up alternative sources of debt finance such as project bonds, covered bonds, and asset-backed securities.
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