

SYSTEMS AND ACTOR MAPPING

Insights from Session 4, Breakout Group 2 of the TCLP 2021 May Virtual Workshop, *Transformational Change and Climate Finance: Moving from Emerging Concepts to Advanced Practices*

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On May 25-26, 2021, hundreds of people from 57 countries came together in a virtual workshop organized by Climate Investment Funds' (CIF) Transformational Change Learning Partnership (TCLP). Workshop participants engaged in multiple forums to tackle questions related to how practitioners can catalyze and contribute to the transformational change that is imperative to achieving an inclusive, climate neutral, resilient, and sustainable world. During the fourth and final session of the workshop, participants selected one of five breakout groups to dive deeper into a particular area of work and what it will take to advance transformational practice and impact: 1) Long-term Planning and Programmatic Approach; 2) Systems and Actor Mapping; 3) Integrating Transformation in the Project Cycle; 4) Evaluative Practice; and 5) Building Capacity for Transformation. This document summarizes key insights, resources, and opportunities to advance transformational change from concept to practice using Systems and Actor Mapping approaches identified in the group's discussion.

Key Insights on Systems and Actor Mapping Towards Transformational Change

Steve Waddell provided a brief presentation, *Mapping for Transformational Change* ([link to presentation slides](#)). The presentation provided an overview of data mapping, its benefits, different mapping methods, and several examples of mapping systems. Key insights from the session include:

- 1. Systems mapping is a useful strategy to bring diverse actors to decision making processes and foster synergies towards transformational change. However, as a complex tool, some considerations need to be taken into account:**
 - Mapping is essential to understanding how social actors influence their natural and physical sphere and, in turn, how their environment influences them, as well as how coalitions and partnerships for transformational change can be initiated.
 - Mapping should always be a participatory process rather than “expert based”. It is important to involve all relevant stakeholders in early discussions, try to reach the most marginalized actors, and invite non-conventional thinkers to the table. Bringing diverse actors together will require different approaches. It is also important to recognize and engage with the “right people” from the mapping phase.

- Give space for higher-level actors to understand interconnections and overlaps in a system that might be more obvious at national or ground level.
- Promote coalitions to support policy makers make difficult decisions towards climate action.
- When dealing with complex arenas, it is important to reach out to our networks, especially when we least see other systems. Relationships keep emerging in the least expected ways.

2. Choosing the mapping system must be a careful process that takes current systems, relevant stakeholders, and the interactions and power relations among both systems and actors into consideration.

- Try, when possible, “mapping” the different mapping systems to understand how they work and determine which ones are the most suitable for the project’s needs.
- Mainstream the understanding of the mapping systems among all actors. Create a clear understanding of transformational change concepts and drivers within the mapping systems, and identify which concepts of climate action and mapping foster or hinder transformation.
- Consider mapping systems that have already been developed that may be influential to our own work.
- Relationship mapping is more developed at the community level, but it still needs to be present at the policy level.
- Address the trade-offs between speed and accuracy on mapping.
- Establish and explicitly plan how mapping will be used for future action.
- Define and establish system boundaries and understand what their implications are for project implementation.
- Include power relations within the mapping process to understand how they are addressed over time.

3. It is important to take advantage of additional resources to enhance the impact of systems mapping.

- Inherent challenges around data availability, capacity building, and need for resources must be addressed.
- Combine climate investments with technical assistance for long term collaboration and mapping.
- Explore new smart and flexible finance mechanisms that allow for emergent resources to move to the area of greatest need.
- Monitoring and Evaluation models can be a useful tool for mapping, provided that their criteria can be simplified and made flexible to address diverse contexts.

Opportunities to Advance Practices Towards Transformational Change

There are opportunities to develop resources, support experimentation, and catalyze learning that supports transformational change through climate action, including:

- Share the knowledge of systems mapping approaches and how to use them with TCLP actors and beyond into the climate finance community.
 - Engage beyond the TCLP community about identifying the elements of systems mapping that influence transformation (actors, for instance) and how to incorporate them into the mapping plan.

- Generate connections among “unsuspecting” allies to promote awareness of potential connections between traditionally non-related sectors or actors and identify ways they can collaborate towards transformational change.
- Deepen the knowledge on how to analyze power relations in the mapping process, how to address power imbalance after the design phase, and how to do mid-course corrections.
- Develop a better understanding of the relationships between actors and their natural and physical environments and how they influence one another.

Systems and Actor Mapping Resources

- Bounce Beyond, [Systems Mapping](#)
- [Transformations Systems Mapping and Analysis Working Group](#)
- [Systems Design Toolkit](#)

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More Information

The insights and opportunities captured in this document reflect ongoing efforts by the TCLP to use research, analysis, expert opinion, and collaborative discussion to advance transformational change when designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and learning from climate investments. For more information, please visit the TCLP website.

