SMI Energy Transition Task ForceFramework for transitioning companies

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Acknowledgements

Sustainable Markets Initiative

In his former role as The Prince of Wales, His Majesty King Charles III launched the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) at Davos in January 2020. The SMI is a network of global CEOs across industries working together to build prosperous and sustainable economies that generate long-term value through the balanced integration of natural, social, human, and financial capital. These global CEOs see themselves as the 'Coalition of the Willing' helping to lead their industries onto a more ambitious, accelerated, and sustainable trajectory. Read more: www.sustainable-markets.org

Terra Carta

In his former role as The Prince of Wales, His Majesty King Charles III, launched the Terra Carta at the One Planet Summit in January 2021. The Terra Carta serves as the mandate for the SMI and provides a practical roadmap for acceleration towards an ambitious and sustainable future; one that will harness the power of Nature combined with the transformative power, innovation, and resources of the private sector. Currently there are over 500 CEO-level supporters, including the first C40 city of Athens, Greece. The Terra Carta has served as the inspiration for the Terra Carta Design Lab. The Terra Carta is a roadmap for public, private, and philanthropic collaboration and open to all countries, cities, companies, organizations, and schools who wish to support it. Read more: www.sustainable-markets.org/terra-carta

Energy Transition Task Force

By invitation, executives from some of the world's largest and most influential industrial, energy and financial firms have come together to form the Energy Transition Task Force (ETTF) as part of the SMI and chaired by bp CEO, Bernard Looney. The ETTF's intent is determining how firms from across the energy value chain, individually and collectively, can play a leading role in driving and accelerating the transition to a sustainable future. Read more: www.sustainable-markets.org/taskforces/energy-transition-taskforce

Transition Working Group

One of the priorities of the ETTF, is to identify and assess the role of companies in transition from carbon intensive to net zero carbon as part of a broader transformation of the energy system, and in support of the world meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. In service of this objective, a transition working group was formed in August 2021. The working group includes representatives spanning the energy and utilities, metals and mining, banking, insurance, and management consulting sectors.



























Independent Assessment Provider

To benchmark and differentiate companies in this space, SMI is working with Sustainable Fitch who will leverage the transition framework to develop a transition assessment, to illuminate the spectrum of companies in the undefined space between carbon intensive and net zero today.



Sustainable Fitch provides insights, tools and data to help bring clarity to the ESG financial community. Its transparent, objective and substantive data enable confidence in decision-making. Products include ESG Ratings, ESG Scores, Second-Party Opinions, Climate Vulnerability Scores and ESG Research. Sustainable Fitch is part of Fitch Solutions, a division of Fitch Group.

Fitch Group is a global leader in financial information services with operations in more than 30 countries. Fitch Group is comprised of: Fitch Ratings, a global leader in credit ratings and research, and Fitch Solutions, a leading provider of data, research and analytics. With dual headquarters in London and New York, Fitch Group is owned by Hearst.



Executive Summary

In this paper, the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) Energy Transition Task Force proposes a transition framework in support of global progress towards net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by recognizing the activities and impact of companies reducing and removing emissions, as well as those accelerating the development of low carbon solutions at scale.

Reaching net zero requires a transformation of how we produce and consume energy. This is complex and necessitates wider engagement on the concept of 'transition' to both reduce emissions and develop green alternatives, at the same time.

To achieve this at pace and scale, the world's attention needs to go to where the emissions are. This means recognising the need to transition producers and consumers of fossil fuels in high-emitting sectors – such as heavy industry, energy, transport, and metals and mining – towards reaching net zero. The energy transition needs to engage incumbents in these sectors – including those who are not 'green' today but pursuing net zero in the future – to deploy their resources, capabilities, and capital to help accelerate global progress towards this goal.

To enable mainstream support for 'transition', stakeholders – notably investors, financiers, and insurers – as well as broader society, need an appropriate framework to identify transitioning companies, assess their progress, and track delivery.

Despite growing momentum for net zero ambitions from countries, regions, and corporates in recent years, there remains a notable gap in the available tools to enable investment in transitioning companies delivering progress across the near-, medium-, and long-term.

While identification of 'green' activities is becoming clearer through initiatives such as the EU taxonomy for sustainable finance, the spectrum between carbon intensive and 'green' (transition) is less defined. To enable support for transition and recognise positive progress that nevertheless does not qualify as 'green', there is a need to recognise assets and, particularly, companies which are transitioning.

It is this gap SMI seeks to address today – by providing a framework, with underpinning principles, to help stakeholders to identify, assess, rank, and track companies driving the transition.

To benchmark and differentiate companies in this space, SMI is working with Sustainable Fitch who will leverage the framework to develop a transition assessment, to illuminate the spectrum of companies in the undefined space between carbon intensive and net zero today. It is worth noting that as the transition framework has been developed to provide insight on transition performance, rather than providing validation of a 'green', net zero or destination state, the framework does not seek to label any company with a 'green' score.

Collectively, the SMI transition framework and Sustainable Fitch transition assessment will provide a method to better understand companies on these paths – and recognise 'transition' as a key enabler of the world meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.



Developed to provide stakeholders with the information they need on performance and progress – and ultimately help mobilise capital into not only 'green', but also 'transition' – a series of indicators have been framed to determine a company's position on the transition spectrum, based on three attributes:

- Emissions ambition: Scale and pace of forward-looking emissions reductions being pursued, including metrics for the medium- and long-term
- Emissions reductions: GHG reductions already delivered against a reported baseline (longer-term reductions) and on average annually in recent years (near-term reductions) across a company's operations, products or services, and value chain
- **Financials:** Proportion of annual investment into decarbonising and green activities or products, as well as the earnings that come from these areas over time

The transition framework published by the SMI in this paper is the result of collaboration across some of the world's largest industrial, energy and utilities, metals and mining, financial services, and management consulting firms, as members of the SMI Energy Transition Task Force. It was formed by the SMI in 2021 with a purpose and intent to determine how firms from across the energy value chain, individually and collectively, can play a leading global role in driving and accelerating the transition to a sustainable future.



Background

Addressing the challenge

In support of the mandate laid out in the Terra Carta, the ambition of the transition working group is to help the world reach net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally by 2050, or sooner; consistent with delivering the Paris goals of limiting global average temperature rise to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

To achieve this at pace and scale, the world's attention needs to go to where the emissions are. This means recognising the need to transition producers and consumers of fossil fuels in high-emitting sectors – such as heavy industry, energy, transport, and metals and mining – towards reaching net zero. The energy transition needs to engage incumbents in these sectors – including those who are not 'green' today but pursuing net zero in the future – to deploy their resources, capabilities, and capital to help accelerate global progress towards this goal.

Despite growing momentum for net zero ambitions from countries, regions, and corporates in recent years, there remains a notable gap in the available tools to enable investment in transitioning companies delivering progress across the near-, medium-, and long-term.

To enable mainstream support for 'transition', stakeholders – notably investors, financiers, and insurers – as well as broader society, need an appropriate framework to identify transitioning companies, assess their progress, and track delivery.

It is this gap that SMI seeks to address – by providing a framework, with underpinning principles, to help stakeholders to identify, assess, rank, and track companies driving transition. It has been developed to provide stakeholders with the information they need on performance and progress – and ultimately help mobilise capital into not only 'green' (e.g., renewable energy producer), but also 'transition'.

The changing role of the energy system

The energy system encompasses around 70% of the world's GHG emissions (International Energy Agency, 2019). Therefore, reaching net zero requires a complete transformation of how we produce and consume energy. Companies which are already manufacturing, supplying, or using 'green' solutions, such as renewable power generation and electric vehicles, have a crucial role to play in the world achieving this net zero ambition as these companies are already transforming the energy system. And to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, we need to continue investing in these wholly green companies.

However, a binary outlook of identifying companies as either carbon intensive or green can be limiting. Particularly, if aligned to a bias towards only investing in green companies. This is not enough to have impact at the scale and pace that the energy transition needs. Put simply, the world cannot grow solely green companies and technologies fast enough. There is no single solution to this challenge. The energy

¹ This initiative does not seek to define 'green', and instead defers this guidance to the ongoing efforts to do so by several parties including through the EU taxonomy for sustainable activities (https://finance.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-finance/tools-and-standards/eu-taxonomy-sustainable-activities_en).



system is complex, and its transformation necessitates wider engagement on the concept of 'transition' to both reduce emissions <u>and</u> develop the lower carbon alternatives needed, at the same time.

Further, especially in the context of the current global energy supply crisis, any transition needs to solve the energy 'trilemma' of lower carbon, affordable, and secure energy supply. It is therefore worth noting that even in the International Energy Agency's Net Zero Emissions Scenario, one of the most ambitious scenarios to describe delivery of the Paris goals, there is a need for continued investment in oil and gas production – of around \$350 billion per year in the 2020s, and \$170 billion per year beyond 2030. Therefore, with oil and gas continuing to play a role – albeit a reducing one – in the future, the case for decarbonising fossil energy, while at the same time, scaling the supply and use of renewable energy has never been greater.



Transition Framework

This section presents all the individual elements and principles which collectively make up the SMI Transition Framework to enable stakeholders to identify, assess, rank and track companies driving the energy transition.

Introducing the transition spectrum

Before developing a framework to identify and differentiate companies in transition, one first needs to consider the makeup of a transition journey from carbon intensive (the start point) to net zero (the destination). Transposed onto a colour spectrum (Figure 1), if the start point is considered 'black' and the destination is 'green', then 'transition' describes the state between the start point and destination.

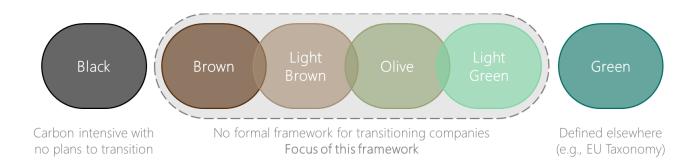


Figure 1: A transition spectrum illuminating the undefined space between carbon intensive ('black') and net zero GHG emissions ('green') by introducing four 'transition colours' – brown, light brown, olive and light green, representative of the progress between start points and destination.

The definition of 'black' for this purpose is a carbon intensive company without an aim to reduce the GHG emissions associated with its activities or products. At the opposite end of the scale is 'green' for a company which has achieved a state of net zero GHG emissions, with a business composed of wholly low and zero carbon activities or products. Neither the definition of 'black' nor 'green' are a focus of this framework. A company without a transition plan is clearly out of scope and this framework does not seek to define 'green', recognising that other ongoing efforts seek to do so including through the EU taxonomy for sustainable activities.

The transition framework that is the subject of this paper instead seeks to illuminate and differentiate companies on the transition spectrum spanning the previously undefined space between 'black' and 'green'. This is done by introducing four transition colours: *brown*, *light brown*, *olive*, and *light green* to provide further granularity on where a company might sit on this continuum. Breaking out the space between black and green, provides greater transparency around 'transition' supported by a broader nomenclature to describe progress.

Establishing the principles of transition

To ascertain the characteristics underpinning where a company stands on the transition spectrum, key principles have been considered around the **paths** that a company might take to transitioning, as well as



the stages or milestones that could delineate **progress** on these paths. Collectively, the thinking behind these paths and progress milestones, help to frame the relevant and appropriate quantitative indicators and metrics that constitute the transition framework – with associated colour assessments.

Considering different paths to transition

Companies in transition may approach and contribute in different ways to the achievement of a net zero world, depending on the sector in which it participates, its core skillset, and its transition strategy. These are distilled in Figure 2 into two archetypal paths for transition: *decarbonising*, and *greening* – both of which chart routes to a net zero destination.

NOTE: Both paths are applicable to companies regardless of where and how they participate in the energy value chain (i.e., whether as a producer or consumer of energy).



Figure 2: Two archetypal paths to transition – decarbonising and greening – accommodating, to varying degrees. the reduction, removal, and/or replacement of activities or products giving rise to GHG emissions.

A decarbonising company is one that seeks to achieve net zero by reducing the volume of its activities or products that give rise to emissions, and/or removing emissions from any remaining activities or products through use of engineered removal technologies (such as direct air capture) or nature-based solutions.

A greening company that seeks to achieve net zero by **reducing** activities or products that give rise to emissions, **removing** emissions from activities or products, and, at the same time, **replacing** activities or products giving rise to emissions with green alternatives.

Through this path, as well as opting for the reduction and removal activities described under the decarbonising path, a greening company also seeks to build out low carbon (or 'green') activities or products. In doing so, the company is developing the alternatives that the world needs to displace high carbon options in use today with low carbon. Over time, a greening company will therefore see a growth in the proportion of green activities or products in its portfolio, while at the same time decarbonising any remaining carbon intensive activities or products through reductions and removals.



Tracking progress towards net zero

With a significant increase in net zero ambitions from companies across sectors in recent years, the transition framework seeks to place a greater level of focus and differentiation on the relative progress being made by a company on its transition journey, based on the characteristics in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Four simplified stages representing progress on, and the maturity of, a company's transition based on key principles around forward-looking emissions reductions targets, investment into transition activities or products, and delivery of emissions reductions and earnings from transition activities, in service of a net zero destination.

Aiming to reduce emissions: To be considered a company in transition and therefore warrant assessment and positioning on the transition framework, an aim must be set to reduce the GHG emissions that arise from a company's activities or products. This includes the measurement of an emissions baseline across relevant and material emission scopes, combined with a publicly stated commitment to reduce this over time. While for some companies, this has tended to take the form of a long-term net zero target or 'aim', others, in absence of clear plans on how such an aspiration might be achieved by levers within its boundaries of control, opt instead to place the focus on reducing emissions in the near-term. The transition framework considers both types of aspirations as valid in driving down global GHG emissions.

Committing capital to transition: While an aim to reduce emissions is a minimum threshold for transition, delivery will necessitate the commitment by a company of a growing proportion of its annual investment towards activities or products that enable the transition of its business. In this context, transitional activities or products are seen as those which enable the reduction in a company's reported emissions across all scopes (1, 2 and 3), on an absolute and/or intensity basis across the near-, medium- and long-term.

Demonstrating progress: Having set a net zero ambition and with increased proportions of annual investment in service of delivering these emissions reductions in the short-, medium- and long-term, progress must be demonstrated. Progress may take many forms, but at a minimum, this would include emissions reductions across all material scopes, and at a pace proportional to its timeframe for achieving net zero. There is also an expectation that the increased investment into transition activities or products will, over time, also translate into a growth in earnings from these transition businesses.



Achieved net zero: This is when a company has achieved net zero GHG emissions across all material scopes, with most of its investment into activities or products consistent with maintaining net zero, and in turn also generating a key portion of its earnings from these activities or products.

Key indicators to measure performance

The quantitative indicators and metrics which constitute the transition framework, as given in Figure 4, build on and assess the key principles around the paths that a company might take to transitioning, as well as the stages or milestones that could delineate progress on these paths. These indicators are designed to provide stakeholders with the means to quantitatively assess a company's transition intent and progress and determine its relative positioning on the framework.

The criteria are based on three key attributes of a company's transition plans:

- 1. **Emissions ambition:** The scale and pace of forward-looking emissions reductions being pursued by a company, including metrics for the medium- and long-term
 - While recognising a company's emissions ambition (forward looking targets), it is suggested that any collective assessment place a higher weight on achieved emissions reductions
 - Within the emissions ambition assessment, it is suggested that a greater emphasis be placed on the
 emissions reductions being forecasted by a company in this decade (by 2030) than its target for the
 long-term (by 2050)
 - The framework recognises the need for GHG emissions reductions across all scopes, with both absolute and portfolio intensity reductions playing a role in delivery
 - When assessing a company's operational (scope 1+2) emissions targets, it is suggested that attention is placed on the methodological boundaries chosen by a company, for example gross emissions on operated assets versus net emissions based on equity share while both methodologies carry merit, adjustments may be warranted to it's a company's final assessment to reflect whether an ambition has been framed on boundaries most material to its business
- 2. Emissions reductions: GHG reductions already delivered against a reported baseline (longer-term reductions) and on average annually in recent years (near-term reductions) to ensure pace and momentum across a company's operations (scope 1 & 2, absolute), products or services (scope 3, absolute), and value chain (lifecycle, intensity)
 - As noted in the emissions ambition, it is suggested that any collective assessment place a higher weight on achieved emissions reductions (actions) than pure ambition as these are seen as demonstrating actual transition progress



- As proposed with the emissions ambition, the emissions reductions indicators recognise the need for reductions across all scopes of emissions, with absolute and intensity reductions playing a role
- While different stakeholders may place varying importance on reductions achieved (i.e., backward-looking) in the recent past versus the distant past, it is suggested that an equal weighting be placed on emissions reductions achieved in the near-term (average over previous three years), as well as those delivered in the longer-term against the company's reported baseline rewarding early movers, while also recognising the importance of continued momentum
- 3. Financials: The proportion of annual investment into decarbonising and green activities or products, as well as the growth of earnings that come from these areas over time
 - The framework recognises the importance of a company's financial commitments in delivering its transition plan
 - Transition investment (composed of capex and opex into both decarbonising and green activities) is considered the leading indicator and best financial metric to track the relative speed and scale of transition and it is therefore suggested that this indicator be given the higher weighting, versus transition revenues which are expected to follow later
 - The framework recognises the need to decarbonise the current energy system as well as the building
 of green (low and zero carbon) alternatives and therefore considers both elements in the financial
 indicators
 - However, it is suggested that a company investing in green be given a small uplift through the
 consideration of a green/decarbonising investment ratio, given the importance in ultimately building
 low and zero carbon alternatives to displace higher carbon options
 - In framing an appropriate metric to assess revenues from a company's transition businesses, it is proposed that a revenues indicator based on growth multiples over time may be more appropriate than an assessment of the percentage of total revenues that come from transition activities or products this recognises that total revenues may remain highly sensitive to commodity prices



	Metric	#	Description	
Emissions Ambition	2050 Aim	1.1	Absolute (Operations) Scope 1+2	
		1.2	Absolute (Products/Services) Scope 3	
		1.3	Intensity (Value Chain) Lifecycle	
	2030 Aim	1.4	Absolute (Operations) Scope 1+2	
		1.5	Absolute (Products/Services) Scope 3	
		1.6	Intensity (Value Chain) Lifecycle	
Emissions Reduction	Long Term Reductions % since reported baseline	2.1	Absolute (Operations) Scope 1+2	
		2.2	Absolute (Products/Services) Scope 3	
		2.3	Intensity (Value Chain) Lifecycle	
	Near Term Reductions % annual average over previous three years	2.4	Absolute (Operations) Scope 1+2	
		2.5	Absolute (Products/Services) Scope 3	
		2.6	Intensity (Value Chain) Lifecycle	
Financials	Transition Investment	3.1	Decarbonising % of total annual investment	
		3.2	Green % of total annual investment	
		3.3	Total (Decarbonising + Green) % of total annual investment	
		3.4	Green / Decarbonising Investment ratio	
	Transition Revenues	3.5	Decarbonising Annual revenue growth multiple	
		3.6	Green Annual revenue growth multiple	

Figure 4: Transition framework with quantitative indicators enabling the assessment of a company's transition intent and progress based on forward- and backward-looking metrics across emissions and financial performance.



Translating performance to a colour rating

The indicators making up the transition framework are designed to highlight key areas that are both important to, and help differentiate the relative performance of transitioning companies. As these may ultimately be adopted in different ways by stakeholders to determine a final assessment or score, this paper stops short of proposing detailed mechanics for assessment, such as relative weightings of indicators and the performance boundaries or thresholds in translating scores to a colour on the transition spectrum.

However, it is envisaged that the elements covered by the transition indicators are used to determine an overall transition score with a corresponding colour rating to position companies on the transition spectrum. It is worth noting that as the transition framework has been developed to provide insight on transition performance, rather than providing validation of a 'green', net zero or destination state, the framework does not seek to label any company with a 'green' score.

The colour rating applicable to companies assessed within this framework are limited to the shades of the transition spectrum (brown, light brown, olive, light green) and dependent on a combination of ambition, actions, and approach.

It is advised that the framework be used to differentiate companies to determine a colour rating and place them on a grid as shown conceptually in Figure 5. Such a grid highlights both the progress being made on its decarbonisation to net zero, as well as the extent to which the company is also looking to build out 'green' alternatives in its portfolio at the same time.

It is suggested that the added dimension of systemic impact offered by a 'greening' company acting to not only decarbonise its activities, but also growing a 'green' portfolio of low carbon alternatives to help displace high carbon equivalents, can enable it to progress more quickly through the transition colours as indicated in the grid by its emergence into the highest 'light green' transition colour.



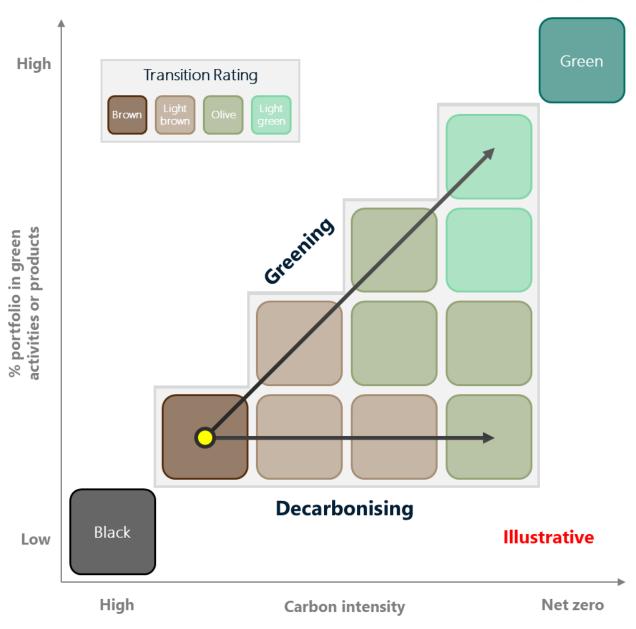


Figure 5: Conceptual two-dimensional transition grid to place transitioning companies by highlighting the progress being made in decarbonising its way to net zero, as well as the extent to which it is also building out 'green' alternatives.



Applications of the Framework

This section presents thinking around how the SMI Transition Framework may be used as well as highlighting planned next steps, including the development by Sustainable Fitch of a Transition Assessment.

The transition framework seeks to:

- Help stakeholders to identify transitioning companies playing a role, either as an energy producer or consumer, in helping to drive the transformation of the global energy system to net zero
- Recognise the type of transition that a company is on (1) 'decarbonising' by reducing and removing GHG emissions from its activities or products, or (2) 'greening' by not only reducing and removing emissions, but also replacing activities or products in its portfolio with low carbon alternatives
- Assess the maturity of a company's transition plans and progress both in a quantitative sense based on scores against key transition indicators and in positioning companies in a relative sense on the transition spectrum and grid
- Enable stakeholders to track a company's actions against its ambition to ensure that both its intent and its delivery are assessed collectively and monitored periodically

The transition framework does not seek to:

- Apply a temperature score or seek to test or validate the alignment or consistency of a company's strategy and/or transition plan with global decarbonisation scenarios
- **Provide any sense of risk guidance** to stakeholders, in the sense of a conventional credit rating that may be used by investors as a means of risk assessment
- Articulate the likelihood of success of any given transition strategy in terms ability to deliver, nor the value proposition at stake in doing so
- Describe or forecast profitability for a company in transition and associated value to interested stakeholders



Sustainable Fitch and the Transition Assessment

To benchmark and differentiate companies in this space, SMI is working with Sustainable Fitch who plan to utilise the framework to develop a Transition Assessment, to illuminate the spectrum of companies in the undefined space between carbon intensive and net zero today.

In developing its transition assessment, Sustainable Fitch may:

- Propose an assessment methodology linking the transition framework's quantitative indicators with relative weights towards a transition score, and performance boundaries to allocate a colour score and position companies on a transition spectrum or grid
- Design potential adjustments (or modifiers) to the framework-determined scores, if appropriate, based on extraordinary factors such as a company's pace and impact on systemic change
- Consider extra granularity on the transition spectrum with added sub-stages to each colour stage (Figure 6), such as 'minus', 'flat' or 'plus' sub-stages, akin to those adopted in credit assessments

Collectively, the SMI transition framework and Sustainable Fitch transition assessment will provide a method for all stakeholders better understand companies on these paths – and recognise 'transition' as a key enabler of the world meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.

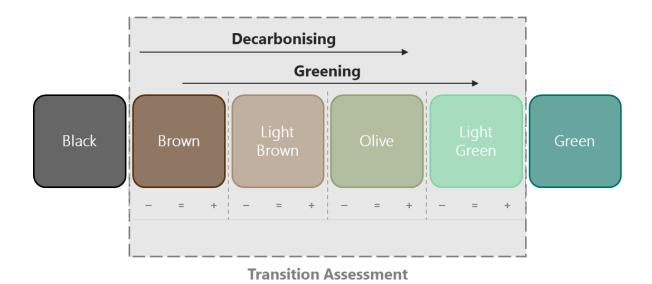


Figure 6: Illustration of a potential transition assessment that builds on the transition spectrum proposed in this paper by offering extra granularity through additional sub-stages to each colour stage, such as 'minus', 'flat' or 'plus' sub-stages, akin to those adopted in credit assessments.



SMI Asset Manager Asset Owner Transition Finance Task Force

The SMI Energy Transition Task Force has socialised the thinking behind the transition framework at various points of its development with the SMI Asset Owner/Asset Manager (AMAO) Transition Finance Task Force. Through this period of development, the AMAO group have also developed a transition categorisation methodology for investors as they consider the alignment of their current portfolios and the development of potential transition investment vehicles. The transition categorisation methodology is consistent with the group's ambitions to achieve net zero. The SMI transition framework presented in this paper and the transition categorisation methodology developed by the AMAO Task Force are considered complementary. The framework offers scope to feed into and provide some guardrails for investment in transition assets under the AMAO categorisation framework – which translates these insights into investment mandates for its members. Read more about the AMAO: www.sustainable-markets.org/taskforces/asset-manager-and-asset-owner-taskforce

SMI Insurance Task Force

The SMI Energy Transition Task Force has engaged closely with the SMI Insurance Task Force (ITF) during the development of the transition framework and also provided input into complementary workstreams being led by the ITF. With the insurance sector representing a key stakeholder in delivering the energy transition, and an anticipated user of the thinking behind the transition framework, this alignment has been invaluable during the development of the framework. Read more about the ITF: www.sustainable-markets.org/taskforces/insurance-taskforce