

# TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE

A Funder Collaborative

Surfing the Tracker Wave:  
Pandemic brings flood of governance data tools

COVID-19 Monitor

Transparency, Civic Participation, and Accountability During and Beyond COVID-19

Issue 1  
August 2020

# What Can We Learn from These Trackers?



## What We Listened for in this Issue

**COVID-19 Monitor content**, sourced by issue theme, addresses accountability relationships or actions, a non-U.S. region or country, and/or funder role or practice.

### Issue 1: What is a “tracker”?

Structured data (primary or secondary) for at least two points in time with the purpose of tracking change or status around an issue(s). Often designed in the form of a database or an interactive visual.

### What languages did we find in the trackers?

All trackers in English; some also in Spanish, Portuguese, Bahasa; [one](#) offers 35 languages.

## What You Need to Know

**TPA** = transparency, civic participation, and accountability

**TPA actors** = types of non-state TPA organizations or associated individual actors

**TPA events** = TPA policy passed / reformed / reversed, legal case, or an election

**TPA institutions** = types of TPA government or state institutions or bodies

## What We Are Hearing

Many **TPA-relevant sectors** are being examined, though some are overlooked. Signals we heard from greater to lower frequency:

 Stronger: Independent media / journalism, open government, civic empowerment / participation, data privacy / rights

 Weaker: Public debt / budget management, tax systems (domestic or international), corporate governance

 No signal: Natural resources / extractives

Tracker **data sources** include: Government documents, public announcements or letters, media reports, surveys, expert interviews, academic studies or data, supplemental research.

## Sources

### How many trackers did we find?

See all 27 trackers [here](#) - all but 4 are new since March 2020.

### How Far Do These Trackers Travel?



Global focus: 25



Regional focus: 1 (Latin America and the Caribbean)



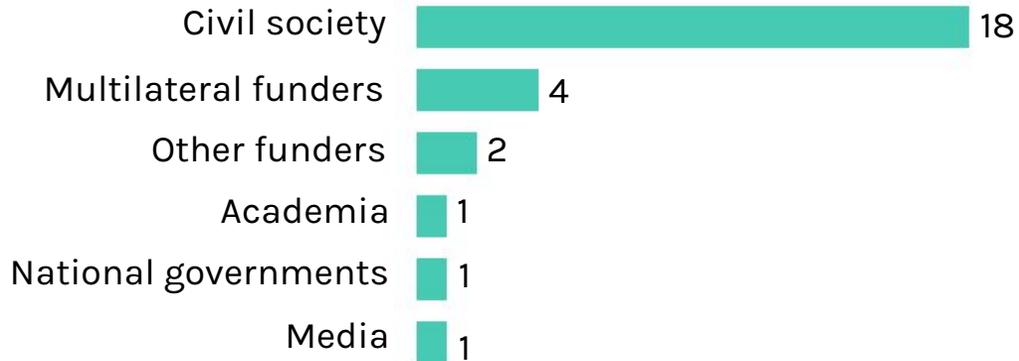
National focus: 1 (Nigeria)



## Voices

### Who Is Tracking These Issues?

Most trackers are authored by civil society organizations.



## What We Are Hearing

**TPA actors** Overall, relatively few non-state TPA organizational or individual actors (e.g., civil society organizations, international NGOs, corporations) are covered by tracker data. Those TPA actors referenced are typically the intended audiences or constituents of the tracker author.

**TPA events** The TPA events most frequently referenced include policy measures, restrictions and violations around press freedom, right to information, and data privacy; fewer trackers cover extraordinary measures and emergency laws passed by governments.

**TPA institutions** Trackers tend to focus on governments as a whole when tracking policy responses. One tracker focuses on the legislative branch, and one mentions the role of police and the military in monitoring people.

## What We Are (Not) Hearing: TPA and other development sectors

Limited coverage of **public debt / budget management** was a notable gap in the pandemic context of major government procurements and spending.

Overall, there were scarce references to **tax systems** (found in [this tracker](#) from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and [this tracker](#) from the OECD), or to **corporate governance** (found in [this tracker](#) from the Open Government Partnership and [this tracker](#) from the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation).

No trackers analyzed focus on **natural resources / extractives**; though there were some references to **climate change mitigation**, considered a development sector in this analysis (see Green, Resilient and Equitable Actions for Transformation [Database](#)).

Very few trackers cover one or more TPA sectors with any **other development sectors**. These instances linked TPA with social protections, labor, health, and education issues.

## Resource Round-Up

Trackers continue to emerge! We found these resources after coding was completed (so they are not included in analysis).

- [Coronavirus Government Response Tracker](#), University of Oxford
- [Solutions Story Tracker](#), Solutions Journalism Network
- [IMF COVID-19 Anti-Corruption Tracker](#), Transparency International
- [Policy Responses to COVID-19](#), IMF
- [Special Series on the Economic Effects of COVID-19](#), IMF



## TAI's Take: Secretariat Reflections

### Emerging threats and opportunities for TPA goals and sector

Proliferation of trackers suggests an opportunity to build on this attention and connect TPA work to broader pandemic response, recovery debates.

Focus on data privacy, media freedoms indicates opportunity to connect groups working on these issues for sensemaking and planning; gaps in tracker data point to need to watch stimulus spending and debt levels.

Trackers mainly focus on threats or negative TPA events; need to consider whether trackers will capture backsliding only or also improvements.

Large data sets helpful but may obscure localized differences in pandemic experience; need to focus on economic, gender, and other equity themes.

## TAI's Take: Secretariat Reflections

### How might you use these trackers?

- > Consider patterns or trends in this data against your current or emerging learning questions.
- > Engage TPA actors and institutions in using this data.
- > Combine with the TPA-relevant [indices and indicators](#) curated by this [fiscal governance measurement](#) initiative.
- > Use as a bridge for conversation and collaboration between your work and other TPA or development sectors.
- > Integrate this trend data into scenario planning, futures thinking underway at your organization or with peers.

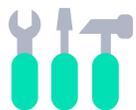
## TAI Strategic Learning Themes

TAI's work, including this learning product, aims to advance our [2020-2024 strategy](#) and support collective learning around these themes:



### What We Fund - Optimizing impact of thematic portfolios

Emerging threats for strategic TPA goals; and windows of opportunity for TPA field and goals



### How We Fund - Reinforcing effective grantmaker practice

Funder efforts to understand grantee organization needs; and to mitigate unintended burdens or inequities in ecosystem or organizational support



### Funder Landscape - Expanding and enhancing funder connections

Funder collaboration around TPA-relevant issues; and opportunities within and beyond the TPA funding ecosystem for joint action or funding

## We Want to Hear from You

**Did we miss a tracker?** See our sourcing criteria and submit other trackers [here](#)

**Tell us how you are using the Monitor** on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#)

### Stay tuned

Issue 2 to cover **TPA-relevant funder voices and responses around COVID-19**

## TAI COVID-19 Monitor and Collaborative Learning

**Why?** Provide structured, bird's eye view of content for reflection and action on medium- and longer-term opportunities to advance transparency, participation, and accountability (TPA) during and beyond the pandemic.

**What?** Brief monthly synthesis of TPA-relevant responses to COVID-19 and emerging research and evidence from peers and practitioners, with Secretariat qualitative analysis and reflections.

**Who?** As a member-serving funder collaborative, TAI's primary audience is comprised of our members. We also aim for the COVID-19 Monitor to be a public good for other funders, funder collaboratives, and practitioners pursuing TPA outcomes.

## Producing and Using the TAI COVID-19 Monitor

TAI works with a small team of researchers using an established [framework to code](#) public and grey qualitative content, including but not limited to blogs, articles, or event summaries. Analysis is based on the characteristics of content reviewed and the code frequencies, code co-occurrences, and qualitative data of the content reviewed.

Offering both opportunities and facing limitations, this information:

Aims to  
Provide structure to disparate content and perspectives  
Offer a starting point for learning and action

Does not aim to  
Be representative of any one or collective voice or experience  
Ensure rigid coding reliability or provide solutions for action



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