



TRANSPARENCY &
ACCOUNTABILITY
INITIATIVE

Monitoring,
Evaluation, and
Learning Plan
2020 - 2024

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Shared Purpose</u>	1
<u>The Collective Challenge</u>	2
<u>Learning</u>	3
<u>Collective Theory of Change</u>	4
<u>MEL Framework</u>	6
<u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>	12
<u>MEL Calendar</u>	13

Introduction

Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI) is a collaborative of leading funders of transparency, participation, and accountability (TPA) efforts worldwide. TAI's purpose is to provide a platform for member learning and exchange that yields connection and action within and beyond the TAI members. TAI is a fiscally sponsored project of the Proteus Fund, staffed by a Secretariat team, and driven by funder member engagement around a shared strategy for collaborative learning and action.

This document describes the why, what, and how of our monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) practices as a funder collaborative. The primary audiences (and users) of this MEL Plan are the Secretariat staff, TAI's Steering Committee and main governance body, and member staff who manage their respective grants to TAI. We also hope that other funder collaboratives and practitioners, particularly those who work through networks, might find this content useful for their MEL efforts.

Shared Purpose

TAI Vision: Our vision is of a more just, equitable, and inclusive world where people are informed and empowered, governments are open and responsive, and collective action advances the public good.

TAI Mission: Our mission is to strengthen the impact of transparency and accountability funding in support of inclusive and equitable development. We do that by developing learning infrastructure and facilitating collaboration to optimize funder practice and resources.

TAI Values

We are committed to acting with integrity, being transparent, and accountable.

We are curious and committed to learning, experimentation, and evidence-based decision-making.

We recognize and respect power dynamics. We always remember that it is grantees (civil society and government actors) who are doing the frontline work and we prioritize their voice, insights, and expertise to help guide our programming.

Collaboration is essential. We want to be more than the sum of our parts.

The Collective Challenge

TAI has prioritized the following problems facing funders and field practitioners pursuing transparency, participation, and accountable governance to motivate our collective work.

Myriad global crises (and the pandemic above all) divert donor attention and resources away from the transparency, participation, and accountability field. The global community faces ever pressing challenges including a climate crisis, democratic backsliding, increasing inequality, and the coronavirus pandemic. Philanthropy is ever more stretched to respond to these challenges, which defy the traditional development sectoral or geographic boundaries of most global funders within and beyond the TPA field. Yet the relationship between people and government and corporate power holders, and people's ability to address abuses of power are central to making progress on any of those fronts.

Therefore, TAI seeks to expand and enhance funder connections primarily through the Funder Landscape strategic pillar, and our other work.

A lack of sufficient, long term, and aligned funding to help reformers successfully challenge policy capture. Trends such as the rise of authoritarian tendencies and rapid growth of digital platforms have amplified concentrations of political and corporate power often with negative consequences for accountable governance and meaningful civic participation. Yet, individual funders face resource and organizational limitations, which can incentivize working in silos, and constrain the potential impact of individual strategies.

Therefore, TAI seeks to optimize the impact of thematic portfolios primarily through the What We Fund strategic pillar.

Funder-grantee power imbalances hamper joint learning and adaptation in the face of current and emerging threats. Funder approaches and practices can help or potentially hinder the development of a field or the health and effectiveness of grantee organizations. This may have detrimental effects on the power dynamics of the funder-grantee relationship, particularly their ability to learn together. Grantee organizational needs evolve with shifts in their external operating environment - in particular, repression of civil society groups in many countries and navigating the pandemic response and eventual recovery period. These needs are more diverse and of a magnitude greater than an individual funder can address. Therefore, TAI seeks to reinforce effective grantmaker practice through the How We Fund strategic pillar.

Institutional incentives hinder sustained donor collaboration and collective learning. Urgent, united action is needed to address these complex and powerful drivers of global governance challenges. And there is a growing base of evidence and learnings that can inform funder strategies and practices to best support accountability actors in the field. Despite an appetite to collaborate among some of the leading funders of accountability and participation work, institutional structures, processes, systems, and scarcity of time present barriers to sustained inter-institution collaboration.

Therefore, TAI funder members support a collaborative structure, managed and delivered by a lean team of Secretariat staff and other experts.

Learning

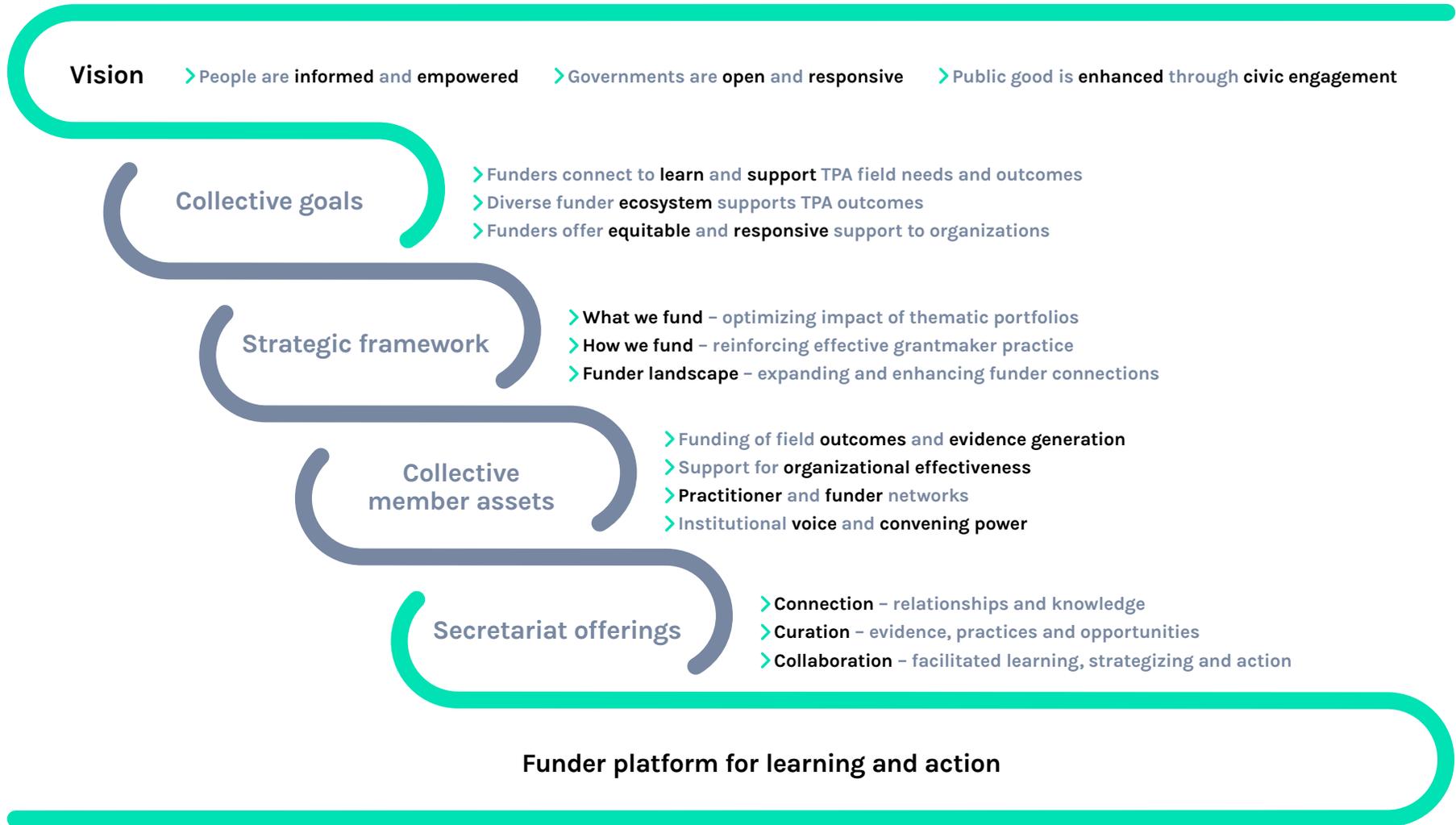
Members value TAI as a space for peer learning and action. TAI considers learning to be any practice used to identify and close knowledge or practice gaps within the scope of TAI's organizational mission, partnerships, or specific collaborative initiatives. TAI's learning questions and practices are motivated by the collective challenges described above. Our strategic learning practices will be conducted with the intention of narrowing these gaps and/or further refining our learning questions.

Learning is both a primary function and an intended outcome of TAI's work, and it drives TAI's MEL practices. We intend to link these practices to our collective strategy, guiding reflection of progress, pursuing learning questions, and assessing achievement against the collaborative's anticipated contribution to change. TAI's MEL practices also serve the collaborative's streamlined proposal and reporting requirements across member grants.

TAI employs several learning approaches including: generating experiential evidence (e.g., annual Learning Day, and peer grantmaker practice sharing); collectively shaping work commissioned by individual members (e.g. peer review of terms of reference or draft content); and tracking and interpreting TPA field evidence (e.g., member and practitioner calls with evidence producers).

While learning is designed for members primarily, TAI Secretariat and members are committed to sharing insights with the field. Products and TAI reports are made public under Creative Commons license and proactively disseminated.

Collective Theory of Change



Theory of change
2020-2024



HYPOTHESES OF CHANGE

In response to these problems, TAI anticipates affecting positive change as follows:

- ✦ If TAI funder members benefit from and leverage their collective information, practices, relationships, and/or resources in a structured and sustained manner; then
 - ✦ TAI members will be incentivized to continuously learn and improve responsive and responsible grantmaker practices and strategies; and
 - ✦ TAI members will collaborate within and beyond the collaborative to amplify shared values and the impact of current and future funding.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- ✦ Maintaining a donor-serving posture will enable TAI to add value to member work and complement and learn from TPA field-building initiatives.
- ✦ TAI members collectively represent substantial funding levels and sector leadership to affect positive change around global TPA issues.
- ✦ Collaboration, beyond institutional or TAI membership boundaries, will enable learning and action beyond what any single funder member could accomplish alone.

COLLECTIVE ASSETS

TAI anticipates drawing on the following assets in pursuing our strategy:

Cumulative experience and documented evidence of TAI as a donor collaborative to guide future work and adaptation

TAI individual member institutional experience, and TAI member and Secretariat staff expertise on different sectors in the participation and accountable governance field

Strong and ever-evolving networks of field experts and non-TAI funders to leverage for knowledge, ideas, and partnership

Variation in organizational structures, cultures, and approaches that enable TAI members to pursue unique but complementary strategies towards TPA outcomes, including the following levers or approaches (which are evolving to adapt to and address COVID-19 pandemic constraints and opportunities):

Grantee-facing support	Public-facing actions or direct practice
Grants (project, program, core/general operating, organizational effectiveness, DEI)	Convenings
Pooled funds	Public voice
Cohort grantmaking & learning models	Story telling; narrative development
Technical assistance (direct or third party)	Policy advocacy
Story making/telling	Strategic litigation
	Commissioned research and evaluative work

MEL Framework

ALIGNED REPORTING INDICATORS

TAI will use these indicators, drawn from current grant agreements and this MEL Plan, for aligned grant reporting across members.

Result	Indicator	Strategic Pillar
TAI-delivered experiences or content inform member strategic direction or portfolio funding decisions	% of member survey respondents that report TAI participation informed their strategies or portfolio funding decisions	What We Fund
TAI-delivered experiences or content inform member grantmaker approaches or practices	# of financial and non-financial tools introduced or shared through TAI adopted by TAI members	How We Fund
Members amplify key messages and evidence-based insights to promote TPA practices	# of member (co)commissioned or authored content that is disseminated beyond TAI membership	Funder Landscape
TAI strengthens mutually beneficial collaboration among members	# of documented instances of collaboration among two or more members	All
Funders within and beyond the current membership are engaged in Secretariat-facilitated activities	# of unique funders (institutional program or other organizational unit) represented at Secretariat-facilitated initiatives	All
TAI core institutional membership size offers value to members	Net change in # of core institutional members from 2017-2019 strategy to 2020-2024 strategy	TAI Collaborative
TAI collective MEL system produces quality data used by Secretariat and members	Secretariat develops and implements MEL Plan for new strategy with members	TAI Collaborative

DETAILED MEL FRAMEWORK

In addition to the aligned reporting indicators (noted here in **bold**), TAI will work with and refine this broader MEL framework of indicators and learning questions during this strategy period. TAI will use the non-reporting indicators in our MEL practices and products with Secretariat and member staff and would incorporate into formal reporting when and as data is available.



WHAT WE FUND: Optimizing impact of thematic portfolios

Goal: Funders work together to learn and support transparency, participation, and accountability (TPA) field needs and outcomes

Result Type	Result Statement	Indicator	Data Source / Means of verification	Collection Frequency
Impact	Members leverage individual resources towards a shared priority field issue or outcome	# of instances where two or more TAI members provide funding for a similar issue or TPA-relevant outcome	TAI member and Secretariat staff, and programmatic or meeting documentation	Strategy (mid-point) evaluation
Outcome	TAI-delivered experiences or content inform member strategic direction or portfolio funding decisions	# of cases member staff identify of TAI-delivered experiences or content to inform strategic decision or portfolio funding decisions	TAI members, Secretariat, and non-member funders (where relevant) (Method TBD)	Annual
		% of member survey respondents that report TAI participation informed their strategies or portfolio funding decisions	Member engagement survey conducted by Secretariat	Annual
Learning	<p>Questions:</p> <p>What threats are emerging for strategic TPA goals of funders / grantee organizations?</p> <p>What windows of opportunity are opening for TPA field and goals?</p> <p>How might funders support more inclusive learning among and with grantee organizations?</p>		<p>Relevant Activities / Products:</p> <p>What We Fund Inquiries (member-driven)</p> <p>TAI Monthly (members-only email on TAI work & learning)</p> <p>TAI COVID-19 Monitor</p> <p>TAI Weekly (public-facing curation of new and research)</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>Monthly (Q2-4 2020)</p> <p>Weekly</p>



HOW WE FUND - Reinforcing effective grantmaker practice

Goal - Funder community offers equitable and responsive support to organizations

Result Type	Result Statement	Indicator	Data Source / Means of verification	Collection Frequency
Impact	Members strengthen individual or collective quality* of support provided to the TPA field	% of members (institutions or programs) that take action to improve at least one quality factor in their TPA grantmaker practice annually	Secretariat inventory of member TPA grantmaker practice against quality factors; TAI grants database	Annual
Outcome	TAI-delivered experiences or content inform member grantmaker approaches or practices* *financial and non-financial	% of member survey respondents that report changes to their grantmaker approaches or practices as a result of TAI participation # of financial and non-financial tools introduced or shared through TAI adopted by TAI members	Member engagement survey conducted by Secretariat TAI members, Secretariat, and grantee organizations (where relevant) (Method TBD)	Annual
Learning	Questions: How are funders sensing and responding to grantee organization needs? What might funders do to mitigate unintended burdens or inequities in ecosystem or organizational support?		Relevant Activities / Products: Learning Day TAI Grants Database Grant Maker Marketplace TAI COVID-19 Monitor	Annual (Q1) Annual (Q3) Quarterly (Q2-4) Monthly (Q2-4 2020)



FUNDER LANDSCAPE: Expanding and enhancing funder connections

Goal - Diverse funder ecosystem supports transparency, participation, and accountability (TPA) outcomes

Result Type	Result Statement	Indicator	Data Source / Means of verification	Collection Frequency
Impact	New funders or funder resources support TPA issues or outcomes	Progress made on non-member funder engagement plans	Non-member TPA-relevant funder engagement plans	Annual Strategy (mid-point) evaluation
Outcome	Members amplify key messages and evidence-based insights to promote TPA practices	# of member (co)commissioned or authored content that is disseminated to funder audiences beyond TAI membership	TAI Weekly newsletter (Member Spotlight section, or other featured op-ed, blogs, research)	Semi-annual
Learning	<p>Questions:</p> <p>How are funders collaborating with other funders around TPA-relevant issues?</p> <p>What opportunities are emerging within and beyond the TPA funding ecosystem for joint action or funding?</p>		<p>Relevant Activities / Products:</p> <p>Non-member TPA-relevant funder engagement plans</p> <p>Collective Voice working group</p> <p>See also What We Fund and How We Fund</p>	<p>Annual 2020</p> <p>Annual 2020</p>

TAI COLLABORATIVE HEALTH / OPERATIONS

Goal: TAI platform for learning and collaborative action brings value to members

Result Type	Result Statement	Indicator	Data Source / Means of verification	Collection Frequency
Outcome	TAI strengthens mutually beneficial collaboration among members	# of documented instances of collaboration among two or more members	TAI Secretariat and members (method TBD)	Rolling basis
		% of member survey respondents that report benefitting from collaborative initiatives	Case studies commissioned or drafted annually by Secretariat	Annual
			Member engagement survey conducted by Secretariat	Annual
Outcome	TAI participation enhances individual and collective member awareness and learning	% of member survey respondents that report sharing TAI experience or content with other funders (members vs non-members)	Member engagement survey conducted by Secretariat	Annual
		% of member survey respondents that report new or stronger relationships with other funders through TAI (members vs non-members)	Member engagement survey conducted by Secretariat	Annual
		Network analysis showing member staff increase in the number of new relationships and strengthening of existing ones	Network analysis (Method TBD)	Twice (baseline and at end of strategy period)
Outcome	TAI core institutional membership size offers value to members	Net change in # of core institutional members from 2017-2019 strategy to 2020-2024 strategy	TAI governance documentation and grant records	Three times (2019 baseline; midpoint and end of 2020-2024 strategy)

Output	Funders within and beyond the current membership are engaged in Secretariat-facilitated activities	# of unique funders (institutional program or other organizational unit) represented at Secretariat-facilitated initiatives (disaggregated by membership status, and TAI strategic pillar) Non-member funders perceptions of value for engaging with TAI's initiatives	Secretariat / programmatic documentation and attendance records Follow-up interview or online post-event open ended survey with non-member funders	Quarterly
Output	TAI annual offerings are adaptive to members' and field contexts	Secretariat employs inclusive processes to scan member interests to initiate, pause, or conclude collective initiatives	TAI annual workplan, reporting, and programmatic documentation	Annual
Output	TAI collective MEL system produces quality data used by Secretariat and members	Secretariat develops and implements MEL Plan for new strategy with members	TAI MEL Plan; data collection and reflection and learning documentation	Annual

Roles and Responsibilities

	Secretariat	Steering Committee	TAI grant program officers	Other TAI member staff
MEL Plan	Maintain and update; share with members and stakeholders beyond TAI	Review and endorse new Plans or significant changes	Review, advise of any requirements or guidance; use for proposal process as feasible	Review as relevant
Data collection & management	Manage data collection, quality review, analysis, storage	Participate in data collection (e.g. annual member survey); encourage institutional data sharing	Same as SC; identify, share institutional data relevant to MEL Plan	Participate in data collection (e.g. annual member survey), as relevant
Data use	Package analysis or learning products; facilitate reflection and learning events; disseminate learning products internally or publicly	Use data and related learning products to assess TAI progress; support dissemination as relevant	Same as SC; review and consider data or learning products in grant check-ins, organizational health assessments, renewals	Review, raise own awareness of TAI; support dissemination as relevant

MEL Calendar

Activity	Purpose	Frequency
External evaluation	Assess progress, challenges, and learning against strategy goals and outcomes	Every three years
Collaboration case notes	Document and assess utility of collaborative initiatives undertaken among TAI members to capture results and inform future initiatives	Annually
Member survey	Assess member staff and institutional perception and experience with TAI services and initiatives	Annually
Annual report	Document strategic progress, results, and insights for past calendar year of work; used for member required reporting	Annually
Reflection and learning	Primary and/or secondary data-informed discussions to draw insights from concluded initiatives / activities and inform future collaborative efforts	Annual member retreat / Secretariat staff or Steering Committee quarterly meetings / ad hoc
Semi-annual report	Document work plan progress and results to-date at the midpoint of the calendar year; used for member required reporting	Every 6 months
TAI Monthly	Update for members and invitation to engage on TAI ongoing and future initiatives	Monthly

Acknowledgements

We thank the TAI Outcomes Advisory Working Group for sharing their guidance, expertise, and time in shaping this MEL Plan.

For more information contact:
Transparency and Accountability Initiative
OpenGov Hub, 1110 Vermont Ave NW #500
Washington, DC 20005

www.transparency-initiative.org

Copyright © 2020 Transparency and Accountability Initiative
This work is licensed under the Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivates 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). Sharing in its original format and with proper attribution is highly encouraged.



TRANSPARENCY &
ACCOUNTABILITY
INITIATIVE

Transparency and Accountability Initiative is a collaborative of leading funders of transparency, accountability and participation worldwide. It envisions a world where citizens are informed and empowered; governments are open and responsive; and collective action advances the public good. Toward this end, TAI aims to increase the collective impact of transparency and accountability interventions by strengthening grantmaking practice, learning and collaboration among its members.

1110 Vermont Ave NW #500,
Washington, DC 20005

www.transparency-initiative.org

@TAInitiative