

3 April 2020

Present:

- Mr. Peter van Sluijs, CSPPS**
- Ms. Judith Kaulem, Poverty Reduction Forum Trust**
- Ms. Florence Syevuo, SDG Kenya Forum**
- Ms. Jean Scrimgeour, Accountability Lab**
- Mr. Hideki Wakabayashi, ADA**
- Mr. John Romano, TAP Secretariat**
- Ms. Claudia Villalona, TAP Secretariat**

Next meeting: 17 April 2020

Chairing Meeting: Mr. Peter van Sluijs, CSPPS

DECISIONS TAKEN FROM CONFERENCE CALL IN GREEN; FOLLOW-UP ITEMS IN BLUE

Agenda Items:

1. Review and Approval of Last Steering Committee Call Notes

Discussion:

John noted that the majority of the follow-up items from the last Steering Committee Call will be discussed when reviewing the revised strategic plan. All members were content with the previous call notes and had no feedback or comments.

2. Review of Revised TAP Network Strategic Plan & Next Steps

a. Review of Strategic Plan

Discussion:

The chair asked John to review any of the revisions made by the Secretariat since the last Steering Committee meeting. The revised Strategic Plan reflects the comments and input given by members of the Steering Committee to make the language more concise and less dense.

The newly revised draft of the Strategic Plan includes an executive summary — which can be shortened to half a page if necessary. Additionally, the content layout is open to discussion. The “About the Tap Network” could, for example, stay on the first page or as a stand-alone page.

It was suggested that the Strategic Plan incorporate “A message from the Steering Committee” as seen in other Strategic Plans. John also raised the idea of including a box under the “Defining the Challenge” section with details of the Rome Declaration to lay out the challenges that civil society faces. However, this could also lead to too much content on one page.

Following the recommendations of the SC, the information on TAP Network’s Member/Partner Engagement was removed and replaced with a link to the website in order to avoid over saturating the document with information.

To stay concise, the boxes of example indicative activities were removed from each of the workstreams. As discussed in the comments, these details are too specific for a general document, and can instead be included in the Work Plan. Following CSPPS’s suggestions, the Strategic Plan and Work Plan will be linked together.

In place of this content, John suggested instead using this space to showcase existing resources, such as the SDG Accountability Handbook. As John noted in the comments, with these changes the final design could put Objective 1 on a full page and Objective II and III together on another page. Rather than 2 full pages for Objective I, and 1 full-page for Objectives II and III respectively.

CSPPS noted its comments on the document, noting that the length on the Executive Summary is fine as is and the inclusion of the Rome Declaration Box. Additionally, the chair agreed with John on the inclusion of “A Message from the Steering Committee” reiterating some key priorities and calling for support and engagement partners and members. CSPPS also agreed with replacing deleted boxes with highlights of key resources and tools as they may be useful for an unfamiliar reader. Placing the message from the SC on the first page would allow for a standalone page with “About the Network” with added content of TAP’s existing resources.

Accountability Lab, SDG Kenya Forum and PRFT approved of the changes as they reflect the comments made and agreed that the document was more concise. ADA voiced support for including “A Message from the Steering Committee” considering the two-year term, as well as the inclusion of Defining SDG 16+ and the Rome Declaration boxes.

Accountability Lab voiced support for removing unnecessary information and cautioned against including content that may be considered dated in a few years. Linking content to the website is a good idea to ensure up to date information and keep the document clean.

Follow-up:

The TAP Secretariat will revise the Strategic Plan to reflect the Committee’s input and send the revised draft within the next few days. The document will again be open for SC committee member’s input and comments. These changes include:

- “A Message from the Steering Committee”
- A “Rome Declaration” box and a box “Defining SDG 16”

- Adding content on TAP’s existing resources and tools— possibly on a standalone “About the TAP Network” page or in boxes along with the document
- Removing Indicative activities content and reformatting Objectives’ pages

b. Next Steps and Email/Outreach to TAP Network Members from Steering Committee

Discussion:

Following these revisions, John outlined the next steps for the Strategic Plan outreach, which include the affirmation process of the network’s partners and members. This circulates the document within the network and allows members to provide input for an allotted period of time (1 to 2 weeks) before it is published. During that period, the design of the plan can be further developed. All members expressed approval.

Follow-up:

An email on behalf of the Steering Committee to introduce the new Strategic Plan for the broader network in the affirmation process should be drafted. The email will include the revised Strategic Plan and related important documents

The email can also be used as the first opportunity to communicate to the network reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic and to announce the return of monthly Coordination calls (see below).

3. Review of Follow-up items from TAP Steering Committee Spring Meeting

a. 2020 Budget

Discussion:

Revisions to the Budget reflect changes in hiring and transitions in staff. The Post-VNR Consultant will now be hired for 2 and a half months-- shaving \$7,000 off the budget. These savings could be used in the future towards extending the fellowship timeline.

Additionally, \$8,000 in savings were made as TAP foregoes the office space for four months — until September if not longer. **John noted that in the case of no other funding is raised, we should be conservative in our budget spending.** Accountability Lab seconded this spending approach given the precarious economic context.

CSPPS questioned if the revised budget reflects the heightened prioritization of remote engagement for the foreseeable future, and possibly using savings to invest in digital engagement platforms. John noted after the allotted amount spent on the fellow, some could be shifted towards these considerations.

b. 2020 Work Plan/2020 Timeline

Discussion:

The main additions to the Work Plan are the narrative assessment for key deliverables, following Accountability Lab’s suggestion of specifically identifying priorities for key deliverables in 2020 and organizing them into workstreams. The limited staff capacity also underscores the need to prioritize.

John communicated the need for the Steering Committee to dedicate time fleshing out the details for the Membership Engagement Work Plan and requested a phone call dedicated to this priority.

Another key deliverable coming up is the launching of the network survey in May — relevant for many of the objectives for 2020.

Accountability Lab called attention to the current context of the COVID-19 reshaping opportunities and priorities— especially in relation to the importance of transparency and accountability in the response to the crisis. Because the crisis is not as temporary as previously thought, Accountability Lab suggested that the network make a public statement and stay attentive to possible funding opportunities. The network should also maintain open communication with its members in this regard. PRFT agreed with the Accountability Lab on these points as it would demonstrate TAP’s awareness and adaptations to ongoing developments.

John agreed with the need to communicate with the broader network about the pandemic and will add the inputs suggested to the Work Plan. Other ideas suggested for member engagement during the crisis included publishing monthly blogs and articles from the Secretariat, the SC and/or the members reflecting experiences during the current crisis in different contexts as a potential advocacy channel.

PRFT supported the idea as a way to engage in dialogue with members and share experiences from the Global South. SDG Kenya Forum also agreed, noting that it is important to support vulnerable groups disproportionately affected and hold institutions accountable in their response to the crisis. The crisis could be framed to contextualize the importance of progress on the SDGs.

CSPPS agreed the need for the Work Plan and Timeline to reflect the disruptions and possible opportunities presented by the new crisis. It is important to support the network as CSOs adapt to these new circumstances on the ground and to make sure they are not excluded from the response. John added that the resumption of the Month Coordination Calls and the upcoming Survey provide opportunities to engage with the network in the current context.

c. Review of Staff Compensation Levels from Proteus Fund

Discussion:

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not discussed. As noted in the Agenda:

Following up on the request from the TAP Steering Committee Spring Meeting, the Secretariat reached out to Proteus Fund to inquire if they had any analysis of staff compensation levels relevant to the TAP Coordinator’s position and location in New York. You can find the following resources that Proteus Fund has shared, which is based on an analysis they undertook as an organization in October 2019.

Proteus Fund Staff Cost Analysis for TAP Coordinator:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sLilke3hjQa8PW7wt_WQYfh9Jybeqe4b/view?usp=sharing

Methodology for Proteus Fund “Compensation Plan Design Initiative”:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k2UIJH65avwFbBS81h4n01hlzYbaP7g/view?usp=sharing>

d. Next Steps and Follow-up

Discussion:

As mentioned earlier, John noted that standalone call with the SC in the coming weeks is necessary to develop the work plan for member engagement.

TAP Network will resume Monthly Coordination Calls and will prepare for the upcoming survey with the network, which will be discussed further in the following SC meeting on April 17. Both are opportunities to update network members directly with the new strategic plan and reflect on the current crisis of the global pandemic.

Follow-up:

The Secretariat will create an analysis of member engagement document that will serve as a background for a future SC Call dedicated solely to Membership Engagement Brainstorming. The standalone call, in addition to the regularly planned bi-weekly meetings, will be planned for the end of April.

- o The resumption of the monthly coordination call (April 21 or 22)
- o The upcoming TAP survey scheduled for May will be discussed as a priority in the weeks to come.

The Secretariat will also revise the Work Plan to include reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemic. The first opportunity to communicate with members regarding the crisis will be in the email launch of the Strategic Plan (See above)

4. Partnership Updates

Discussion:

John raised the possibility of reaching out to the Mott Foundation regarding Match Funding. **The foundation reaffirmed its commitment to the current precarious climate. They also offered flexibility in terms of postponing reporting deadlines and budget changes, if necessary.**

However, they did not say that they could increase their funding and did not refer to the disbursement of the Match Funding option. Although TAP was close to securing funding from governments, this is no longer an option for the foreseeable future. It may be helpful to communicate to Mott that the loss of significant leads hinders their ability to match this funding. This could be communicated through a joint message on behalf of the Steering Committee.

The Accountability Lab cautioned that it may not be a good idea given the particularly sensitive time, rather suggesting an informal comment with a contact at Mott may be less risky. CSPPS, PRFT and SDG Kenya Forum agreed with this point.

5. Review of TAP Partner Applications

Due to time constraints this was not discussed on the call.

Follow-up:

The review of applications will resume on the next SC call scheduled for April 17.

6. Transition in TAP Secretariat Staffing

- a. Introduction to TAP Communications and Outreach Fellow**
- b. Handover Note from TAP Program Officer**
- c. TAP Network Consultant for Post-VNR Resource**

The new TAP Communications Fellow, Claudia Villalona, was in attendance and introduced herself to the committee. She will help take on some of the responsibilities previously carried out by the outgoing Program Officer— as outlined in the Handover Note document.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JIHIB0tcLmLKQR-m6CpcCDuezVAsvkff/view?usp=sharing>

The new consultant for the Post-VNR resource, Margaret Williams, is set to start the following week.