

Synthesis Report: TAP Network 2020 Membership Engagement Survey

Background

In May 2020, the TAP Network Steering Committee launched an open consultation with TAP Network Members and Partners, to solicit feedback and ideas for improving Membership Engagement within the TAP Network. This consultation featured a comprehensive survey as well as an open-ended webinar for TAP Members to provide feedback on a wide range of topics. The feedback provided via this consultation is intended to guide the Steering Committee in providing improved and additional opportunities for engagement of TAP Members in all of TAP's work streams, with the aim of enhancing ownership amongst TAP's Members, and enhancing inclusion at all levels.

Executive Summary

Reflections around overall Membership Engagement featured a wide range of responses that provide invaluable insights into how TAP Network Members and Partners envisage their engagement in TAP's work on many fronts. Notably, **respondents responded overwhelmingly that they were interested in being more involved with the TAP Network's work overall**, and that they were generally aware of the opportunities presented to them for engaging with TAP's work up to this point. However, while respondents were generally positive regarding the current levels of engagement to-date, responses also reflected a need and desire for the TAP Secretariat and Steering Committee to provide **more opportunities for the Membership to be included directly in TAP's work**, including through working groups and more open-ended engagements that work to effectively create broader ownership amongst Members and Partners. This is a particularly noteworthy point, given that TAP's focus on Membership Engagement in recent years has provided opportunities for "*engagement*" of the Membership – an area that respondents reported broad satisfaction with through this survey and others. However, these "*top-down*" efforts provided by the Secretariat differ from the "*bottom-up*" engagement related to "*inclusion*" of the Membership in opportunities and activities – an important distinction to be made, and prioritized going forward. However, it was noted by some respondents that this requires an active Membership where Members and Partners are willing to step-up when called upon – a system that encourages mutual ownership and accountability amongst all partners.

Another area for improvement that was noted by respondents is the need for **TAP to facilitate better and more frequent opportunities and platforms for TAP Members and**

Partners to connect with one another. This was also highlighted in respondents reflections around the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many noting that TAP could provide **more opportunities for sharing information amongst peers or platforms for learning and engagement** amongst members around COVID-19 topics. While this call for more opportunities for cross-network connections and collaboration was noted by many, responses varied for how TAP could achieve this, with some suggesting that **empowering working groups** as the most efficient and effective means of facilitating these opportunities. It was also suggested that the TAP Secretariat could **set up platforms for cross-network communications that are already widely used by organizations**, utilizing platforms such as whatsapp groups, slack, or google groups.

Notably, there was a strong call for TAP to deepen its work at the national and regional levels, including proposals to **re-establish the TAP Network's Regional Focal Points and Coordination Groups**, and for TAP to look to **establish National Focal Points** in countries where possible. However, it was also noted that these groups should be established on a case-by-case basis, based **on overall willingness of TAP Members and Partners to engage in such a group**, and should **not duplicate any similar groups that may already exist in a country** – and indeed, work should be done to further strengthen these existing mechanisms. Some respondents also noted that the Steering Committee could **empower these Regional Focal Points to play a role in the overall governance of the TAP Network**, which could help provide an important bridge between TAP's global coordination through the Secretariat and Steering Committee, and the regional and national levels. It was noted that this could also provide opportunities for peer-learning amongst like-minded organizations working in a region or country, and would improve ownership of TAP's Members and Partners in TAP's work. It was also suggested that **multiple focal points per region** could be identified, to help diversify the reach of TAP in different sub-regions or countries, and would improve mutual accountability amongst partners engaged in these working groups. It was also noted that **providing small amounts of funding to these regional coordination mechanisms** could help encourage ownership and ensure that ambitions of these groups can adequately be taken forward, if funding is required.

In relation to the current TAP Network "Partners" structure and engagement, current TAP Partners responded with **moderate satisfaction to the benefits offered exclusively to Partners, however also noted that they would like to see additional opportunities for engagement**. Respondents offered proposals for additional benefits that could be considered, which include additional Partner-exclusive opportunities for funding or for hosting TAP capacity building programs at the national and regional level. Partners also noted that the TAP Secretariat should provide more information about current opportunities on a regular basis, and increase the frequency of engagement with TAP Partners directly.

In addition to engaging in opportunities for collaboration at the national and regional levels, respondents noted that they would like to see **more opportunities for global advocacy going forward**, similar to the opportunity presented by the 2019 Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+. It was suggested that TAP's various **working groups that are**

established could look to develop such advocacy materials, but that they must be tied to concrete opportunities for advocacy, and will require broad ownership amongst not only the working groups, but the broader TAP Membership in order to be successful.

Finally, respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the overall work and transparency of the TAP Secretariat and Steering Committee to-date. It was noted that while the Secretariat and Steering Committee were transparent in their work, **some respondents would prefer more opportunities for engaging directly with both**, and respondents also noted that they would prefer **more engagement and communications from the Steering Committee**, with the Steering Committee representing the TAP Network Membership directly. It was also suggested that to improve the accessibility and responsiveness of the Secretariat and the Steering Committee to the Membership, that **a platform or mechanism for the Membership to submit specific requests or queries to the Secretariat and Steering Committee could be created.**

Key Takeaways:

- Membership Engagement should focus more on “bottom-up” engagement and inclusion of TAP Network Members and Partners in TAP’s work directly, including through empowering working groups and other coordination mechanisms
- Renewed focus on facilitating better and more frequent opportunities and platforms for TAP Members and Partners for connecting, sharing, collaborating and learning from one another, and utilize best platforms for engagement amongst peers
- Re-establish TAP Regional Focal Points and Coordination Mechanisms, and empower Regional Focal Points to play a role in overall governance of the TAP Network
- Establish/Pilot National Focal Points and Coordination Mechanisms in countries where TAP has active Members and Partners, taking note of existing groups in-country
- Review the TAP Network “Partner” structure, and scope out any additional opportunities that can be offered for TAP Partners, along with concrete means of engagement with Partners
- Revive or establish TAP Working Groups on various topics to engage and empower TAP’s Members and Partners, and provide opportunities for self-organization and ownership of working group participants
- Establish a clear mechanism for TAP Partners and Members to communicate directly with the TAP Secretariat and Steering Committee, to submit requests, queries or opportunities for partnership