Independent mid-term evaluation - Transparency International's Asia Pacific Programme 2016-2019: DFAT management response

Overview

The Transparency International (TI) Asia Pacific Regional Programme is a four-year program running from 2016 – 2019. It seeks to contribute to policy and behaviour change in the Asia Pacific region through regional and national interventions coordinated at the TI Secretariat (TI-S). It supports 12 national chapters including: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Vietnam, Maldives, Nepal, PNG, Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The program is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with a total budget of $6.9 million.

TI-S commissioned an independent mid-term evaluation in 2018 with Karlburg Consulting. The evaluation reviewed the period January 2016 – June 2018 and consulted TI staff in Berlin and representatives from national chapters in PNG, Solomon Islands, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The final evaluation report was completed in November 2018.

DFAT supports most of the recommendations in the evaluation. The evaluation provides Transparency International and DFAT with recommendations that can be used to strengthen an already good partnership that has existed for 15 years. DFAT notes that as of June 2019, Transparency International has accepted most of the recommendations and, in some cases, has already started implementation.

It is DFAT's view that the evaluation is comprehensive in its scope, based on a diverse range of evidence and the recommendations identify the highest priority issues that require attention. The recommendations, if fully implemented, are likely to significantly strengthen the quality of the current, and a potential future, program. DFAT's response to each of the recommendations in the evaluation is below.

DFAT's detailed response to the recommendations in the evaluation

Independent mid-term evaluation recommendations	DFAT response
Design and planning **For TI-S: Reflection on key strengths and alignment with TI's global strategic priorities and advocacy goals.** In light of the new advocacy global level priorities for the TI movement, assessment of the AP region's and the NCs' added value and key strengths, what this means for TI's global level initiatives, and how the key strengths can contribute to TI's proposed global advocacy strategy for dirty money and political integrity.	Agree. DFAT supports this recommendation. The work in the Asia Pacific region should align as much as possible to the new directions of TI at a global level to achieve greatest relevance and impact for TI as a global movement. The global advocacy themes of dirty money and political integrity have relevance for countries across the Indo-Pacific.
For TI-S and NCs: Stronger lateral connections between the goals Making the logical horizontal links between goals more explicit would enable better management for shared outcomes and allow for efficient and innovative cross-goal programme solutions and ideas. At country level, there are several examples of where this is done. Smaller chapters with less resources sometimes do this better, as it is often cost effective and provides integrated solutions.	Agree. DFAT thinks that greater integration between program objectives is a worthwhile focus.
For TI-S: Review the Theory of Change, results framework, and terminology for target groups and beneficiaries. The Theory of Change would benefit from a review of its causal chain and the change intended with different interventions. Stronger results-oriented indicators are necessary, which to the extent possible should be within what TI can control and to the extent possible avoid external dependencies. To be able to measure and determine TI's impact, it is essential to have a strong and deliberate beneficiary description in results and outcome statements, and as a consequence to be able	Agree. The current theory of change and results framework needs to be re-worked. Many of the intermediate outcomes go beyond TI-S and NC 'sphere of control'. The program needs to develop a more robust definition of what it is seeking to achieve and who it is seeking to influence and work with.

to follow up the different intended results for target groups and beneficiaries.	
Goal 1 – Enhanced Social Accountability **For TI-S: Commission a thematic impact assessment of Social Accountability** Social accountability is a big investment area. For accountability and learning it is important to properly capture the impact of the investments, and its contribution to people seeking redress, to community action, and to anti-corruption activism. This involves impact evaluation in all or several of the countries that contribute to this goal, with a focus on consulting beneficiaries. This should be done at the end of the current programme, either as a distinct part of the final evaluation or as a separate evaluation. **For NCs: Innovative approaches at design stage to reach more women and vulnerable groups** Methods such as gender responsive programming apply a gender lens at planning and design, which can lead to different approaches to activities and implementation. Some chapters do this well, and with a specific gender focus in mind they are able to reach more women, whom in turn have conveyed the message further, thereby having a multiplier effect. **For NCs: For better reach, more partnerships and more effective communications and campaign strategies.** Some chapters have established good partnerships that allow them to cover broader geographical areas. Other chapters need to do much more in this regard, to raise the awareness and contribute to more people taking action. Some chapters are demonstrating best practice in terms of using the best of modern technology and up to date campaign strategies, partnering with media outlets or entertainment industry to better capture people's attention and interest, as well as using mobile technology that allows people to report cases online. These examples could be adopted to improve the performance of other chapters hat are still mainly using print publications for this purpose.	Agree. DFAT supports an impact assessment of the social accountability goal, during a potential future phase of the partnership. It is important for TI to understand the impact of the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALAC's) on the behaviour of beneficiaries (citizens impacted by corruption) and what combination of approaches work best at achieving impact overall. Agree. DFAT agrees that NCs need to strengthen approaches to gender equality and reaching vulnerable groups, including at the design stage of activities. However, responsibility for this is shared with the TI-S, who should be developing better systems, tools and processes to assist and guide NCs. The collection of sex-disaggregated data is also a critical way to build up an 'evidence base' on what works – and to then inform gender responsive programming which all NCs need to collect. Agree. DFAT agrees that NCs need support to work more effectively with partners and improve communications and campaign strategies. However, responsibility for this is shared with the TI-S, who should be developing better systems, tools and processes to assist and guide NCs.
Goal 2 – Strengthened Anti-Corruption Legislation Build on good experience made so far, but narrow the focus to countries where this goal is a strong priority, such as in the Pacific, and/or where this work is strongly required but where it is not possible to get funding from other sources (as some NCs are involved in legislative work regardless of the AP Programme). Consider making lateral connections to the other goals more explicit, to enable the programme to be more integrated and improve management for shared outcomes.	Agree. DFAT agrees that support under the program for this goal should be mostly focused in countries that do not have other sources of finance for this work (i.e. the Pacific). Ideally this goal should be connected to other priorities rather than framed as a stand-alone goal. Stronger legislation is only useful if stakeholders are aware and make use of it.
Goal 3 – Strengthened Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Mechanism Continue with the programme according to the current strategy, informed by the new Anti-Corruption Agency assessment in 2019, in order to see results towards the key outcome. Assess further how the tool can be used for non-willing ACAs. Consider how the anti-corruption enforcement work in the AP region can contribute to TI's global advocacy goals.	Disagree. DFAT is not necessarily convinced that this goal is a high priority for NCs as part of a possible next phase of the program. Only ACA's in South Asia (and Indonesia) are currently participating. DFAT wants to see more evidence that this goal is a priority for NCs, during the design of a new partnership with TI.

Goal 4 – Demonstrated Business Integrity Determine whether there is sufficient capacity at both NCs and TI-S to continue with this goal and the feasibility for scaling up. To make a case to continue with the goal, finalise the regional work with developing an overarching strategy, leveraging off the different regional initiatives in place. This should include connections to the other programme goals, such as policy coherence for efficient and accountable business practices, and Rights to Information as part of accountable business practice. Establish how business integrity can contribute to TI's new global advocacy direction and how it can work in coalitions and regional partnerships for strengthened impact.	Disagree. DFAT is not necessarily convinced that this goal is a high priority for NCs as part of a possible next phase of the program. TI has struggled to attract sufficient interest from NCs for this goal and it is not connected to other work that NCs are doing. DFAT would like TI to consider engagement with the private sector be around targeted specific industry sectors that are vulnerable to corruption (such as extractives, construction and health), rather than a more general business integrity approach.
Funding – for TI-S Develop a funding formula that would enable chapters that operate in a country context in which access to alternative core funding is very difficult. The formula should take into account the feasibility of accessing other core funding, and the demonstrated effectiveness and likelihood of achieving impact, despite funding problems.	Agree. DFAT agrees that TI needs to better manage diversity in funding across NCs in the region. Chapters in smaller and more isolated countries of the Pacific require access to sufficient core funding to achieve accreditation and sustainability as local organisations.
Enabling Impact – for TI-S **Balance Enabling Impact tied to the change goals with general capacity strengthening support** Consider the right balance between Enabling Impact tied to the change goals and a stand-alone capacity strengthening component. This will also support weaker chapters to reach their potential by utilising this budget component better. Advice at the proposal concept stage can make a difference for chapters who currently have not budgeted for any, or very little, Enabling Impact funds. **Balance between standardised centrally driven capacity building and needs driven approaches** A programme-driven structured approach should be combined with a demand-driven responsive approach, to ensure there is a minimum standard of skills and capacities within all chapters. **Skills and capability matrix.** TI-S to develop a skills and capability matrix of technical skills available at each chapters, for chapters to access when they need guidance and advice on particular issues and want to connect with other colleagues for peer-to-peer learning. The matrix should also include capacity needs development, in order for TI-S plan ahead and meet capacity strengthening demands. **Gender mainstreaming**. AP Team to advocate for institutionalising gender mainstreaming at TI-S. It is recommended that this involves engaging an in-house gender expert, or an expert on a retainer consultancy basis. Apart from benefitting the TI movement as a whole, for the AP Programme it would mean a gender quality controller to provide technical expertise on gender mainstreaming. With or without this resource, contribute to developing a gender mainstreaming policy and operationalise it through training and capacity support.	Agree. DFAT wants to see a potential future program include a greater focus on supporting weaker chapters reach their potential. This will enable TI to utilise this budget component better. Agree. A balance between standardised and needs driven approaches is needed. During the design of the next phase of the program DFAT wants to see more information about the TI-S strategy, tools and approaches to building the capability of NCs. Agree. DFAT supports the development and utilisation of a skills and capability matrix for supporting NCs. Agree. Gender mainstreaming should be a key priority for TI-S and NCs. DFAT wants to see evidence of more resources to support gender mainstreaming in the next phase of the program.

Continued capacity strengthening in the use of the Impact Matrix. The matrix contains several essential elements on outcomes and impact logic. Ensuring more chapters understand the model and appreciate the value of it would enable chapters to raise their level of impact thinking. It would also enable TI-S to get more consistent qualitative data on impact.	Agree. DFAT supports the idea of TI-S assisting NCs to make greater use of the Impact Matrix and understand the importance of data collection and impact evaluation more broadly.
Reporting. Consider moving to 6-monthly chapter reports and develop a change request and risk and issues reporting procedure for chapters to use instead, when budget and programme changes are necessary between the regular reporting intervals.	Agree. DFAT supports the use of the more efficient reporting processes proposed.
Recommendations pertaining to the Pacific **Finalise and operationalise the TI's draft Pacific strategy** This includes recruiting a Pacific resource person, to contribute to operationalising the strategy.	Agree. DFAT supports the recommendations related to the Pacific and recruitment of additional resources.
Regional and national approach. Focus on supporting existing TI chapters in the Pacific, as well as leveraging off regional opportunities. There is a strong need for an intensified regional approach and partnership for anti-corruption in the Pacific	DFAT supports an increased focus on the Pacific. DFAT has consistently advocated for a Pacific resource person to be located in the region. DFAT supports strengthening the existing chapters (Vanuatu, Solomon Islands) as an urgent priority and possibly look to the viability of re-engagement in Fiji.
Demonstrate relevance, entry points and coalitions For a strong business case for the Pacific, demonstrate the critical role of TI in the region, the options for different entry points for the next 1-2 years, and feasible partnerships and coalitions.	Agree. DFAT supports the proposal for TI to consider how to build relevance in the Pacific at a 'regional' level.
Develop the core funding formula, recommended above. **A split funding approach (project/core funding), and pooled funding**. A new AP Programme should primarily consist of project or activity funding, with a small portion for core funding for vulnerable chapters. Explore mechanisms to put in place to allow for other donors other than DFAT to contribute to this pool for the Pacific chapters.	Agree. DFAT supports a coordinated approach to funding TI in the Pacific in collaboration with NZ (MFAT) and other potential donors. DFAT supports the establishment of a core funding formula for smaller Pacific Island countries and a focus on program funding for other countries.