

How Has Think Tank Transparency Evolved in 2018?

A reassessment of 92 think tanks in 24 countries worldwide

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www.transparify.org

TRANSPARIFY



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Transparency: Progress, Slippage & Donor Responsibility

Previous Transparify reports have shown that think tanks are becoming more transparent, around the world. Our targeted assessments, such as our report on think tanks in the United Kingdom (2016) and Canada (2017) demonstrate the same pattern. Most quality think tanks respond positively and increase disclosure, when the issue of transparency is raised.

What was missing, however, was an assessment of how transparency evolves once it no longer is in the headlines. Having focused on Canada in 2017, Transparify had not done a global assessment that year. It was not clear how strong the trend towards disclosure remained. Did think tanks stay transparent? Was it just a fad, while journalists paid attention? Had some institutions decided to sneak back into opacity, when it came to their funding?

This question – how the transparency of think tanks has evolved – is the focus of this report. Transparify reviewed think tanks that previously achieved high levels of transparency to check how they developed. Moreover, eight institutions approached Transparify for an assessment.

The results are encouraging: we are seeing more and more transparent think tanks. In 2018, Transparify identified 67 institutions that are highly transparent (5-star), as compared to 41 in 2016, and 12 think tanks with full disclosure in 2013, when we did our baseline.

In total, there now are 92 institutions that are highly transparent (5-star) or broadly transparent (4-star), showing a strong increase over time. The trend is global, with institutions in 24 countries showing high disclosure.

While the trend is clearly positive, we also did see significant slippage. Some think tanks seem to struggle with updating their financial or annual reports. Great disclosure for 2015 does not do much for a citizen that checks a webpage in 2018. The exemplary disclosure of one US think tank vanished after its website was overhauled (it was restored, eventually). In that way, transparency has not always been institutionalized into think tank processes. Moreover, there are, of course, still too many organizations with insufficient disclosure out there.

This remaining lack of transparency is regrettable, particularly so in the current political context. As we argue in a study for the Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI), think tanks find it easier to push back against public attacks if they model the behaviors they demand of others. Transparency about funding remains a simple and sensible step.

On this, it probably is fair to say that too many donors have been asleep. Simple changes to application procedures could nudge think tanks to become more transparent. Opacity could largely be history, at least for quality think tanks, if donors asked institutions about their disclosure, at the point of application. In that way, too, think tank transparency will be a way of measuring whether systemic donors are improving their own practices.

We will continue to follow this issue. It's not the only one that matters for think tanks. But it's one that practically all think tanks should and can get right. Revealing your donors should become and be as natural as citing sources, in academic papers.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hans Gutbrod".

Dr Hans Gutbrod,
Executive Director of Transparify

How has transparency evolved in 2018?

What we measure

Transparify rates the extent to which think tanks publicly disclose through their websites where their funding comes from.

We visit think tanks' websites and looked at the funding and donor information disclosed online, including in online annual reports.

Institutions rated with the maximum of five stars are highly transparent about who funds them. Think tanks with four stars are broadly transparent; typically, they do not disclose the precise amounts given, but instead group their donors into several funding brackets. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the funding of think tanks with zero stars or one star is highly opaque as they fail to disclose even the names of some or all of their donors.

Transparify used the same rating criteria as in previous years' assessments. The rating criteria for the number of stars to award are defined as follows:

RATING		CRITERION
Five stars	*****	highly transparent: all donors listed, clearly identifying funding amounts for, and sources of, particular projects ¹
Four stars	****	broadly transparent: all donors above USD 5,000 listed in 4+ precise funding brackets, with anonymous donors no more than 15%
Three stars	***	all or most donors listed in 2 or 3 broad contribution brackets [e.g. "USD 5,000 to 15,000, the following donors"]
Two stars	**	all or many donors listed, but little or no financial information
One star	*	some donors listed, but not exhaustive or systematic
Zero stars	0	no relevant or up-to-date information

NB: Organizations may exceptionally list privacy-minded donors as "anonymous", but in order to qualify as transparent, an organization needs to disclose the sources of over 85% of its funding volume.

Multiple steps reinforce the reliability of Transparify's rating results:

- Systematic and transparent approach with clear categories
- Ratings by separate raters
- Adjudication where needed
- Full replicability of results by third parties

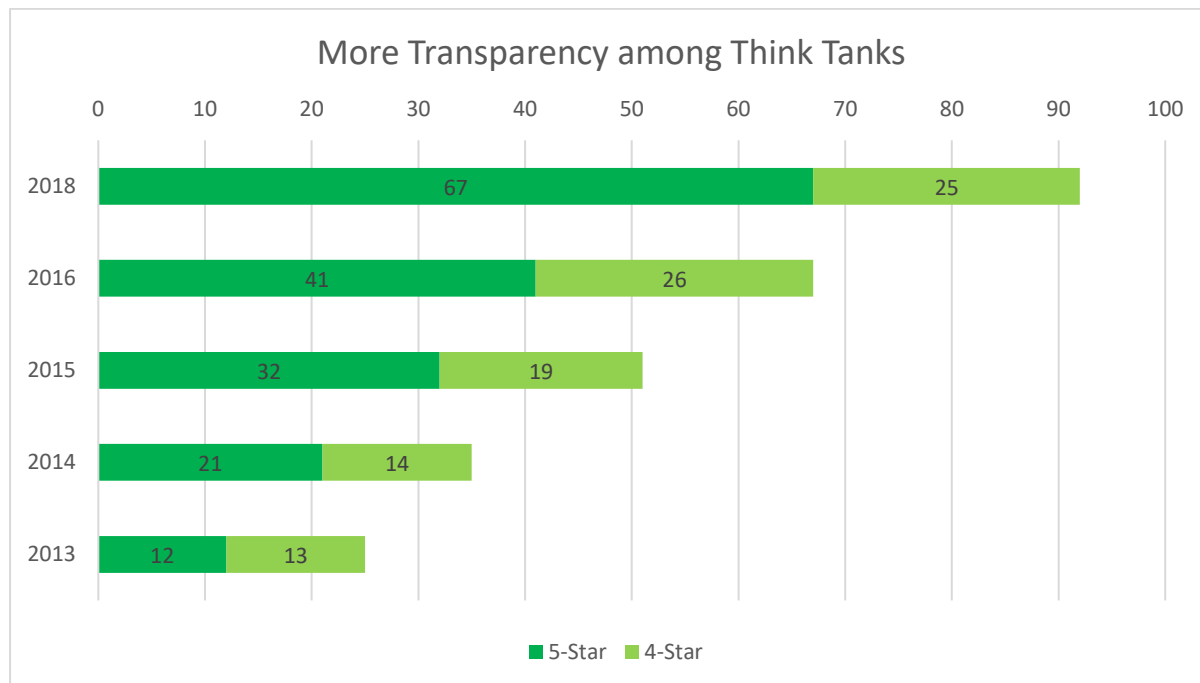
The ratings for the main cohort of think tanks in this report capture the status quo as of June 10, 2018.

Our rating methodology is explained in detail in the Annex.

¹ Transparify has compiled a brief guide for think tanks wishing to pursue excellence in financial disclosure, available here: <http://www.transparify.org/get-five>. We encourage institutions aspiring to five-star disclosure to contact us beforehand as Transparify may in future review and slightly modify the criteria for 5-star ratings.

Global Overview and Trends

The trend towards more transparency among think tanks continues. Transparify now has tracked a total of 92 institutions that are highly transparent or broadly transparent, around the world.



NB: In 2017, Transparify focused on a targeted assessment of think tanks in Canada.

Particularly striking, in this context, is the increase in institutions with 5-star transparency. In 2013, at the time of our baseline, there were 12 institutions. In 2018, we identified 67 institutions that have 5-star transparency.

In a world often dominated by bleak headlines, this is a welcome piece of news. Importantly, recent surveys in the United States² and United Kingdom³ show that a majority of those who know what think tanks are also want them to be financially transparent. We think that the global movement towards transparency in part reflects the public demand, by citizens, advocacy organizations, and journalists.

We assume there are dozens of highly transparent think tanks and policy advocacy organizations that we have not assessed yet. We hope to expand our coverage in the future, to provide additional evidence that high transparency is emerging as the new norm in policy research and advocacy.

2 <https://weareflint.co.uk/forging-the-think-tank-narrative-perceptions-usa/>

3 <https://weareflint.co.uk/forging-the-think-tank-narrative-uk>

Newly Transparent Think Tanks in 2018

In 2017 and 2018, Transparify identified a number of newly transparent think tanks. Five newly transparent institutions had been assessed before, and had increased their transparency. Of particular note is the Clingendael Institute in the Netherlands, which now has 5-star transparency, increasing by several stars. We had previously found that government-founded think tanks typically have been less involved in transparency-related debates. This is now changing, and it is thus good to see the recent 4-star transparency by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in the United Kingdom.

In the United Kingdom as well, LSE Ideas, a think tank based at the London School of Economics has increased to 4-star transparency, hopefully becoming a model for other university-based think tanks. Universities are not always at the forefront of transparency practices. LSE Ideas is a much-needed exception.

The New America Foundation, which had been the focus of some discussion on the donor-research relationship, now has 5-star transparency. As we have commented elsewhere, the relationship between donors and research is a complex one. We think it is desirable, but too optimistic, to expect that funding is entirely disinterested. (Most resources for research, including at universities, come with some interests attached.) What we can expect, however, is transparency. The New America Foundation now has such exemplary transparency, joining the handful of leading US think tanks that are 5-star transparent, together with Freedom House, which also increased its transparency to 5-stars.

Name	Change	Stars
Clingendael Institute (The Netherlands)	+5	*****
Freedom House (United States)	+1	*****
New America Foundation (United States)	+1	*****
LSE Ideas	+1	****
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (United Kingdom)	+1	****
African Centre for Evidence (South Africa)	new	*****
Centre for Health and the Public Interest (United Kingdom)	new	*****
DiXi Group (Ukraine)	new	*****
Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) (Norway)	new	*****
Generation Squeeze (Canada)	new	*****
Institute of Analysis & Advocacy (Ukraine)	new	*****
New Europe Center (Ukraine)	new	*****
Transnational Institute (Netherlands)	new	*****
Espacio Público (Chile)	new	****
Middle East Institute (United States)	new	****

NB: This report focuses on the changes in 2017-2018. Not included under "new" institutions are those whose increased disclosure we previously covered in reports on the United Kingdom and Canada, or covered through blogposts throughout 2016.

Next to the think tanks that we have followed for some years already, ten new institutions asked us to assess their transparency.

In the course of 2017, two institutions got in touch with Transparify. In Norway, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), itself dedicated to increasing disclosure, sets an example with its own 5-star transparency. In Chile, Espacio Público, has achieved 4-star transparency.

In Ukraine, in 2018, the DiXi Group; Institute of Analysis & Advocacy (IAA); and New Europe Center (NEC) have decided to become highly transparent. In South Africa, the African Center for Evidence (ACE), also has 5-star transparency. Such high transparency, in our view, continues to be particularly important where democratic processes are not consolidated. In the increasingly challenging political environment the world has witnessed in recent years, transparency is of no less importance in more established democracies, though. In this vein, it is positive to see that four other institutions asked us to review their disclosure. The Centre for Health and the Public Interest in the United Kingdom, Generation Squeeze an organization focused on advocacy related to urban development in British Columbia, Canada, and the Transnational Institute in the Netherlands now all have 5-star transparency. We were particularly encouraged to see the diversity of institutions, both in terms of countries and in the types of organizations.

Another new institution is the Middle East Institute, which had also been the focus of some media attention. It is now 4-star transparent. While we cannot comment on the original issues, we do think that institutions deserve recognition when they, as a consequence of debate, decide to become transparent. This suggests that positive changes are possible.

Highly Transparent Think Tanks in 2018

In 2018, Transparify identified 57 think tanks who continue to be highly transparent, in addition to the 10 that have become 5-star transparent recently.⁴

We see a strong trend towards more transparency, around the world. From originally 12 institutions, at the time of our baseline study, we now have 67 think tanks with 5-star transparency, more than quintupling the original number. The list of highly transparent think tanks now no longer fits on one page.

Name	Change	Stars
African Centre for Evidence (South Africa)	new	*****
African Economic Research Consortium (Kenya)		*****
Amnesty International (United Kingdom)		*****
Analitika - Center for Social Research (Bosnia and Herzegovina)		*****
Bruegel (Belgium)		*****
CEDOS (Ukraine) (FORMERLY: Center for Society Research)		*****
Center for Democratic Transition (CDT) (Montenegro)		*****
Center for Global Development (United States)		*****
Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) (Bulgaria)		*****
Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) (Canada)		*****
Centre for Health and the Public Interest (United Kingdom)	new	*****
Centre for Monitoring and Research (CeMI) (Montenegro)		*****
Centre for Policy Research (India)		*****
Centre of Policy and Legal Reform (CPLR) (Ukraine) (FORMERLY: Centre for Political and Legal Reforms)		*****
CIDOB (Spain)		*****
Clingendael Institute (The Netherlands)	+5	*****
Corruption Watch (South Africa)		*****
Development Initiatives (United Kingdom)		*****
DiXi Group (Ukraine)	new	*****
Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC) (Georgia)		*****
Eötvös Károly Institute (Hungary)		*****
European Centre for Development and Policy Management (ECDPM) (Netherlands)		*****
European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) (United Kingdom)		*****
European Policy Institute - Skopje (Macedonia)		*****
Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) (Norway)	new	*****
Fabian Society (United Kingdom)		*****
Financial Transparency Coalition (United States)		*****
Freedom House (United States)	+1	*****
Global Integrity (United States)		*****
Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) (United Kingdom)		*****
GovLab @ NYU (United States)		*****
Grupo FARO (Ecuador)		*****
Institute Alternative (IA) (Montenegro)		*****
Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) (United Kingdom)		*****
Institute for Government (IfG) (United Kingdom)		*****
Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Georgia		*****
Institute of Analysis & Advocacy (Ukraine)	new	*****
Institute of Development Studies (United Kingdom)		*****
Institute of World Policy (IWP) (Ukraine)		*****
International Crisis Group (ICG) (Belgium)		*****

⁴ This includes think tanks covered in reports focused on the United Kingdom (2016) and Canada (2017).

Name	Change	Stars
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)		*****
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (Canada)		*****
ISSET Policy Institute (Georgia)		*****
Natural Resource Governance Institute (United States)		*****
New Economics Foundation (NEF) (United Kingdom)		*****
New America Foundation (United States)	+1	*****
New Europe Center (Ukraine)	new	*****
Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) (Norway)		*****
Open Contracting Partnership (United States)		*****
Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (United Kingdom)		*****
PMC Research Center, Georgia (Georgia)		*****
Publish What You Pay – Canada		*****
Publish What You Pay – US		*****
South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) (South Africa)		*****
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) (Germany)		*****
Stimson Center (United States)		*****
Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) (Sweden)		*****
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (Sweden)		*****
Sunlight Foundation (United States)		*****
Tax Justice Network (United Kingdom)		*****
Transnational Institute (Netherlands)	new	*****
Transparency International – EU Office in Brussels		*****
Transparency International - Georgia (Georgia)		*****
Transparency International UK (United Kingdom)		*****
World Resources Institute (United States)		*****
World Wide Web Foundation (United States)		*****

Reflecting their strong representation among the think tanks we engaged with in the past, 14 of the highly transparent think tanks are based in the United States, and 13 in the United Kingdom. In Ukraine we found six think tanks that are 5-star, in Georgia five, in Canada four, in Belgium and Montenegro three, in Sweden and Norway two each. We also saw three institutions with 5-star transparency in South Africa.

Otherwise we saw 5-star institutions in Australia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Germany, India, Kenya, Macedonia, The Netherlands, and Spain, highlighting that transparency matters around the globe.

Broadly Transparent Think Tanks

In 2018, Transparify also tracked an increase in think tanks with 4-star transparency. Twenty-one think tanks continue to be broadly transparent, in addition to the four new 4-star think tanks.

Name	Change	Stars
Atlantic Council (United States)		****
Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) (Australia)		****
Brookings Institution (United States)		****
Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs (United States)		****
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (United States)		****
Center for a New American Security (United States)		****
Center for American Progress (United States)		****
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (United States)		****
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (United States)		****
Chatham House (United Kingdom)		****
Espacio Público (Chile)	new	****
Demos (United Kingdom)		****
Development Policy Centre (Australia)		****
German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) (Germany)		****
German Marshall Fund of the US (United States)		****
Heritage Foundation (United States)		****
LSE Ideas (United Kingdom)	+1	****
Institute for Public Policy Research (United Kingdom)		****
Middle East Institute (United States)	new	****
Peterson Institute for International Economics (United States)		****
RAND Corporation (United States)		****
ResPublica (United Kingdom)		****
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (United Kingdom)	+1	****
Urban Institute (United States)		****
Woodrow Wilson Center (United States) ⁵	-1	****

As the table shows, this form of disclosure is particularly attractive among many US think tanks. They constitute the overwhelming majority of 4-star think tanks. For some large organizations, 4-star transparency seems attractive because it allows extensive information to be published in an accessible way. Moreover, it provides reasonable levels of disclosure to the public, while also allowing some discretion on contributions. Institutions often prefer not to be entirely transparent about their itemized cost structure, vis-à-vis donors or clients. A better understanding of the need to cover overhead costs would reduce some of this fundraising pressure on the institutions.

⁵ The Woodrow Wilson Center in principle has 5-star disclosure but has not updated its information recently.

Why Some Think Tanks Slide & Donor Engagement

While Transparify identified a number of think tanks that no longer are highly transparent, we could not identify a case in which an organization has deliberately decided to become more opaque.

One US think tank, at first glance, had removed financial disclosure information that previously was accessible. As it turned out, the website had been reorganized comprehensively, and there also had been staff turnover. After we got in touch, the institution updated their donor webpage, and now is again among the 5-star institutions.

In the case of another US think tank, previously 5-star, now 2-star, the two main donors in the past were identified in tax reports that were accessible on the think tank's website. The 2016 tax report, however, blanked out the name of the two donors. While the donors can be inferred, as the think tank operates as a subsidiary of a major trust, proper transparency should not rely on guesswork.

For another four think tanks, the decline in transparency was a result of delays in posting updated annual and/or financial reports. (Our window is comparatively broad, fully taking into account reports that cover the time up to mid-2016. The overwhelming majority of institutions have more recent disclosure.) For at least some organizations, this may bring up the topic of the usefulness of annual reports. They typically take long to prepare, require quality lay-out, are expensive to print, and rarely studied. Donors have more than enough to read already.

Somewhat outside our remit, our impression was that many dynamic think tanks have decided to present themselves via short, highly accessible summaries on policy issues, and a multimedia at-a-glance summary, otherwise posting regular updates on their websites. That said, we continue to see many annual reports that made good use of the format.

Some think tanks, also, shut down. Two think tanks apparently ceased to operate. In another two cases of non-updated information, it appeared that institutions had greatly decreased their activity.

It is possible that some think tanks have updated their information, since we last checked their website, in June 2018. Moreover, it is also possible that some of the 200 think tanks that we previously assessed (of which 173 had 0-3-star transparency, in 2016) in the meantime have improved their disclosure. In this round, we did not go back to look at all 200 websites. Where we become aware of changes, we will post on our website and on Twitter.

A systemic solution to increase transparency in policy research is possible. As highlighted in the introduction, donors could play a key role in mainstreaming transparency by asking think tanks at the point of application, to indicate the webpage on which they declare their funding. If a few systemic donors, including major US foundations, the World Bank, and the UK-Department for International Development would adopt such a measure, updated transparency could be the norm as soon as 2020.

Why Transparency Continues to Matter

Transparency continues to matter. In a 2017 Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI) report, we highlighted how a number of governments around the world are putting think tanks (and civil society organizations more broadly) under pressure, framing them as funded by opaque outside interests; illegitimate and self-appointed; and hugely privileged in comparison to the population.

In that regard, proactive disclosure is a sensible step, to demonstrate that institutions have nothing to hide. Proactive disclosure helps to keep the discussion focused on issues, and on holding government accountable, rather than being caught up in questions of one's own accountability. The report contains several other points that may be of interest to think tanks, CSOs, and donors, with a focus on how to make civil society organizations (including think tanks) more resilient in a context of potential onslaught.⁶

This aligns with our main focus: promoting transparency so that think tanks can have a larger impact, not as an additional constraint. We will continue to work on this, with focused assessments, direct advocacy with institutions, engagement with donors and with the On Think Tanks network.

There are, in Transparify's view, four key takeaways:

- for think tanks that are already transparent: achieving this disclosure is an essential step that communicates the confidence in the integrity of your research. We also think it's important to think about managing other risks, so that think tanks can concentrate on impact. We have suggestions that other institutions have found useful, here: <http://bit.ly/IntegrityCheck>
- for think tanks that are not yet transparent: this is a good time to increase disclosure. Dozens of quality institutions around the world have demonstrated that sustained transparency is a good operating model, and helps to set apart quality think tanks from those institutions that shill for opaque interests. Transparify is happy to help in the process.
- for donors that fund think tanks: a little tweak to your application procedure could go a long way in making all think tanks more transparent – and especially more transparent for citizens, in an accessible way. Do ask think tanks about disclosure when they request funding – which is when you have their full attention.
- for journalists and media outlets: stop giving a free platform to lobbyists that present themselves as independent experts. Do ask about the funding for institutions. Highlight to your audience when it is not transparent. When you need real expertise, go to think tanks that are transparent about who funds them. This, by itself, does not guarantee quality but at least it indicates that the institutions have nothing to hide.

⁶ "Distract, Divide, Detach: Using Transparency and Accountability to Justify Regulation of CSOs" – Transparency & Accountability Initiative, see <http://bit.ly/ResilientCSOs-2017Report>

Annex: Methodology

What we measure

Transparify rates the extent to which think tanks publicly disclose through their websites where their funding comes from.

We visited think tanks' websites and looked at the funding and donor information disclosed online, including in annual reports. Institutions rated with the maximum of five stars are highly transparent about who funds them. Think tanks with four stars are broadly transparent; typically, they do not disclose exactly who gave how much, but instead group their donors into funding brackets. Institutions with three stars or less currently lack transparency.

Multiple steps reinforce the reliability of Transparify's rating results:

- Systematic and transparent approach with clear categories
- Ratings by separate raters
- Adjudication process, where needed
- Full replicability of results by third parties

Ratings were conducted between 1 May, 2018 and June 10, 2018.

Rating criteria

The rating criteria for the number of stars to award are clearly defined as follows:

RATING		CRITERION
Five stars	*****	highly transparent: all donors listed, clearly identifying funding amounts for, and sources of, particular projects ⁷
Four stars	****	broadly transparent: all donors above USD 5,000 listed in 4+ precise funding brackets, with anonymous donors no more than 15%
Three stars	***	all or most donors listed in 2 or 3 broad contribution brackets [e.g. "USD 5,000 to 15,000, the following donors"]
Two stars	**	all or many donors listed, but little or no financial information
One star	*	some donors listed, but not exhaustive or systematic
Zero stars	0	no relevant or up-to-date information

⁷ Transparify has compiled a brief guide for think tanks wishing to pursue excellence in financial disclosure, available here: <http://www.transparify.org/get-five>. We encourage institutions aspiring to five-star disclosure to contact us beforehand as Transparify may in future review and slightly modify the criteria for 5-star ratings.

Preparation phase

Designing the process

The rating system was originally designed and piloted in 2013 based on the professional experience of the Transparify team, gained while overseeing 100+ research projects, including dozens of countrywide surveys, for more than 30 donors across numerous countries. The team has extensive previous experience in operationalizing research.⁸ Transparify successfully used the same rating criteria in previous assessments of 200+ policy research and advocacy organizations worldwide.

Mobilizing raters and experienced review

Transparify's rating team consisted of a total of four raters. Three of these raters had already rated think tanks for Transparify previously, and demonstrated their ability to return reliable results. They were provided with a refresher training. Their ratings were subsequently reviewed by the experienced Transparify team, who also adjudicated when there were divergent views.

Transparify continues to collect examples of think tank transparency in an updated PowerPoint presentation that provides all raters with a standard protocol to follow when searching for financial data online.

Selecting think tanks

For its 2018 assessment, Transparify re-rated the same group of highly transparent think tanks it had already reviewed during its previous rounds, since 2014. In addition, Transparify assessed think tanks and organizations that expressed an interest in being reviewed. As indicated on Transparify's website, organizations can be assessed, if they wish to highlight that they are highly transparent.

To achieve the maximum amount of coverage and a good cross-selection, Transparify had originally identified leading think tanks from around the world, drawing on third party lists. The original selection emphasized a diversity of countries, and focused on institutions working broadly on public policy.

United States institutions were selected according to the 2012 "Global Go To Think Tank Index" by James McGann at the University of Pennsylvania, probably the most widely cited global think tank ranking.⁹ We included all institutions¹⁰ listed in the US top 30, and added some extra institutions to provide sufficient coverage in case the rankings shift over the coming years.

Institutions located in Central and Eastern Europe were overrepresented in the original sample, as this was an area of particular interest to our then-donor, the Think Tank Fund,¹¹ which has worked with many think tanks in this region. Institutions in Central and Eastern

8 Short team bios are available on Transparify's website.

9 The 2012 ranking was released in January 2013. See: http://gotothinktank.com/dev1/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2012_Global_Go_To_Think_Tank_Report_-_FINAL-1.28.13.pdf

10 Some US institutions included in the McGann rankings expressed doubts about the value of including them in Transparify's data set. In order to remain consistent in our selection methodology, Transparify nevertheless included these institutions in the data set. Please see the footnotes in the US section for details.

11 See: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/think-tank-fund>

Europe were selected from a list provided by the Think Tank Fund. We did not rate think tanks in Arabic-, Chinese- or French-speaking countries as our raters did not have the required language skills.

The overall gradation of categories continues to work well, though as in all quantitative research there can be challenges in identifying exact cutoffs. For example, at what point is information given in an annual report outdated and no longer relevant? In consultation, we decided that an institution receives zero stars if its most recent financial information is presented in an annual report from 2014 or earlier. If the most recent financial information is presented in an annual report from early 2016, one star is deducted from the overall rating. Other borderline cases arose where think tanks identified “partners”, mixing in research partners and donors. Additional adjudication was required in cases of partial transparency, for example when a think tank discloses all information about a particular funding category but provides less information on other sources of funding. In such cases, adjudication provided consistency across ratings, ensured the integrity of the process and contributed to refining future ratings.

Third party quality control

The rating for any given institution can be replicated by any third party, as the methodology and the rating system are freely available on our website. As far as we know, on at least six occasions, researchers working independently from Transparify have used our rating system to rate institutions on their own initiative, most recently in a report on think tanks in China.

Opening our findings to public scrutiny

Anyone can visit the website of any think tank we rated and compare the information provided there against our rating criteria. Thus, the results can be verified and replicated by any interested third parties, keeping in mind that Transparify’s ratings period covered web content available during the assessment time periods outlined above.

If Transparify is notified of an incorrect rating result, we will follow up and, if applicable, correct that rating and announce the corrected rating on our blog and Twitter account.

This report was put together by Transparify team members Dustin Gilbreath, Hans Gutbrod, and Ian Goodrich, with additional input from Till Bruckner. Johann Schmidt and Vazha Burduli provided assistance at various points.

About Transparify

Transparify promotes transparency and integrity in policy research and advocacy worldwide. Our team members have combined experience in think tanking, grant making, academia, journalism, advocacy and fundraising. Thus, we understand both the constraints that think tanks face and the opportunities for positive change. Transparify is part of the On Think Tanks Labs, a collection of innovative ventures in policy research.

The Transparify team

Dr Hans Gutbrod	Executive Director
Dr Till Bruckner	Advocacy Manager
Dustin Gilbreath	Communications Manager
Tiko Ambroladze	Ratings Coordinator
Ian Goodrich	Project Developer

Brief bios of our team members can be found [on our website](#).

Our own transparency

This report was compiled by the Transparify team without any external financial support. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Transparify. In the past, Transparify's work has received the support of the Think Tank Fund of the Open Society Foundations; this grant was closed out in 2016. We have disclosed all details of this funding as well as other Transparify-related funding, including the original project proposal [on our website](#).

A big thank you to...

Next to all the think tanks who engaged with us in constructive discussions from which we have learnt much, we also want to thank Francesc Ponsa and Jaime Gonzales of the [Spanish Think Tank Observatory](#); Enrique Planells Artigo also [on Spain](#); Tom Hashemi at *We Are Flint* for their research into public attitudes to [think tank funding](#) in the US and the UK; Xufeng Zhu-THU on think tanks in China; and Vardan Atoyán on think tanks in [Armenia](#). We also want to thank Enrique Mendizabal and his team at [On Think Tanks](#) for their support and providing a forum for think tank debates, on transparency and on much more.

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