

Land Trust Accreditation Impact Evaluation

Appendix A: Stakeholder Survey

March 9, 2018

Overview of Document

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- Responses
 - Affect on confidence
 - Frequency and familiarity
 - A factor in decisions
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Summary

Purpose and Approach

A central question of this evaluation is whether the accreditation program has had an effect on public confidence in land trusts. This survey sought to understand whether there was such an effect on key conservation stakeholders: Federal funders and regulators, state and county funders, and foundations.

In addition, we wanted to understand whether these stakeholders were factoring accreditation into their decision making, and, if so, how

The survey was conducted in the first half of December 2017. It was emailed from the Commission to some 431 stakeholders.

The list of state and county contacts encompassed all public funding programs around the country included in TPLs database of such programs. The list of Federal and foundation contacts was provided by the Land Trust Alliance

50 responses were received, for a total response rate of 12%. Of these 50, 11 indicated that they were not at all familiar with accreditation and were not asked additional questions about use and confidence. The remaining 39 represent 9% of those contacted

Analysis was conducted by the consultant

Key Results

1. The accreditation program has had an effect on stakeholder confidence in land trusts. 85% of respondents said that accreditation moderately or substantially increases their confidence in land trusts, with some 36% saying it did so substantially. Federal agencies and foundations reported the strongest effect on their confidence
2. In general, the degree of awareness and understanding of the accreditation program is lower than one might expect. Twice as many stakeholders had frequent interactions with land trusts as had a high degree of familiarity with accreditation (60% v. 30%). 22% were not at all familiar with it.
3. Awareness seems highly related to degree of interaction with land trusts. About 9 in 10 of those very familiar w/accreditation interact frequently with land trusts, while nearly three-quarters of those who are not at all familiar with accreditation interact only occasionally with land trusts
4. Even so, 8 in 10 respondents said accreditation factored into their organization's decision making, with nearly 4 in 10 (37%) saying it was a major factor
5. Only 1 in 5 said accreditation was a requirement for funding (Note: this figure may be inflated as only 18 respondents answered the question about how accreditation was used by their agency)

Discussion

The accreditation program appears to have been successful in increasing stakeholder confidence in land trusts

However, perhaps not surprisingly, the effect tends to be relatively more present in those that interact most frequently with land trusts

Most respondents are factoring accreditation into their decision making (even if they do not understand precisely what accreditation is, or feel it does not address financial or skill factors). While relatively few have made it a requirement, many consider it in funding and partnering decisions

There would appear to be a major opportunity to increase awareness of accreditation and understanding of what it is (and what it is not)

The data has certain limitations. While the population of state and county funders is known and was contacted, the population of Federal and foundation funders is not fully known and had to be sampled (identified by LTA)

Still, 30 subsequent interviews with additional stakeholders are relatively consistent with the survey results (see Interviews document)

Affect on Confidence

Discussion

Of 39 respondents familiar with accreditation, 85 percent said that the accreditation program increased their confidence in land trusts moderately or substantially

Stakeholder Breakdown

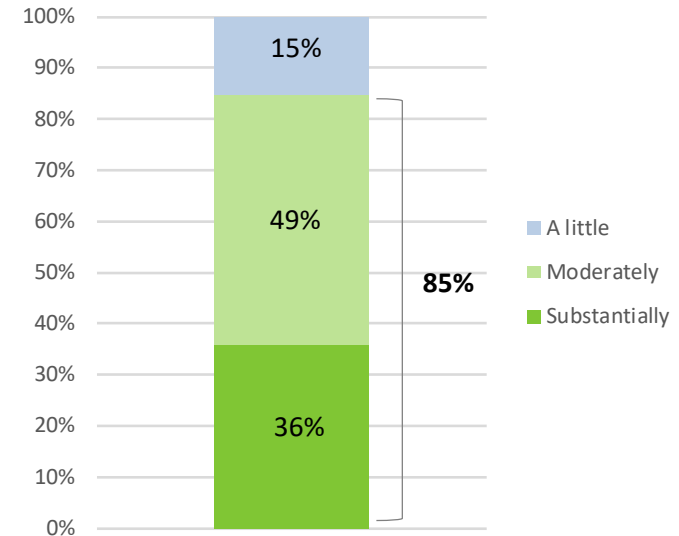
Federal agency and foundation respondents expressed the strongest response to accreditation. With 100% of both stakeholder groups saying accreditation substantially or moderately increased their confidence in land trusts

Very large majorities of federal agency and foundation respondents (75% and 67%, respectively) said it had substantially increased their confidence

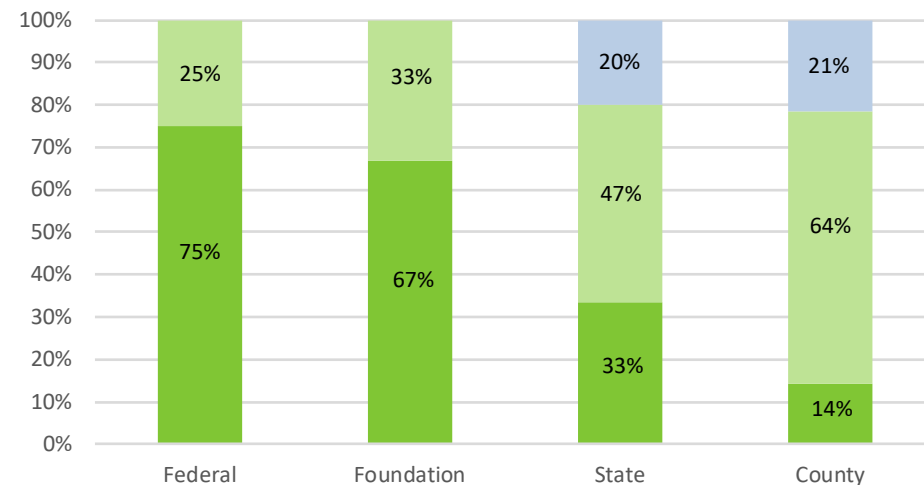
Though not as intense, accreditation still had a solid effect on county and state agency respondents, with four in five saying it substantially or moderately increased their confidence in land trusts, though with only a minority of each saying it had done so substantially

About 20% of both these stakeholder types said accreditation increased their confidence “a little”

Degree to Which Accreditation Increases Stakeholder Confidence in Land Trusts



Increase in Confidence by Stakeholder



Note: The respondents include 38 that interact with land trusts and are familiar with accreditation and one that does not interact with land trusts but is familiar with accreditation

Source: Conservation Stakeholder Survey, 2017; Consultant analysis

Frequency and Familiarity

Discussion

Generally, respondents have a greater frequency of interaction with land trusts than familiarity with accreditation

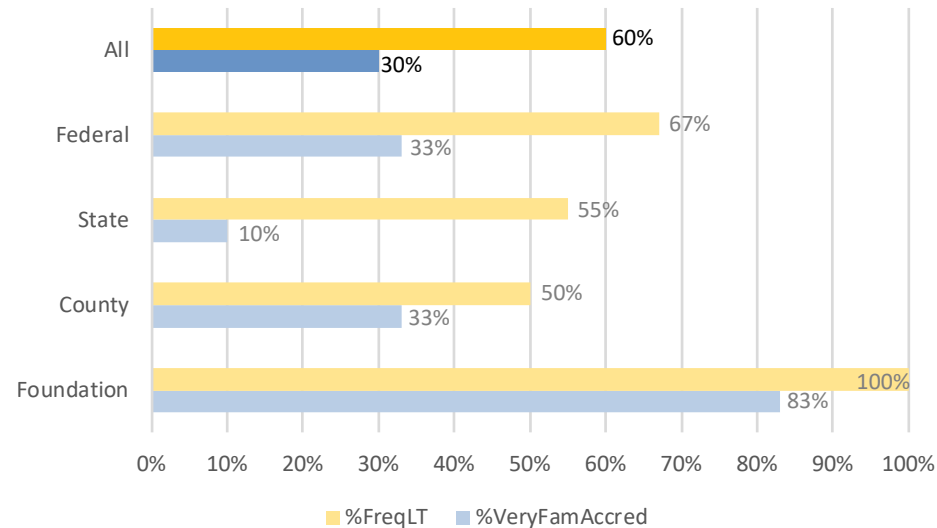
Across all survey respondents, 60% interact frequently with land trusts, but only 30% are very familiar with accreditation

Foundation-respondents interacted most frequently with land trusts and were most familiar with accreditation

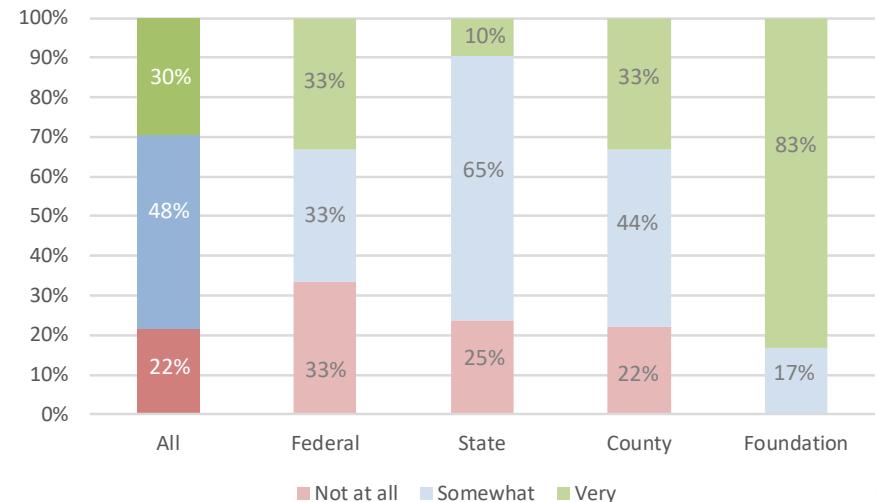
Familiarity with Accreditation

Drilling down on familiarity with accreditation, it is notable that about 1 in 5 respondents (22%) are not at all familiar with accreditation, and about half (48%) say they are “somewhat” familiar

%Frequent Interaction w/LTs and %High Familiarity w/Accreditation, by Stakeholder Type



Familiarity with Accreditation



Frequency and Familiarity (cont'd)

Familiarity Perspective

Respondents most familiar with accreditation interact most frequently with land trusts

- 87% of respondents who are very familiar with accreditation interact frequently with LTs
- 73% of respondents who are not at all familiar with accred interact only occasionally with land trusts

Only 30% of all respondents are very familiar with accreditation

Frequency Perspective

Even among respondents who interact frequently with land trusts, a sizeable majority are either only somewhat familiar with accreditation (47%) or not at all familiar with it (10%)

Most of those who interact only occasionally with land trusts are not very familiar with accreditation (47% somewhat familiar + 42% not at all familiar)

Only 11% of respondents who interact occasionally with land trusts are very familiar with accreditation

General Take-Away About Frequency and Familiarity

There appears to be an opportunity to increase the familiarity conservation stakeholders have with accreditation, whether they interact frequently with land trusts or just occasionally



Interplay 1: Familiarity with Accreditation

Frequency of Interaction w/LTs	Familiarity with Accreditation			
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	All
Frequently	27%	58%	87%	60%
Occasionally	73%	38%	13%	38%
Never	0%	4%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Read as: "Among respondents that are Not/Somewhat/Very familiar with accreditation, XX% interact Freq/Occ/Never with land trusts"



Interplay 2: Frequency of Interaction

Frequency of Interaction w/LTs	Familiarity with Accreditation			
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Total
Frequently	10%	47%	43%	100%
Occasionally	42%	47%	11%	100%
Never	0%	100%	0%	100%
All	22%	48%	30%	100%

Read as: Reads as: "Among respondents that interact Freq/Occ/Never with land trusts, XX% are Not/Some/Very familiar with accreditation"

A Factor In Decisions

Discussion

Approximately 8 in 10 respondents said accreditation factors into their institution's funding and policy/regulatory decisions. For 37% it is a major factor

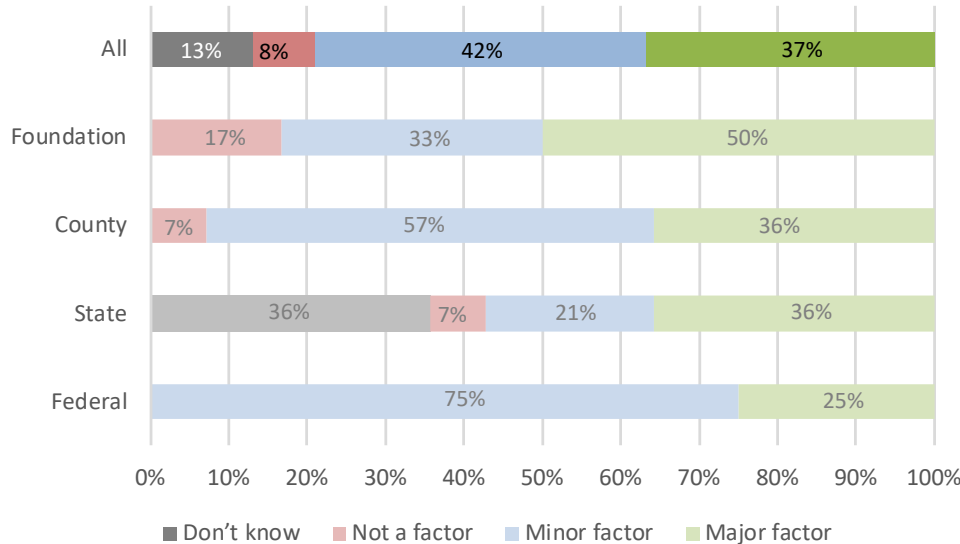
About 1 in 10 respondents do not factor accreditation into their decision making, and another 1 in 10 did not know (all were state respondents)

Though all Federal respondents said their agency factored accreditation into decision making, only 25% said it was a major factor

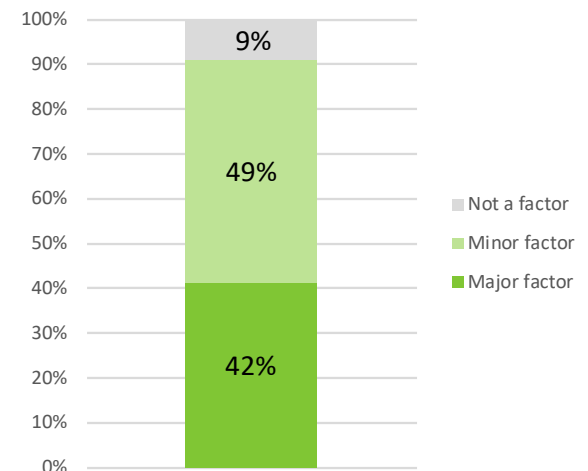
And though about 15% of Foundation respondents said it was not a factor, 50% said it was a major factor for their institutions

Among those who know their organization's practice, 91% said accreditation was a factor - 42% a major factor and 49% a minor factor

Whether Accreditation Is A Factor in Stakeholder Decision Making



Those Who Know Organization's Practice



Note: For the following analyses, 11 respondents who were not at all familiar with accreditation, and 1 respondent who said they never interact with land trusts were removed from the data set. Of the 51 respondents to the survey, 39 are included in this analysis

Source: Conservation Stakeholder Survey, 2017; Consultant analysis

How Factored In

Discussion

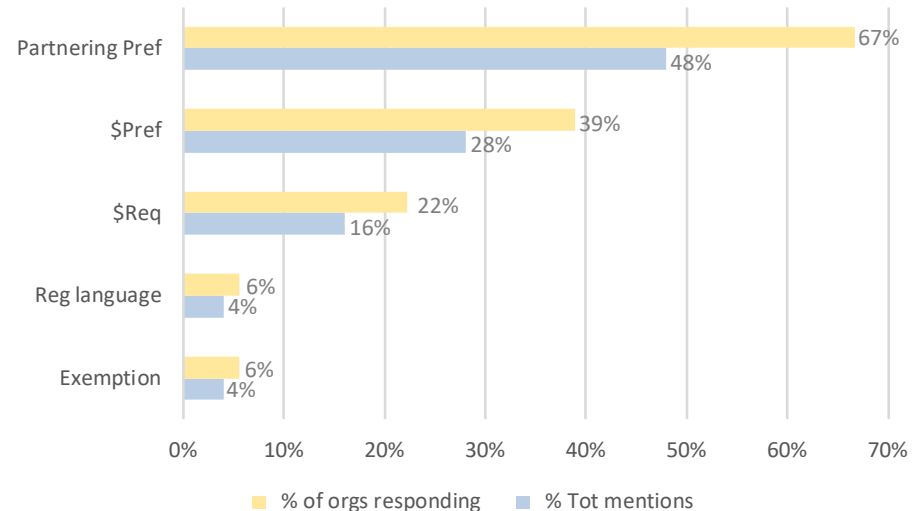
18 organizations responded to the question of how accreditation factored into their decision making (Yellow = % total), indicating 25 ways in which accreditation factored in (Blue = % total)

Respondents most frequently said that accreditation factors into their partnering decisions (67% of orgs). This was followed by funding decisions (39% of orgs)

Counties accounted for 58% of the times a partnering preference was mentioned (7 of 12)

About one-fifth of respondents (4 of 18 orgs) said that accreditation was a requirement for funding; however, only one respondent (4%; a state agency) said this requirement had been put into regulatory language

How Accreditation Is Factored into Stakeholder Decision Making



Note: % orgs is > 100% because data is in "mentions" and organizations could have mentioned more than one way in which accreditation is factored into decision making; Mentions total 100%

Source: Conservation Stakeholder Survey, 2017; Consultant analysis

Open-Ended Comments

Accreditation has a relatively high bar, so becoming accredited should indicate solid organizational capacity, rigor, systems, quality and staying power. This is generally but not always the case

Keep it up. The land trust movement/industry needs it for credibility. Individual land trusts need to be pushed for quality and be held accountable with consequences. It's critical to have high performing land trusts

I know that the accreditation process is an extremely thorough one, assuring that an accredited land trust is following the highest standards.

I think it is a great program that ensures consistency across the country. It really helps newer organizations in early development and growth with best practices

We are seeing an evolution of focus from protection to stewardship, and I suspect some of this evolution is being driven by the very strong (necessary and valid) stewardship requirements for accreditation.

Knowing a land trust is accredited lets us know that they have undertaken a substantial process to review/revise/update internal policies related to acquisition, management and stewardship, but not whether they can successfully raise funds, understand a good appraisal from a bad appraisal, understand and appropriately analyze risk associated with title defects, etc.

Accreditation is about metrics, not whether land trusts are good partners, or ethical, or operate with integrity, or interested in community.

We feel that it should include a more robust financial planning component

Appendix A:

Response Rate by Stakeholder Group

Survey Responses by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder	# Distributed and Rec'd	# Resp	Total Resp Rate	Not Familiar	Net	Rate
Federal	53	6	11%	2	4	8%
State	157	20	13%	5	15	10%
County	166	18	11%	4	14	8%
Foundation	55	6	11%	0	6	11%
Total	431	50	12%	11	39	9%