

## FEST Face-to-Face Fommunity Planning Meeting @ the Systemic Investing Summit

### Introduction

This Concept Note responds to a call by and to the FEST community for proposals to greatly accelerate the development of the field of Financing Systemic Transformation (FST). The field consists of all those people and activities working to provide systems change and transformation financing at the scale and with the ease of access necessary to respond to today's polycrisis. These Notes can be considered a field "action planning" process to define 3-5 year field development pathways. For more on the field of FST, please [go here](#).

### Goals of the Concept Note

To convene a Systemic Investing Summit to advance the field.

#### 1. Project Leads:

- a. **Last name:** Schneider  
**First name:** Magdalena  
**Organization:** TransCap Initiative
  
- b. **Last name:** Barker  
**First name:** Todd  
**Organization:** Meridian Institute
  
- c. **Last name:** Jay  
**First name:** Jason  
**Organization:** MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative

#### 2. This proposal is in support of the FEST activities to:

Cohere an FST ecosystem of well-connected people and resources.

#### 3. Describe the activities in 500 words or less, with explanation of how it advances the component.

The TransCap Initiative (TCI) is convening a Systemic Investing Summit at MIT's premises in Cambridge, MA, running 29-31 January 2024, dedicated to showcasing the work of pioneers, extracting insights and learning for the field, and incubating new collaborations (in partnership with the MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative, and the Meridian Institute). We believe integrating FEST's face-to-face community planning meeting with the Summit would add value on various levels and to both communities, which are overlapping.

We imagine the outcome objectives for these convening to include:



- Celebrating pioneering work and raising awareness of who is doing what in this space
- Forming social bonds between a nuclear community of practice that can lend credence to the field and advocate for the broader adoption of systemic investing
- Forming new prototyping and research collaborations to advance technical aspects and establish/strengthen track records The above would add to a well-recognized, well-supported FEST field, cohering an ecosystem of well-connected people and resources.

Hence, both communities could create a shared language, vision, and understanding of the challenges and leading practice and be a resource base of tools and cases. We want to nurture a robust ecosystem propelling the field's ongoing evolution - a network with the requisite diversity, competency, entrepreneurial drive, and commitment to accelerating the systemic investing and FEST field. And last but not least, creating an operational, strategic 3-5 year pathway for the field's development.

**4. In 100 – 150 words for each, please describe the:**

**a. Knowledge about the Field by the applicants**

The TransCap Initiative (TCI) is a think-and-do-tank operating at the nexus of real-economy systems change, sustainability, and finance. We operate as a multi-stakeholder alliance coordinated by a backbone team comprising wealth owners, innovation leaders, system thinkers, research institutes, and financial intermediaries.

MIT is the birthplace of system dynamics and an academic centre of gravity of systems thinking, including as applied to complex societal issues such as climate change.

Meridian is a mission-driven, 501(c)3 organization that engages diverse players to tackle complex global environmental issues such as oceans, agriculture and food systems, climate change, and sustainability through a collaborative and systems approach. Also, Meridian just developed and housed the "Investing for Impact Institute."

**b. History of achievements of the applicants**

TCI is a thought leader at the nexus of systems thinking and finance. The mission of TCI is to bring systems thinking and complex systems science to the practice of finance, particularly in the context of the real-economy transformations required due to climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequity.

Housed at the MIT Sloan School of Management – the birthplace of systems thinking, system dynamics, and modeling of complex human + environment interactions – the MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative (MIT SSI) is deeply committed to advancing systems change for an equitable and sustainable world. Also, MIT SSI is strategically interested in exploring the intersection of systems science and sustainable finance.

Over the past two decades, Meridian has served as a trusted partner and advisor to philanthropic funders, impact investors, and other funding and impact partners, including providing them with crucial insights and advice, bringing their deep understanding of the issues and the people, politics, and power dynamics surrounding them.

**c. Innovativeness of approach**

We are organising the world's first Systemic Investing Summit, and it would be fantastic to combine that with the FEST face-to-face community planning meeting. The TCI's and FEST's mission is to build the field of systemic investing. Core to this mission is nurturing a community of practice whose members



collaborate on research, innovation, and prototyping in a connected and orchestrated way. Our shared ambition is to create a public-good infrastructure—methods, tools, metrics, proof points, narratives—to enable the uptake of systemic principles by a wide range of financial actors, including private-wealth impact investors, family offices, strategic institutional investors, multilateral finance institutions, and responsible asset managers.

**d. Applicants' capacity to achieve proposed outcomes**

Convenings play a critical role in nurturing this community. And all three organizations have a fable for convening and, of course, have experienced community builders in their teams - MIT and Meridian have an entire department dedicated. Meridian convenes diverse actors to develop networks, drive co-learning, and refine strategic priorities. They help align grantmaking strategies for a more significant impact and create successful multi-funder collaborations.

Hence, we are confident that together we will be able to showcase and amplify the work of early pioneers (organisations and individuals that have applied principles of systemic investing for years), develop relationships and social bonds amongst leading thinkers and doers, and incubate new research and prototyping collaborations, along an operational strategic 3-5 year pathway for the field's development.

**e. How you are responding to the diversity imperative**

At TCI, we don't consider diversity (alongside equity, inclusion, and belonging) a box to tick or a challenge to manage. What makes diverse teams powerful is not the colorful array of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, skin color, or ability. It is what all of these represent: diversity of background, diversity of experience, and diversity of thought. We strive to be catalysts for system transformation in various places and dynamics. To achieve this, our belief in the power of diversity must be actionable and transcend the confines of our teams. We seek to foster a global community of practice with FEST, which, rooted in principles of open innovation and inclusion, can channel its collective knowledge and experience toward the people and socio-technical systems most in need. Ultimately, only diversity in people will solve diversity in global challenges, and we will ensure that this is the DNA of our Summit and the FEST face-to-face community planning meeting.

**5. Are there any ways you plan to engage others in the field?**

We aim to co-create the FEST face-to-face community meeting program with as many FEST peers as possible to integrate various needs and ideas. In addition, the Summit and the FEST community meeting will drive toward seeding collaborations—both in the form of new projects and the enhancement of existing work.

**6. Please provide a tentative budget.**

\$45,000 - \$50,000