Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia (G-PAC)

საჯარო პოლიტიკის, ადვოკატირებისა და სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების განვითარება საქართველოში

პროფესიონალიზმი
Professionalism

სამოქალაქო
პასუხისმგებლობა
Civic Responsibility

Quality Standards
For Georgian Policy Research Organizations

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Purpose

This document presents comprehensive standards to guide the work of Georgian think tanks. The purpose of this code is to establish principles of excellence to ensure think tanks meet the highest possible professional standards.

EWMI G-PAC assisted 11 Georgian think tanks in developing this code, using similar documents from the US and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) as guidelines. Policy research experts from Arizona State University (ASU) in the US reviewed the draft standards and provided feedback. Through months of discussion, and with great attention to the Georgian policy research environment, Georgian think tanks developed, finalized, and adopted these standards.

Quality Standards

1. **High-quality Research**. Georgian think tanks should seek to disseminate high-quality research products as a means for supporting data-driven policy decisions. The research process leading to these products will:

    - Be as objective as possible and conducted with the techniques and spirit of scientific inquiry.

    - Employ rigorous and transparent research designs and methodologies.

    - Make use of only the highest quality data and information available.

    - Ensure that data are statistically generalizable whenever possible, and whenever possible do not involve selective cases or pilots.

    - Ensure that data are statistically reliable, meaning that it can be verified by others and is valid to the applicable policy field.

    - Ensure that data are accurate and credible.

    - Ensure that, where appropriate, the confidentiality of individual responses to data inquires will be respected.

    - Involve participatory review processes that allow for peer and stakeholder input on initial research findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

    - Seek to add value to existing knowledge about the policy issue.

    - Demonstrate creativity and innovation in policy research approaches when justified.

    - Align with recognized international ethical standards for research, including the treatment of research subjects.

2. **Data-driven Analysis and Conclusions**. Policy analysis, conclusions, and recommendations should stem from and be supported by the data in the study. The stronger the connection is between the data, conclusions, and recommendations, the more persuasive the analysis will be to the public and policy makers. In other words, the evidence will lead to the conclusions, not be tailored to them.

3. **Holistic Approach to Policy Analysis**. Policy research will consider the implications of existing and proposed policies for diverse stakeholders and policy areas, as applicable. For example, when appropriate to the research topic and stakeholders, think tanks should consider the impact of public policy throughout the regions of Georgia, assess the domestic and international implications of Georgian policy choices, and/or demonstrate the impact of the research topic on other sectors, minority groups, and vulnerable populations.

4. **Practical Policy Options and Recommendations**. Policy options and recommendations are only useful when they are actionable and applicable. Therefore, Georgian think tanks will ensure their recommendations:
    - Are clearly stated and comprehensively described.
    - Are feasible, affordable, and relevant, and will explain how each of these conditions are met.
    - Are sustainable and explained in terms of their long-term and short-term implications.
    - Acknowledge their own limitations and trade-offs (for example, the impact on the state budget, public goods and services, individual rights, social equality, compatibility with existing laws, and any other relevant contextual considerations).

5. **Targeted Research Products**. Policy research and recommendations are most effective when they reach and are understood by the right policy makers and stakeholders. This requires presenting research and recommendations in formats tailored to specific audiences. Georgian think tanks will maximize the impact of their work and reach diverse stakeholder groups by using:
    - Diverse policy research products for diverse audiences (for example, full-length technical policy papers, simplified papers for general audiences, and policy briefs).
    - Policy products targeted to policy makers in the relevant policy area.
    - Various platforms to present research and recommendations (ie, print, electronic, face-to-face meetings, roundtables, presentations, etc.).

6. **Clear and Logical Writing and Presentation**. Policy products will demonstrate clear and professional writing that is well-structured and balanced in tone. They will also demonstrate an organized format to maximize accessibility and policy impact. As appropriate to the research topic and audience, policy research products will clearly describe the:
    - Policy challenge and purpose of the study.
    - Research methodology.
    - Evidence.

- Data analysis and conclusions.

- Policy options and recommendations.

7. **Comprehensive Communication and Advocacy Strategies**. A policy research organization's public relations and advocacy campaigns should be multifarious and sustained in order to effect policy change. Such campaigns conducted by Georgian think tanks will:
   - Include both long-term (mission-based) and short-term (project-based) components.

   - Use new media technologies to maximize communication with stakeholders and broaden constituencies.

   - Be built into individual research project plans, with a clear description of how the campaign will achieve policy change and connect to the institution's mission and goals.

   - Plan for research publications, presentations, and meetings to coincide with relevant policy events.

8. **Thorough and Continuous Impact Assessment**. The impact of the organization's project- and mission-based work will be evaluated regularly, and these assessments will be used to adjust organizational programming.

9. **Long-term Maintenance of Records.** All records, data, and data instruments associated with the final copy of written policy research reports will be maintained and accessible for a period of no less than 10 years.

10. **Strong Institutional Sustainability Provisions**. A sustainable research organization should strive to develop its capacity and produce high-quality research over the long-term. Organizations will therefore focus not only on project-based work, but will also secure their long-term viability by:
    - Developing long-term plans that fit with the organization's mission and goals.

    - Diversifying research products, activities, and donors.

    - Seeking to establish non-donor funding sources, including revenue-generating activities.

References

The standards in this document have been adapted for the Georgian context from relevant international academic and professional sources about think tanks. These sources are listed below.

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Additionally, these standards incorporate feedback by two US policy research experts at Arizona State University, Dr. Robert Melnick and Dr. Stephen Batalden. Dr. Melnick is Executive Dean of the Global Institute for Sustainability at ASU, and has more than 20 years of research and management experience at prestigious US think tanks including the Morrison Institute for Public Policy and the Hudson Institute. Dr. Batalden is Director of the Melikian Center at ASU, which implements research and development projects focusing on Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe.

Organization	Name	Signiture