



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

საჯარო პოლიტიკის, ადვოკატირებისა და სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების  
განვითარება საქართველოში

პროფესიონალიზმი  
Professionalism

სამოქალაქო  
პასუხისმგებლობა  
Civic Responsibility

# **Etical Standards for Georgian Policy Research Organizations**

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This document was prepared in the framework of the 'Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia Program (G-PAC) which is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the East-West Management Institute (EWMI).

The contents of this publication and the views expressed at this conference do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government, or EWMI.

# Ethical 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 integrity 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.

## Ethical Standards

- 1. Relative Independence and Impartiality.** Think tanks will act to ensure they are as independent and impartial as possible, while recognizing that complete independence and impartiality may not always be feasible or desirable. In practice, this means:
  - Think tanks are not to be part of, or controlled by, the government or any intergovernmental agency.
  - Quality research, fact-based analysis, and principles (e.g., basic freedoms and rights, the rule of law, civic participation, etc.) will always take precedence in programming and activities over government, corporate, individual, political, and donor agendas.
  
- 2. Honesty and Transparency.** Organizations will demonstrate a commitment to transparency by:
  - Avoiding conflicts of interest and publicly disclosing them when they do occur. A conflict-of-interest policy should exist outlining guidelines and procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest transparently.
  - Choosing non-corrupt partners and donors.
  - Declining any grants or gifts that are truly anonymous or given with the intent to influence the work of the organization or particular staff members.
  - Conducting transparent research processes, including disclosing data sources and methodology, respecting intellectual property rights, selecting the least-biased research designs, presenting information in a fair and unbiased manner, and explicitly disclosing potential biases.
  - Rejecting plagiarism and fabrication.

- Maintaining the confidentiality of personal information about staff, clients, human research subjects, and others, unless the individuals waive this right or disclosure is required by law.

**3. Public Accountability.** Think tanks will be accessible and accountable to the public by producing accurate, timely, and publicly available annual reports and financial statements that disclose funding sources and describe how funds were spent. They will also provide regular updates and announcements through a variety of media. Policy research organizations will make their contact information accessible to the public, and will provide prompt and open responses to reasonable public inquiries.

**4. Lawful Conduct.** Organizations will pursue their goals and conduct their activities within Georgia's existing legal framework (although they may advocate a change in laws or regulations). Compliance with the law is a minimum standard, and organizations will also conduct themselves in accordance with the public understanding of right and ethical behavior.

**5. Responsible governance.** Governing policies that ensure transparent and ethical operations (in accordance with the principles described in this code) will be developed and followed. These policies will be codified in documents, and when relevant, made available to the public. Governing policies will establish:

- Mission and vision statements that describe the purpose of the organization, its values, and the scope of its activities.
- A governing body that steers and evaluates organizational performance. To ensure the governing body makes decisions in the long-term best interest of the organization, this body should be composed primarily of members who are neither compensated by the organization nor whose personal or professional interests are directly affected by the organization's work.
- Ethical management policies and procedures.
- Long-term strategies and plans that ensure the alignment of the organization's programming and mission, and
- Opportunities for stakeholders to participate and provide input regarding organizational governance.

## 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.

