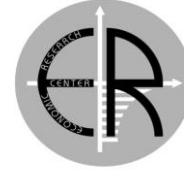




European Union



Economic Research Center

Quarterly Report (I)

Project title: “Enhancing the Effectiveness of Government by Strengthening the Role of Think Tanks in Decision-making Arena”

Reporting period: 08.02.2012 – 20.04.2012

Reporting organization: Economic Research Center

Person in charge for the report: Samir Huseynov

Organization reported to: European Union Delegation to Azerbaijan

Date of report submission: 27.04.2012

Accomplished Activities

1. Determination of project staff and project kick-off

- 1.1. On the 8th of February 2012 ambassador Roland Kobia, Head of the European Union Delegation to Azerbaijan signed the contract on behalf of the European Union with Mr. Gubad Ibadoglu, the Chairman of the Board of Economic Research Center. This was the official kick-off of the “Enhancing the Effectiveness of Government by Strengthening the Role of Think Tanks in Decision-making Arena” project.
- 1.2. After the official agreement about the project, Economic Research Center prepared and submitted all necessary documents for registering the project at the Ministry of Justice. Currently, the documents are under review and ERC was informed by the ministry that the approval would be posted on the website of the ministry in near future. Please note that yet the ministry has not posted any project registration on its website for 2012.
- 1.3. Immediately after the project kick-off, Economic Research Center started to form project staff for effective realization of the project. Action plan was reviewed again and labor division was conducted on the base of relative competencies of the staff for increasing work efficiency.

Furthermore, ERC's finance staff was informed about international financial reporting and accounting standards in the light of the project requirements. Additionally, the presentation discussed by European Union experts at the project kick-off was translated to Azeri and explained to ERC's finance staff.

- 1.4. Experts of ERC traveled to regions and held meetings with TTs from regions. ERC thinks that regional TTs face additional issues while operating and that is why they will be discriminated positively during the project in the forms of more attention and assistance.
- 1.5. On 02 April 2012 ERC signed a contract with its local partner "Intelligent Citizen Enlightenment Center" (ICEC) for the implementation of the project in the regions (please see attached contract for details).

Intelligent Citizen Enlightenment Centre Public Union (ICEC) will coordinate all activities with four TTs outside of Baku. This will include organizing, implementing and monitoring all training and mentorship activities with four TTs outside of Baku. These activities will contribute to positioning non-state regional TT's as credible partners and, thus, facilitate TT's participation in inclusive policy process. Additionally, ICEC will facilitate all communications with local government.

- 1.6 On 17 April 2012 ERC transferred the amount of funding indicated on the contract to ICEC

2. Selection of Beneficiary TTs

- 2.1. According to the action plan of the project, Economic Research Center prepared a survey forum for the selection of beneficiary Think Tanks (TTs). The survey forum was designed to identify the most appropriate TTs for the project and ERC thought that that stage was very vital for achieving success after the completion of the project.
- 2.2. ERC sent out official invitation letters to potential organizations and informed interested organizations about the project by various means (explaining the project via phone calls and etc.)
- 2.3. ERC sent survey forums to interested TTs and set a deadline for submitting surveys.
- 2.4. Economic Research Center received 21 feedbacks in the forum of filled in surveys from prospective beneficiary TTs. According to the project the selection criteria were the followings:
 - *Officially registered with the Ministry of Justice;*
 - *Number of staff members (at least 3 researchers in the staff);*
 - *Total annual budget (at least EUR 8,026), of which about 90% are funded by international donors;*
 - *Works in one of the following policy directions: (1) economic policy and development; (2) social policy; (3) EU integration and eastern partnership; (4) energy security and sustainability;*

- *Has at least one policy research product developed and communicated to stakeholders.*

After careful analysis of the feedbacks ERC granted the “Beneficiary” status to 18 TTs out of 21.
(Please see enclosed excel file of the results of the survey)

3. On 15 March 2012 the Economic Research Center announced the results of the selection process to the public at the press conference held at Park Inn hotel in Baku. The project Coordinator Samir Huseynov made a presentation about the project and answered questions came from the selected TTs and stakeholders. The press conference was covered by various mass media representatives. (Please see among attached documents list of participants, the presentation and news links about the press conference was placed in **Appendix** part)

4 Needs assessment of the selected TTs

4.1. After the selection of beneficiary TTs, Economic Research Center prepared relevant survey form (attached) for identifying institutional and research training needs of TTs. During development of the survey, ERC discussed the form and questions included in the survey with experts. ERC’s aim was to design relevant survey form for properly assessing and identifying institutional and research needs of the selected TTs.

4.2. Currently ERC conducts survey among the selected TTs for identifying their training needs (see attached survey form). The results of the survey will determine the future programs of trainings which will be held both by local and international experts.

Appendix

List of the Selected TTs

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| 1) Support for Economic Initiatives | 11) "World of Law" Legal Propaganda Public Union |
| 2) Center for Economic and Social Development | 12) Society For Humanitarian Research |
| 3) Studying of Economic Resources | 13) Young Democratic Reformers Union |
| 4)"Balans" Economic Awareness | 14) Education on Human Rights Public Association |
| 5) Entrepreneurship Development Foundation | 15) "Social Problems" center under Dilara Aliyeva |
| 6) Independent Consumers Union | Association for the Protection of Women's Rights |
| 7) Ganja Agrobusiness Association | 16) "Uluchay" Social-Economic Innovation Center |
| 8) Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy | 17) Caucasian Center for International Relations and |
| 9) Eco-World Public Organization | Strategic Studies |
| 10) Azerbaijan Ornithological Society | 18) Constitution Research Foundation |

News Links about the press conference which was held on March 15 2012

http://www.musavat.com/new/G%C3%BCnd%C9%99m/119866-%C4%B0QT%C4%B0SAD%C4%B0_T%C6%8FDQ%C4%B0QATLAR_M%C6%8FRK%C6%8FZ%C4%B0_S%C4%B0YAS%C4%B0_BEY%C4%B0N_M%C6%8FRK%C6%8FZ%C4%B0_YARADIR

<http://www.azadinform.az/news/a-18487.html>

<http://deyerler.org/print:page,1,119455-dtm-yeni-layihjsinin-tjqdimat-mjrasimini-kegirdir.html>