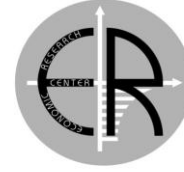




European Union



Economic Research Center

## *Quarterly Report (II)*

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

*Reporting period: 20.04.2012 – 15.07.2012*

*Reporting organization: Economic Research Center*

*Person in charge for the report: Samir Huseynov*

*Organization reported to: European Union Delegation to Azerbaijan*

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## **Accomplished Activities**

### **1. Survey for identifying Institutional and Research training needs**

- 1.1. In the May of 2012, Economic Research Center (ERC) conducted a survey among the beneficiary Think Tanks of "Enhancing the Effectiveness of Government by Strengthening the Role of Think Tanks in Decision-making Arena" project. The survey was intended to identify institutional and research training needs of partner organizations. The results shows that most of the TTs have sufficient accounting policy, but they need training on strategy planning, HR policy, public relations policy, quality control policy, communication plan and fundraising strategy. Most of the organizations mentioned that they need assistance on creation of advisory committee and quality control system at their organizations.

The research needs assessment part of the survey demonstrated that research capabilities of local TTs are still weak and it turns out that in the second year of the

project ERC should prepare very intensive training program for the partners for developing proper research activities.

- 1.2. ERC made a minor change to the project "Enhancing the effectiveness of government by strengthening the role of think tanks in decision-making arena" funded by European Union. According to the project ERC had to select 4 Think Tanks from regions-2TTs from Ganja, 1 TT from Mingachevir and 1 TT from Shaki. But during the selection process ERC had not received any application from Mingachevir, instead we received 2 strong applications from Shaki. That is why, ERC decided to include 2 TTs from Shaki into the project.
- 1.3. Within the project and in the line with visibility requirements of European Union (EU), Economic Research Center (ERC) published a banner and brochures. The publications were intended to serve as communication and advocacy tools for achieving the goals of the project

## **2. "Strategic Governance of Think Tanks"**

- 2.1. In the light of conducted survey and its results, Economic Research Center has successfully completed 3 days training on 28-30 July of 2012 on "Strategic Governance of Think Tanks" within the project.
- 2.2. Before the training, for the sake of giving the participants preliminary knowledge, some materials on strategy management, integrity policy and how to prepare policy guide were sent to the partner organizations. Email group (azethinktanks@googlegroups.com) was created for increasing the effectiveness of communication among the partners. There were Q&A sessions and initial discussions via the email group. Additionally, all necessary documents were uploaded to the group for making them more reachable to the partners
- 2.3. ERC started to collecting materials from beneficiary Think Tanks for establishing [www.thinktanks.az](http://www.thinktanks.az). All partner TTs were requested to submit information about missions, goals, profile and activities, products and services and contact details of their organizations.

22 board of governance representatives of 18 NGOs, including 4 NGOs from regions (Ganja, Shaki), participated at the training. With the help of need assessment survey conducted before and during the training the program of the seminars were adjusted to interests of the participants. Presented 9 modules were prepared on the base of management rules, structure, policy on staff relationships with board of

governance, organizational integrity, HR policy and PR policy.

- 2.4. Moreover, Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organization public union requested to participate at the training, although they were not the partner under the project. ERC decided to grant them a right for participating at the trainings.
- 2.5. The modules of the training were presented by local experts- the head of "Public Initiatives Center" Gubad Ibadoglu, the chief of "Citizens Labor Rights Protection League" Sahib Mammadov and the head of "Support to the Development of Public Relations" public union Shalala Huseynova.
- 2.6. Gubad Ibadoglu successfully completed the three-day training workshop on "Strengthening Policymaking Skills in Central Asia and the South Caucasus Training of Trainers (ToT): Civil Society Policy Trainers" organized by PASOS on 29-31 May of 2012 in Issyk-Kul Kyrgyz Republic. He made presentations on fundamentals and practical methods of strategic development of institutional systems of think tanks, remarkable world experiences, types and categories of think tanks, management rules and structures and integrity policy.
- 2.7. Shalala Huseynova gave seminars on building public images of think tanks, establishing optimal relationships with the government, choosing media strategy and media tactics, PR planning and management and continuous management process for supporting public image.
- 2.8. Sahib Mammadov focused on HR policy of think tanks, effective staffing and staff development, preparing work contracts and nuances of work with State Social Protection Fund and with other relevant organization in his presentations.
- 2.9. Furthermore, Azerbaijan specific issues arising while governance of think tanks, barriers impeding participation in the decision making process were discussed during "brain storm" sections of the training. "How should be an ideal think Tank?" question was answered with the simulation of Western Europe and American examples and effective discussions organized on how to adjust pre-mentioned examples for Azerbaijan case
- 2.10. The training was reported via some mass media. ([link1](#), [link2](#))
- 2.11. After the training the participants filled feedback form. Majority of participants assessed modules of the training 8.9 on average (on the 10 points scale).
- 2.12. It was agreed that the next training within the project will be in September on "Strategic Planning and Financial Policy". It is expected that expert Darina Kodunkova from Bulgaria will be the trainer of this training. Currently ERC is actively discussing organizational and thematic parts of the training with Kodunkova with the help of project partner-PASOS .

2.13. After the training, with the participation of representatives of partner TTs, it was planned that all beneficiary organizations would prepare and submit some documents in the light of the training. Integrity policy, policy guide and strategy management are among those documents. Some TTs need to prepare and some of them just need to adjust them to the international standards.

### **3. Some issues**

3.1. Macedonian citizens Marija Risteska and Zhidas Daskalovski were supposed to participate at the training as trainers. A month before the training we contacted MFA and submitted the necessary documents for the visa. With the help of Farah Ajalova-the first Secretary of MFA, we did manage to send the invitation letter to the consulate in Istanbul via MFA. Additionally, we conducted Mikayil Yusifov, officer of Consular Services of Azerbaijan Republic in Istanbul for smoothing the process. It was planned that the trainer would pick up their visa a day (27th July) before the training in Istanbul. But unfortunately, when they showed up at the consulate it was turned out that their visas were not ready. They were informed that their visas would be ready in 5 days. And that is why they had to fly back to Skopje.