

***BEST PRACTICES FOR FUNDING AND  
EVALUATING THINK TANKS &  
POLICY RESEARCH***



*Prepared for:  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b><u>1.0 THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY</u></b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.0 Introduction</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Structure of the Report	15
<b>3.0 Methodology</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Data Collection and Methods of Analysis	16
3.2 Definition of Terms	17
3.2.a Think Tanks	17
3.2.b Policy Analysis	17
3.2.c Policy Impact	17
3.2.d Output	18
3.2.e Organizational Capacity	18
3.2.f Evaluation	18
3.2.g Institutional Assessment	19
3.3 Steps in the Pre-Evaluation Process	19
3.3.a Involving Stakeholders	19
3.3.b Defining Programmatic Purpose and Objectives	20
<b><u>SECTION I: PRE-GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA</u></b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4.0 Pre-Grant Evaluation</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5.0 Level One: Country Assessment</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Pre-Grant Selection	21
5.2 Dimensions and Implications of Environmental Context	22
<b>6.0 Commonalities and Limitations in Current Country Assessments</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>7.0 Country Assessment Tool – Recommended Best Practices</b>	<b>23</b>
7.1 Country Indicators for Pre-Grant Assessment	23
7.2 Application of the Country Level Approach to Pre-Grant Assessment	26
<b>8.0 Level-Two: Policy and NGO Environment Assessment</b>	<b>28</b>
8.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Pre-Grant Assessment	28
8.1.a Value of Assessing the Policy Environment	29
8.1.b Value of Assessing the NGO Environment	31
8.3 Application of Policy and NGO Environment Assessment Indicators	32
8.3.a Policy and NGO Assessment Indices	32
8.3.b Policy and NGO Environment – Assessment Continuum	33
<b>9.0 Policy and NGO Environment Assessment Tool – Recommended Best Practices</b>	<b>35</b>
9.1 Best Practices and Indicators to Assess Policy and NGO Environment	35
<b>10.0 Level Three: Institutional Assessment</b>	<b>36</b>

10.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Pre-Grant Assessment	36
10.2 Current Foundation Pre-Grant Selection Criteria for Research Organizations	37
10.2.a The African Capacity Building Foundation	38
10.2.b The Tinker Foundation	38
10.2.c The Canadian International Development Agency	39
10.2.d Freedom House	39
10.2.e The Global Development Network	39
10.2.f The International Development Research Centre	40
10.2.g The International Research and Exchange Board	41
10.2.h The UK Civil Society Partnership Programme Agreements	41
<b>11.0 Institutional Assessment Tool – Recommended Best Practices</b>	<b>42</b>
11.1 Application of Pre-Grant Institutional Assessments	42
11.1.a Needs Assessment	42
11.1.b Current Institutional Capacity Review	43
11.1.c Cost Effectiveness Analysis	44
11.2 Best Practices for Pre-Grant Selection Criteria	45
<b>12.0 Pre-Grant Assistance Programs to Consider</b>	<b>48</b>
<b><u>SECTION TWO: POST-GRANT EVALUATION TOOLS</u></b>	<b>49</b>
<b>13.0 Grant Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>14.0 Evaluating Output and Impact</b>	<b>50</b>
14.1 Evaluation Tools for Evaluating Output and Impact	50
<b>15.0 Level One: Grant Output Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>51</b>
15.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Grant Monitoring and Evaluation	51
<b>16.0 Assessment Tools for Output Evaluation – Recommended Best Practices</b>	<b>52</b>
16.1 Best Practices Evaluation Tools: Measuring Activities and Dissemination	52
16.2 Best Practices Evaluation Tool: Measuring Quality and Relevance	53
16.2.a Survey Evaluations – Research Quality	53
16.2.b Survey Evaluations – Policy Relevance	54
16.2.c Process Evaluation – Research Quality	54
16.2.d Process Evaluation – Policy Relevance	55
<b>17.0 Level Two: Grant Impact Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>56</b>
17.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Grant Monitoring and Evaluation	56
<b>18.0 Institutional Impact Evaluation</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>19.0 Assessment Tool for Institutional Impact – Best Practices</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>20.0 Policy Impact Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>60</b>
20.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Grant Impact Evaluation	60
<b>21.0 Think Tank Output and Impact Performance Indicators – Recommended Best Practices</b>	<b>61</b>

<b><u>SECTION III: FUNDING MECHANISMS AND CONDITIONS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY</u></b>	<b>63</b>
<b>22.0 Funding Mechanisms and Programs to Promote Sustainability</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>23.0 Best Practices, Mechanisms and Programs for Sustainability</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>67</b>
<b><u>APPENDICES</u></b>	
APPENDIX A: INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED	68
APPENDIX B: GRANT-MAKING ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED	70
APPENDIX C: THINK TANK BACKGROUND INFORMATION	72
APPENDIX D: DIMENSIONS/IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT	75
APPENDIX E: CURRENT ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO MEASURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT	77
APPENDIX F: RECOMMENDED POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT INDICATORS	82
APPENDIX F1: INDICES FOR RATING THE POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT	85
APPENDIX F2: POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT – ASSESSMENT CONTINUUM	87
APPENDIX G: CURRENT EVALUATION MECHANISMS – INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT	93
APPENDIX H: CURRENT EVALUATION MECHANISMS – POLICY IMPACT EVALUATION	96
APPENDIX I: COMPREHENSIVE POLICY IMPACT EVALUATION TOOL	102
APPENDIX J: SELECTED EVALUATIONS AND RESOURCES	106
APPENDIX K: RECOMMENDED READINGS AND RESOURCES	112
APPENDIX L: GRANT-MAKING INTERNET RESOURCES	117
APPENDIX M: AUTHOR/ASSISTANT BIOS	122

***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***  
***BEST PRACTICES FOR FUNDING AND EVALUATING***  
***THINK TANKS AND POLICY RESEARCH***

**Objectives of the Examination**

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is currently in the process of launching a new initiative that aims to strengthen policy research institutes based in the developing world. The central objective of this new initiative is to support the production of high-quality research that can be employed by developing countries in formulating national, regional, and international policies to address development challenges.

As part of the program planning process, the Foundation commissioned a study to be conducted by James G. McGann, Ph.D., that documents and analyzes the existing pre-grant assessment criteria, methods of grant monitoring and evaluation, and effective funding mechanisms for think tanks in developing and transitional countries. The purpose of the study is to examine the funding mechanisms and evaluation criteria currently employed by public and private donors in order to determine the best practices for each area. Specifically, Dr. McGann was tasked with identifying recommended best practices in the following three areas:

- 1) selection criteria for choosing think tanks to support;
- 2) evaluation criteria for determining whether funded groups are "successful" (i.e. metrics that would measure impact and help public and private donors determine whether funding should be renewed); and
- 3) funding mechanisms that would encourage the long-term financial sustainability of institutions that receive support.

The study is intended to elucidate some of the best practices for funding and evaluating think tanks and policy research that have emerged over the last 15 to 20 years in developing and transitional countries around the world. The views expressed in this report are the authors and are not necessarily the views of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

**Methodology**

To effectively derive and formulate the best practices for pre-grant assessment and grant monitoring and evaluation, it was necessary to consult with executives, program officers, and staff from a wide range of public and private donors. Specifically, Dr. McGann communicated with representatives from NGO and Think Tank Networks, Government and Multilateral Organizations, Foundations, and think tanks, to generate a variety of perspectives that could be considered in the development of this report. Included within these types of grant-making bodies were the following organizations:

**NGOs and Think Tank Networks**

African Policy Institutes Forum  
African Capacity Building Foundation  
Atlas Economic Research Foundation  
Center for International Private Enterprise  
Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC)

Eurasia Foundation  
Freedom House  
Global Development Network (GDN)  
Global Public Policy Institute  
International Republican Institute  
International Development Research Centre  
International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Open Society Institute  
Progressive Policy Network  
State Policy Network  
Stockholm Network

### **Governments and Multilateral Agencies**

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)  
SIDA United Nations Development Program (UNDP)  
Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
World Bank

### **Foundations**

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Ford Foundation  
Gates Foundation  
German Marshall Fund  
Kriebler Foundation  
Pew Charitable Trusts  
Pfizer Corporation  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
Soros Foundation  
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
Tinker Foundation

### **Think Tanks**

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
Center for Research and Development  
DEMOS UK  
Heritage Foundation  
Institute for Economic Research Germany  
Institute of Development Studies  
International Institute for Environment and Development  
Mackinac Center for Public Policy  
North-South Institute

Overseas Development Institute  
Rand Corporation  
Urban Institute

\*Please see Appendix A for a comprehensive list of individuals and institutions consulted.

In addition, the methodology employed for identifying recommended best practices consisted of the following elements:

- **Data Collection** – To assess the criteria that have been employed to evaluate organizations for funding, Dr. McGann reviewed the websites of 45 organizations which fund and/or run programs supporting think tanks and policy research organizations (See Appendix B and K). To this end, data was compiled on the following – Grant Program Descriptions, Grant Guidelines, Grant Assessment Procedures, Recent Grantees, and Grant Best Practices.
- **Document Review** – Over 150 documents related to think tank funding, assessment of grantee selection, and evaluation of think tank output and impact were reviewed for this study. A number of project and program evaluations were also collected and examined. Many of these evaluations were provided by the institutions and individuals consulted for the study and are listed in the appendix (See Appendices I and J).
- **Selected Interviews** – Dr. McGann conducted 36 email consultations and selected telephone and in-person interviews over a period of two months. Those interviewed (see Appendix A) were selected based upon their expertise in matters related to think tank funding, evaluation and long-term viability. They comprised think tank and NGO executives, program officers, senior advisors, scholars, and practitioners who have written on this subject.

### **Key Findings**

The desk review and interviews revealed that pre-grant assessment is most effective when three levels of evaluation are employed: (1) Country Assessment; (2) Policy and NGO Assessment; and (3) Institutional Assessment. Further, grant monitoring and evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive when two levels of assessment are utilized: (1) Output Evaluation; and (2) Impact Evaluation.

Based upon an assessment of the evaluation mechanisms employed by public and private donors as well as our own research, this report has identified the following as the recommended best practices in pre-grant assessment and grant monitoring and evaluation.

## **Section I: Pre-Grant Assessment**

### **I. Pre-Grant Assessment:**

The pre-grant assessment stage of funding includes all evaluations preceding grant disbursement, and is therefore inclusive of such determinations as where financial contributions should be directed, what organizations should be beneficiaries, and how grants may best be structured for maximum impact. This stage of grant assessment is best managed – and the tangible outputs of these grants most effective – when three levels of examination are implemented: Country Assessment, Policy and NGO Assessment, and Institutional Assessment.

### **A. Level One – Country Assessment**

Having reviewed the particularities, commonalities, and possible limitations of various existing pre-grant assessment mechanisms, it is evident that a variation of the 13 Indicators defined in *Comparative Think Tanks, Politics and Public Policy* should be employed for the Level One: Country Assessment. Since the publication of the book, Dr. McGann has been refining and testing the indicators in selected regions of the world. This process has led to the development of an evaluative instrument that provides quantitative measures that can be employed in selecting countries for public and private support for policy research. The new set of indicators, which builds upon the initial 13 and has recently been applied to the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, can provide a comprehensive evaluation and is therefore identified as the best practice for this level of assessment.

The revised set of 10 indicators are listed below and explained with regard to how they can be quantitatively measured in the report. In addition, the section also details how these indicators can be combined to produce a “viable” or “not viable” state and/or regional categorization.

- **Political Freedom**
- **Freedom of the Press**
- **Number and Strength of Political Parties**
- **Economic Freedom**
- **Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (GDP)**
- **Population**
- **Number of Universities**
- **Level of Global Integration**
- **State Sustainability**
- **Level of Need**

### **B. Level Two – NGO and Policy Sector Assessment**

It is equally important to evaluate the NGO and Policy environment within the countries and regions that are targeted for funding. Since there is an interdependence between think tanks, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and policymakers it is essential that donors evaluate the current state of these actors and their relationship to one another. While the first level of analysis focuses on deriving an assessment of the overarching environmental context, this second level seeks to determine the nature of the NGO environment – what is the legal environment for these organizations, what is their capacity, whether NGOs are financially viable, etc. - as well as the degree to which policy advice is welcome. Particularly in the context of funding think tanks, this level of consideration is an integral segment of the pre-grant assessment. It illustrates and examines the operation of current organizations and the degree to which the policy environment is receptive to their research and prescriptions. The recommended best practices highlighted below can allow public and private donors to conduct an assessment of the state of certain academic disciplines in order to determine the answer to such questions as: (1) what is the state of policy research in a given field; (2) what is the level and quality of the data available in a field of research; or (3) what areas of research are more or less prone to intense political scrutiny or sanctions? The criteria for assessing the NGO and Policy environment are:

#### **Policy Environment**

- **Demand for Policy Advice**
- **Policy Research Capacity in Public and Private Sectors**

- **Think Tank, Advocacy Group and Policy Maker Ecology**
- **Current State of Information and Knowledge Systems and Networks**
- **Utilization of Policy Research**

## **NGO Environment**

- **Legal Environment**
- **Organizational Capacity**
- **Financial Viability**
- **Advocacy**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Public Image**
- **Program and Service Provisions**

These indicators can prove useful to public and private donors in that they allow those conducting the assessment to quantifiably measure conditions in the NGO and policy environment and determine each country's current stage of development. These numerical values and stages are derived from an examination of USAID's NGO Sustainability Index and have been translated for pre-grant assessment. The indices employed to assess a country's standing on each of these indicators range on a scale of 1 (best rating) – 7 (lowest rating), and can be applied to a three stage continuum for the donor's analysis – Less Conducive, Moderately Conducive, and Conducive. These stages directly refer to the degree to which the policy and NGO environment in a country is receptive. Consequently, they allow public and private donors to anticipate whether funding organizations in a given country would achieve their objectives.

### **C. Level Three – Institutional Assessment**

Whereas the previous two levels seek to quantify the nature of country viability and the degree to which a country's policy and NGO environment is conducive, this level of analysis is necessary in that it evaluates the current capacity and potential sustainability and effectiveness of each organization considered for funding. It affords public and private donors the opportunity to compare the differentiations between and particularities of specific institutions within a country and in so doing it allows for organization-level rather than mere country-level or sectoral consideration. Consequently, organizations that are more able or less able to utilize funding can be determined, and grants can be disbursed more effectively.

Recommended best practices at this level prescribe that organizations chosen as grantees should be assessed and selected based upon positive ratings on the criteria listed below. That being said, these guidelines should be used like a job description that outlines the skills and attributes of the ideal candidate. It is understood that refinements and tradeoffs will have to be made when these grant selection criterion are operationalized. Our recommendation is that organizations considered for a grant should:

- **Be a nonprofit and nongovernmental policy research organization**
- **Be legally registered in the country of operation as an independent organization**
- **Provide evidence of the Director's proven track record as a manager, policy research scholar, and builder of policy networks and coalitions**
- **Demonstrate transparency in its governance structure**
- **Demonstrate transparency in its financial operations and records**

- **Demonstrate a “sound institutional background,” financial viability, and history of effective grant management**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of the terms and purpose of the grant**
- **Provide evidence of an ability to conduct and communicate research that is rigorous and relevant**
- **Provide evidence of an ability to identify and select policy research projects with high impact**
- **Provide evidence of a capacity to conduct research that is independent in its analysis and based upon quality datasets**
- **Provide evidence of the ability to generate domestic financial support**
- **Demonstrate programmatic relevance to the core capacity needs of the state and/or region**
- **Possess an ability to network with other organizations in the state and region**
- **Demonstrate a strategic plan for both organizational and program development**
- **Evidence a critical mass of professional ability amongst its research and administrative staff**
- **Submit a realistic, estimated budget that does not request coverage of administrative costs totaling more than 50% of the organization’s total administrative budget and does not exceed 30% of the overall budget planned for the grant period (unless the grant programs is designed to provide general operating support)**
- **Provide five references in support of its proposal application**

In addition, it is necessary that the Institutional Assessment also include a comprehensive examination of the potential grantee, including review of its institutional structure, financial viability, and personnel compensation. Specifically, the following questions should guide this level of analysis:

- **What is the Current Organizational Performance?**
- **What is the Current Nature of Organizational Motivation?**
- **What is the Current Organizational Technological Capacity?**
- **What is the Current External Perception of the Organization?**

<b>Section Two: Grant Monitoring and Evaluation Assessment Tools</b>
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Grant monitoring and evaluation includes those assessments conducted after funding has been disbursed to the selected organization. These assessments tools are primarily directed toward ascertaining the degree to which the funded institute has proved successful in strengthening its own organizational capacity, producing rigorous and policy relevant research, facilitating increased involvement of civil society in the policy dialogue process, and contributing to the nature of the policy debate and actual policy formulation. Public and private donors typically have multiple objectives, so in order to adequately measure the degree to which an organization has succeeded in increasing its own capacity, the capacity of civil society, and nature and quality of policy and policy debate, a two level assessment must be employed – (1) Level One: Outputs Assessment and (2) Level Two: Impact Assessment. The former reviews both activities and outputs, and the latter considers organizational and policy impact. Optimally an assessment that is conducted for the purpose of evaluating performance would evaluate both the output and impact of think tanks.

## **A. Level One – Outputs Evaluation**

### **a. Activities and Disseminations**

To conduct a thorough output evaluation, funded organizations should compare their outputs at the mid-point and the end of the grant period to their pre-grant baseline. In particular, numbers should be generated on the following:

- **Policy proposals and ideas developed**
- **Publications produced (books, journal articles, policy briefs, working papers, etc.)**
- **News interviews conducted and number of media citations**
- **Briefings, conferences and seminars organized**
- **Number of staff nominated to advisory and government posts**
- **Number of academic citations**
- **Establishment of new programs and projects**

For an effective and accurate assessment of this level of evaluation, it is necessary that the public or private donor develop two measures: (1) documentation of pre-grant output statistics; and (2) a measure of what numerical increase would constitute output success – for instance, a certain percentage of increase could be judged as low, medium, high or exceptional output change. Once these measures are in place, a simple numerical assessment of post-disbursement outputs can be developed and utilized in a comparative analysis.

### **b. Quality and Policy Relevance**

In addition to an output evaluation, grant monitoring should also include an assessment of both quality and policy relevance. With regard to the former, evaluators should be guided by the following questions:

- **What is the overall quality of research and information?**
- **To what degree is the research thorough and comprehensive?**
- **Do the disseminations meet academic standards and evidence research and rigor?**
- **Is the research produced based upon credible datasets and rigorous analysis as opposed to descriptive methods?**
- **Does the research evidence analysis that is independent, particularly of the government?**

Policy Relevance should be assessed in relation to:

- **Are the disseminations useful in framing the policy debate?**
- **Are the disseminations instructive in providing thorough research and analysis on salient topics?**
- **Are the disseminations useful in their policy advice and prescriptions?**
- **Do the disseminations fit within the political and institutional limits and pressures of policymakers and resonate with their assumptions?**
- **Do the disseminations provide evidence that is credible and convincing and offers practical prescriptions to salient problems?**
- **Do the disseminations demonstrate a cognizance of the intervening actors and networks in the policy process?**

## **B. Level Two – Impact Evaluation**

### **a. Organizational Impact Evaluation**

The Organizational Impact Evaluation focuses on assessing the manner in which the funded organization has increased its capacity since the grant was made, and encompasses a review of a

number of internal features of the organization including financial viability, personnel morale, motivation and qualifications, strength of governance structure, and external relations. This assessment should occur at regular intervals, rather than simply at program or funding completion, so as to ensure that the objectives of the public and private donors are being met and that improvements are made to remedy any implementation errors. As mentioned previously, these assessments compare impact achieved after grant disbursement with those of the pre-grant baseline. This report recommends that an organizational assessment consider the following:

- **Organizational Effectiveness**
- **Relevance**
- **Capacity**
- **Financial Sustainability**
- **Rigor and Quality of Policy Research**
- **Innovation**
- **Domestic Recognition**
- **Networking Partnerships**
- **Program and Process Management**
- **Managing and Evaluation**

#### **b. Policy Impact Evaluation**

After reviewing the grant Impact Evaluation mechanisms employed by various grant-making organizations, as well as reviewing the nature of the policymaking environment and the manner in which think tanks and NGOs can impact actual policy formation, it is evident that the assessment tool implemented by grant-making bodies must combine both quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Specifically, the tangible measures suggested by McGann (below) should be determined in the grant monitoring and evaluation stage and compared with baseline pre-grant numbers.

- **Relationships/contacts with policymakers/implementers**
- **Relationships of board members, advisors, etc. with policymakers**
- **Extent of/quality of circulation of research products**
- **Utilization of products by policymakers (public references)**
- **Utilization by other influential elites: editorial boards, columnists, media commentators**
- **Utilization by political pressure groups and other civic actors**
- **Cumulative media references to research products**
- **References made to research and analysis in scholarly journals, new media, public testimony, etc.**

In addition to this quantitative assessment, public and private donors should also recruit policymakers and representatives of advocacy and civil society groups, to ascertain how well they have utilized the grantee's research. This participation can be pursued via interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and focus group meetings, and can serve to provide for the Outcome Mapping introduced by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). This additional assessment, which considers the manner in which the grantee has been able to influence policymaking and the policy dialogue within the government and in civil society, is essential in that it recognizes that policy impact can be successful even if policy prescriptions are not directly transferred into actual policy. However, these qualitative assessments should be translated into a numerical assessment which allows for ease of comparisons with pre-grant levels as well as future monitoring and evaluations. To this end, the low to high ranking implemented by the

Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) can prove instructive in that it assigns numerical values for the purpose of representing measures of and between categories.

### **Section Three: Funding Mechanisms to Promote Greater Effectiveness and Sustainability**

Funding mechanism should be sufficiently flexible to permit public and private donors to respond to unexpected challenges and opportunities that arise during the life of the program. To promote the viability and financial sustainability of think tanks, the following best practices should be considered:

- **Making grants only to institutions, rather than individual researchers and scholars**
- **Focusing on a limited number of countries, institutions, and analytical areas or topics**
- **Providing technical assistance throughout the life of the grants program**
- **Encouraging collaborative funding and joint programs with other donors that effectively leverage and target resources for think tanks at the country and regional level**
- **Including a plan and budget for dissemination and advocacy activities in each grant**
- **Encouraging information sharing between and among grantees**
- **Developing strategies that help recruit and retain high quality think tank directors and research staff**
- **Making multi-year grant commitments that are closely monitored with grant payouts tied to performance**
- **Encouraging grantees to influence policy at local, national and regional levels, either simultaneously or consecutively**
- **Providing funding for researchers and managers to attend regional and international conferences that facilitate skills exchange**
- **Encouraging organizational and program capacity by creating a critical mass of policy analysts and policy experts**
- **Providing funding for technical assistance so as to:**
  - **Train staff in effective communications and public engagement strategies**
  - **Educate researchers in applied policy research and credible datasets where necessary**
  - **Promote strategic planning, fundraising, organizational sustainability and development**
- **Creating opportunities for mentoring/peer review activities in order to encourage peer learning and strengthen collaborative relationships between researchers and research institutions and between research and policy communities**
- **Encouraging grantees to make monetary and in-kind contributions to the project from the outset to demonstrate commitment**
- **Providing funds to promote external relations in order to generate domestic support for the institution**

- **Developing from the outset a clear exit strategy in collaboration with the institution**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks to all of the individuals and institutions that provided the excellent information and advice during the course of the study. I want to thank Darby Krewer, my Research Assistant, for her assistance with the research for and preparation of the final report. I would also like to thank my research interns from the University of Pennsylvania and Villanova University for their assistance with data collection for the project.

## ***1.0 THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY***

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is currently in the process of launching a new initiative that aims to strengthen policy research institutes based in the developing world. The central objective of this new initiative is to support the production of high-quality research that can be employed by developing countries in formulating national, regional, and international policies to address development challenges.

As part of the program planning process, the Foundation commissioned a study to be conducted by James G. McGann, Ph.D., that documents and analyzes the existing pre-grant assessment criteria, grant monitoring and evaluation, and effective funding mechanisms for think tanks in developing and transitional countries. Specifically, Dr. McGann was tasked with identifying recommended best practices in the following three areas:

- 1) selection criteria for choosing think tanks to support;
- 2) evaluation criteria for determining whether funded groups are "successful" (i.e. metrics that would measure impact and help determine whether funding should be renewed); and
- 3) funding mechanisms that would encourage the long-term financial sustainability of institutions that receive support.

The study is intended to elucidate some of the best practices for funding and evaluating think tanks and policy research that have emerged over the last 15 to 20 years in developing and transitional countries around the world.

In order to effectively relay the best practices in the three areas referenced above, this report will define the terminology relevant to this examination, consider the assessment mechanisms currently employed by public and private donors, and detail those measures that are identified as best practices.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Think tanks have, and continue to play, a unique role in strengthening the bridge between research and policy as a result of their distinct ability to provide independent research, analysis and policy advice to an audience that includes governments, the academic community, civil society and the public. In serving this role, these organizations have established a nuanced position within the community of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) by virtue of their various functions which include: (1) providing decision-makers with high quality research and analysis that is both rigorous and relevant; (2) creating an informed citizenry through public education about key issues and choices; (3) facilitating the dialogue between policymakers and their constituencies, as well as knowledge and policy communities; (4) acting in the vanguard of democratization and economic development movements; and (5) strengthening civil society by providing a forum for discussion and analysis. Viewing these functions collectively, it is evident that think tanks can reinforce civil society and responsive government where it exists, as well as build these foundations in developing and transitional states.

However, the capacity of think tanks to fulfill these roles and attain optimum level of performance, is in many ways contingent upon, and often directly correlated to, a range of factors in the societies in which they reside. In view of this dynamic and in recognition of the critical catalytic role these organizations play at the national, regional, and global level, public and private donors have funded the creation of think tanks where they did not exist and supported a range of programs that are designed to build the research and institutional capacity of think tanks in developing and transitional countries.

While the vast majority of the more established think tanks are found in the advanced industrialized countries in the North, there are a growing number of these organizations in developing and transitional countries around the world. The funding provided to think tanks, and particularly those in transitional states, has increased markedly in the last 10 to 15 years and has generated analysis by both scholars and funding organizations aimed at defining how grants may be best distributed and managed so that they will have the greatest impact. To achieve this objective, public and private donors have supported a variety of initiatives in a range of developing and transitional countries in order to foster the creation of think tanks and other research groups and help reengineer and strengthen the capacity of existing think tanks. Over the last 15 years public and private donors have employed a rather diverse set of assessment strategies and techniques to measure the quality, effectiveness, and impact of their grants to policy research organizations. The study is intended to provide the best practices related to assessment criterion and funding mechanisms, and to serve as a resource for donors who seek to strengthen the quality, sustainability, and independence of think tanks in developing and transitional countries, as well as for these organizations themselves.

## 2.1 Structure of the Report

This report was based upon extensive research and interviews which were conducted for the purpose of: (1) articulating and examining the manner in which public and private donors currently fund think tanks – specifically, the methods by which they select institutions for grants and the measures they employ to gauge the level of progress achieved; and (2) concurrently deriving from this analysis the funding and assessment methods that may be regarded as the best practices for pre-grant assessment and grant monitoring and evaluation.

The desk review and interviews have revealed that pre-grant assessment is most effective when three levels of evaluation are employed: (1) Country Assessment; (2) Policy and NGO Assessment; and (3) Institutional Assessment. Further, grant monitoring and evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive when two levels of evaluation are explored: (1) Output Evaluation; and (2) Impact Evaluation.

For the purpose of clarity and in the interest of defining our examination of pre-grant assessment and grant monitoring and evaluation, this report presents the recommended best practices for assessment tools that can be employed, as well as identifies funding mechanisms that facilitate organizational sustainability. Key findings are organized in relation to their respective section headings. In addition to the identified best practices, the report also includes several appendices which provide examples of assessment tools currently utilized by a sampling of public and private donors.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

The methodology for answering the core questions identified in the introduction consisted of the following elements:

- **Data Collection** – In order to assess the criteria that have been employed to select organizations for funding, Dr. McGann reviewed the websites of 45 organizations which fund and/or run programs that support think tanks and policy research organizations in a variety of settings. (See Appendix B and K). To this end, data was compiled on the following – Grant Program Descriptions, Grant Guidelines, Grant Assessment Procedures, Recent Grantees, and Grant Best Practices.
- **Document Review** – Over 150 documents related to think tank funding, assessment of grantee selection, and evaluation of think tank output and impact were reviewed for this study. A number of project and program evaluations were also collected and examined. Many of these evaluations were provided by the institutions and individuals consulted for the study and are listed in the appendices (See Appendices I and J).

- **Selected Interviews** – Dr. McGann conducted 36 email consultations and selected telephone and in-person interviews over a period of two months. These individuals (see Appendix A) were selected based upon their expertise in matters related to think tank funding, evaluation and long-term viability. This sample of interviewees was composed of think tank and NGO executives, program officers, senior advisors, scholars, and practitioners who have written on this subject.

## **3.2 Definition of Terms**

### **3.2.a Think Tanks**

Viewed collectively, think tanks (aka public policy research organizations) are organizations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues in an effort to enable policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues. Think tanks may be affiliated or independent institutions and often act as a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities, serving the public interest as an independent voice that translates applied and basic research into a language and form that is understandable, reliable, and accessible. These institutions are critical actors in civil society and in recent years there has been significant cause for them to not only conduct research, but also to engage policymakers, the press and the public in a dialogue about key policy issues.

Structured as permanent bodies, as contrasted with ad hoc commissions or research panels, think tanks devote a substantial portion of their financial and human resources to commissioning and publishing research and policy analysis in the social sciences: political science, economics, public administration, and international affairs. Their major outputs are policy-oriented publications such as books, monographs, reports, policy briefs, conferences, seminars, briefings, and informal discussions with policymakers and government officials. These functions allow think tanks to serve as integral actors that can alleviate the disconnect between research and policy.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.2.b Policy Analysis**

As defined by William N. Dunn, policy analysis is “a process of multidisciplinary inquiry designed to create, critically assess and communicate information that is useful in understanding and improving policies.”<sup>2</sup> More specifically, it is a type of analysis that is “systematic, disciplined, analytical, scholarly...[and] whose primary motivation is to produce well-supported recommendations for action in dealing with concrete political problems.” As is evidenced in the central features of these definitions, think tanks can serve as integral actors in this type of analysis due to the unique role they play in providing scholarly research and informed policy prescriptions to both decision-makers and the general public.

### **3.2.c Policy Impact**

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1 McGann, James G. “Think Tank Definition.”

2 Dunn, William N. *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction*. (New York, NY: Prentice Hall, 2003), p. 2.

Impact is typically defined either broadly as the “totality of the effects brought about by intervention,” or more narrowly as “effects on the attitudes, skills, knowledge, or behavior of groups or individuals.”<sup>3</sup> When referred to in terms of policy impact, it can be defined in reference to how an organization’s efforts have impacted policy and decision-makers, as well as how it influenced members of civil society and the nature of the policy debate. Think tanks can serve as integral actors in this effort and can influence individuals within, as well as the dialogue of, the policymaking community in order to create policy impact. Measured as direct or indirect influence, policy impact can be inclusive of directly contributing to the specifics of a given piece of legislation, providing components of proposed bills, directing attention to an issue in order to bring it onto the political agenda, serving as consultants for policymakers, or motivating sectors of civil society to voice support for or against a proposed piece of legislation. Policy impact can usually be measured through consultation with “target groups and other stakeholders to find out if and how the evaluated activities have affected their situation, positively or negatively,” as well as through quantitative assessments.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.2.d Output**

According to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), output can be defined as the physical products, institutional and operations changes, and/or enhanced “skills and knowledge to be achieved by the project or program as a result of good management of inputs and activities. The immediate, visible, concrete, and tangible consequences of project inputs.”<sup>5</sup>

### **3.2.e Organizational Capacity**

Organizational capacity is the ability of an organization to “use its resources in order to perform.”<sup>6</sup> According to IDRC, if the “organization itself is the unit of analysis, all of the resources, systems, and processes that organizations develop to support them in their work can be assessed.” Consequently, an assessment of organizational capacity entails an examination of the practices related to human, financial, and organizational infrastructure resources.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, organizational capacity is comprised of eight components including: (1) strategic leadership; (2) organizational structure; (3) human resources; (4) financial management; (5) infrastructure; (6) program and services management; (7) process management; and (8) inter-organizational linkages.<sup>8</sup>

### **3.2.f Evaluation**

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3 Molund, Stefan and Goran Schill. “SIDA: Looking Back, Moving Forward: Sida Evaluation Manual.” 2004, p. 30.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Lusthaus, Charles, Marie-Helen Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden and George Plinio Montalvan. “Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance,” [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30224-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30224-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed 15 March 2006.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

A standard definition of evaluation, as characterized by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, is “a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results.”<sup>9</sup> The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has further asserted that an evaluation must satisfy certain quality standards and as such must be “carried out systematically and with due concern for factual accuracy and impartiality.”<sup>10</sup> Specifically, evaluation: (1) assesses program objectives in relation to “higher-level goals or the problem to be solved;” (2) identifies both unintended and intended results;” (3) uses both quantitative and qualitative methods; (4) utilizes multiple sources of data; and (5) can be, and often is, done by external evaluators.<sup>11</sup> Viewed in the context of grant-making, evaluation is typically referenced in the stage after funds have been disbursed to the grantee with the objective of improving how the funding project is being implemented and maximizing output and impact results.

**Monitoring** is often coupled with evaluation and can be defined as an ongoing process to verify systematically that planned activities or processes take place as expected or that progress is being made in achieving planned goals and output/impact.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.2.g Institutional Assessment**

Conducted as a learning process for both the donor and grantee, an institutional assessment “should be designed to diagnose areas of need so as to guide capacity building efforts.”<sup>13</sup> To this end, the assessment should evaluate the organization’s effectiveness, efficiency, and performance for the purpose of identifying and reforming problems and/or areas of weakness. This assessment can be conducted by either internal or external evaluators and should utilize both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a comprehensive examination. A thorough institutional assessment will take into account the organization’s environment, motivation, organizational capacity, and organizational performance.<sup>14</sup>

## **3.3 Steps in the Pre-Assessment Process**

Prior to beginning the pre-grant assessment process, it is necessary to determine: (1) the players that will be involved; and (2) the objectives of the overall funding process.

### **3.3.a Involving Stakeholders**

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9 Ibid, p. 9.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid, p. 11.

12 Lusthaus, Charles, Marie-Helen Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden and George Plinio Montalvan. “Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance,” [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30231-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30231-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed 15 March 2007.

13 “Chapter 2: Developing and Institutional Profile,” International Development Research Centre (IDRC), [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28363-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28363-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed 15 March 2007.

14 Ibid.

With regard to the first determination, SIDA recommends that the stakeholders that will be involved in or affected by the project should be defined. Specifically, they note “among the benefits of [stakeholder] participation are greater accuracy and depth of information, increased credibility and acceptance of findings, and better correspondence to the practical concerns” of these involved.<sup>15</sup>

However, since greater participation can increase the time and financial cost of the evaluation, it is necessary to articulate the individuals and groups that should be incorporated into the process. It is recommended that the following potential stakeholders be considered:

- **Co-operation Partners** – Includes “parties that request donor support and that are responsible for planning, implementing, and following up the evaluation intervention” as well as other partner country stakeholders.<sup>16</sup>
- **Primary Stakeholders** – Target groups and other primary stakeholders, including those that may not be able to actively participate in “preparatory work.” This facilitates the ability of targeted groups to “constructively participate” and ensures that the point of view of those affected is incorporated.<sup>17</sup>
- **Interested Parties** – Groups that do not actively participate in the evaluation process and may not be members of the targeted beneficiaries. These groups should be afforded the opportunity to be aware of the project and express their views.<sup>18</sup>

Once these stakeholders are selected, they should be informed as early as possible of when the evaluation process will begin so that they may prepare their respective “inputs,” as well as the extent of their anticipated contribution and role.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.3.b Defining Programmatic Purpose and Objectives**

Before commencing the pre-grant assessment process in which institutions are selected as grantees, it is necessary for the donor to define the central purpose and objectives of its funding project in order to guide selection and subsequently monitoring and evaluation. In particular, public and private donors must define the following:

- **Purpose of the Grant Program** – What does the donor seek to influence and/or improve? What is the intended scope or reach of the program? The project purpose can include such objectives as improving poverty, health, political repression, etc., and should narrow the specific regions and institutions considered for funding.

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15 Ibid, p. 57.

16 Ibid, p. 58.

17 Ibid, pp. 58-59.

18 Ibid, p. 59.

19 Ibid.

- **Regional Focus** – Once the purpose of the grant program is articulated, the donor should determine which region or regions would most likely benefit from funding, and further which would prove most facilitating in allowing for program objectives to be achieved.
- **Type of Institution** – What type of think tank would provide the best conditions for program objectives to be achieved? The donor should establish the organizational features and capacities that are necessary for program success.

By addressing these questions and considerations in the pre-assessment stage, the donor’s ability to conduct a comprehensive pre-grant selection, identify organizations that are programmatically aligned, and perform thorough monitoring and evaluation will be significantly enhanced.

## **SECTION I: PRE-GRANT ASSESSMENT**

### ***4.0 PRE-GRANT ASSESSMENT***

The pre-grant assessment stage of funding includes all evaluations preceding grant disbursement, and is therefore inclusive of such determinations as where financial contributions should be directed, what specific organizations should be beneficiaries, and further how grants may best be structured for maximum impact. As referenced above, it is evident based upon a review of current practices, that this stage of grant selection is best managed – and the tangible outputs of these grants most effective – when three levels of assessment are implemented – Level One: Country Assessment, Level Two: Policy and NGO Assessment, and Level Three: Institutional Assessment. For the purpose of clarity and explication each level will be examined individually and our evaluation of the assessment criteria and tools that are recommended best practices will be presented.

### ***5.0 LEVEL ONE: COUNTRY ASSESSMENT***

#### **5.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Pre-Grant Assessment**

A number of scholars within the think tank and NGO community, as well as actors within funding organizations, have noted the importance of surveying the political, social, and economic conditions within the country and region in which a think tank resides. This contention, that the degree of independence and level of effectiveness that an organization can attain is directly related to the environment in which it operates, has been assessed previously and is worthy of further exploration at this juncture. Analyzed in relation to funding, as well as in studies of think tank viability, organizations such as the International Development Research Centre, Canada (IDRC), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) as well as practitioners and scholars such as Simon Maxwell, James McGann, Julius

Court, Diane Stone, Avert Lindquist, Raymond Struyk, John Young, Fred Carden, and Erik Johnson have characterized the nature of this relationship and have recognized the manner in which a country's conditions can either inhibit or enhance both think tank sustainability and function. In order to effectively articulate this dynamic, this sub-section will begin by defining the particularities and facets of the political, social and economic environment to be scanned and conclude with a set of indicators that have been preliminarily tested for the region of Sub-Saharan Africa and can be employed to effectively conduct a comprehensive Country Level Assessment in the pre-grant stage for every region of the world.

## 5.2 Dimensions and Implications of Environmental Context

The environmental context of a country encompasses elements of social, economic, and political practices and conditions. According to McGann, these include such features as:

- **Political** – including the nature and structure of the political system, the level of press and speech freedom, the legal and extralegal methods employed in order to sanction action or maintain stability, and the legal status provided to NGOs
- **Economic** – including the degree of economic freedom allowed to a populous and the GDP per capita income
- **Social** – including the philanthropic nature of a citizenry and the sectors into which it channels its associational energy<sup>20</sup>

In the view of these scholars, these conditions can either enforce or impede think tank development and operation. A review of how public and private donors have concurred with this assessment is included in Appendix D.

## 6.0 COMMONALITIES AND LIMITATIONS IN CURRENT COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS

Currently a number of private and public donors utilize evaluation mechanisms in order to assess the nature of a country's environmental context. Specifically, organizations such as CIVICUS, the World Bank, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have employed assessment criteria (detailed in Appendix E), which are instructive for the overall analysis of this report in that they provide evidence of identifiable commonalities between and among some tools used to gauge environmental context to date. From a brief overview of the Civil Society Index (CIVICUS), the Country and Institutional Assessment (World Bank), and the Democracy and Governance Assessment (USAID), it is clear that in order to fully assess a country or region, elements of the political, social, and legal context must be considered. For instance, all three assessment tools seek to identify the level of social involvement both in isolation and within the political system, the nature of economic policies and conditions, and the practices or 'rules of the game' in the political arena.

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20 McGann, James G. with Erik Johnson. *Comparative Think Tanks, Politics and Public Policy* (Edward Elgar Publishing, Ltd., 2006), pp.1-2.

In addition to these topical similarities, each of these methods exercise a reliance on scaled measures (i.e. the use of 0-3 and 1-6 rankings), value stakeholder input, and implement criteria that is programmatically relevant or thematically exclusive. However, in some cases these mechanisms also exhibit an inclusion of non-quantifiable data which can arguably skew the objectivity of results.

## **7.0 COUNTRY ASSESSMENT TOOL – RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES**

McGann and Kent Weaver initially studied the relationship between think tanks and their environment in their study on the “Environmental Influences on Think Tank Growth, Activity and Impact.”<sup>21</sup> In *Comparative Think Tanks, Politics and Public Policy*, McGann further explored the role of political context by considering the full breadth and scope of these factors as well as expanding consideration to social and economic conditions to “[identify] critical elements that shape the degree to which a national environment is conducive to and encourages the emergence and operation of think tanks.”<sup>22</sup> This analysis resulted in the development of 13 indicators that can be utilized to measure think tank viability, and which can be applied to judge how conducive state conditions are to the sustainability of these organizations. Specifically, the indicators rely on quantifiable and qualitative measures including political freedom, political system, number of years as a democracy, number and strength of political parties, nature of civil society, freedom of the press, economic freedom, gross domestic product per capita, public sector demand for independent policy analysis, population, philanthropic culture, number and independence of public and private universities, and the level of global integration.

Having reviewed the particularities, commonalities, and possible limitations of various existing pre-grant assessment mechanisms, we have determined that a variation of the 13 Indicators presented in *Comparative Think Tanks, Politics and Public Policy* represents the best practices for a pre-grant Country Level Assessment. Since the publication of the book, Dr. McGann has been refining and testing the indicators in selected regions of the world. This process has led to the development of an assessment instrument that provides quantitative measures that can be employed in selected countries for public and private support for policy research. The recommended set of indicators has been applied to all the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and based upon initial analysis and findings it can be concluded that the metric provides a comprehensive tool to identify a universe of possible countries to target for funding.

### **7.1 Country Indicators for Pre-Grant Assessment**

While these indicators proved highly successful in ascertaining the degree to which countries offered facilitating or impeding environments for think tank viability in the 20 case studies pursued, McGann has refined these measures for the purpose of Country

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21 McGann and Johnson, p. 2.

22 Ibid.

Assessments in the context of pre-grant assessment process. Toward this end, McGann removed three of the 13 indicators – nature of philanthropic culture, public sector demand for policy advice, and nature of civil society – due to the fact that they are non-quantifiable and cannot be numerically assessed toward the production of a viability score. While these indicators are still highly instructive in determining the nature of a country’s social environment they are qualitative and best ascertained via field research. Conversely, the 10 indicators included in the revised assessment tool can be quantifiably measured based upon authoritative datasets and result in a viability score that can be derived for a country or region under review. For the purpose of clarity, the set of 10 indicators is listed below along with an explanation of how these may be quantifiably measured. The method by which these indicators can be combined in order to produce a “viable” or “not viable” country and/or regional categorization is also defined.

- **Political Freedom** – Measures the degree of political freedom preserved in the country concerned, derived from the well-known and accepted Freedom House ratings, and is consistent with their ratings which include a combined measurement of both political rights and civil liberties. “The rationale behind this indicator is that political freedom is a precursor to genuinely independent analysis: for think tanks to be able to perform their duties as independent policy analysts, the freedoms to criticize and express dissent, as well as to analyze and comment are essential.”<sup>23</sup> Freedom House assigns a rating of 1 (free) to 7 (not free) and as such these numbers can be utilized as quantifiable measures.
- **Freedom of the Press** – This measure offers an assessment of the degree to which think tanks are able to effectively disseminate their research findings and policy prescriptions without government, legal or extralegal interference. Gauged via the World Audit’s ranking of press freedom and the number and ownership (state or private) of news media, the indicator is also quantifiable based upon the country’s World Audit standing. Specifically, the rating includes “considerations of liberty of media to comment and criticize without fear of government reprisal, as well as a measure of the degree to which media institutions are under state influence and control.”<sup>24</sup> The rationale of this inclusion is that “a free media helps not only to increase public exposure for think tanks, whose work is often misunderstood, but also to pressure obstinate governments to consider criticism and to further the institutionalization of democracy.”<sup>25</sup>
- **Number and Strength of Political Parties** – Measuring the number and strength of political parties within a system, this indicator is included because “where political parties are strong and abundant, [they are able to] demand and support a wide range of policy advice.”<sup>26</sup> The rationale for including this variable is based upon the simple fact that the presence of two or more parties is likely to create a demand for policy alternatives. Data for this is compiled from the *CIA Factbook*.

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23 McGann and Johnson, p. X.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

- **Economic Freedom** – Measured by the *Heritage Foundation/Wall Street Journal Index of Economic Freedom*, this indicator is defined as “the absence of government coercion or constraint on the production, distribution or consumption of goods and services, beyond the extent necessary for citizens to protect and maintain liberty itself.” Specifically, the Index quantifies economic freedom on a scale of 1 to 5 and awards states lower scores for greater economic freedom. The operating assumption is that if there is an acceptable level of economic freedom in a country the government will be open to alternative economic policies. A command economy or an economy that places significant constraints on nongovernmental economic activities is not likely to allow policy proposals that call for economic reform.
- **Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (GDP)** – This indicator, based on the United Nations Development Program’s *Human Development Report*, can serve as a predictor of domestic capacity to fund think tanks. Quantifiable as the “sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products,” the indicator is included based upon its ability to gauge a population’s readiness to financially support policy analysis as judged by disposable income.<sup>27</sup> For instance, for states with low GDP per capita, capital is likely to be invested in basic needs related materials rather than toward the civil society infrastructure. This measure may be particularly relevant to Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Population** – Although the relationship between the number of people in a state and the number of think tanks is “rather loose,” this variable is useful in comparing small, less populous nations to their more populous counterparts.<sup>28</sup> For the purpose of consistency, this data is derived from the *CIA World Factbook*.
- **Number of Universities** – This indicator, based upon research by the International Association of Universities (as reported by UNESCO), is included based upon the critical intellectual interrelationship among universities, think tanks, and policymakers. The data distinguishes between public and private funding “in order to [ascertain] the extent to which the government influences university policy...An environment characterized by less government funding and influence is considered more conducive to independent thought in research and subsequently, independent policy advise.”<sup>29</sup>
- **Level of Global Integration** – This indicator is based upon the *Globalization Index* published annually by AT Kearney and *Foreign Policy Magazine* and considers four areas: economics, movement of people across borders, access to and usage of technology, and participation in international treaties and peacekeeping operations. “In each of these four spheres, data on many different

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27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

variables are considered and normalized to form the overall ranking.”<sup>30</sup> As explicated by McGann and Johnson, “the rationale behind the inclusion of this variable is that nations that are more integrated globally will have greater access to ideas that are not mainstream within their society, igniting greater demand for independent public policy advice and creating a more conducive environment for the emergence of think tanks.”<sup>31</sup>

- **State Sustainability** – Based upon the Failed State Index created by *Foreign Policy* and funded by the Fund for Peace, this indicator uses 12 social, economic, political and military measures to rank states according to their “vulnerability to violent internal conflict and societal dysfunction.”<sup>32</sup> Measures include demographic pressures, refugees, group grievances, human flight, urban development, economy, delegitimization of state, public services, security apparatus, factionalized elites, human rights and external intervention. This measure is significantly important, particularly in the context of funding, because it can quantify which states tend toward stability.
- **Level of Need** – This measure is included specifically for the purpose of country level pre-grant assessment. Derived from the *Human Development Index (HDI)*, which measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development: “a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living,”<sup>33</sup> this indicator is included in order to determine need in addition to political and social conditions. Rankings are measured on a 0 (most need) – 1 (least need) scale.

The addition of State Sustainability and Need, and the removal of three of the hard-to-quantify measures from the set of 10 indicators strengthen the objective and quantitative dimension of this assessment metric.

## 7.2 Application of the Country Level Approach to Pre-Grant Assessment

These 10 indicators are broadly inclusive in evaluating the political, social, and economic facets of a country’s context due to the scope of the variables included as well as the quantifiable nature of its measures. However, each of these indicators in isolation or simple combination cannot effectively evaluate country context. Rather, the indicators should be viewed collectively, combining them into a single score for the purpose of determining whether a given country provides an appropriate context for funding think tanks. Because each indicator can be assigned a numerical value, it is possible to normalize the ten into a combined score within a sub-regional or regional viability index.

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30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 “Failed State Index, 2006.” [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=3420](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3420). Accessed December 2006.

33 “Human Development Report 2006.” <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/indices/default.cfm>. Accessed December 2006.

Each indicator can be assigned a relative weight based upon the influence it has on the overall viability of a possible grant. For instance, political freedom, freedom of the press, level of need, and state sustainability can be weighted more than the less powerful indicators of population and number of universities. While other pre-grant assessment mechanisms such as those detailed in Appendix E are useful in assigning quantifiable measures to the state of civil society or to the social, economic or political contexts individually, our assessment is unique because it can combine all indicators into a single numerical value for public and private donors to review.

This assessment was recently applied to Sub-Saharan Africa and produced the viability scores in the chart below based upon the methodology discussed, and assigned weights to each of the variables (i.e. - political freedom has a correlation of .658, freedom of the press - .770, Failed State Index - .495, economic freedom - .552, GDP per capita - .085, political parties - .235, and population - .002, etc.).

VIABLE			LESS VIABLE		
Rank	Country	Viability Score	Rank	Country	Viability Score
1	<i>South Africa</i>	0.906	25	<i>Malawi</i>	0.490
2	<i>Ghana</i>	0.867	26	<i>Nigeria</i>	0.486
3	<i>Cape Verde</i>	0.800	27	<i>Gambia</i>	0.472
4	<i>Mauritius</i>	0.796	28	<i>Central African Republic</i>	0.453
5	<i>Mali</i>	0.795	29	<i>Cameroon</i>	0.451
6	<i>Botswana</i>	0.792	30	<i>Congo</i>	0.441
7	<i>Senegal</i>	0.777	31	<i>Swaziland</i>	0.435
8	<i>Lesotho</i>	0.755	32	<i>Ethiopia</i>	0.419
9	<i>Namibia</i>	0.750	33	<i>Cote D'Ivoire</i>	0.414
10	<i>Benin</i>	0.728	34	<i>Liberia</i>	0.408
11	<i>Madagascar</i>	0.672	35	<i>Chad</i>	0.407
12	<i>Tanzania</i>	0.624	36	<i>Angola</i>	0.406
13	<i>Gabon</i>	0.611	37	<i>Guinea</i>	0.404
14	<i>Zambia</i>	0.610	38	<i>Guinea- Bissau</i>	0.386
15	<i>Mozambique</i>	0.599	39	<i>Sierra Leone</i>	0.364
16	<i>Uganda</i>	0.587	40	<i>Rwanda</i>	0.359
17	<i>Mauritania</i>	0.586	41	<i>Togo</i>	0.329
18	<i>Sao Tome &amp; Principe</i>	0.581	42	<i>Congo, Democratic Republic of Zaire</i>	0.298
19	<i>Niger</i>	0.574	43	<i>Burundi</i>	0.287
20	<i>Kenya</i>	0.564	44	<i>Equatorial Guinea</i>	0.285
21	<i>Burkina Faso</i>	0.562	45	<i>Zimbabwe</i>	0.249
22	<i>Seychelles</i>	0.529	46	<i>Sudan</i>	0.236
23	<i>Djibouti</i>	0.514	47	<i>Eritrea</i>	0.160
24	<i>Comoros</i>	0.494	48	<i>Somalia</i>	0.133

Once these scores are tallied and compared in relation to the Level of Need indicator, a graphical illustration can be developed which depicts those countries recommended for funding. In addition, these scores can be combined in order to ascertain a regional

viability measure which would prove instructive to public and private donors determining which regions to fund.

Although the pre-grant Country Assessment which has been defined as the best practice for this level of analysis is comprehensive in its assessment, effective pre-grant consideration should also include an examination of two other levels of assessment – a Policy and NGO Assessment and an Institutional Assessment. These additional levels will be examined independently.

Several donors have underscored the importance of assessing the funding programs of the public and private donors who are currently operating in the countries selected for funding so that greater coordination, networking, and impact might be realized. While it can be useful to direct resources to areas and regions that other donors have not, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Soros Fund suggest that coordination and joint programming have been essential elements in the success of their programs in Eastern and Central Europe.

## ***8.0 LEVEL TWO: POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT***

### **8.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Pre-Grant Assessment**

Just as it is important for funding organizations to conduct a Country Level Assessment of political, economic, and social context, in order to effectively determine what geographic entities are conducive for grant-making, it is necessary to evaluate the policy and NGO environment within these countries and regions. While the first level of analysis focuses on developing an assessment of the macro or overarching environmental context, this second level seeks to determine the nature of the NGO environment – what is the legal environment for these organizations, what is their capacity, what is the financial viability of NGOs, etc. - as well as the degree to which policy advice is available and in demand. Particularly in the context of funding think tanks, consideration of this level is an integral segment of the pre-grant assessment because of the interdependence between the think tanks, NGOs and policymakers. It illustrates and examines how current organizations are operating and the degree to which the policy environment is receptive to their research and prescriptions. Specifically, although grantee selections could be deduced from a pre-grant Level One: Country Assessment, this determination would be incomplete without a measurable assessment of the NGO sector and the environment in which public policy is formulated. Numerous studies have been conducted on this topic, and a number of policy and NGO environment assessment tools are currently being utilized by several public and private donors. These tools and mechanisms are briefly explored prior to an examination of the best assessment practices that can be implemented at this level.

## 8.1.a Value of Assessing the Policy Environment

Robert Rouda and Mitchell Kusy, Jr. of the California Institute of Technology have conducted research on evaluation methods and have concluded that a Policy Environment Needs Assessment should be included in the pre-grant stage whenever possible. Although many of their recommendations are applicable to the third level of assessment – Institutional Assessment – one is also relevant in deducing the state of the policy environment. For definitional purposes, a Needs Assessment aims to illuminate the gaps in infrastructure and services that can be met through program activity or project implementation.<sup>34</sup> Specifically, the state of a given policy environment can be measured through the Environmental Identification portion of the review developed by Rouda and Kusy, in that it defines and characterizes “policies that might dictate the implementation of funding or of a specific program...[such as] government mandates to which the funder must comply.”<sup>35</sup> The restrictions placed on think tanks and other advocacy oriented NGOs in Russia is a clear example of the dramatic impact government regulations can have on the policy environment. In addition, a Needs Assessment also includes analysis of impending changes in the policy environment, such as opportunities for new actors to become involved or influential, as well as new administration objectives.<sup>36</sup>

Organizations such as the Eurasia Foundation and USAID have also offered prescriptions for how this evaluation can be adequately conducted. With regard to the former, the Eurasia Foundation has implemented two pre-grant evaluation tools aimed at assessing the policy environment: (1) Baseline Evaluation; and (2) Structure Conceptualization. Specifically, these tools are:

- **Baseline Evaluation** – Documents population, political restrictions, events and other data sets that may change during the course of the program. The value of this evaluation is two-fold: (1) it can be utilized to assess the policy environment; and (2) it collects data so that the “evaluator is able to compare data at the close of the program activities” or funding “in order to gauge the impact...upon the particular data sets.”<sup>37</sup>
- **Structural Conceptualization** – Designed to assist stakeholders and public and private donors in defining the program appropriately, target receptive segments of the population and policymakers and predict possible outcomes.<sup>38</sup>

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) also utilizes such mechanisms in order to assess the nature of the policy environment. Specifically, they seek to determine the nature of “decision-makers’ desire for research” in order to effectively gauge how the

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34 Rouda, Robert H. and Mitchell E. Kusy, Jr. “Development of Human Resources Part 2: Needs Assessment, The First Step.” California Institute of Technology, [http://alumnus.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2\\_NA.html](http://alumnus.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2_NA.html). Accessed December 2006.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 “Tools and Methods.” Eurasia Foundation. [http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx). Accessed December 2006.

38 Ibid.

grantee project should be implemented.<sup>39</sup> According to IDRC, the Policy Environment is characterized as evidencing: (1) a “Clear Demand from Policymakers” – open window for policy influence; (2) “Government Interest but a Leadership Gap” – partially open window of influence but structures and activities necessary for policy prescriptions to be adopted are not in place; (3) “Research Interest” – partially open window and the government has recognized the need to address the given issues; (4) “Emergent Issues” – partially open window of policy influence however, although policymakers have a strong research agenda, the current issue is not included; and (5) “Government Disinterest/Hostility” – closed policy influence window and policymakers are pursuing other issues.<sup>40</sup> These determinations are guided by an examination of whether there are structures and procedures in place to enable policymakers to implement policy recommendations. In particular, project teams assess: (1) the stability of relevant decision-making institutions; (2) the capacity of policymakers to use research; (3) whether government control is decentralized or “tight;” and (4) economic pressures on the government.<sup>41</sup> In *Comparative Think Tanks, Politics and Public Policy* McGann compares and contrasts the demand for policy advice in 23 countries.

USAID employs an additional assessment mechanism in order to ascertain the nature of the policy environment. Known as the Advocacy Assessment, this tool judges the ability of NGOs and think tanks to “influence public policy decision-making, their ability to articulate demands on public/government officials, and their ability to monitor government actions and performance, including monitoring party platforms, to ensure accountability.”<sup>42</sup>

Although these tools are useful in determining whether an organization will be able to act effectively in influencing the policy of a given country, a second consideration in this level of analysis – the NGO environment – is equally important as an indicator that can predict the potential for funding success.

Many donors interviewed for this study, when asked what lessons were learned over the last 15 years from working in developing and transitional countries, pointed out the importance of working on the demand side of the policy advice equation as well as the supply side. Many of the donors felt they had been successful at establishing, building capacity and sustaining think tanks, but that capacity has to be improved with policymakers in the legislative and executive branches of government as well as with the media. The conclusion was that you must take a more holistic approach and work with both sides of the problem; specifically, helping governments, policymakers and the media understand the value and utility of independent policy advice. In addition, while there have been tremendous strides made in helping bridge the divide between knowledge and policy, an understanding of the supply of high quality, evidence based, policy relevant research is a critical pre-grant assessment that should be conducted.

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39 Carden, p. 8.

40 Ibid, p. 9.

41 Ibid, pp. 10-11.

42 “The NGO Sustainability Index: For Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.” USAID, 2005.

[http://ftp.info.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/ngoindex.htm](http://ftp.info.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex.htm). Accessed December 2006.

## 8.1.b Value of Assessing the NGO Environment

Assessment of the NGO environment is a highly instructive measure in gauging the likelihood of think tank success because this analysis focuses on the way in which current NGOs are operating and the conditions of this third sector of civil society. Private and public donors have found this type of assessment important because the effectiveness and at times the very survival of NGOs is dependent on the strength of the entire community. These issues are especially true for policy research and advocacy organizations that rely on the support of civil society to help advance the reforms that they have proposed. For this reason an assessment of the state of the NGO environment in a country and the legal space in which these organizations are allowed to operate is essential. Both the Eurasia Foundation and USAID have developed assessment criteria for this level of examination.

In particular, the Eurasia Foundation has a requirement within its pre-grant assessment to “Identify Priorities and Importance.” This step determines the organizational goals, realities and constraints of the project and project environment, and pays special attention to legal mandates and population. With regard to the former, the Foundation establishes whether there are “laws either enhancing or impeding the funding opportunities,” and in the case of the latter, whether there is a “level of civic commitment to civil society organizations, NGOs, etc.”<sup>43</sup>

USAID similarly recognizes the importance of these considerations in its NGO Sustainability Index which includes a set of indicators to assess the NGO environment. The assessment of each indicator is rendered based upon a subset of considerations that prove instructive in defining the nature of the legal, financial and social environment in which NGOs operate. Briefly identified below, the indicators are reviewed in detail in Appendix F:

- **Legal Environment**
- **Organizational Capacity**
- **Financial Viability**
- **Advocacy**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Public Image**
- **Program and Service Provisions**

Beyond these general descriptions, these indicators are also quantifiably measured using a 1 (best rating) – 7 (lowest rating) scale. These indices are then further categorized into three possible phases of development progression for each. For instance, Stage I includes ratings of 5-7, Stage II includes 3-5, and Stage III includes 1-3. The funding implications of these various stages are examined more fully in relation to the best practice indicators for this area of assessment outlined in the section to follow, which adopts and revises some of these considerations. Since think tanks are a subset of the NGO community and

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43 “Tools and Methods.” Eurasia Foundation. [http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx). Accessed December 2006.

depend on them to help advocate their policy recommendations, it is essential that public and private donors pay close attention to the state of the NGO environment.

### 8.3 The Application of the Policy and NGO Environment Pre-Grant Assessment Indicators

These indicators can prove highly effective in assessing the nature of the Policy and NGO environment of a country. Specifically, these indicators equip public and private donors with an assessment tool that provides useful quantifiable measures and creates a continuum of developmental states. These numerical values and stages are derived from an examination of USAID’s NGO Sustainability Index and have been refined for pre-grant assessment. For the purposes of this assessment, the indices employed to evaluate a country’s ranking on each of these indicators on a scale ranging from 1 (best rating) – 7 (lowest rating), can then be applied to a three stage continuum for grant-maker analysis – Less Conducive, Moderately Conducive, and Conducive. These stages directly refer to the degree to which the policy and NGO environment facilitates and consequently, allows grant-makers to anticipate whether funding organizations in a state would support the achievement of their objectives. Examples of: (1) the considerations taken into account in the determination of indicator ratings; and (2) how these ratings are applied to determining the level of country conduciveness, are provided below (See Appendix F.1 for a full examination of these indices and stages).

#### 8.3.a Policy and NGO Assessment Indices

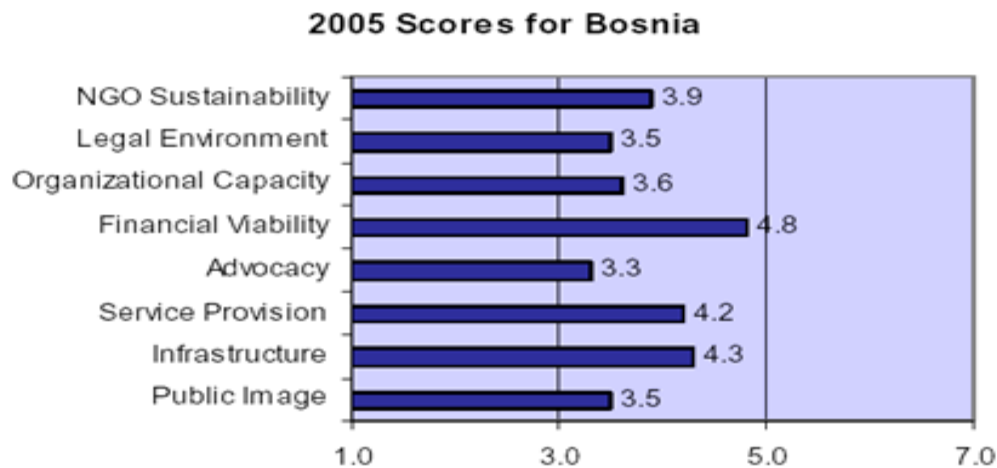
The indices defined in order to assess the degree to which the Policy and NGO Environment of a country is facilitating to think tank viability include consideration of the following: (1) are reforms needed in the NGO environment, and if so do the government and publics recognize this; (2) are NGOs dispersed throughout the country or concentrated in specific regions or the capital city; (3) what degree of foreign assistance is provided to NGOs in the country; and (4) how open is the government and financial sector to reform. In order to illustrate how these indices relate to country conditions, a sampling of scores 1 (best rating), 4 (mid-ranking), and 7 (lowest rating) is included below:

Rating Score	Score Description (Derived from USAID Indices) <sup>44</sup>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although additional reforms can be made in the NGO environment, the local NGO community recognizes which reforms are needed and has made plans to remedy failings</li> <li>• NGOs are found in all regions of the country as well as in numerous different sectors</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs are minimally affected by practices and policies in the state. However,</li> </ul>

44 “NGO Sustainability Index: Section 2: Ratings – General Definitions,” USAID 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf). Accessed December 2006, pp. 1 - 5.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NGO sector is limited by a number of factors, including a stagnant economy, a passive government or administration, a disinterested or ambivalent media, and/or a community of activists that are inexperienced</li> <li>• NGOs are often concentrated in the capitol city or in three or four regions of the country</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NGO sector has remained stagnate or eroded since the end of the Cold War</li> <li>• The development and sustainability of NGOs are severely curtailed by war, a depleted economy, highly divided society or totalitarian regime</li> </ul>

Once these index values are assigned for each indicator within a given state, these ratings can be graphically displayed, as shown in the score representation for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005.<sup>45</sup>



### 8.3.b Policy and NGO Environment - Assessment Continuum

Once scores are assigned for all indicators, these ratings can then be translated into a continuum based upon whether the environment is Conducive for Funding (1-3 rating), Moderately Conducive for Funding (3-5 rating), or Less Conducive for Funding (5-7 rating). For the purpose of clarity, an example of how the Policy and NGO Environment assessment tool can be applied is provided below using the “Legal Environment” as an illustration of this application. (See Appendix F2 for a Full Examination of these Levels):

- **Legal Environment**
  - **Less Conducive (5-7):** The absence of legal provisions, the confusing or restrictive nature of legal provisions (and/or their implementation) on non-

<sup>45</sup> “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/ngoindex/2005/bosnia\\_herzegovina.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/bosnia_herzegovina.pdf). Accessed December 2006.

governmental organizations (NGO) make it difficult to register and/or operate (i.e., regulation to the point of harassment). Assistance programs address status laws pertaining to registration, internal management/governance, scope of permissible activities, reporting, dissolution, and other topics; as well as the degree of bureaucratic and administrative impediments to NGO formation and operation; degree of state regulation, harassment of or violence toward NGOs.<sup>46</sup>

- **Moderately Conducive (3-5)**: NGOs have little trouble registering and are not subjected to state harassment. They are permitted to engage in a broad range of activities, although taxation provisions, procurement procedures, etc. may inhibit NGOs' operation and development. Programs seek to reform or clarify existing NGO legislation, to allow NGOs to engage in revenue-raising and commercial activities, to allow national or local governments to privatize the provision of selected government services, to address basic tax and fiscal issues for civil society organizations (CSOs), etc. The local NGO community understands the need to coalesce and advocate for legal reforms benefiting the NGO sector as a whole. A core of local lawyers begins to specialize in NGO law by providing legal services to local NGOs, advising the NGO community on needed legal reforms, crafting draft legislation, etc.<sup>47</sup>
- **Conducive (1-3)**: The legislative and regulatory framework begins to make special provisions for the needs of NGOs or gives not-for-profit NGOs special advantages such as: significant tax deductions for business or individual contributions, significant tax exemptions on CSOs, open competition among NGOs to provide government-funded service, etc. Legal reform efforts at this point are primarily a local NGO advocacy effort to reform or fine tune taxation laws, procurement processes, etc. Local and comparative expertise, as well as availability of legal services and materials is sufficient based upon the NGO legal framework existing.<sup>48</sup>

By placing these indicator ratings within a continuum of how conducive a country's Policy and NGO Environment are, public and private donors can assess this rating, in combination with the results derived from the Level One: Country Assessment, to ascertain whether directing financial contributions to a think tank in a given state would feasibly produce the results sought by the organization. Although the inclusion of this level of analysis greatly enhances the pre-grant assessment beyond the results of a simple Country Assessment, a third level of evaluation is critical - the Institutional Assessment.

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46 "NGO Sustainability Index: Section 2: Ratings – General Definitions," USAID 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf). Accessed December 2006, p. 14.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

## **9.0 POLICY & NGO ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL – BEST PRACTICES**

Clearly, these measures can be used to assess whether a research organization is a good candidate for funding. However, many of the evaluation mechanisms currently utilized by public and private donors are primarily focused on examination of the legal environment and/or organizational capacity. However, by synthesizing the evaluation tools for both policy and NGO assessments, and analyzing the relevant features of the extensively used USAID Sustainability Index, it becomes evident that an integration of these elements and considerations combine for the best assessment practices at this level of the pre-grant assessment. This combined tool is effective because it goes beyond the Level One: Country Assessment by providing a more nuanced examination of the specific policy and organizational environment in which new or newly funded think tanks will operate.

### **9.1 Best Practices and Indicators to Assess Policy and NGO Environments**

Specifically, the indicators identified below may be defined as the best practices to be utilized in the examination of this pre-grant assessment level.

#### **Policy Environment**

- **Demand for Policy Advice** – What is the demand for policy advice by policymakers, the media, and the public in the country?
- **Policy Research Capacity in Public and Private Sectors** - What is the capacity of think tanks, universities, and other policy research organizations in the country? Are they able to provide rigorous and policy relevant research, and to effectively communicate it to policymakers and the public? What is the capacity of policymakers in the legislative and executive branches and the media to produce their own research and to utilize the research produced by NGO policy research groups?
- **Policy Research, Advice, and Advocacy Ecology** - What is the number, type, and quality of policy related organizations that comprise the policy ecology in the country?
- **Information and Knowledge Systems and Networks** - What is the state of information and data sources, knowledge based institutions, systems and networks that a policy researcher will have to work with in the country?

#### **NGO Environment**

- **Legal Environment** – What is the legal status of NGOs in the countries in which they reside, including but not limited to the ease of registration, legal rights, and

the degree to which laws governing taxation, research, and regulation may hinder the viable functioning of the organizations?<sup>49</sup>

- **Organizational Capacity** – What is the “internal operation of NGOs?” Specifically, does the sector have a critical mass of NGOs that are “transparently governed, publicly accountable, capably managed, and able to exhibit professional organizational skills?”<sup>50</sup>
- **Financial Viability** – What portion of the NGOs are financially viable based upon the support of the domestic economy and the culture of philanthropy?<sup>51</sup>
- **Service Provision** – How effective are NGOs at efficiently providing services that consistently meet the needs, priorities and expectations of their respective constituencies?<sup>52</sup>
- **Infrastructure** – Are NGOs provided the training and information by Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs), as well as access to NGO networks and coalitions involved in information sharing?<sup>53</sup>
- **Public Image** – Is the view of NGOs among the public, business, and governmental sectors positive? Do these organizations possess credibility within these communities?<sup>54</sup>

Clearly there is a good deal of congruence and compatibility between the NGO sector assessment tools outlined above that are employed to evaluate the NGO sector and the assessment tools used to evaluate NGO think tanks. It is critical, however, to consider these tools separately for a number of reasons but foremost among them is the fact that the legislation and regulations that govern the operation of NGOs applies to think tanks.

## ***10.0 LEVEL THREE: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT***

### **10.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Pre-Grant Assessment**

The third and final level of pre-grant assessment is the Institutional Assessment. While the previous two levels have sought to quantify country viability and the degree to which a country’s Policy and NGO Environment is conducive, this level of analysis is necessary to determine the current institutional capacity and potential sustainability and effectiveness of each organization considered for funding. This approach assesses the various factors that impact an organization’s development and can prove valuable to the donor because it examines differentiations between and particularities of specific

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49 NGO Sustainability Index.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

institutions within a country and focuses on the institutional-level rather than the entire NGO sector or the state of the country. This type of assessment tends to focus on factors such as the institution's history and stages of development, mission, organizational culture, leadership, strategy and structure, programs, performance, human and financial resources, information and management systems, public image and interaction, and linkages with other sectors and organizations. Consequently, organizations that are more able or less able to utilize funding can be determined, grants can be identified, and grants and grants programs can be structured for maximum impact.

While a review of current institutional assessments employed by donors does indicate that most engage in this level of assessment, it is important to note that this consideration is typically not systematic. Specifically, many donors did not have clearly articulated or published pre-grant selection criterion and a number established the grant assessment criterion (ex post) after the grant award as a function of the grant monitoring and evaluation process. Institutional assessments tend to run the gambit from self-assessments and reporting to full scale independent evaluations that examine a single dimension of the organization or the entirety of its entire operations. However, the quality and level of evaluation employed at this level has improved dramatically over the last 15 years and it can be concluded that a comprehensive evaluation requires two types of metrics. First, the selection criteria for organizations must be determined, universalized for the funding project, and disseminated to all potential grantees. For the purpose of project consistency, all grantee organizations should be selected for funding based upon these guidelines. The second type of examination includes a thorough review of the organization's current structure, personnel capacity, and financial viability, among other considerations, in order to ensure that the think tank evidences a potential for positive growth, future sustainability, and the capacity and willingness to adhere to the goals, objectives and operational guidelines of grants program. Typically, this in depth review follows the selection of potential grantees.

## **10.2 Current Pre-Grant Assessment Criteria for Research Organizations**

A number of public and private donors currently employ pre-grant assessment criteria as a means of selecting grantees according to uniform guidelines. To demonstrate the wide variety of donor criteria and to help identify those criteria that should be illuminated as best practices, below is a review of a sampling of public and private donor pre-grant assessment criteria. Desk review of the existing pre-grant assessment criteria and the associated review process revealed that most pre-grant assessments are left largely to the donor's field staff and are not published. The German Marshall Fund, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Tinker Foundation, and Open Society Institute rely on the assessments of their field staff in making the initial funding recommendations. For this reason, the criteria that are published tend to be quite broad and are used to communicate the donor's intent and to provide staff with a general set of guidelines that can be used to guide their selections of institutions to recommend for grants.

## 10.2.a The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

The overarching objective of the African Capacity Building Foundation is to “build and strengthen sustainable human and institutional capacity in the core public sector, in its interface with the private sector and civil society, in training and research institutions as well as within regional organizations, in order to spur economic growth, poverty reduction, good governance and effective participation in the global economy.”<sup>55</sup> In keeping their objective, ACBF’s selection criteria encompass the following baseline requirements for an organization under consideration:

- Consistency with the Foundation’s mandate and core objectives
- Relevance of the organization and project to the country and/or region’s core capacity needs
- Evidence that the project will support a participatory process in capacity building and/or development management as well as contribute to poverty reduction efforts
- Demonstrated commitment to the sustainability of the project
- Country conditions that are conducive to the project, including but not limited to participation in the Foundation’s activities, commitment to socio-political, economic and institutional reform
- Contribution of the project to the “enhancement of the geographic balance of the Foundation’s projects and programme portfolio”<sup>56</sup>
- An institutional framework capable of coordinating capacity building activities
- Existence of a sound, transparent and accountable budgetary and financial system and process
- Evidence of good governance practice that allows for participatory action in the development process<sup>57</sup>

## 10.2.b The Tinker Foundation

Nancy Truitt, a Senior Advisor of the Tinker Foundation, stated that the Foundation’s main pre-grant organizational selection criteria includes the following considerations:

- Relevance to the topical and programmatic objectives of the Foundation (i.e. Economic Policy, Governance, Environmental Policy, and Market-Oriented approaches to these initiatives)
- Ability to meet IRS 501 (c) 3 criteria:
  - At least 33% of funds in previous three years generated from public sources
  - No more than 25% of funding generated from a single source
- Review of previous 2 year audited financials reveal no significant problems
- Project is based in research
- Proposal indicates that funding is for project rather than institutional support<sup>58</sup>

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55 Bladescu and Young, p. 9.

56 Ibid, p. 10.

57 Ibid, p. 11.

58 Truitt, Nancy. “The Tinker Foundation: Pre-Grant Selection.”

### **10.2.c The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**

According to the grant program of CIDA, think tanks and other organizations selected for grant disbursement must possess the following characteristics:

- The organization must demonstrate alignment with the Millennium Development Goals which include among others, the objectives to – eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; reduce child mortality; ensure environmental sustainability; and improve maternal health.<sup>59</sup>
- The organization must have a transparent internal governance structure with a regularly elected or appointed board of directors (or governing body of another designation) that sets policy and appoints an executive that is accountable to the board
- The organization must have audited financial statements for its last two fiscal years, the latest being completed within the past 18 months<sup>60</sup>

### **10.2.d Freedom House**

Freedom House’s “Institutional Development Initiative” is aimed toward encouraging policy-oriented think tanks in Southern Eastern Europe to “more consistently and systematically develop regional projects and pursue cross-board initiatives.”<sup>61</sup> In order for think tanks to receive funding from Freedom House, they must meet the criteria listed below. Specifically, the organization must:

- Exhibit programmatic alignment with Freedom House and work to strengthen democratic institutions and political transformation
- Demonstrate a history of cross-border activity and a regional approach
- Demonstrate a sound institutional background
- Present five references in support of their proposal application
- Present a “strong strategic plan of program and organizational development”<sup>62</sup>

### **10.2.e The Global Development Network (GDN)**

Among other criteria referenced previously, the Global Development Network also considers the following when determining grantees:

- Organizations should have the ability to court stakeholders
- Organizations should be able to demonstrate stakeholder interest in partaking in project activities and research dissemination
- Organizations should be able to demonstrate a capacity to create meaningful results and facilitate development and capacity building in the state and/or region<sup>63</sup>

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59 “About CIDA: Millennium Development Goals,” <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-13173118-GPM>. Accessed December 2006.

60 Ibid.

61 “Regional Networking Project: A Freedom House Regional Initiative, Call for Proposals.” Funded by the United States Agency for International Development, p. 1.

62 Ibid, p. 2.

## 10.2.f The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

The IRDC conducts its Institutional Assessment by assessing how the potential grantee is operating with regard to the following guiding questions:

- **Operational Capacity**
  - **Personnel**

**Adequate Staffing** – Are there an appropriate number of staff members so that all tasks can be completed efficiently and well?

    - Are there enough staff to maintain contact with other regional networks/centers?
    - Is there an Executive Director to guide operations?
  - **What are the Effects of Insufficient Staff?**
    - Without enough staff, the current staff members are forced to focus on the internal organization, process and activities, and so have to pay less attention to outwardly oriented, “external” activities such as “establishing a ‘brand’ and participating in international conferences and workshops in order to gain greater exposure.”<sup>64</sup>
  - **Is the Training Effective and Sufficient?**
    - Training may be affected by pressure on staff time, which is a result of insufficient numbers
- **Infrastructure, Technology and Financial Resources**
  - **Is there assurance that there are no significant gaps in funding** - are new (domestic and international) donors being recruited on appropriate financial cycles which correspond to the “funding cycles of current donors.”<sup>65</sup>
- **Strategic Leadership** – Strategic planning should be established and maintained which concentrates on external and internal relations and priorities<sup>66</sup>
  - **Does the planning encompass partner organizations?** This also ensures representation of partner/networked institutions in the planning and implementation dialogue
  - **Simplicity of Governance Structure** – this can facilitate communication between the executive committees and the research centers.
- **Program and Process Management**
  - **Accountability and Responsibility** – there should be accountability and responsibility via committee approvals of transactions/work plans.

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63 “Institutional Insights: A Northern Bi-Lateral Donor Agency,”

<http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=371#Donor>. Accessed December 2006.

64 “Evaluation of the Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa: SISERA.” Bannock Consulting, June 2004. [http://www.idrc.ca/sisera/ev-85373-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/sisera/ev-85373-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed December 2006, p. 62.

65 Ibid, p. 63.

66 Ibid, p. 64.

- The Steering Committee should be aware of work plan and key implementation dates
  - **Managing and Evaluation** – There should be a governing body that facilitates the timely monitoring and evaluation of the performance of each staff member.<sup>67</sup>
    - There must be an adequate number of personnel to manage staff/programs/proposals of partner organizations
    - Evaluations should gather data on an ongoing basis<sup>68</sup>
- **Networks and Linkages with Other Organizations and Groups**
  - **The organization should attempt to find ways to integrate its activities with sub-regional networks**
  - **Outreach Campaigns** – should be conducted in order to raise the profile of the organization

### 10.2.g The International Research and Exchange Board (IREX)

According to the IREX selection criteria, well qualified candidates will be able to demonstrate the following organizational characteristics:

- Adequate professional experience
- Necessary language proficiency and communication skills
- Leadership potential
- Feasibility of the proposed project timeframe
- Commitment to execute the project efficiently and effectively
- Financial soundness in the proposal
- Relevance of the proposal to the priorities of the funder
- Evaluation methods in order to gauge the success of the project
- Ability to impact the state and/or region<sup>69</sup>

### 10.2.h The UK Civil Society Partnership Programme Agreements

The Department for International Development (DFID), which funds civil society organizations through their model funding arrangement, Partnership Programme Agreements, recently conducted an evaluation of their pre-selection criteria. Based upon “best practices” for pre-grant assessment, DFID currently employs the criteria bulleted below. However, it is interesting to note that PPA Agencies “reject the notion of an identical set of performance criteria to assess all agencies irrespective of purpose, size and focus.”<sup>70</sup> While DFID does not specifically target think tanks, the pre-grant assessment criteria they conduct evidences alignment with the criteria selected by other public and private donors, and can prove instructive in guiding this level of assessment. Overall, an organization must demonstrate:

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> Basin, Olga Ph.D. “Evaluation of IREX University Administration Support Program (UASP),” George Washington University, Washington, D.C., November 2005, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> “Funding of UK Development Civil Society Organizations Through PPAs,” p. 9.

- Strategic objectives that correspond to one or more of the funding organization’s objectives
- A research and work agenda in which more than 50% (measured by share of expenditure) addresses problems related to poverty in development countries
- Evidence of impact in achieving objectives
- Robust monitoring and financial reporting systems
- Accountable governance structures
- A demonstrated partnership with other (similarly focused) civil society organizations
- A minimum of three years of financial support from DFID
- An established track record of fundraising from private and official sources<sup>71</sup>

Many of these grants programs have quite broad criteria for evaluating and selecting policy research organizations for grants.

## ***11.0 INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL – RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES***

### **11.1 The Application of Pre-Grant Institutional Assessments**

Based upon an examination of the assessment tools used by a number of public and private donors as well as consultation with their executive and field staffs, it is recommended that close consideration be given to the tools employed by the Eurasia Foundation and the International Development Research Centre. The application of these tools is instructive because it provides an excellent illustration of how the criteria outlined above can be applied. Several tools such as a needs assessment, current institutional capacity review, and cost effectiveness assessment have been selected for closer examination.

#### **11.1.a Needs Assessment**

During the pre-grant assessment stage, a Needs Assessment should be conducted of the potential grantee. Although a number of other foundations conduct similar reviews, Eurasia’s description of this tool is most useful: “[A] Needs Assessment is performed...in order to determine the demands and gaps in infrastructure and services that can be met through program activity. It identifies the appropriate strategies required to address these needs for purposes of program development and implementation.”<sup>72</sup> In addition to proving useful in developing a project or program to meet the specific needs of the organizational or state context, a Needs Assessment utilizes a series of important analytical tools – Gap Analysis, Current Situation Review, Desired or Necessary Situation Review – that are critical to pre-grant evaluation:

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> “Evaluations: Tools and Methods,” Eurasia Foundation, [http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx). Accessed December 2006.

- **Gap Analysis** – This tool seeks to determine the actual performance of the organization and its personnel in order to compare it to the standard the donor aims to attain<sup>73</sup>
- **Current Situation Review** – To evaluate the actual organizational functioning, this tool “determines the current state of skills, knowledge and abilities of current employees” as well as examining organizational goals, internal climate, and organizational and external constraints<sup>74</sup>
- **Desired or Necessary Situation Review** – Designed to set benchmarks for what is to be achieved and to assess whether the organization considered for the grant can achieve them, this tool identifies the desired or necessary conditions for institutional and personnel success. Specifically, it examines what skills, knowledge and abilities will be needed<sup>75</sup>

These assessments of current organizational capacity should be conducted through direct observation by donor staff and/or field staff, questionnaires of current personnel, consultations with the executive staff and/or individuals with “specific knowledge” relevant to the evaluation, review of work samples, and examination of financial reports.<sup>76</sup>

### **11.1.b Current Institutional Capacity Review**

IDRC also engages in this type of pre-grant institutional assessment and directs their examination toward three main questions. Specifically, these are: (1) what is the institutional motivation; (2) what is the institutional capacity; and (3) what is the current institutional performance?<sup>77</sup> Specifically, the Centre’s assessment relies on these broad questions to guide its ultimate grant-making decisions.

Based upon a review of its evaluation mechanism, as well as those employed by other donors, it is the assessment of this report that the questions utilized by IDRC may be regarded as the best practices for the pre-grant Level Three: Institutional Assessment. These specific questions are organized below under their assessment subheadings.

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73 Rouda and Kusy, [http://alumus.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2\\_NA.html](http://alumus.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2_NA.html). Accessed December 2006.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 “Evaluations: Tools and Methods,” Eurasia Foundation, [http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx). Accessed December 2006.

77 Blagescu, p. 19.

- **Current Organizational Performance**<sup>78</sup>
  - How effective is the organization in working toward its mission?
  - How efficiently is the organization converting its resources to achieve its enumerated objectives?
  - How relevant is the organization to current and potential stakeholders?
  - To what extent is the organization financially viable?
  - Are budget allocations managed effectively?
- **Current Organizational Motivation**<sup>79</sup>
  - What aspects of the organization's culture enhance or impede its ability to fulfill its mission?
  - Does the current incentive system encourage or discourage performance by members of the organization's personnel?
  - How has the organization adapted to crises in the past?
- **Current Organizational Technological Capacity**<sup>80</sup>
  - Is there an adequate number of able staff to support the organization's work?
  - Is the staff capable of adapting to and implementing new technologies as they are introduced?
  - Are technology training personnel available or accessible for recruitment?
  - Does the organization have access to research materials and sources?
- **Current External Perception of Organization**<sup>81</sup>
  - Has the organization been identified as influential and important to the sector of consumers, policymakers, suppliers, competitors and other peer organizations in their external environment?
  - Are the organization's objectives complimentary to other peer or potentially peer organizations so that networking is facilitated?
  - Does the organization have a role to play in national or sector development?

### 11.1.c Cost Effectiveness Analysis

Once these determinations are made, the public or private donor should conduct a Cost Effectiveness Analysis in which “the cost of the problem” – i.e. the degree of organizational changes that will need to be made – are weighed with the “benefit of the solution.”<sup>82</sup> Weighed in this comparative evaluation are the specific problems associated

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78 Lusthaus, Charles, Marie-Helene Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden, and George Plinio Montalvan. *Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance*. International Development Research Centre. “Chapter Six: Methodological Issues in Organizational Assessment”, [http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30227-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30227-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed December 2006.

79 Ibid.

80 Lusthaus, “Appendix I: Environment Assessment Questions,” [http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30229-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30229-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed December 2006.

81 Lusthaus, “Appendix I: Environment Assessment Questions.”

82 Ibid.

with and opportunities possible from partnership with the potential grantee. A final segment of this analysis is an “Evaluability Assessment” in which the donor must determine “whether an evaluation is feasible and how stakeholders can shape its usefulness.”<sup>83</sup>

These two levels of institutional analysis serve to inform the selection of grantees and ensure that those organizations that are funded possess the organizational capacity, financial viability, stakeholder interest, and programmatic alignment necessary to attain a successful result.

## **11.2 Best Practices for Pre-Grant Selection Criteria**

Based upon the commonalities derived from an examination of the criteria utilized by several of the leading public and private donors, as well as our own analysis, it is evident that organizations chosen as potential grantees should be evaluated and ultimately selected based upon positive standings on the following criteria. Most organizational assessments include a comprehensive examination of the potential grantee, including a review of institutional structure, financial viability, and personnel composition. Although these issues are included in the previous discussion of the evaluation of the environment in which these organizations operate, the organizational capacities of all prospective grantees must be more closely analyzed through a number of assessment tools. Best practices at this level indicate that each organization selected should optimally:

- **Be a nonprofit and nongovernmental policy research organization**<sup>84</sup>
- **Be legally registered in its country of operation as an independent organization**<sup>85</sup>
- **Provide evidence of the Director’s proven track record as a manager, policy research scholar, and builder of policy networks and coalitions** – The director should be an excellent manager and an intellectual leader that has a high profile and credibility within policy circles.
- **Demonstrate transparency in its governance structure** – The internal governance structure should: (1) have a regularly elected or appointed board that sets organization policy; and (2) maintain an executive who is accountable to the board
- **Demonstrate transparency in its financial operations and records** – Including: (1) effective monitoring and financial reporting systems; and (2) regular audits that demonstrate financial soundness

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83 Ibid.

84 Polishchuk, Leonid and Caryn Voland. “Eurasia Foundation’s Grants to Public Policy Research Institutes: Assessing the Impact on Public Policy Formation and Implementation in Russia, Kazakhstan and the South Caucasus,” Prepared for The Eurasia Foundation, December 2004, p. 8.

85 “Regional Networking Project: A Freedom House Regional Initiative, Call for Proposals,” p. 1.

- **Demonstrate a “sound institutional background,” financial viability, and a history of effective grant management**<sup>86</sup>
- **Demonstrate a capacity and willingness to adhere to the goals, objectives and operational guidelines of the grants program** – Grantees should conduct research or prove commitment to: (1) the core objectives of the funding organization; and (2) the grant-maker’s topical interest or area of discipline<sup>87</sup>
- **Provide evidence of an ability to identify and select policy research projects with high impact** – Grantees must have the personnel capacity to select policy research projects that address politically salient and relevant topics that are focused on the needs of their given state. According to some donors this requires that the grantee be engaged in significant public policy research and advocacy<sup>88</sup>
- **Provide evidence of its ability to conduct and communicate research that is rigorous and relevant** – Grantees must produce work that is policy relevant and demonstrates rigor and academic standards. While financial support can enhance this capacity, it is necessary that the pre-grant staff exhibit an adequate baseline of these qualities.
- **Provide evidence of a capacity to conduct research that is independent in its analysis and based upon quality datasets** – although research capacity can be improved through funding, it is necessary that the grantee organization exhibits an ability to produce research that is: (1) independent; (2) policy relevant and developed in recognition of the country’s political arena; (3) based upon sound analytical methods and data rather than “descriptive methods.”<sup>89</sup>
- **Provide evidence of an ability to raise domestic support** – Grantees are most successful when they are able to generate local/domestic support because it encourages civic commitment to the project and organization, as well as promoting sustainability. Organizations will prove more successful in the long-term if they are able to think about and generate in-kind, cash and moral support of the communities in which they operate. Demonstrating this ability in the pre-grant stage should be considered a plus for an organization.
- **Demonstrate programmatic relevance to the core capacity needs of the state and/or region** - Because most public and private donors attempt to build state and regional capacity, the organization must exhibit that it addresses issues related to the basic needs of its state and region

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86 Ibid, p. 2.

87 Ibid, p. 1.

88 Ibid.

89 Durevall, Dick and Goran Hedebrö. “Review and Assessment of Policy Research Institutes in Eastern and Southern Africa.” Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), December 2006, pp. 43-45.

- **Possess an ability to network with other organizations in the state and region** – Organizations that are able to demonstrate networking capacity are essential and can enhance a donor’s ability to build capacity the country and region
- **Demonstrate a strategic plan for both organizational and program development** – this should include: (1) a strategic plan for organization during the length of the grant program; (2) a listing of anticipated outcomes that are to be achieved based upon the proposed activities of the program; and (3) an institutional plan that encompasses performance measurement and evaluation, fundraising strategies, and outreach objectives<sup>90</sup>
- **Exhibit a critical mass of professional ability amongst its research and administrative staff** – Although funding can facilitate greater personnel development, potential grantees should demonstrate that they currently maintain a critical mass of competent and able staff
- **Submit a realistic, estimated budget that does not request coverage of administrative costs to more than 50% of the organization’s total administrative budget and does not exceed 30% of the overall budget planned for the grant period (unless the grant programs is designed to provide general operating support)** – funds should be directed toward programs, general operating and organizational development expenses – staff training and professional development, targeted consulting services and technical assistance, program evaluation, financial audits, fundraising campaigns; not toward “costs of commodity purchases, debts or value added taxes<sup>91</sup>
- **Provide five references in support of their proposal application** – these reference materials can be obtained from previous or current donors, partner NGOs or government agencies that have familiarity with the organization’s work<sup>92</sup>

As with the first type of pre-grant level Institutional Assessment, these criteria can assist public and private donors in their identification of those institutes with the capacity to achieve quality research and promote a more informed policy process in their respective country. A grantee’s potential development is also significantly enhanced by a thorough examination of institutional capacity.

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90 Ibid, p. 2.

91 Ibid, p. 1.

92 Ibid, p. 2.

## **12.0 PRE-GRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER**

Before reviewing those assessment tools which can be adopted to gauge organizational performance and impact during the grant monitoring and evaluation stage, this section will briefly highlight a few pre-grant process mechanisms.

A number of donors have provided support to help grantees develop their grant request. The donors consulted for this report pointed out that this type of assistance helped prospective grantees develop clear goals and objectives which in turn enabled the grant-maker to more effectively evaluate the grantee's performance.

- **Proposal Assistance Should be Provided** – During the pre-grant stage, the Eurasia Foundation staff actively communicates “with actual and prospective grantees, putting them in touch with possible partners and stakeholders...such communication take place individually and collectively, at numerous conferences, roundtables, brainstorming sessions and other gatherings” that were created by the Foundation.<sup>93</sup>

**Best Practice** – This approach enables those organizations that may be inexperienced in proposal writing the opportunity to draft a more comprehensive and effective proposal. By enabling more organizations to become involved in the grant seeking process, public and private donors develop a great number of qualified “customers”. Their competition can strengthen the prospective pool of applicants.

- **Processing, Evaluation and Selection Should be Managed by an External Advisory Board** – The Eurasia Foundation relies on External Advisory Boards to “evaluate incoming proposals and recommend grant awards.”<sup>94</sup> Specifically, proposals are first reviewed by the program officers within each given area of interest, followed by Board scrutiny and further review.<sup>95</sup>

**Best Practice** – This restriction ensures the expertise of those reviewing the proposals by assigning this responsibility to an external review board that can support the work of the public or private donor with its expertise, as well as maintain consistent selection methodology and standards. Additionally, the process positions the program officer as an integral actor in selection, which can prove beneficial in selecting institutions due to their experience in the programmatic field.

- **Funds Should be Distributed According to an “Open Door” Schedule** – In distributing grants to Russia, Kazakhstan and the South Caucasus, the Eurasia Foundation “accepted grant proposals at any time without specifying proposal submission deadlines and setting narrow thematic restrictions” so as to allow donors to “respond to the emerging needs in policy analysis in a timely and flexible fashion, and to have such needs revealed by independent policy experts

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93 Polishchuk, p. 9.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

with first-hand knowledge of the priorities of policy processes in their countries.”<sup>96</sup>

**Best Practice** – While this report acknowledges that the flexible timetable implemented by the Eurasia Foundation was positive in that it allowed for greater inclusion, it also has drawbacks. For example, as noted in the evaluation report conducted on the Foundation’s grant-making activity in the region, “proposals could be rejected on the ‘chance’ that another better one will be submitted” or the extent of funds available could be exhausted before all worthy proposals were received.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, it is recommended that proposal deadlines be implemented to avoid these potential failings.

## SECTION TWO: GRANT MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

### 13.0 GRANT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The grant monitoring and evaluation stage includes those evaluations conducted after funding has been disbursed to the selected organization(s). Monitoring and evaluation is primarily directed toward ascertaining the degree to which the grantee has proved successful in strengthening its own organizational capacity, producing rigorous and policy relevant research, facilitating increased involvement of civil society in the policy dialogue and process, and contributing to the nature of the policy debate and actual policy formulation. Generally, the reasons for public and private donors to conduct these examinations are three-fold:

- **Learning** – to evaluate the manner in which organizations have succeeded or failed for the purpose of improving future grant-making and the activities of the organization itself
- **Accountability** – to ensure that the grantee organization utilized the funds as intended and that there was program success consistent with project objectives
- **Sustainability** – to improve upon the current operations of the grantee and promote its long-term viability.<sup>98</sup>

In order to adequately measure the degree to which an organization has succeeded in increasing its own capacity, the capacity of civil society, and the quality and content of public policy, a two-level assessment must be employed:

- **Level One: Outputs Assessment** – reviews both the quantity and quality of outputs (what the institution produces)

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Polishchuk, p. ii.

- **Level Two: Impact Assessment** – evaluates the organizational and policy impact of the grant (what impact it has on the grantee, policy, and society)

Combined, these two types of assessment provide donors and grantees with a comprehensive evaluation tool for evaluation of a think tank’s performance. These two methods also take into account the multiple objectives donors have when making grants to these institutions and provide a more holistic approach to monitoring and evaluation.

In order to effectively ascertain which tools and mechanisms are the best practices for each level of evaluation, it was necessary to integrate an examination of existing indicators and mechanisms utilized by public and private donors and conduct our own research.

## ***14.0 EVALUATING OUTPUT AND IMPACT***

Numerous scholars of the NGO community as well as practitioners have noted the difficulty associated with measuring success and impact on civil society in general or policy in particular. The difficulty is often attributed to the number of variables and contributors that play a role in defining policy or influenced civil society. Finding proof that a think tank or NGO has directly influencing policy is an arduous and complicated process. However, these determinations are possible especially in the grant monitoring and evaluation stage through the combined analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. In the context of grant monitoring and evaluation, qualitative data can prove highly useful in assessing social and/or cultural environmental factors. Each type of data has its value, and both should be included in a strong grant evaluation.

### **14.1 Evaluation Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating Output and Impact**

Our review of the evaluation practices of several of the major funders of think tanks in the United States and abroad has demonstrated that the approaches described below are regularly employed. Utilized at various points of program implementation for the purpose of assessing progress throughout and improving implementation on an ongoing basis, these approaches include:

- **Formative Evaluations** -- A series of data collection activities and analyses that occur over the course of the program for the purpose of examining its effectiveness. This series aims at improving the organization’s ability to fulfill the grant project by monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the program and the quality of its implementation, and analyzing the organizational context, personnel, procedures and inputs.<sup>99</sup> The value of this approach is to provide ongoing feedback which can allow revisions of implementation methods. It can be useful in assessing both output and impact.

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<sup>99</sup> Nan, Susan Allen. “Formative Evaluation: Knowledge Base Essay.” December 2003, [http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/formative\\_evaluation/](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/formative_evaluation/). Accessed December 2006.

- **Process Evaluation** - Conducted during the course of project implementation, this approach determines whether the project is being conducted: (1) effectively; and (2) as planned. Central to this evaluation is consideration of the extent to which the program is meeting expectations and producing the intended outputs and impact.<sup>100</sup>
- **Program Monitoring** – Focused primarily on the collection of data as well as the monitoring of program activities, this approach relies on constant monitoring so that program staff are able to continually improve on program activities by which success is being measured. As the most common of evaluation techniques, this mechanism can be utilized for both output and impact assessments.<sup>101</sup>
- **Summative Evaluation** – Occurring both during and at the close of the program or funding project, the purpose is to assess the degree to which the program achieved its goals and the effects the program had upon the targeted issues. The approach seeks to quantify the impact of the programmatic activities by mapping changes subsequent to program delivery and determining whether these shifts can be attributed to the program. Factors measured can include knowledge shifts, increase in discussion and changes in attitude. Forms of summative evaluation include:
  - **Outcome Evaluations** examine whether the program has demonstrable effects on specifically defined target outcomes
  - **Cost Effectiveness/Cost-Benefit Analysis** examines the efficiency of the program by standardizing the outcomes, typically in terms of monetary values<sup>102</sup>
- **Impact Evaluation** – Conducted once program activities have run long enough for significant data to be collected and for the program operation to increase in capacity and size, this approach:
  - Analyzes the program impact by measuring the degree to which the program has met its goals. This is also instructive for the implementation of future projects as part of the “learning” aspect of evaluation
  - Reviews data collected during program activities and compares it to baseline data in order to gauge current and potential future success

## **15.0 LEVEL ONE: GRANT OUTPUT MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **15.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Grant Monitoring and Evaluation**

As noted by IDRC overall success and “performance is seen in the visible outputs of institutions, namely their research and training products and services.”<sup>103</sup> These services and research outputs include such measures as increases in the number of activities conducted, the number of training services provided and the number of working papers and reports disseminated. However, while these tangible outputs can be quantitatively

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100 “Tools and Methods.” Eurasia Foundation.

[http://www.euasia.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.euasia.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx). Accessed December 2006.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Blagescu, p. 19.

measured, the research quality and policy relevance of these documents and activities should also be assessed to achieve a comprehensive evaluation. Therefore, an effective evaluation of grant outputs includes both quantitative and qualitative measures and specifically includes two types of monitoring and evaluation: (1) an evaluation of activities and dissemination; and (2) an evaluation of quality.

With regard to the quantitative evaluation of the number of activity and dissemination outputs produced, the assessment tool derived from the combined consensus of McGann, Diane Stone and Donald Abelson can be characterized as a best practice at this level of evaluation.

## ***16.0 ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR OUTPUT EVALUATION – BEST PRACTICES***

### **16.1 Best Practices Evaluation Tools: Measuring Activities and Dissemination**

According to the research of Donald Abelson and Diane Stone, and as articulated by McGann, think tanks can utilize various measures to assess increases in their activities and disseminations, as well as account for their contributions to the policymaking environment and civil society. While the latter considerations will be examined in the section on Impact Evaluation to follow, the best practices for determining increases in tangible outputs will be discussed in this section. With regard to the former, scholars of the NGO community, as well as practitioners in the field, have generally arrived at a consensus that the best method to assess increases or decreases in output is a quantitative evaluation. Research suggests that think tanks should compare their post-grant disbursement outputs to their pre-grant baseline. In particular, data should be generated on the following:

- Policy proposals and ideas developed
- Publications produced (books, journal articles, policy briefs, working papers, etc.)
- News interviews conducted
- Briefings, conferences and seminars organized
- Number of staff nominated to advisory and government posts
- Number of academic citations
- Establishment of new programs and projects<sup>104</sup>

In order to implement this type of evaluation, a donor should develop two measures: (1) documentation of pre-grant output statistics;<sup>105</sup> and (2) a numerical benchmark that sets a desired standard for success. Once these measures are in place, a simple numerical evaluation of grant outputs can be developed and utilized in a comparative analysis. It is essential that these pre-grant baseline measures be established prior to grant distribution so that evaluators have an accurate set of quantifiable figures that can be used to gauge levels of improvement.

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104 McGann, James G. *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States: Academics, Advisors and Advocates* (Routledge Publications, 2007), p. 43.

105 Molund, Stefan and Goran Schill. "SIDA: Looking Back, Moving Forward: Sida Evaluation Manual." 2004, p. 29.

## 16.2 Best Practices Evaluation Tool: Measuring Quality and Policy Relevance

While the monitoring and evaluation of tangible outputs is useful in determining increased organizational output effectiveness, a comprehensive evaluation of output should also include evidence of increases in the quality of research conducted and its policy relevance. In order to make this determination, a grant-maker must evaluate quality and policy relevance levels prior to grant disbursement so as to have a credible baseline from which to gauge grant success. Once this is established, it can be contended that the evaluation mechanisms developed by McGann and those implemented by the Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc. (CPRN) should be employed.

To adequately assess the level of research quality produced by a funded organization and the degree to which it is policy relevant, it is necessary to combine qualitative and quantitative evaluations according to the Program Evaluation approach. Public and private donors can deduce the degree to which quality has improved by comparing pre-grant determinations with a post-grant disbursement evaluation of survey responses from, and interviews with, stakeholders and users of these outputs – policy briefs, working papers, reports, conferences, etc. As utilized by CPRN, survey responses from stakeholders and users of the organization’s material can be instructive in judging the quality of disseminations. Similarly, these techniques can also be used to gauge policy relevance when actors in the policy arena are included in the interview process.

### 16.2.a Survey Evaluations – Research Quality

CPRN’s output quality evaluation employed a scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) which respondents could use to relate their views of the quality of the organization’s research.<sup>106</sup> Although this method allows for subjective or qualitative assessments, assigning a numerical value to the evaluation provides for a quantifiable element that allows easier translation into a numerical rating that can be compared with pre-grant levels. This evaluation method has been assessed by this report as valid in that it is directed toward measuring three elements of quality:

- Overall quality of research and information
- Comprehensiveness of research and information
- Academic standards and rigor of research

Additional considerations should include whether the research produced is: (1) based upon credible datasets that utilize nationally representative data as opposed to descriptive methods;<sup>107</sup> and (2) independent in its analysis, and independent specifically of the government.<sup>108</sup> CPRN also instructed respondents to compare the organization’s outputs

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106 “Evaluation of the Federal Grant Provided to the Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc.” *Audit and Evaluation Directorate Policy and Direction Social Development Canada*. March 2005, p. 14

107 Durevall, p. 43.

108 Ibid, p. 45.

with those of other similar institutions.<sup>109</sup> This cross-organizational comparison adds to the credibility of survey results. Combined, this assessment can then be displayed (as indicated below) and used by a grantee and its funder as a guide of where improvements need to be made.

<b>Exhibit 3.3.1 CPRN Attribute Ratings</b>						
	<b>1 (Very Low)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 (Very High)</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
Relevance	0.3%	1.3%	11.6%	44.3%	42.5%	4.3
Overall Quality	0.3%	0.3%	7.3%	56.2%	36.0%	4.3
Ease of accessing research reports/ information	0.7%	2.6%	14.4%	44.0%	38.4%	4.2
Understandable to readers	0.3%	1.1%	12.0%	55.0%	31.7%	4.2
Thoroughness/comprehensiveness	0.1%	1.1%	14.0%	56.2%	28.6%	4.1
Academic standards/rigour	0.1%	0.8%	16.0%	56.5%	26.5%	4.1
Provides new perspectives/insights	0.8%	2.3%	21.8%	49.7%	25.3%	4.0
Objectivity	0.5%	1.7%	18.0%	59.4%	20.3%	4.0

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### **16.2.b Survey Evaluations – Policy Relevance**

Similar surveys should also be employed to assess whether the information produced by the organization is policy relevant. This can be effectively gauged by surveying members of the policy community and decision-makers to gather their views on whether the funded organization’s disseminations are: (1) useful in framing the policy debate; (2) instructive in providing thorough research and analysis on salient topics; and (3) useful in their policy advice and prescriptions. As with the previous survey used to gauge research quality, these questions can also be assessed according to a numerical scale and applied graphically for internal use and improvement efforts.

Collectively, the survey evaluation mechanism is a best practice at this level in that it provides both the grant-maker and the grantee with a measurable perspective on how the quality and policy relevance of the organization’s research outputs are viewed by users (policymakers, media, and public) as well by the grantee’s stakeholders. Further, by comparing these assessments with pre-grant evaluation, the Program Evaluation can prove effective in determining whether changes need to be made for the quality of outputs to improve.

### **16.2.c Process Evaluation – Research Quality**

In addition to survey responses, research quality can also be judged through a process evaluation of how research is conducted. This evaluation can be performed through

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109 Ibid, p. 12.

110 Ibid, p. 14.

interviews with the organization's research and executive staff. In particular, for research quality to achieve high rankings, the following best practices/process reviews should be implemented:

- Experts should be consulted early in the program/project development stage in order to assist in formulating the design and questions of the effort
- Stakeholders should be consulted early in the program/project design in order gauge the level to which they support the given initiative
- Thorough literature reviews should be conducted for research projects
- Stakeholders and experts should be consulted throughout the project to ensure it is progressing as needed
- Prior to dissemination, peer reviews should be utilized for material that is produced
  - These reviews should include members of the academic, business and political communities<sup>111</sup>
  - These individuals selected by members of the organization should not be engaged in researching or writing the evaluation report<sup>112</sup>
- Roundtables should be used in order to discuss reports and formulate or validate conclusions and recommendations
- Internal reviews of reports should be conducted by the internal advisory board or by the organization's president<sup>113</sup>

By employing this set of criteria in conducting and producing credible research, a public or private donor can evaluate the quality of an organization's research.

#### **16.2.d Process Evaluation – Policy Relevance**

In the same manner that research quality can be determined through process evaluation, the degree to which an organization is policy relevant can also be evaluated by reviewing the methods used in the production of outputs. According to John Young, for research outputs to contribute to evidence-based policy or to inform the policy debate, they must: (1) fit within the political and institutional limits and pressures of policymakers and resonate with their assumptions; (2) provide evidence that is credible and convincing and offers practical prescriptions to salient problems; and (3) demonstrate a cognizance of the intervening actors and networks in the policy process.<sup>114</sup> In recognition of these requirements, if an organization is to produce material that is policy relevant, it is clear that answers to the following questions must be determined in the planning process prior to drafting:

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111 Ibid, p. 30.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid, p. 15.

114 Young, John. "Bridging Research and Policy: The RAPID Approach," Overseas Development Institute, Paper for the International Conference "African Economic Research Institutions and Policy Development: Opportunities and Challenges" Dakar, 28-29 January 2005, Organized by the Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa (SISERA), p. 7.

- **Political Context**<sup>115</sup>
  - Who are the policymakers?
  - Is there policymaker demand for new ideas?
  - What are the sources and/or strengths of resistance?
  - What is the policy-making process?
  - What are the opportunities and timing for input into formal processes?
- **Evidence**<sup>116</sup>
  - What are the prevailing ideas?
  - How divergent is the new evidence?
  - What sort of evidence will convince policymakers?
- **Links**<sup>117</sup>
  - Who are the key stakeholders in the policy discourse?
  - What links and networks exist between them?
  - Who are the intermediaries in the system and what influence do they exert on the process?
- **External Influences**<sup>118</sup>
  - Who are the main international actors in the policy environment?
  - What influence do they have?
  - What are their main priorities?
  - What are their research priorities and mechanisms?

Interviews with both the program directors/project leaders and the research staff of the funded organization can yield answers to these questions. Although these questions do not necessarily guarantee that an organization's disseminations will be policy relevant, they can serve as an objective indicator in this evaluation. Further, for those organizations that lack policy relevance in their reports, these questions can be useful in the process stage of report drafting in order to improve the quality of their outputs.

## ***17.0 LEVEL TWO: GRANT IMPACT MONITORING AND EVALUATION***

### **17.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Grant Monitoring and Evaluation**

Although the Output Evaluation is useful in determining how funding has increased the number of activities and disseminations produced by the grantee organization, as well the level of quality and degree of policy relevance attained in these outputs, a second level of evaluation is necessary in order to ascertain how this funding has contributed to organizational capacity and influenced policy.

According to the evaluation research of Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), grant monitoring and evaluation should focus on two ends:<sup>119</sup>

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115 Ibid, p. 10.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

- Sustainability – “the continuation or longevity of benefits from [an]...intervention”
- Efficiency – “the extent to which the cost of...intervention” has been “justified by its results”

To address these two issues, SIDA recommends that level of impact, effectiveness, and relevance of the grantee’s capacity and efforts be measured. It is the recommendation of this report that an Impact Evaluation be implemented which addresses the manner in which funding has contributed to two factors:

- The increased capacity of the funded organization
- The ability of the grantee to influence policy

Consequently, these two levels of evaluation – (1) Institutional Impact Evaluation; and (2) Policy Impact Evaluation – and the recommended assessment tools for each are reviewed below

## ***18.0 INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT EVALUATION***

The Institutional Impact Evaluation focuses on evaluating whether the funded organization has increased its organizational capacity since the grant was made, and includes a review of a number of the internal characteristics of the institution including financial viability, personnel morale, motivation and qualifications, strength of governance structure, and external relations. This type of assessment should occur at regular intervals, rather than simply at program or funding completion, to ensure that the objectives of the grant-maker are being met and that improvements are made to remedy possible implementation errors. In addition, these evaluations compare current conditions with those of the pre-grant baseline. The baseline conditions should address: (1) the conditions in a locality or site prior to intervention; and (2) baseline information regarding previous outputs and impact.<sup>120</sup> Baselines can be generated retrospectively for such tangible outputs as number of publications, conferences, etc., by using the number of outputs produced by other think tanks as a comparative example. However, it is evident that baselines are most effective when they are defined prior to the grant and less authoritative when developed later in the post-disbursement stage for issues related to impact.<sup>121</sup>

To date a number of grant-making organizations including the Eurasia Foundation, IDRC, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the UK Development Civil Society Organizations PPAs, as well as individuals such as Raymond Struyk, Kelly Kohagen and Chris Miller of the USAID/PRO-Mentoring Project, have employed Institutional Impact Evaluations. To fully examine the breadth and scope of these

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119 Molund, p. 25.

120 Ibid, p. 30.

121 Ibid.

mechanisms, as well as to provide an effective analysis of the best practices for organizational impact evaluation, a sampling of existing assessment tools is provided in Appendix F.

## ***19.0 ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT – BEST PRACTICES***

A number of commonalities emerge from a review of the evaluation mechanisms employed by public and private donors to judge Institutional Impact. These tools can and should be adapted for the assessment of think tanks. Specifically, organizational features such as the degree to which training has increased personnel knowledge and staff ability to disseminate quality products, level of financial viability, transparency of governance structure, and relationships with stakeholders are all seen as relevant to a comprehensive Institutional Impact Evaluation. In view of these similarities, the evaluation framework of the UK Development Civil Society Organizations (see Appendix G) can be utilized with some adaptations for think tanks, and combined with the assessment questions developed by JICA, in order to conduct an Institutional Impact Evaluation:

- **Organizational Effectiveness** – To what degree has the organization progressed toward the attainment of the project goals enumerated in the program proposal?
  - Relevance – Do the outcomes of project objectives and efforts address policies and practices that benefit the targeted group/audience and contribute to the learning of civil society in general?
  - Cost-Effectiveness – Are the financial inputs commensurate with the stated objectives and outcomes and do they offer value?
  - Organizational Capacity – Do the governance and management structures and methods of analysis adequately prepare the grantee to adapt as needed to changes in the external environment? Is the organization able to maintain a consistent approach despite these external changes?<sup>122</sup>
- **Relevance** – What is the extent to which organizational outcomes are aligned with the grant-maker’s policy goals and overarching objectives?<sup>123</sup>
  - How far does the realization of the grantee’s objectives contribute to the improved capacity of the target audience and/or sector of society?
  - Does the grantee complement the funding organization’s efforts and objectives?<sup>124</sup>
- **Capacity** – To what extent have the skills, competence, and systems of individuals, partner organizations, governments and donors been strengthened?
  - Are the individual capabilities and skills of the targeted group enhanced?
  - Has the capacity of organizations that serve and represent these targeted groups improved?

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122 “UK Funding,” p. 14.

123 Molund, p. 25.

124 Ibid, p. 15.

- Have organizations in the region/country of the funded institution benefited from the grantee via information sharing, training, or engagement in advocacy?
  - Have networks and coalitions been formed and strengthened?
  - Has the capacity of government organizations, service providers and officials at national and local levels been strengthened?
  - Have the staff and officials from the donor agencies benefited from the organization's capacity building efforts?<sup>125</sup>
- **Financial Sustainability** – To what extent has the grantee been able to generate local funding through the cultivation of relationships with local stakeholders and domestic contributors?
    - Diversification of Funding – Has the grantee evidenced an ability to recruit additional sources of funding, and is there a diversification in these sources?
    - Financial Solidarity – Has the grantee evidenced an ability to recruit and maintain donors to the extent that the organization will be able to sustain once the life of the grant is ended?
- **Knowledge** – To what extent has the creation and dissemination of new or alternative ideas and information been pursued?
    - What kinds of new knowledge or programs have been generated by the organization and how has it contributed to the realization of the stated objectives?
    - Has the organization contributed to knowledge generation among partner organizations?
    - Have organization interventions contributed to improved public awareness of development issues?<sup>126</sup>
- **Innovation** – To what extent has the development, dissemination and adoption of new techniques, approaches and practices been pursued?
    - Has the organization contributed to the production and adoption of new techniques and technologies for its targeted audiences?
    - Have innovations pioneered by the organization and its partners been adopted and disseminated by different types of organizations?
    - Have innovations been developed, adopted and replicated in different locations and geographic levels (local, regional, national, international)?<sup>127</sup>
- **Program and Process Management** – To what extent have mechanisms been implemented to ensure that programs run efficiently?
    - Is accountability and responsibility built into the management practices? Are steering and executive committees in place and is the executive answerable to the Board?
    - Are significant transactions approved by the Board of Directors or Trustees?

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125 Ibid.

126 Ibid, p. 16.

127 Ibid, pp. 16-17.

- Are there an adequate number of employees to facilitate program operations?
- **Managing and Evaluation** – Has a governing body been established which facilitates the timely monitoring and evaluation of the performance of each staff member?<sup>128</sup>
  - Is there sufficient staff to provide time for training both internally and of partner organizations?
  - Are there evaluations which gather data on research products and outputs on an ongoing basis so as to allow for incremental monitoring?<sup>129</sup>

In addition to these considerations, a comprehensive Institutional Evaluation will also address the following questions which have been derived and modified from those developed by JICA:

- How has the leadership of the organization evolved?
- What role has the organization played in its related sector and what is its credibility?
- What is the organization’s relationship with other institutes?
  - Has the organization been able to develop relationships with other institutes in the region for the purpose of information sharing and networking?
- What has been the organization’s capacity for fiscal management?
- What has been the organization’s technical capacity?
- What is the overall incentive level of the organization’s staff?
- What is the capacity of the organization’s staff to implement, manage, monitor and evaluate program activities?
- What is the state of the organization’s human resources development?<sup>130</sup>

## **20.0 POLICY IMPACT MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **20.1 Rationale for Inclusion in Grant Impact Evaluation**

The IDRC in its “Strategic Evaluation of Policy Impact” report, along with a number of other foundations, recognizes “that influencing public policy is an intended result or implied expectation of...supported research,” and that this support aims to “strengthen the mechanisms by which research is translated into policy action.”<sup>131</sup> Although

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128 “Evaluation of the Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa: SISERA.” Bannock Consulting, June 2004. [http://www.idrc.ca/sisera/ev-85373-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/sisera/ev-85373-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed December 2006

129 Ibid, p. 65.

130 Blagescu, pp. 20-21.

131 Adamo, Abra. “Strategic Evaluation of Policy Influence: What Evaluation Reports Tell Us About Public Policy Influence by IDRC-Supported Research, Final Report,” Prepared for the Evaluation Unit, IDRC, 30 April 2002, p. iv.

influencing policy at the country or regional level is a common ambition of several public and private donors, actually measuring the manner in which a grantee has influenced policy is ambiguous due to the number of variables which influence, and the number of actors involved in, the policymaking process. However, according to the research of Abelson and McGann, when the policymaking process is divided into specific phases, the impact of think tanks and NGOs is easier to assess. Specifically, there are three primary stages in the policymaking process: (1) Issue Articulation – the time in which an issue or concern is identified for policy consideration; (2) Policy Formulation – the stage in which the policy to be implemented is developed through research and case study analysis; and (3) Policy Implementation – the final step of policymaking when legislation is approved and implementation measures are initiated.<sup>132</sup> Abelson and McGann effectively contend that think tanks are most influential in affecting the policy process in the first two stages, playing a role in influencing the issues to be discussed as well as providing informed and policy-relevant research and prescriptions for consideration.

To date, a number of public and private donors have implemented, and NGO and think tank scholars have recommended, evaluation methods for judging the manner in which grantees have influenced, or failed to influence, the policymaking environment. To provide a comprehensive examination of the assessment tools that can be employed, the mechanisms used and/or suggested by McGann, the Center for International Private Enterprise, the International Development Research Centre, the Eurasia Foundation, and USAID/PRO-Mentoring Project’s Raymond Struyk, Kelly Kohagen and Chris Miller are provided in Appendix H.

## ***21.0 THINK TANK OUTPUT AND IMPACT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES***

Based upon an analysis of various approaches to Impact Assessment, a preferred assessment tool that integrates the current best practices for assessment at this level must combine both quantitative and qualitative metrics and output and impact metrics. The measures identified by McGann should be applied in the grant evaluation stage and compared with baseline pre-grant numbers:

- **Resource indicators:** Ability to recruit and retain leading scholars and analysts; the level, quality, and stability of financial support; proximity and access to decision-makers and other policy elites; a staff that has the ability to conduct rigorous research and identify, analyze, and produce timely and incisive analysis; institutional currency; quality and reliability of networks; and key contacts in the policy and academic communities and the media
- **Utilization indicators:** Reputation as a “go-to” organization by media and policy elites in the country; quantity and quality of media appearances and citations, web hits, testimony before legislative and executive bodies; briefings, official appointments, consultation by officials or departments/agencies; books sold;

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132 McGann, (Forthcoming) Manuscript p. 43.

- reports distributed; references made to research and analysis in scholarly and popular publications and attendees at conferences and seminars organized
- **Output indicators:** Number and quality of: policy proposals and ideas generated; publications produced (books, journal articles, policy briefs, etc.); news interviews conducted; briefings, conferences, and seminars organized; and staff who are nominated to advisory and government posts
  - **Impact indicators:** Recommendations considered or adopted by policymakers and civil society organizations, issue network centrality; advisory role to political parties, candidates, transition teams; awards granted; publication in or citation of publications in academic journals, public testimony and the media that influences the policy debate and decision-making; listserv and website dominance; and success in challenging the conventional wisdom and standard operating procedures of bureaucrats and elected officials in the country

Beyond this quantitative assessment, donors should also seek the involvement of NGOs, as well as members of the government and policymakers, to ascertain the degree to which they have utilized the grantee's research output. This participation can be complemented through interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and focus group meetings, and can be part of the Outcome Mapping introduced by IDRC (see Appendix H), which "moves away from assessing the products of an activity or a program to focus on changes in behaviours and relationships (outcomes) which can lead to changes." Impact can be viewed as positive if it "changes the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a programme works directly."<sup>133</sup> An Outcome Mapping of CPRN is provided as an example of how this tool may be utilized in Appendix G.

This additional assessment, which takes into consideration how the grantee has been able to influence policymaking, as well as the policy dialogue within the government and in civil society, is essential because it recognizes that policy impact can be successful even if policy prescriptions are not directly translated into actual policy. However, it is the recommendation of this report that these qualitative assessments be translated into numerical rankings which will allow comparisons with pre-grant levels, as well as future grant monitoring and evaluations. The low to high ranking used by CIPE (see Appendix H) can prove instructive and can be assigned numerical values in order to represent the varying degrees between each category level. Further, the assessment instrument that is recommended by this report is outlined in detail in Appendix I.

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133 "Successful Communication Tools – Outcome Mapping," [http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Toolkits/Communication/Outcome\\_mapping.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Toolkits/Communication/Outcome_mapping.html). Accessed December 2006.

## SECTION THREE: FUNDING MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE GREATER EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

### 22.0 FUNDING MECHANISMS AND PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

In order to promote the viability and financial sustainability of think tanks, authors Raymond Struyk, Chris Miller and Kelly Kohagen in their report “Were Bosnian Policy Research Organizations More Effective in 2006 than in 2003?”, as well as a number of grant-making organizations such as the Eurasia Foundation, the International Development Research Centre, the Canadian International Development Agency, and USAID, have recommended a number of best practices for funding policy research. A sampling of these is included for consideration below:

- **Information Sharing Should Occur Between and Among Grantees** – in order to encourage success and sustainability, information sharing and “collaborative projects” should occur and be pursued<sup>134</sup>
  - **Cluster Meetings** can help organizations by allowing others to assist them in better articulating and formulating their agendas, as well as opening new sources of information and assisting with dissemination and outreach.<sup>135</sup>
- **The Funder Should Facilitate Communication between its Grantees and Stakeholders in the Region** - grant-makers should “solicit inputs from prospective participants and stakeholders” including contacts in the “private sector, civil society, and governments.”<sup>136</sup>
- **The Funder Should Encourage Capacity Building Through Creating a Critical Mass of Experts** – according to the Eurasia Foundation and its efforts in Kazakhstan, priority should be given to “building capacity for public policy studies in the country, creating a critical mass of experts with modern training, and laying the ground for their active involvement in policy process and for emergence at a later time of sustainable think tanks.”<sup>137</sup> This can be cultivated via graduate programs and scholarships as well as support for other academic related endeavors and projects.
  - **The Foundation Should Support Training** – the donor should provide training programs and conferences, and supply access to professional resources, such as libraries, databases, web sites, national economic periodicals, etc.,” in order to facilitate national policy debates.<sup>138</sup>
- **Funds Should be Directed Toward Training Staff In Communications and Public Engagement** – “Many initiatives from the Government, the Parliament, political parties or NGOs might not be understood because the awareness of the general public of the principles of civic society is rather low. NGOs should take a role of educator of the

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134 Polishchuk, p. 19.

135 Ibid, p. 28.

136 Ibid, p. 11.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

society, as well as a channel for forwarding information and explaining it. In order to do that they need to have appropriate skills and ability to talk to people in a (simple) language that they can understand. They also need access to people in the regions. In order to do this work efficiently NGO leaders and activists have to receive adequate training, appropriate for local conditions.”<sup>139</sup>

- **Funds Should be Directed Toward Training of Researchers in Applied, Policy Research** – There is a need to develop research methods and reporting formats: focus on whom you write for, the purpose of research, formulating recommendations, etc.<sup>140</sup>
  - The Eurasia Foundation has also suggested that parallel support be contributed to the mass media to facilitate information access by the research community and the public.<sup>141</sup>
- **Funds Should be Directed Toward Training the Research Staff in Utilizing Credible Datasets** – the research staff of the institute should be involved in training sessions and workshops which instruct them on how to produce quality materials and publications.<sup>142</sup> Specifically, the donor organization should provide funding for training that instructs researchers on: (1) using nationally representative data rather than descriptive methods; and (2) producing policy relevant analysis that is independent in its prescriptions.
  - Research capacity building training can be conducted via courses, workshops and seminars, internship programs, and collaboration with consultants on methodology and policy related topics.<sup>143</sup>
- **Funds Should be Directed Toward Training Staff in Organization Sustainability** – With the idea that these organizations will in time support themselves from local funding, funds should be directed toward training. Specifically, “training in organization strategy development, financial management, public relations, organizational change and development, building of coalitions and everyday management should be widely applied.”<sup>144</sup>
  - Institutional Training should also include such issues as procurement, accounting and reporting.<sup>145</sup>
- **Local Funding Should be Encouraged** – Attempts should be made to encourage organizations to develop methods to finance projects locally. One way to do this is to give grants only for a proportion of the total cost of the project. That proportion could be 90%, but still it would need some degree of local fundraising.<sup>146</sup>

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139 Baltacs, Janis. “Base-line Evaluation: Public Policy in Southern Caucasus, Case Study on Georgia,” July 2002, p. 13.

140 Mungenast, Henrik. “Base-Line Evaluation: Public Policy in the Southern Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia: Regional Summary.” Prepared by Forum Syd within Eurasia Foundations’ Program ‘The Southern Caucasus Cooperation Program.’ June 2002, p. 16.

141 Polishchuk, p. 19.

142 Durevall, p. 43.

143 Ibid, p. 45.

144 Baltacs, p. 13.

145 Polishchuk, p. 28.

146 Kampe, Kjell. “Baseline Evaluation: Public Policy in Azerbaijan: A Eurasia Foundation Project, The South Caucasus Cooperation Programme, June 2002, p. 19.

- **Why?** “The dependence on a grant market is often pointed to as a negative pre-requisite for public policy research, since the agenda of foreign donors may not always coincide with the perceived needs or demands of domestic policy clients.” Local funding can help alleviate this disconnect as well as encourage organization sustainability by building support for the think tank within the domestic environment.<sup>147</sup>
  - “There is some evidence that NGOs with good grassroots connection and who use them in public policy research have a higher probability of positive impact on the policy formulation process”<sup>148</sup>
  - “There is a need to develop the thinking, methods and general knowledge on how to find economic resources nationally and locally. The overdependence on external funding has many negative effects – dependence, lack of public involvement, non-interest from state authorities and research subjects”<sup>149</sup>
- **Funds Should be Directed Toward Creating Recognition of the Institution Domestically** – Increased public awareness about civil society and public policy creation processes is needed. There is a need to both listen to target groups and to encourage people to become more active in civil society so as to involve them in the research and policymaking process. This is necessary in order to generate a genuine interest amongst the public in the grantee’s research findings..<sup>150</sup>
- **Funding Should be Directed Toward Instructing How to Create Channels of Cooperation** – NGO and State institutions need to find channels for cooperation and information sharing. There need to be some structures where NGOs and officials/policymakers can meet. The aforementioned commissions or expert groups are one example. Roundtables, open hearings, and public debates are other examples.<sup>151</sup>
- **Funding Should Not be Withdrawn Until Other Sources of Financial Support can Fill the Void** – While it is necessary to establish funding diversification as an essential benchmark to be cultivated by the grantee, and evaluated by the donor throughout the course of the grant, financial support should be withdrawn gradually so as to ensure organizational sustainability.

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147 Ljungvall, Tobias. “Base-line Evaluation: Public Policy in Southern Caucasus, Case Study on Armenia,” July 2002, p. 8.

148 Mungenas, Henrik, “Base-line Evaluation: Public Policy in the Southern Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Regional Summary,” June 2002, p. 12.

149 Ibid, p. 15.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.

### **23.0 BEST PRACTICES, MECHANISMS AND PROGRAMS FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

Based upon an examination of the funding mechanisms pursued by donors to date, it is clear that the mechanisms and programs employed should be sufficiently flexible to permit the donor to respond to unexpected challenges and opportunities that will undoubtedly arise during the life of the program. In order to promote the viability and financial sustainability of think tanks the following practices should be utilized:

- **Making grants only to institutions, rather than individual scholars and researchers**
- **Focusing on a limited number of countries, institutions, and analytical areas or topics**
- **Providing technical assistance throughout the life of the grants program**
- **Encouraging collaborative funding and joint programs with other donors that effectively leverage and target resources for think tanks at the country and regional level**
- **Including a plan and budget for dissemination and advocacy activities in each grant**
- **Encouraging information sharing between and among grantees**
- **Developing strategies that help recruit and retain high quality think tank directors and research staff**
- **Making multi-year grant commitments but monitor them closely and tie grant payouts to performance**
- **Encouraging grantee to attempt to influence policy at local, national and regional levels, either simultaneously or consecutively**
- **Providing funding for researchers and managers to attend regional and international conferences that facilitate skills exchange**
- **Encouraging organizational and program capacity by creating a critical mass of policy analysts and policy experts**
- **Providing funding for technical assistance so as to:**
  - **Train staff in effective communications and public engagement strategies**
  - **Educate researchers in applied policy research and credible datasets where necessary**
  - **Promote strategic planning and organization sustainability strategy development**
- **Creating opportunities for mentoring/peer review activities in order to encourage peer learning and strengthen collaborative relationships between researchers and research institutions and between research and the policy communities**
- **Encouraging grantees to make monetary and in-kind contributions to the project from the outset to demonstrate their commitment**
- **Providing funds that help to create domestic recognition for the institution**
- **Developing a clear exit strategy in collaboration with the institution from the outset**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study of the various approaches to funding and evaluating think tanks was undertaken to determine what lessons might be drawn from the experiences of public and private donors who have supported think tanks in developing and transitional countries over the last 15-20 years. The study reveals that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience about what works and does not work, what strategies are effective in helping to increase the impact of the research conducted by these institutions, and what is required to sustain policy research organizations over time. It is also clear that evaluating the performance and impact of think tanks is not easy to do and requires a different set of tools than those employed to evaluate academic research or social service programs. Despite these challenges the best practices contained in this report provide a framework that will help donors and grantees measure the success of these institutions so they can improve their performance and so donors can target their resources more effectively.

## APPENDIX A: INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

\* Email Consultation                      # Phone Consultation                      + In Person Consultation

**Scott Abrams** – Project Manager Local Government and Public Service Reform, Open Society Institute Europe #

**Paul Balaran** – Executive Vice President and Secretary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace #

**Joesph Behaylo** – Director Office of Grants Management, Open Society Institute \*

**Timothy J. Bork** – Resident Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace \*

**Annette Brown** – Director International Activities Center, Urban Institute \*

**Fred Carden** – Evaluations Unit, International Development Research Centre #

**Thomas Carothers** – Vice President Studies, International Politics and Governance, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace #

**Brent Herbert-Copley** – Director Social and Economic Policy, International Development Research Centre #

**Peter F. Geithner** – Consultant, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Formerly of Ford Foundation \*

**Timothy Geithner**, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations \*

**Joseph Maximilian Bankole Jarrett** – Information and Communication Service, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa \*

**Erik C. Johnson** – Knowledge for Development Program, World Bank #

**Terence Jones** – Director, United Nations Development Program \*

**Linda Kelly** – Praxis Consultants \*

**Craig Kennedy** – President, German Marshall Fund #

**Roland Kovats** – Deputy Director, Freedom House Europe #

**Jeff Lovitt** – Executive Director, Policy Association for an Open Society \*

**Emily Martinez** – Program Director Human Rights and Governance Grants Program, Open Society Institute\*

**Daniel Mato** – Coordinator, Centro de Investigaciones Postdoctorales\*

**Simon Maxwell** – Director, Overseas Development Institute #

**Rohinton Medhora** – Vice President of Programmes, International Development Research Center #

**Chris Miller** – PRO Project and Urban Institute \*

**William Moody** – Program Director for Serbia and Montenegro, Rockefeller Brothers Fund #

**Apollinaire Ndorukwigira** – Operations Advisor, African Capacity Building Foundation\*

**Emmanuel Nnadozie** – ESPD Networking, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa \*

**Robert O'Donovan** – Evaluation Director, Eurasia Foundation +

**Mark Pomar** – President, International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) +

**Jeffrey M. Puryear** – Vice President Social Policy, Inter-American Dialogue and Ford Foundation #

**Lawrence Reed** – President, Mackinac Center for Public Policy \*

**Lisa Roman** – Research Advisor Department of Research Cooperation, Swedish International Development Agency #  
**Luis Rubio** – Think Tank Director \*  
**Jean Rogers** – Deputy Director, Center for International Private Enterprise +  
**Chris Sands** – Director of Evaluations, International Republic Institute \*  
**Sharon Manson Singer** – President, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc. \*  
**Raymond Struyk** – Senior Fellow, Urban Institute \*  
**Nancy Truitt** – Senior Advisor, Tinker Foundation +  
**Joyce Warner** – Director Education Programs Division, International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) \*  
**Jennifer Windsor** – Executive Director, Freedom House \*  
**John Young** – Director of Programmes for the RAPID Group, Overseas Development Institute \*  
**Steven Yeo** – CEO, Center for Economic Policy Research \*  
**George Zarubin** – Director of Programs, Eurasia Foundation +

## **APPENDIX B: GRANT-MAKING ORGANIZATIONS EXAMINED**

### **NGOs and Think Tank Networks**

African Policy Institutes Forum  
African Capacity Building Foundation  
Atlas Economic Research Foundation  
Center for International Private Enterprise  
Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC)  
Eurasia Foundation  
Freedom House  
Global Development Network (GDN)  
Global Public Policy Institute  
International Republican Institute  
International Development Research Centre  
International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Open Society Institute  
Progressive Policy Network  
State Policy Network  
Stockholm Network

### **Governments and Multilateral Agencies**

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)  
SIDA United Nations Development Program (UNDP)  
Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
World Bank

### **Foundations**

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Ford Foundation  
Gates Foundation  
German Marshall Fund  
Kriebler Foundation  
Pew Charitable Trusts  
Pfizer Corporation  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
Soros Foundation  
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
Tinker Foundation

### **Think Tanks**

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Center for Research and Development  
DEMOS UK  
Heritage Foundation  
Institute for Economic Research Germany  
Institute of Development Studies  
International Institute for Environment and Development  
Mackinac Center for Public Policy  
North-South Institute  
Overseas Development Institute  
Rand Corporation  
Urban Institute

## APPENDIX C: THINK TANK BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the interdependent world of the 21st century, direct communication between societies in the form of economic exchange, investment, mobility of people, transfer of ideas and knowledge have become as important as classical state-to-state governmental relations. If a minimum of global governance is to be achieved, societies have to communicate directly on ways and means to reconcile openness with control and stability. Think Tanks will play an increasingly crucial role in contributing to this process by providing ideas and by contributing to a global network of knowledge transfer.

-- **Karl Kaiser**, Otto-Wolff-Director of the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Berlin

The growth of public policy research organizations, or think tanks, over the last two decades has been nothing less than explosive. Not only have these organizations increased in number, but the scope and impact of their work has expanded dramatically. Still, their potential to support and sustain political reform, economic development, and global peace and security is far from exhausted. The challenge is to harness the vast reservoir of knowledge, information, and associational energy that exist in think tanks around the world.<sup>152</sup>

The emergence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as important global actors has received increased attention from researchers and scholars in international relations, development studies, and nonprofit management. One type of NGO, the think tank, has received much less attention than other NGOs such as development, education, and environmental organizations despite think tanks' growing numbers and influence. Think tanks now constitute a set of knowledge-based policy-oriented institutions that serve governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society. These institutions generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues in an effort to enable policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues.<sup>153</sup>

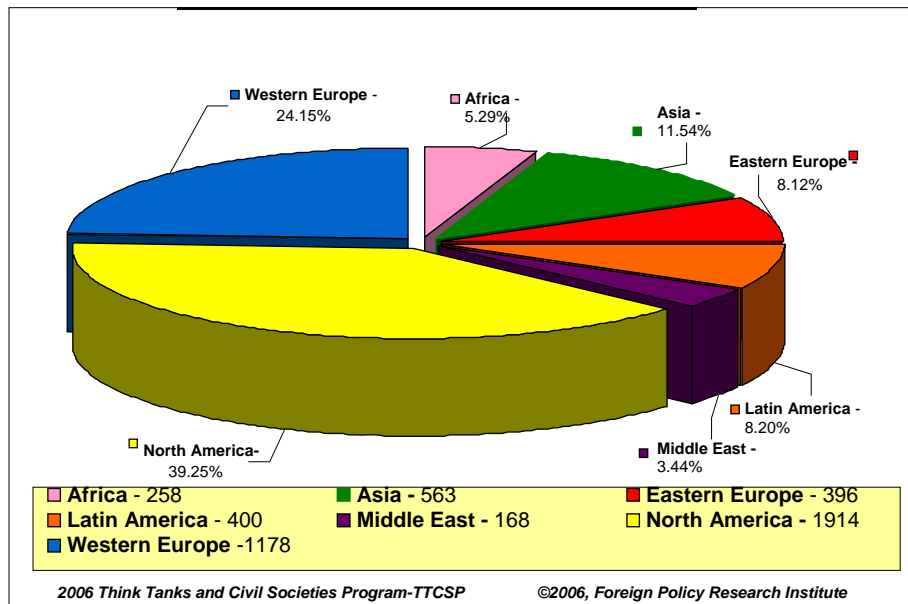
For most of the twentieth century, independent, nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations that perform research and provide advice on public policy were an organizational phenomenon found primarily in the United States, with a much smaller number in Canada and Western Europe. Although think tanks are present in most countries, they generally lack independence, having close ties to government ministries, political parties, or corporations. There has been a veritable proliferation of think tanks since the 1970s. Two thirds of all the think tanks that exist today were established after 1970 and over half were established since 1980. Today there are 4,877 think tanks around the world, in almost every country that has more than a few million inhabitants

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152 McGann, James G. "Think Tanks and the Transnationalization of Foreign Policy," in M.T. Scanlin, ed., "U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda," *An Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department of State*, vol. 7, no. 3, November 2002, pp. 13-18, <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/1102/ijpe/pj73mcgann.htm>.

153 McGann, James G. *Think Tank Definition, Think Tanks and Policy Making in the US: Academics, Advisors and Advocates*, Routledge (2006).

and at least a modicum of intellectual freedom.<sup>154</sup> The regional dispersion of these institutions is depicted below:



Government and individual policymakers throughout the developed and developing world face the common problem of bringing expert knowledge to bear on government decision-making. Policymakers need understandable, reliable, accessible, and useful information about the societies they govern. They also need to know how current policies are working, as well as possible alternatives and their likely costs and consequences. Although this need has been an inherent dynamic of the policymaking process, the forces of globalization have fostered and markedly accelerated the growth of independent think tanks due to their unique ability to strengthen the research-policy bridge and thus facilitate the effectiveness of the policymaking process.

The globalization of think tanks and policy research has accelerated over the last 15 years, particularly in developing and transitional countries where public and private international donors have provided financial assistance to governments and NGOs to support political and economic reforms in these countries. The remarkable growth of think tanks globally has been propelled by a series of interrelated forces. Specifically, these forces have been manifested in six ways: (1) the increased level of democratization and its correlate recognition of the importance of civil society in promoting and strengthening democracy; (2) the increased demand for independent information and analysis; (3) the growth of international actors: states, non-state and inter-state actors; (4) improvements in the fields of communication and technology; (5) the globalization of NGO funding; and (6) the “crisis of confidence” with government leadership which has

154 “2006 Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) Survey,” Foreign Policy Research Organization.

caused citizens to question government credibility and seek alternative sources of information.<sup>155</sup>

The effect of these concurrent convergences has proved significant and has complicated the policymaking process by creating four challenges: (1) geographic: state policymakers are confronted with issues that are best addressed through transnational policy collaboration; (2) time constraints: rapid technological change has accelerated the flow of information exchange and in so doing “severely constrained the time available to traditional public policymakers for weighing options and preparing informed decisions;” (3) issue complexity: states are confronted with a variety of issues that “cut across areas of bureaucratic or disciplinary expertise;” and (4) legitimacy and accountability: resulting from the “crisis of confidence” faced by many governments and the demise of the state’s monopoly on information and decisions. The “traditional closed shop club model” has been relegated a secondary position to the pursuit of decision-making that encourages transparency and participation.<sup>156</sup> Responding to these challenges, think tanks have notably increased in their number, attempted to solidify their position as integral contributors to the policymaking process, and developed and strengthened ties with other nongovernmental and research organizations through the establishment of state, regional and international networks since the 1990s, all in order to bridge a growing gap between research and policy.

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155 Ladi, Stella. “Globalization, Think-Tanks and Policy Transfer.” Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Paper Presented in the World Bank Conference of the Global Development Network, 5-9 December 1999. <http://citeseer.ist.psu.edu/ladi99globalization.html>, pp. 7-8.

156 Benner, Thorsten, Wolfgang H. Reinicke and Jan Martin Witte. “Global Public Policy Networks: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead.” *The Brookings Review* (Spring 2003). [http://www.brookings.edu/press/review/spring\\_2003/benner.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/press/review/spring_2003/benner.htm)

## APPENDIX D: DIMENSIONS AND IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

In order to fully articulate the relationship between a country's environmental context and the ability of think tanks to achieve optimum operation, a sampling of how several funding organizations view the effects of environmental context are provided.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has recognized this connection in their own pre-grant assessments and grant monitoring and evaluations. Specifically, the Centre notes,

Organizations do not exist in a vacuum. Each organization is set in a particular environment to which it is inextricably linked. This environment provides multiple contexts that affect the organization and its performance, what it produces, and how it operates...Any effort to diagnose and improve the performance of an organization requires an understanding of the forces outside the organization that can facilitate or inhibit that performance. Enabling environments support effective and efficient organizations and individuals.<sup>157</sup>

In view of this fact and to promote organizational effectiveness and capacity building, IDRC has developed a survey of questions related to the political, social, and economic environment that they recommend for consideration prior to grant-making. For instance, in judging the nature of the political environment, IDRC Evaluators attempt to determine the rules of the political system through such questions as the following:

- Does the political environment lend to changes in rules or policies that a funded organization may need to adjust to?
- Can the organization expect the government to enforce major laws, rules and policies?
- Can the funded organization voice disapproval against government policies without fear of sanction or reprisal?
- Can the funded organization feel confident that authorities will protect it and its property from criminal action?
- Does the judiciary enforce rules arbitrarily, impartially, or unpredictably?<sup>158</sup>

The Center for International Private Enterprise's (CIPE) evaluation criteria also reflects selected elements of the McGann/Johnson assessment and has defined the evaluation of country conditions as important in the development of its programs. As indicated in their program evaluations, CIPE identifies country conditions as the "economic, political and social context in which a project takes place," and indicates further that it "plays an important role in determining the size and shape of individual projects as well as larger program areas...it greatly influences the way an organization and its partners approach

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157 Lusthaus, Charles, Marie-Helene Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden and George Plinio Montalvan. *Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance* International Development Research Centre, 2002, [http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30223-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30223-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed December 2006.

158 Lusthaus, Charles, International Development Research Centre, [http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30223-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.org/en/ev-30223-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html), Accessed December 2006.

questions of design, implementation and program management.”<sup>159</sup> CIPE’s report, “Impact and Results of CIPE’s Global Programs, 1984-1999,” reaffirms the presence of a relationship between state context and organizational impact and sustainability by recommending that program staff develop a strategic plan for presentation to the Board of Directors on an annual basis that “identifies the prevailing background conditions in each region, considers to the major obstacles to development...and identifies a menu of operational approaches.”<sup>160</sup>

The connection of environment to project success is also considered relevant by the African Capacity Building Foundation, which states as a segment of their criteria for selecting organizations to fund, that “in the case of post-conflict countries, evidence of complete cessation of hostility in the geographic area in which the programme is to be implemented” must be documented by the potential grantee.<sup>161</sup>

ODI Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) scholars Robert Nash, Alan Hudson and Cecilia Luttrell, have concurred with the centrality of this relationship between organizational effectiveness and environment, through their focus on the political context. According to their research, the political context of the state in which a civil society organization or think tank resides must be considered due to the influence it exerts on the organization’s ability to function. Specifically, they note,

Political context shapes the ways in which political processes work. To engage effectively in policy processes, civil society organizations [CSOs] and others need to understand political context. In some contexts, policymakers are keen to receive evidence and ideas from CSOs: there are established channels through which CSOs can make their inputs. In other contexts, CSOs are excluded from formal policy processes...For development actors seeking to influence policy, political context matters because it determines the feasibility, appropriateness and effectiveness of their actions.<sup>162</sup>

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159 Geurts, Geoffrey, Steven Rogers, and John D. Sullivan. “Impact and Results of CIPE’s Global Programs, 1984-1999.” Center for Private Enterprise, August 2001.

<http://www.cipe.org/programs/evaluations/pdf/Evaluations.pdf>. Accessed December 2006, p. 23.

160 Ibid.

161 Blagescu, Monica and John Young. “Working Paper 260: Capacity Development for Policy Advocacy: Current Thinking and Approaches among Agencies Supporting Civil Society Organizations,” January 2006, Overseas Development Institute, p. 9.

162 Nash, Robert, Alan Hudson and Cecilia Luttrell. “Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organizations.” Overseas Development Institute – Research and Policy in Development (RAPID), July 2006, p. 1.

## **APPENDIX E: CURRENT ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO MEASURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT**

In recognition of the relationship between environmental context and think tank success, RAPID developed “Mapping the Political Context: A Toolkit for CSOs” for the Overseas Development Institute. The Toolkit identifies and describes nine evaluation dimensions – the Civil Society Index, Country and Policy Institutional Assessment, Democracy and Governance Assessment, Drivers of Change, Governance Questionnaire, Governance Matters, Power Analysis, Stakeholders Analysis, and the World Governance Assessment. Although the report was written for civil society organizations, these methods are equally applicable to the pre-grant assessment of think tanks and other policy research organizations. These political context indicators provide donors with a set of tools that they can utilize to assess the political context of a state where they are considering funding think tanks. A country’s scores can help assess risks and target resources using an objective assessment metric. In consideration of this application, and for the purpose of examining methods of Regional and State Assessment that have been pursued to date, a sampling of those mechanisms which prove relevant to pre-grant assessment and instructive for the purposes of this report, are briefly detailed below.

Before examining the specific dimensions of political context in the Toolkit, it is first necessary to outline the “Political Interests Map” which contains those questions that each evaluation should attempt to answer. Including:

- What actors have access to the arena or forum for policy discussion?
- What are the “rules of the game” within in this arena?
- What resources of power/influence are relevant in this arena?<sup>163</sup>

These broad questions should be addressed prior to conducting a pre-grant evaluation in order to ensure that the methods employed will be focused on the right arenas.

### **The Civil Society Index (CIVICUS)**

According to the research conducted for RAPID, civil society is an integral indicator that must be measured in order to assess the social environment of a state or region. In order to judge the nature of this environment, Nash, Hudson and Luttrell recommend the use of the Civil Society Index developed by CIVICUS. Think tanks are civil society organizations and it is therefore essential that an assessment of the state of the civil society in a country be considered in any pre-grant assessment process.

CIVICUS has defined civil society as, “the arena, outside the family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests.”<sup>164</sup> More specifically, Amy Hawthorne of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has noted that civil society includes “nonprofit organizations, religious organizations, labor unions, business

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163 Nash, p. 3.

164 Heinrich, V. F. “Managing Trade-offs: Challenges Faced in Designing the Implementation Approach of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index.” Paper presented at the ISTR Conference, Cape Town, 6-10 July 2004, p. 13.

associations, interest and advocacy groups, societies, clubs, and research institutions.”<sup>165</sup> In order to encapsulate the full scope of this sector, the Civil Society Index collects data on Four Dimensions of Civil Society and ranks these on a measurable scale of 0-3. Specifically, the four dimensions and the sub-dimensions are as follows:

- Structure – “what is the internal make-up of civil society? How large vibrant and representative is civil society? What are the key relationships? What resources do they command?”
  - The sub-dimensions considered include the breadth and scope of citizen participation; the degree of diversity within civil society; the level of organization; and resources.<sup>166</sup>
- Space/Environment – “what is the political, socioeconomic, cultural and legal environment in which civil society exists? Are these factors enabling or disabling to civil society?”
  - The sub-dimensions considered include the political context; basic freedoms and rights; socio-economic context; socio-cultural context; legal environment; state-civil society relations; and private sector-civil society relations.<sup>167</sup>
- Values – “what are the values that civil society practices and promotes?”
  - The sub-dimensions considered include democracy; transparency; tolerance; non-violence; gender equity; poverty eradication; and environmental sustainability.<sup>168</sup>
- Impact – “what is the impact of civil society? Is it effective in resolving social, economic and political problems, and in serving the public good?”
  - The sub-dimensions considered include influencing public policy; holding state and private corporations accountable; responding to social interests; empowering citizens; and meeting societal needs.<sup>169</sup>

The 0-3 measure of these dimensions is generated via media reviews, stakeholder consultations – including government, businesses, international agencies, media and academics - as well as community surveys, and has been conducted for nearly 50 states. While the Civil Society Index is instructive due to the sectors and features of civil society that it attempts to measure, it may be argued that the “citizen jury approach to scoring” which deduces an assessment of state context “without the constraint of having to quantify or score it”<sup>170</sup> can detract from the perceived and actual objectivity of the Index. However, the CSI is one approach that lends itself well to pre-grant assessment.

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165 Hawthorne, Amy. “Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Carnegie Paper No. 44, p. 5.

166 Nash, p. 6.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

## Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (World Bank)

The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) is an annual survey conducted by the World Bank in an effort to determine the ability of a given state to use aid in an efficient and effective manner. Conducted since 1977, these scores translate into a comparable “country performance rating” which is then utilized by the Bank as they consider where to direct funds.<sup>171</sup> Based upon this focus, it is clear that the CPIA warrants examination since state rankings can be applied for comparative purposes as well as for ascertaining internal and regional conditions.

Specifically, the CPIA evaluates a set of 16 criteria in four groups and ranks each on a scale of one (very weak) to six (very strong). These rankings are determined by technical analysts who assess the manner in which a state’s political and institutional context can foster the promotion of the World Bank’s primary objectives – poverty reduction and sustainable growth – as well as support the effective use of aid.<sup>172</sup> The criteria included in CPIA are as follows:<sup>173</sup>

- Economic Management
  - Macroeconomic Management
  - Fiscal Policy
  - Debt Policy
- Structural Policies
  - Trade
  - Financial Sector
  - Business Regulatory Environment
- Policies for Social Inclusion/Equity
  - Gender Equality
  - Equity of Public Resource Use
  - Building Human Resources
  - Social Protection and Labour
  - Policies and Institutions for Environmental Sustainability
- Public Sector Management and Institutions
  - Property Rights and Rule-Based Governance
  - Quality of Budgetary and Financial Management
  - Efficiency of Revenue Mobilization
  - Quality of Public Administration
  - Transparency, Accountability, and Corruption in the Public Sector

These criteria are judged by in-house World Bank economists, sector specialists and members of country teams who initially work to “[set] regional benchmarks to ensure cross-country comparability,” followed by assessing the remaining countries using these

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171 Nash, p. 8.

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid.

benchmarks as a reference.<sup>174</sup> However, while CPIA is useful in comparing regions and countries within these regions, it is necessary to note,

Attempts to map context objectively perhaps inevitably embody normative and inherently political assumptions. Critics of the CPIA have argued that it has a pro-growth, pro-liberalisation bias, and that it gives too much weight to a particular conception of ‘good governance’ which revolves around minimal regulation and strong property rights.<sup>175</sup>

Consequently, while this dimension may prove useful for the World Bank based upon its overarching objectives and purposes in funding specific states, application of this evaluation to broader projects may prove problematic by virtue of its scope and guiding assumptions. While some of the criteria used by the World Bank reflect their particular interests in grant-making, Policies for Social Inclusion/Equity and the Public Sector Management and Institution criteria is useful as a segment of pre-grant analysis.

### **Democracy and Governance Assessment (USAID)**

The Democracy and Governance Assessment implemented by the USAID was devised for the purpose of “identify[ing] certain comparable elements of countries’ political economy and institutions and use those to inform a strategic analysis of how best to promote democracy and good governance...[It] focuses on aspects of context USAID considers relevant to encouraging or enabling countries to develop liberal democratic government: ‘order, liberty, open communication, the rule of law, and respect for pluralism and minority rights.’”<sup>176</sup> However, although the scope of environmental features and factors measured is limited by the objectives of USAID, this framework considers a number of issues similar to those detailed above, and as such demonstrates the commonalities amongst country and regional assessments to date.

The Democracy and Governance Assessment is divided into a four segment evaluation which includes: (1) “Analysis of the kind of political ‘game’ that characterizes a country and of the problems relating to the transition to or consolidation of democracy;” (2) “More specific analysis of actors, interests, resources, and strategies leading to an understanding of how the political ‘game’ is actually being played in a country;” (3) “Analysis of the institutional arenas (legal, governmental and civil society) in which the ‘game’ is played;” and (4) “the interests and resources of the donors, including USAID.”<sup>177</sup> This analysis is conducted via information and data collection in addition to focus group interviews with key stakeholders within the country under review. However, as with the other two evaluation mechanisms outlined previously, the reliance of this dimension on measuring based upon specific thematic objectives and non-quantifiable data renders its application less inclusive and its results arguably subjective. It revealed

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174 Nash, pp. 8-9.

175 Powell, J. “The World Bank Policy Scorecard: New Conditionality?” Bretton Woods Update. Bretton Woods Project, November 2004. <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/doc/knowledge/cpia.PDF>.

176 Nash, p. 11.

177 Ibid.

from the data collected and interviews conducted that these criteria are viewed as general guidelines that are utilized by field staff that use them to guide their assessment of a country. While there is no substitute for an evaluation conducted by a knowledgeable field staff, assessments should be based on an objective set of criterion and data.

## APPENDIX F: RECOMMENDED POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT INDICATORS

Specifically, we recommend that the indicators identified below and explored in detail in Appendix F be utilized to evaluate this pre-grant level.

- **Legal Environment** – Identifies the overall nature of the legal environment. Specifically, what is the legal status of NGOs in the states in which they reside, what is the ease of registration, legal rights, and the degree to which laws governing taxation, research, and regulation may serve to impede think tank function. Included are these issues:<sup>178</sup>
  - Are there favorable laws on NGO registration?
  - Does clear legal terminology preclude unwanted State control over NGOs?
  - Are NGOs and their representatives able to operate freely with in the law?
  - Are NGO members free from harassment by the local government by either legal or extralegal means?
  - Do NGOs receive tax exempt status?
  - Do individuals and corporate donors receive tax deductions?
  - Do NGOs have to pay tax on grants?<sup>179</sup>
  
- **Organizational Capacity** – Qualifies the internal environment of think tanks, determining whether NGOS are “transparently governed, publicly accountable, capably managed, and able to exhibit professional organizational skills.”<sup>180</sup> Included are these issues:
  - Do NGOs actively seek to build constituencies for their initiatives?
  - Do the critical mass of NGOs have defined mission to which they adhere?
  - Is strategic planning implemented in decision-making processes?
  - Do most NGOs have a well-defined management structure that is responsive and accountable – i.e. a Board of Directors, Executive or Advisory Council, etc.?
  - Are the staffs of the leading NGOs permanent and paid?<sup>181</sup>
  
- **Financial Viability** – Identifies the degree to which NGOs in a given state can support themselves based upon the “domestic economy” and/or the “culture of philanthropy.”<sup>182</sup> Included are these issues:
  - What is the arena of “competition for international donor support funds?”

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178 “NGO Sustainability Index 2005: Section 1. Dimensions of NGO Sustainability.” USAID, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/nglindex/2005/dimensions.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/nglindex/2005/dimensions.pdf), p. 1.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid, p. 2.

181 Ibid.

182 Ibid.

- Are NGOs able to raise a significant portion of their funds from domestic sources?
  - Does the total funding for many of the NGOs evidence diversification?
  - Are NGOs able to generate funding from services, products, etc. in addition to grants and donations?
  - Do government or local businesses contract with NGOs for their services?<sup>183</sup>
- **Advocacy** – Measures whether the political advocacy environment can support the formation of coalitions and networks, and offer NGOs a medium through which they can communicate their messages to a broad audience of both policymakers and the public.<sup>184</sup> Included are these issues:
    - What is the level of influence that NGOs can exert on public policy decision-makers?
    - What is NGOs ability to articulate demands to public policymakers?
    - What is their ability to monitor government performance and transparency?
    - Are there direct lines of communication between NGOs and policymakers?
    - Have advocacy campaigns been successful at the local or national level?<sup>185</sup>
- **Infrastructure** – USAID developed this measure based upon their conclusion that “a strong sectoral infrastructure is necessary to provide local NGOs with broad access to support services.” Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs) should be in place in order to provide to NGOs their services to inform, train, and advise, as well as provide access to NGO networks and coalitions.<sup>186</sup> Included are these issues:
    - Are there means for NGOs to access information, technology, training and technical assistance throughout the state?
    - Do local community foundations provide grants from either locally raised funds or by recruiting funding from international organizations?
    - Do NGOs participate in information sharing?
    - Are there information sharing networks in place?
    - Are there capable trainers for NGO management staff?
    - Have there been examples of NGOs working in partnerships – formal or informal – with local businesses, government, and/or the media?<sup>187</sup>

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183 Ibid.

184 Ibid.

185 Ibid.

186 Ibid, p. 3.

187 Ibid, p. 3.

- **Public Image** – Measures whether NGOs are viewed positively within the community as a whole – government, businesses, and civil society sectors. Included are these issues:
  - Are NGOs viewed as credible organizations and are they able to recruit volunteers and new members with ease?
  - Do NGOs receive positive coverage in the media?
  - Do NGOs work to promote their public image via activity advertisement?
  - Have NGOs adopted a code of ethics or attempted to display transparency in their operations?<sup>188</sup>
  
- **Program and Service Provisions** – Measures how effective NGOs are at efficiently providing programs and services that consistently meet the needs, priorities, and expectations of their respective constituencies.
  - Do NGOs provide programs for and services in a variety of fields?
  - Do the programs and services produced by the NGO reflect the needs and priorities of their constituencies and communities?
  - When NGOs provide these programs and services are they compensated by charging fees?
  - Does the government, at the national and/or local level, recognize the value that NGOs can add in the provision of programs and services?

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188 Ibid.

## APPENDIX F 1: INDICES FOR RATING THE POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT

Rating Score: 1 – 7 (1 = Best; 7 = Lowest)	Score Description (Derived from USAID Indices) <sup>189</sup>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although additional reforms can be made in the NGO environment, the local NGO community recognizes which reforms are needed and has made plans to remedy failings</li> <li>• NGOs are found in all regions of the country as well as in numerous different sectors</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment is enabling and the local community demonstrates commitment to pursuing needed reforms as well as to developing professionalism;</li> <li>• Foreign assistance continues to accelerate or facilitate these developments</li> <li>• NGOs can be found in most large cities, many regions of the country, and in a variety of sectors</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment is generally enabling and/or local progress and commitment to developing this environment are reasonably strong</li> <li>• Foreign assistance is able to accelerate and/or facilitate reform</li> <li>• Government is open to reform; the financial sector is generally growing; advocacy is allowed by some decentralization of governance structures; and an independent media supports NGOs public image</li> <li>• NGOs are mostly in regional centers and in some sectors of civil society</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs are minimally affected by practices and policies in the state. However,</li> <li>• The NGO sector is limited by a number of factors including, a stagnant economy, a passive government or administration, a disinterested or ambivalent media, and/or a community of activists that are inexperienced</li> <li>• NGOs are often concentrated in the capitol city or in three or four regions of the country</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmatic success in developing local capacity or facilitating progress is hampered</li> <li>• Constraining circumstances often include, a highly centralized government structure, a controlled and/or reactionary media, and/or a low level of capacity, will or interest on the part of the NGO community</li> <li>• The NGO community itself is often limited to only the</li> </ul>

189 “NGO Sustainability Index: Section 2: Ratings – General Definitions,” USAID 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf). Accessed December 2006, pp. 1 - 5.

	capitol and only one or two policy issue areas
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little progress has been made in the NGO sector since the end of the Cold War when most other areas experienced growth</li> <li>• Development of local capacity is significantly curtailed by a hostile authoritarian regime, state-controlled media, brain drain, and/or a small or highly fractionalized community of activists with limited capacity or experience to organize or initiate change</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NGO sector has remained stagnate or eroded since the end of the Cold War</li> <li>• The development and sustainability of NGOs is severely curtailed by war, a depleted economy, highly divided society or totalitarian regime</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX F 2: POLICY AND NGO ENVIRONMENT – ASSESSMENT CONTINUUM

Once these index values are assigned for each indicator within a given state, these ratings can then be translated into a continuum based on whether the environment is Conducive for Funding (1-3 rating), Moderately Conducive for Funding (3-5 rating), or Less Conducive for Funding (5-7 rating).

- **Legal Environment**

- **Less Conducive (5-7)**: The absence of legal provisions, the confusing or restrictive nature of legal provisions (and/or their implementation) on non-governmental organizations (NGO) make it difficult to register and/or operate (i.e., regulation to the point of harassment). Assistance programs address status laws pertaining to registration, internal management/governance, scope of permissible activities, reporting, dissolution, and other topics; as well as the degree of bureaucratic and administrative impediments to NGO formation and operation; degree of state regulation, harassment of or violence toward NGOs.<sup>190</sup>
- **Moderately Conducive (3-5)**: NGOs have little trouble registering and are not subjected to state harassment. They are permitted to engage in a broad range of activities, although taxation provisions, procurement procedures, etc. may inhibit NGOs' operation and development. Programs seek to reform or clarify existing NGO legislation, to allow NGOs to engage in revenue-raising and commercial activities, to allow national or local governments to privatize the provision of selected government services, to address basic tax and fiscal issues for CSOs, etc. The local NGO community understands the need to coalesce and advocate for legal reforms benefiting the NGO sector as a whole. A core of local lawyers begins to specialize in NGO law by providing legal services to local NGOs, advising the NGO community on needed legal reforms, crafting draft legislation, etc.<sup>191</sup>
- **Conducive (1-3)**: The legislative and regulatory framework begins to make special provisions for the needs of NGOs or gives not-for-profit NGOs special advantages such as: significant tax deductions for business or individual contributions, significant tax exemptions on CSOs, open competition among NGOs to provide government-funded service, etc. Legal reform efforts at this point are primarily a local NGO advocacy effort to reform or fine tune taxation laws, procurement processes, etc. Local and comparative expertise, as well as availability of legal services and materials, on the NGO legal framework existing.<sup>192</sup>

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190 “NGO Sustainability Index: Section 2: Ratings – General Definitions,” USAID 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/ratings.pdf). Accessed December 2006, p. 14.

191 Ibid.

192 Ibid.

- **Organizational Capacity**

- **Less Conducive (5-7)**: NGOs are "one-man shows," completely dependent upon the personality of one or two major figures. They often split apart due to personality clashes. NGOs lack a clearly defined sense of mission. At this stage, NGOs reflect little or no understanding of strategic planning or program formulation. They lack organizational skills and procedures for budgeting and tracking expenditures; and they lack the ability to monitor, report on, and evaluate programs. Organizations rarely have a board of directors, by-laws, staff, or more than a handful of active members. Programs provide basic organizational training to NGO activists.<sup>193</sup>
- **Moderately Conducive (3-5)**: Individual NGOs, or a number of NGOs in individual sectors (women, environment, social services, etc.), demonstrate enhanced capacity to govern themselves and organize their work. Individual NGOs in at least the major sectors -- environment, business, social sector, human rights/democracy -- maintain full-time staff members and boast an orderly division of labor between board members and staff. Local NGO support centers are founded to inform, train, and advise other NGOs. Activities include newsletters, libraries, consultations or other services. NGO activists may demand that training be at a more advanced level. Programs train local trainers and develop local language materials and locally sponsored courses to teach organizational skills. Local trainers learn how to facilitate: strategic planning exercises and program development, financial management structures, appropriate communication channels both within and outside an organization, and team building.<sup>194</sup>
- **Conducive (1-3)**: A few transparently governed and capably managed NGOs exist across a variety of sectors. Essential organizational skills are demonstrated, and include how to recruit, train, and manage a volunteer network. A professional cadre of local experts, consultants and trainers in non-profit management exists. An accessible network for identifying trainers and consultants exists. NGOs recognize the value of training. The lack of financial resources may remain a constraint for NGOs wanting to access locally provided NGO management training. Topics of available training cover: legal and tax issues for NGOs, accounting and bookkeeping, communication skills, volunteer management, media and public relations skills, sponsorship and fundraising.<sup>195</sup>

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193 Ibid.

194 Ibid, p. 15.

195 Ibid.

- **Financial Viability**

- **Less Conducive (5-7):** New NGOs survive from grant to grant and/or depend financially on one (foreign) sponsor. NGOs at this stage lack basic fundraising skills, such as how to write a proposal. Programs seek to teach fundraising skills in order to diversify funding sources. Even with a diversified funding base, donors remain overwhelmingly international. A depressed local economy may contribute to this dependency.<sup>196</sup>
- **Moderately Conducive (3-5):** NGOs pioneer different approaches to financial independence and viability. Some might survive and continue to grow modestly, by reducing foreign funding and sticking to a minimal, volunteer-based operation. Individual NGOs experiment with raising revenues through providing services, winning contracts and grants from municipalities and ministries to provide services, or attempting to attract dues-paying members or domestic donors. NGOs begin to pool resources by sharing overhead costs, such as hiring one accountant for several NGOs. Efforts are made to simplify and/or establish uniform grant application procedures undertaken by donors or governmental agencies. A depressed local economy may hamper efforts to raise funds from local sources. Training programs accelerate financial viability by offering strategic planning, revenue raising and advanced fundraising skills through indigenous trainers and NGO support centers. NGOs begin to understand the importance of transparency and accountability from a fundraising perspective. NGO centers may provide "incubator" services to decrease administrative costs for fledgling NGOs.<sup>197</sup>
- **Conducive (1-3):** A critical mass of NGOs adopt rules on conflict of interest, prohibitions on self-dealing and private procurement, appropriate distribution of assets upon dissolution, etc., to win potential donors' confidence. In a conscious effort, the local NGO sector may lay the groundwork for financial viability by cultivating future sources of revenue for the sector. This might include lobbying for government procurement reform for NGO-delivered services, tax reform to encourage revenue-generating activities, providing exposure through NGO trainers and NGO support center to successful domestic precedents, cultivating a domestic tradition of corporate philanthropy, or cultivating international donors. There is also a growing economy which makes growth in domestic giving possible.<sup>198</sup>

- **Advocacy**

- **Less Conducive (5-7):** Broad umbrella movements, composed of activists concerned with a variety of sectors, and united in their opposition to the old regime fall apart or disappear. Some countries at this stage have not even

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196 Ibid.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid.

experienced any initial burst of activism. Economic concerns become predominant for most citizens. There may be an increase in passivity, cynicism, or fear within the general public. NGO activists are afraid to engage in dialogue with the government, feel inadequate to offer their views and/or do not believe the government will listen to their recommendations. NGOs do not understand the role that they can play in "public policy" or do not understand concept of "public policy". Programmatic activities begin to introduce the importance of collecting empirical data and first-hand information in order to share facts rather than opinions with officials or concerned citizens.<sup>199</sup>

- **Moderately Conducive (3-5):** Narrowly defined advocacy organizations emerge and become politically active in response to specific issues, including issues that emerge during the transition: human rights, abortion, opportunities for the disabled, environment, etc. Organizations at Stage II development may often present their concerns to inappropriate levels of government (local instead of national and vice versa). Weakness of the legislative branch might be revealed or incorrectly assumed, as activists choose to meet with executive branch officials instead ("where the power truly lies.."). Beginnings of alternative policy analysis are found at universities. The beginnings of information sharing and networking between NGOs, and the existence of an NGO support center to inform and advocate its needs within the government may develop. Programmatic initiatives include training in advocacy techniques, coalition building, communication techniques, and policy analysis.<sup>200</sup>
- **Conducive (1-3):** The NGO sector demonstrates the ability and capacity to respond to changing needs, issues and interests of the community and country. As NGOs secure their institutional and political base, they begin to 1) form coalitions to pursue issues of common interest, such as children's rights or handicapped care; 2) monitor and lobby political parties; 3) monitor and lobby legislatures and executive bodies. NGOs demonstrate the ability to mobilize citizens and other organizations to respond to changing needs, issues, and interests. NGOs at stage three will review their strategies, and possess an ability to adapt and respond to challenges by sector. A prime motivator for cooperation is self-interest: NGOs may form alliances around shared issues confronting them as non-profit, non-governmental organizations.<sup>201</sup>

- **Infrastructure**

- **Less Conducive (5-7):** There are few, if any, active NGO Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs), networks and umbrella organizations. Those that do operate, work primarily in the capital city and provide limited services

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199 Ibid, p. 16.

200 Ibid.

201 Ibid.

such as access to computer equipment, faxes, email and meeting space. Local training and NGO development capacity is extremely limited and undeveloped. Primarily programs of international donors provide training and technical assistance. There is no coordinated effort to develop philanthropic traditions, improve fundraising or establish community foundations. NGO efforts to work together are limited by a perception of competition for foreign donor support and mistrust of other organizations.<sup>202</sup>

- **Moderately Conducive (3-5):** ISOs are active in most major population centers, and provide services such as distributing grants, publishing newsletters, maintaining a membership database, running a library of NGO literature, and providing basic training and consulting services. Other umbrella organizations are formed to facilitate networking and coordinate activities of groups of NGOs. Local trainers have the capacity to provide basic organizational training. Donors' fora are formed to coordinate the financial support of international donors, and to develop local corporate philanthropic activities.<sup>203</sup>
- **Conducive (1-3):** ISOs are active in all areas of the country and provide advanced training, legal support and advice, and philanthropic development activities. Efforts are underway to found and endow community foundations, indigenous grant-making institutions, and organizations to coordinate local fundraising. Local trainers are capable of providing high level training to NGOs throughout the country.<sup>204</sup>
- **Public Image**
  - **Less Conducive (5-7):** The general public and/or government is uninformed or suspicious of NGOs as institutions. Most the population does not understand the concept of "non-governmental" or "not for-profit", including government officials, business leaders and journalists. Media coverage may be hostile, due to suspicion of a free but uninformed media, or due to the hostility of an authoritarian government. Charges of treason may be issued against NGOs. Due to a hostile atmosphere caused by an authoritarian government, if individuals or businesses donate to NGOs at all, they do so anonymously.<sup>205</sup>
  - **Moderately Conducive (3-5):** The media generally does not tend to cover NGOs because it considers them weak and ineffective. Individual NGOs realize the need to educate the public, to become more transparent, and to seek out opportunities for media coverage. Individual local governments demonstrate strong working relationships with their local NGOs, as evidenced

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202 Ibid, p. 17.

203 Ibid.

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid, p. 18.

by their participation in advisory committees, consultations, public-private initiatives, and the funding of an occasional grant.<sup>206</sup>

- **Conducive (1-3):** This stage is characterized by growing public knowledge of and trust in NGOs, and increased rates of voluntarism. NGOs coalesce to mount a campaign to win public trust. Widespread examples of good working relationships between NGOs and national and local governments exist, and can result in public-private initiatives or NGO advisory committees for city councils and ministries. Increased accountability, transparency, and self-regulation exists within the NGO sector to win public trust, including existence of a generally accepted code of ethics or a code of conduct.<sup>207</sup>
- **Service Provision**
  - **Less Conducive (5-7):** A limited number of NGOs are capable of providing basic social services—such as health, education, relief, housing, water or energy. Those who do provide such services receive few if any government subsidies or contracts. NGOs that produce publications, technical services or research do so only for their own members. Attempts to charge fees for goods and services are limited, and often fail. The volume of services to the poor is limited since there is little local private sector financial support and no cross-subsidization from services to better off constituencies.
  - **Moderately Conducive (3-5):** The contribution of NGOs to covering the gap in social services is recognized by government, which may on occasion subsidize or contract for these “public goods.” NGOs recognize the need to charge fees for services and other products —such as publications and workshops —but even where legally allowed, such fees seldom recover their costs. The constituency for NGO expertise, reports and documents expands beyond their own members and the poor to include other NGOs, academia, churches, and government.
  - **Conducive (1-3):** Many NGOs provide goods and services, which reflect community and/or local donor priorities. Many NGOs produce products beyond basic social services to such sectors as economic development, environmental protection or democratic governance. NGOs in several sectors have developed a sufficiently strong knowledge of the market demand for their services, the ability of government to contract for the delivery of such services or other sources of funding including private donations, grants and fees, where allowed by law. A number of NGOs find it possible to cross-subsidize those goods and services for which full cost recovery is not viable with income earned from more lucrative goods and services, or with funds raised from other sources.

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206 Ibid.

207 Ibid.

## APPENDIX G: CURRENT EVALUATION MECHANISMS - INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

To date a number of foundations including the Economic Education and Research Consortium, the Eurasia Foundation, the International Development Research Centre, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the UK Development Civil Society Organizations PPAs, have employed Institutional Impact evaluations. To fully examine the breadth and scope of these mechanisms, as well as provide an effective analysis of the recommended organizational impact assessment, we provide a sampling of existing assessment tools below.

### **The Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC)**

The Economic Education and Research Consortium gauges project success through a series of questions which assess the manner in which capacity has been strengthened in the grantee organization. These assessments rely on the participation of members of the organization, stakeholders and grantor staff via questionnaires, surveys, observation and interviews, and address the issues in bold below.

- **Achievement of Goal**
  - Has the economic community recognized the processes of open debate, peer review, and publication of scholarly articles?
  - Has a sustainable local capacity for teaching and research been facilitated?
  - Have stronger linkages been created between and among the economics research communities within and outside the host country?
- **Impact**
  - Have the grantees received training which would enhance their research skills and enable them to produce quality research?
  - Has the institution expanded the breadth of topics that it researches and disseminates publications on?
  - Has the grantee's staff improved the content of their teaching and its method of delivery?<sup>208</sup>

### **The Eurasia Foundation**

The Eurasia Foundations grants are generally disbursed in order to provide for the following:

- **Increased Capacity** – To increase the capacity of the organization to influence the policy environment and contribute to public debate, training programs and conferences which provide access to professional resources, libraries, databases and periodicals should be provided. These capacity building elements should prove useful in building the “critical mass of experts” both within the organization and in society in general.<sup>209</sup> Specifically, staff training is important so as to provide the personnel of the think tank with the capacity to “talk to people in a language that they can understand.”<sup>210</sup>

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208 “Economic Education and Research Consortium: Impact Evaluation – Russia.” Bannock Consulting, Ltd. Economic Education and Research Consortium, pp. 48-49.

209 Polishchuk, p. 28.

210 Baltacs, Janice. “Base-line Evaluation: Public Policy in Southern Caucasus, Case Study on Georgia.” July 2002, p. 13.

- **Organizational Sustainability** – To help organizations to support themselves from local funding, training should be directed toward “training in organizational development, financial management, public relations, organizational change, and development, building of coalitions and everyday management.”<sup>211</sup>
- **Financial Sustainability** – Organizations should be able to generate local funding through the cultivation of relationships with local stakeholders and domestic contributors. This is critical because domestic support can increase the financial viability of the organization as well as strengthen the domestic support of the institute and its projects. Specifically, the Foundation notes, “there is some evidence that NGOs with good grassroots connection and who use them in public policy research have a higher probability of positive impact on the policy formulation process.”<sup>212</sup>
- **Domestic Recognition** – The organization’s executive staff and personnel should work to raise the visibility of the think tank so as to promote local recognition and support<sup>213</sup>
- **Networking Partnerships** – A central objective of the organization should be to develop relationships with other institutes in the region for the purpose of information sharing and network partnerships. The establishment of these relationships will also help to increase knowledge resources of the funded organization<sup>214</sup>

To effectively evaluate whether a funded organization has met the grant-maker’s objectives for strengthening internal capacity, the Eurasia Foundation conducts Formative and Program Evaluations (see section 11.2). Specifically, these assessments are conducted through four primary means: (1) face to face discussions with grantees and their representatives; (2) roundtable discussions with grantees in which open-ended questions were presented for the individuals to share their views; (3) discussions with the Foundation’s country directors and program officers; and (4) stakeholder meetings in each country which include representatives of other state and regional NGOs and policymakers.<sup>215</sup> These consultations are focused on the following questions:

- How has the organization communicated with the grantor during the implementation process?
- What has been the significance of the grant with regards to improving the organization’s capacity to conduct quality research?
- What impacts have the funds had on increasing organizational viability?

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211 Ibid, p. 14.

212 Mungenast, Henrik. “Base-line Evaluation: Public Policy in the Southern Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Regional Summary.” June 2002, p. 12.

213 Mungenast, p. 15.

214 Ibid.

215 “Evaluations: Tools and Methods.” [http://www.euasias.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.euasias.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx). Accessed December 2006.

- What recommendations should be made to improve the current practices of the organization?<sup>216</sup>

### **13.1.e The UK Development Civil Society Organizations**

The UK Development Civil Society Organizations through Partnership Programme Agreements has devised 6 General Performance Criteria that are used for the purpose of evaluating whether the grantee organization has increased its capacity and sustainability. These criteria are both comprehensive and thorough in their evaluation of the various features of post-grant organizational change.

- **Organizational Effectiveness** – What is the overall progress of the organization toward the attainment of stated objectives and outcomes in poverty reduction and sustainable development?
- **Policy Coherence** – What is the extent to which PPA outcomes are aligned with DFID policy goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?
- **Capacity** – To what extent have the skills, competence, and systems of individuals, partner organizations, governments and donors been strengthened?
- **Knowledge** – To what extent has the creation and dissemination of new or alternative ideas and information within DFID, bilateral and multilateral donors, governments and southern partners been pursued?
- **Influence** – What has been the organization’s contribution to policy debate, options and solutions through advocacy, lobbying, campaigns and the education and mobilization of key constituencies
- **Innovation** – To what extent has the development, dissemination and adoption of new techniques, approaches and practices been pursued?<sup>217</sup>

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216 Ibid.

217 “Funding of UK Development Civil Society Organizations Through Partnership Programme Agreements (PPAs),” pp. 14-16.

## **APPENDIX H: CURRENT EVALUATION MECHANISMS - POLICY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

To date a number of funding foundations have implemented and NGO and think tank scholars have recommended evaluation methods for judging the manner in which grantees have influenced, or failed to influence, the policymaking environment. To provide a comprehensive examination of the assessment tools that can be employed, the mechanisms used and/or suggested by the Center for International Private Enterprise, the International Development Research Centre, the Eurasia Foundation, and Raymond Struyk, Kelly Kohagen and Chris Miller are explored below.

### **The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)**

CIPE has developed a “scorecard of results” that assesses the degree to which their grantee organizations have proved successful in impacting policy and the policy environment. The scorecard measures influence as “low,” “medium,” “and “high,” and provides definitions of what would constitute each ranking. For example, to obtain a “high” ranking an organization must receive positive assessments on all four of the following:

- Address the purposes and objectives of CIPE;
- Address a clearly identified, explicit problem or obstacle in the policy environment which impedes the development of private enterprise;
- Produce specific, identifiable impact results; and
- Have lasting effect on the development of private enterprise and democracy<sup>218</sup>

CIPE then applies these rankings to five criteria used to measure whether the grantee has proved successful in impacting the policy environment. These criteria include: (1) legal and regulatory structures necessary to maintain a well-functioning democracy and market oriented economy; (2) participation in public policy decision-making affecting economic and business issues; (3) private sector organization acts as a catalyst in advancing political and economic reform; (4) access to business and economic information necessary for informed decision-making; and (5) support for market economies and democratic systems among decision-makers. As is evident from these, for CIPE there is a high correlation between what is considered as effective policy impact and advocacy of CIPE objectives. For the purpose of clarifying how the high to low rankings are determined by program officers and staff members, a chart depicting the association of rankings to criteria is provided below.<sup>219</sup>

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218 Geurts, Geoffrey, Steven Rogers, and John D. Sullivan. “Impact and Results of CIPE’s Global Programs, 1984-1999. August 2001. <http://www.cipe.org/programs/evaluations/pdf/Evaluation.pdf>, p. 103.

219 Ibid, p. 112.

Participation in Public Policy Decision-Making Grading Scale	
Level of Impact	Criteria
Exceptional	Evidence of systemic change that has significantly improved private sector participation in public policy decision-making
High	Mechanisms that permit stakeholders to widely participate in decision and law-making process firmly established; fundamental change in the way stakeholders participate; often leads to policy change
Medium	Established participatory mechanisms, built relationships with key constituencies, and engaged in advocacy activities that fostered participation in the public policy decision-making process; voice inserted into policy-making process; recognized as leader; broad support for work
Low	Project activities satisfactorily completed, but had little effect on improving participation in public policy decision-making

To make these assessments, program officers and staff members utilize a Project Analysis Tool (PAT) which is a key management information system database including six pages for each of the criteria and a summary page.<sup>220</sup> Respondents provide detailed comments on each indicator and analysis on the degree to which each of the criteria were fulfilled. In addition, space is provided for respondents to score their own performance.<sup>221</sup>

### The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

As noted earlier, IDRC believes policy impact is a central objective of organizational funding. As a result, the Centre's impact assessment considers how the organization has targeted policymakers, increased research and knowledge generation, strengthened the capacity of researchers and research institutions, enhanced the capacity of decision-makers, and contributed to the policy dialogue of civil society. To arrive at these assessments, IDRC's staff and program officers track the activities of, and the approaches employed, by their grantee organization, using the following criteria:

- **Participate with government agencies, policy/decision-makers at various levels, extension agencies, etc.**
- **Participate in Capacity Building**
  - Workshops, seminars, conferences, roundtables
  - Training
  - Peer Review, Mentoring
  - Networking

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p. 110.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

- **Dissemination of Information/Knowledge**
  - Publications, reports, newsletters, working papers and policy relevant briefs
  - Outreach/networking/awareness raising with government officials and other key decision-making stakeholders
  - Workshops, seminars, meetings, and policy roundtables
- **Facilitate/Strengthen Policy Dialogue**
  - Working groups and task forces
  - Policy roundtables and workshops
  - Consultations and networking with policymakers

In addition to using these criteria, tangible product measures are also employed:<sup>222</sup>

	No. of reports (n=16)
Contributions to the advance of policy relevant knowledge	8
Significant increase in capacity of researchers, organizations, civil society, policymakers	8
Successful dissemination of research outputs	3
Use of research results as inputs into policies, programs	4
Strengthened policy dialogue	3
Changes in attitudes and approaches of policy/decision-makers and other stakeholders	2
Researchers acting as advisors to government or taking important government positions and playing active role in policy design at various levels	2
Contributions to the development of policy alternatives and proposals	5
No policy influence documented	2

IDRC's is also interested in determining why policy impact has failed to achieve success, and considers the following factors when it measures negative policy impact:<sup>223</sup>

	No. of Reports (n=16)
Involvement of government officials and policymakers in project	2
Relevant and high quality of research and outputs	2
Visibility, reputation and positioning of researchers and/or institutions in policy arenas	4
Novelty of approach or structure used	3
Supportive policy environment	4
Not specified	9

In gauging success, IDRC recommends the employment of “**Outcome Mapping**” as an evaluation mechanism which “moves away from assessing the products of an activity or a

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

program to focus on changes in behaviours and relationships (outcomes) which can lead to changes.” Impact can be viewed as positive if it “changes the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a programme works directly.”<sup>224</sup> An Outcome Mapping of CPRN is provided as an example of how this may be utilized:

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>BOUNDARY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME CHALLENGES</b>	<b>PROGRESS MARKERS</b>
<b>Problem Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officials</li> <li>Business leaders</li> <li>Civil society organizations</li> <li>Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agendas modified</li> <li>• New concepts /paradigms adopted</li> <li>• Partners invest in new ways of approaching problems</li> <li>• Best practices from elsewhere adopted</li> <li>• Partners adopt longer term &amp; more nuanced perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time commitment to CPRN activities at senior levels</li> <li>• Recruitment of CPRN staff into partner organizations</li> <li>• New vocabulary &amp; concepts adopted outside CPRN events</li> <li>• Invitations to present to new audiences</li> <li>• Some friction as accepted wisdom challenged</li> </ul>
<b>Improving the Policy-Making Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officials</li> <li>Business people</li> <li>Civil society organizations</li> <li>Academics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust in the existence of a neutral policy space</li> <li>• Willingness to work with new stakeholders</li> <li>• Buy in to new ways of operating</li> <li>• Broader engagement in public policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academics willing to work for CPRN</li> <li>• Commitment of time by business leaders &amp; advocacy groups</li> <li>• Repeat mtgs. with new partners</li> <li>• Recognition of the role of values in policy-making</li> </ul>

### **The Eurasia Foundation**

The Eurasia Foundation evaluates grantee success in influencing specific policy and the policymaking environment by asking the following questions:

- Did the organization communicate its conclusions and assessments to policymakers and were they received?
- Did the organization inform the public of its research and policy prescriptions in order to influence the policy environment?
- Has the organization been approached by government bodies and private companies to provide information and analysis?
- Did the organization contribute to the policy debate by exerting a “competitive pressure” on policymakers, “forcing them to better articulate and substantiate their views and preferences?”

224 “Successful Communication Tools – Outcome Mapping,” [http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Toolkits/Communication/Outcome\\_mapping.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Toolkits/Communication/Outcome_mapping.html). Accessed December 2006.

- This should be viewed as a success even if the organization was unable to succeed in transferring their policy advice into legislation<sup>225</sup>

The Eurasia Foundation recognizes and makes distinct reference to the fact that policy impact can be successful even if it is not translated into final policy. The foundation also recognizes that the political context of a state must be considered in these evaluations as a less policy-receptive government can thwart efforts to make an impact.

**Recommendations of Raymond Struyk, Kelly Kohagen, and Chris Miller**

In the evaluation report, “Were Bosnian Policy Research Organizations More Effective in 2006 than in 2003?”, NGO scholars Raymond Struyk, Kelly Kohagen, and Chris Miller provide a number of recommendations for how to assess policy impact which are useful for the purposes of this report.

In measuring the nature of an organization’s policy impact the following questions guided their assessment:

- **Involvement in the Policy Process –**
  - **Absolute Level of Involvement –** Rated as to the intensity of their involvement, this assessment ranged from low to high based upon their responses to a series of questions. These qualitative ratings took into account:
    - Had the organization worked with both members of parliament and government agencies?
    - Were there a number of concrete examples offered of where the organization’s work was used in the policy process?
    - What is the extent to which the organization had informational dealings with policymakers?<sup>226</sup>

The authors recommend that rankings on these issues be compared to the baseline pre-grant levels, and that policymakers in addition to program officers should be involved.<sup>227</sup> In their policy impact assessment, government sources were involved and were asked a series of questions about the information sources that they relied on in their policy determinations. Government officials, members of parliament and NGO directors were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 (strong) to 5 (no interest), as to whether materials from the grantee were policy relevant and useful.<sup>228</sup>

Finally, and in view of the fact that policy impact can be viewed as successful even if the organization’s prescriptions are not translated into policy, the authors recommend that positive impact can be measured by both growth and funding. Specifically:

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225 Polishchuk, p. 14.

226 Struyk, Raymond, Kelly Kohagen and Christopher Miller. “Were Bosnia Policy Research Organizations More Effective in 2006 than in 2003? Did Technical Assistance Play a Role?” November 2006, p. 8.

227 Struyk, et. Al., p. 9.

228 Ibid.

- **Growth** – It can be assumed that greater growth comes in response to encouragement that the organization is proving successful in the policy arena.
- **Funding** – The increase in funding availability may also be connected to success.
  - “It is hard to imagine talented people creating or joining organizations that are unable to fulfill their basic mission. At the same time we recognize that the role of funding availability, particularly from the international community, can be an important factor. Indeed, over this period the creation of one [policy research organization] was wholly supported by international donors. In short, we take growth in the number as an indicator of positive experience.”<sup>229</sup>

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229 Ibid, p. 9.

## **APPENDIX I: COMPREHENSIVE POLICY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL**

The assessment instrument developed by Ashley Snowdon can be modified, clarified, and re-named to illustrate how a comprehensive impact evaluation might be employed to evaluate the full impact of a grant. This approach combines the output and impact assessment tools which are then utilized to evaluate the impact of a grant at the policy level, community level, and organizational level. While this can be a very effective tool and a best practice at this level of evaluation, it would be difficult to implement and too costly to administer for most public or private donors. Despite its limitations, it is instructive to consider the various levels and elements of this approach to evaluating the impact of policy research.

### **Policy Research and Advocacy Impact Assessment Tool**

- **Policy Level**
  - Passage of new legislation
  - Ability to move an issue onto the policy agenda
  - Changes in existing legislation and administrative or regulatory policy
  - Changes in private industry or company policy
  - Inclusion of new voices in policymaking process, evidenced by testimony provided at hearings and policy forums
  - Attendance of policymakers at community events to address policy issue, etc.
  - Increased policymaker support on the issue, evidenced by press releases, testimony, declared support, etc.
  - Tangible commitments of existing or new resources to address the issue
  
- **Community Level**
  - Increased civic engagement, measured by:
    - Attendance at community meetings, civic hearings, and other events to discuss the issue
    - % of community members who feel empowered to raise an issue and work for its resolution
  
  - Increased public support of the issue, measured by:
    - Attendance at actions and rallies
    - % of votes in support of an issue
    - How the issue is framed in local papers and community newsletters
    - Declared support from other organizations
    - % of constituents who claim to support the issue
  
  - Increased participation in coalitions between organizations, measured by:
    - Number of organizations and individuals in a coalition
    - Number of members active in the coalition: attending meetings, serving on committees, holding leadership positions, etc.
    - Increased participation of “unusual partners,” e.g. a broad base of diverse organizations involved

- Increased collaboration between organizations working on regulatory and legislative advocacy, community organizing, media campaigns, and policy research and analysis
  - Equitable representation in coalition leadership and decision-making between member organizations
  - Increase in member organization resources committed to joint projects
  - Increased understanding of other organizations' views
- **Organizational Level**
    - Mobilization capacity, measured by:
      - Number of supporters or members
      - Number of events held
      - Growth in financial support and membership
      - Number of members serving on committees
      - Number of members regularly attending events
    - Ability to influence policy, measured by:
      - Organizational reputation, measured by:
        - % of policymakers and other authorities who are aware of the organization
        - % who believe organization is an authority on the issue
        - Policymaker perceptions of the size and composition of the organization's membership
        - Policymaker perceptions of organization's contribution to previous debate of issues
        - Policymaker perceptions of organization's contribution to policy making process
    - Relationships built with policymakers, measured by:
      - Number of visits to policymakers
      - Length of meetings with policymakers
      - % of phone calls to policymakers returned
      - Number of times policymakers ask organization for information
    - Advocacy development, measured by:
      - Number of trainings sessions attended by staff and leadership on policy-related topics
      - Quality of relationships with key media sources
    - Ability to develop strong and sophisticated policy strategy, measured by:
      - Whether focus is moving from local to state level, or state to national level
      - Whether focus is moving from community improvements to policy changes
      - Whether focus is moving from policy passage to policy implementation
      - Whether strategy is reflective of changes in political, social, and economic climate

- Whether there is a clear implementation plan
- Ability to develop strong leaders, measured by:
  - Number of leaders produced
  - Number of trainings sessions conducted
  - Leadership continuity: number of years leaders have been with the organization
  - Number of new leaders recruited and trained
  - Changes in leaders' knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, and perceptions
    - Beliefs about their abilities to effect change (empowerment)
    - Knowledge of policy process
    - Deeper levels of understanding of policy dynamics
- Changes in leaders' behavior, measured by:
  - Using voice more
  - Attending more activities and community events
  - Leading more activities
- Strong governance and infrastructure, measured by:
  - Ability to attract additional funding from diverse sources
  - Diversity of members and leadership
  - Diversity of staff
  - Number and diversity of members included in decision-making on key issues
  - Number and diversity of members in leadership positions
- Ability to build and maintain coalitions (see above under community-level: Increased participation in coalitions between organizations), measured by:
  - Relationships built with institutions and stakeholders, e.g. school boards, social service agencies, churches, universities, etc.
    - Members active in these institutions
    - Number of institutions supporting the issue
  - Relationship between the organization and larger community
    - Community perceptions of the organization
    - Receptivity to non-member needs
    - Number of non-members attending events
- Ability to build and maintain strong relations with print and electronic media, measured by:
  - Distribution:
    - Types and number of reports disseminated
    - Types and number of rallies held
    - Number of op-eds submitted
    - Number of postcards mailed to a representative
  - Placement:

- Amount of donated media
- Number of articles covering the issue
- How many op-eds run
- Strength of relationships with press
- Exposure
  - Degree to which the intended audience encountered the media efforts
  - Frequency of exposure by the intended audience to the media efforts
  - Degree to which the intended audience paid attention to the media efforts (recall and recognition)
- Knowledge, awareness, and attitudes about targeted policy issues, measured by:
  - What percentage of the population is aware of the issue?
  - What is people's understanding of the issue, e.g. its cause and effects?
  - How do people feel about a particular policy or practice?
  - How important is the issue to people?
  - How important is it compared to other issues?
  - How relevant is it to their daily lives?
- Media Frames, measured by:
  - Did the language of the campaign appear in policy proposals, legislative testimony, or the public debate about the issue?
  - Are other people or organizations adopting ideas or language from the campaign?
  - Did the message of the campaign appear in press coverage?
  - Is there an increase in the presence of a human voice or perspective on the issue?
  - Were members' voices present in the media coverage?
  - Are policymakers adopting ideas or language from the campaign?

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"The ODI Civil Society Partnerships Programme: Annual Report 2006." London: Overseas Development Institute. [http://www.odi.org.uk/cspp/docs/CSPP\\_AR\\_2006.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/cspp/docs/CSPP_AR_2006.pdf).

## **APPENDIX L: GRANT-MAKING INTERNET RESOURCES**

### **Grant Program Descriptions – NGO and Think Tank Networks**

African Capacity Building Foundation.

<http://www.acbfact.org/programs/backgroundACBFProgramSupport.asp>.

Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). <http://www.cipe.org/programs/index.php>.

Eurasia Foundation.

<http://www.eurasia.org/programs/grantmaking.aspx> and

<http://www.eurasia.org/programs/activities.aspx>.

Global Development Network. <http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=75>.

IRDC. [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30321-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30321-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html) and PDF Brochure:

[http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11248223831Awards\\_e.pdf](http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11248223831Awards_e.pdf).

International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX).

<http://www.irex.org/programs/aro/index.asp>; <http://www.irex.org/programs/iep/index.asp>;

<http://www.irex.org/programs/afsg/index.asp>; <http://www.irex.org/programs/assg/index.asp>.

National Endowment for Democracy. <http://www.ned.org/grants/grants.html>.

Open Society Institute (OSI).

[http://www.soros.org/grants/application/grant\\_apply\\_step\\_1\\_view](http://www.soros.org/grants/application/grant_apply_step_1_view).

### **Grant Program Descriptions- Governments and Multilateral Agencies**

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-112912183-NAU>.

Rockefeller Brothers Fund. <http://www.rockfound.org/iandr>.

Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

[http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=153&language=en\\_US](http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=153&language=en_US).

United Nations Development Program (UNDP). <http://www.undp.org/focusareas/>.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/private\\_voluntary\\_cooperation/](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/private_voluntary_cooperation/).

World Bank.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20715153~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>.

### **Grant Program Descriptions- Foundations**

Ford Foundation. [http://www.fordfound.org/program/program\\_main.cfm](http://www.fordfound.org/program/program_main.cfm).

Gates Foundation. <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/ForGrantSeekers/>.

German Marshall Fund of the United States. <http://www.gmfus.org/grants/index.cfm>

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. <http://www.fritz-thyssen-stiftung.de/?id=39&L=1>.

Kriebler Foundation. <http://www.kriebler.org/grants.asp>.

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

[http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1129529/k.D156/Program\\_Guidelines.htm](http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1129529/k.D156/Program_Guidelines.htm)

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. <http://mott.org/programs/programs.asp>.

Pew Charitable Trusts. <http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/index.cfm>.

Pfizer Corporation. <http://www.pfizer.com/pfizer/subsites/philanthropy/programs.jsp>.

Rockefeller Brothers Fund. <http://www.rbf.org/grants/index.html>.

Soros- Human Rights and Governance Grants Program.

[http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hrggp/focus\\_areas](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hrggp/focus_areas).

Smith Richardson. <http://www.srf.org/grants/international.php> and

<http://www.srf.org/grants/domestic.php>.

Tinker Foundation. <http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/tinker/institu.html>; Field Research

Grants - <http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/tinker/field.html>.

### **Grant Program Descriptions- Think Tanks**

Overseas Development Institute. "Individual Fellowship Grants."

<http://www.odi.org.uk/fellows/index.html>.

### **Grants Guidelines- NGO and Think Tank Networks**

African Capacity Building Foundation. <http://www.acbf-pact.org/GrantRecipients/>.

Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

<http://www.cipe.org/about/grants/cipeproposal.pdf>.

Eurasia Foundation. <http://www.eurasia.org/programs/grantcriteria.aspx>.

Global Development Network.

[http://www.gdnet.org/pdf2/announcements/Call%20for%20Proposals\\_GDN.pdf](http://www.gdnet.org/pdf2/announcements/Call%20for%20Proposals_GDN.pdf).

IRDC. [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-56760-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-56760-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html) and "For Writing Project

Proposal " [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-57070-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-57070-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

International Research and Exchanges Council (IREX).

<http://www.irex.org/programs/aro/index.asp>; <http://www.irex.org/programs/iep/index.asp>;  
<http://www.irex.org/programs/afsg/index.asp>; <http://www.irex.org/programs/assg/index.asp>.

National Endowment for Democracy. <http://www.ned.org/grants/coreGrants.html> and  
["Discretionary Proposal Guidelines" - http://www.ned.org/grants/discretionaryGrants.html](http://www.ned.org/grants/discretionaryGrants.html).

### **Grants Guidelines- Governments and Multilateral Agencies**

Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[http://www.rockfound.org/docs/Grantmaking/How\\_We\\_Develop\\_and\\_Fund\\_Programs.pdf](http://www.rockfound.org/docs/Grantmaking/How_We_Develop_and_Fund_Programs.pdf).

Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). "Policies and Guidelines."

[http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=248&language=en\\_US](http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=248&language=en_US).

United Nations Development Program. Small Grants Programme.

<http://sgp.undp.org/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&s=HowdoesSGPwork>.

### **Grants Guidelines- Foundations**

Ford Foundation. <http://www.fordfound.org/about/guideline.cfm>.

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. <http://www.fritz-thyssen-stiftung.de/?id=40&L=1>.

Kriable Foundation. <http://www.kriable.org/grants.asp>.

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

[http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.1129529/k.D156/Program\\_Guidelines.htm](http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.1129529/k.D156/Program_Guidelines.htm)

Charles Stewart Mott. <http://mott.org/programs/programs.asp>.

Pew Charitable Trusts.

<http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/guidelines.cfm?name=Grant%20Guidelines>.

Rockefeller Brothers Fund. <http://www.rbf.org/programs/howapply.html> and [Individual Program Websites](#).

Soros- Human Rights and Governance Grants Program.

[http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hrggp/focus\\_areas/a\\_human\\_rights/guidelines](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hrggp/focus_areas/a_human_rights/guidelines).

Smith Richardson. <http://www.srf.org/grants/guideline.php> and

<http://www.srf.org/databank/documents/basicproposaltemplate.pdf>.

Tinker Foundation. <http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/tinker/institu.html>; [Field Research Grants - http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/tinker/field.html](#).

### **Grant Assessment Procedures- NGO and Think Tank Networks**

African Capacity Building Foundation. <http://www.acbf-pact.org/tracking/>.

Eurasia Foundation. [http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools\\_and\\_methods.aspx](http://www.eurasia.org/evaluations/tools_and_methods.aspx) and [http://www.eurasia.org/evaluation\\_system.aspx](http://www.eurasia.org/evaluation_system.aspx).

IRDC. "Evaluation in Pre-Grant Stage." [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-56861-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html#evaluation](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-56861-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html#evaluation).

### **Grant Assessment Procedures- Governments and Multilateral Agencies**

Rockefeller Brothers Fund . <http://www.rockfound.org/Grantmaking>.

Swedish International Development Agency. Ongoing Evaluations. [http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=775&language=en\\_US](http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=775&language=en_US).

United Nations Development Program. <http://www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf> (Evaluation Policy of UNDP).

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/tracking/>.

World Bank.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/0,,contentMDK:20120723~menuPK:41393~pagePK:41367~piPK:51533~theSitePK:40941,00.html>.

### **Grants Assessment Procedures- Foundations**

Ford Foundation. [http://www.fordfound.org/about/docs/ff\\_grantee\\_memo.pdf](http://www.fordfound.org/about/docs/ff_grantee_memo.pdf).

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. <http://www.fritz-thyssen-stiftung.de/?id=40&L=1>.

Kriable Foundation. <http://www.kriable.org/grants.asp>.

Charles Stewart Mott. <http://mott.org/toolbox/reporting.asp>.

Pew Charitable Trusts.

<http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/index.cfm?page=g11&name=Application%20Procedure>.

Soros- Human Rights and Governance Grants Program.

[http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hrggp/focus\\_areas/b\\_accountability/guidelines](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hrggp/focus_areas/b_accountability/guidelines).

Smith Richardson. <http://www.srf.org/status/>.

Tinker Foundation. <http://www.foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/tinker/institu.html#report>.

### **Recent Grants- NGO and Think Tank Networks**

African Capacity Building Foundation. <http://www.acbf-pact.org/GrantRecipients/>.

Eurasia Foundation. <http://www.eurasia.org/programs/grantsearch.aspx>.

IDRC. [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-70363-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-70363-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

National Endowment for Democracy. <http://www.ned.org/grants/05programs/spotlight-africa05.html>; <http://www.ned.org/grants/05programs/spotlight-asia05.html>;  
<http://www.ned.org/grants/05programs/spotlight-eurasia05.html>.

Open Society Institute (OSI). <http://www.soros.org/grants/research>.

### **Recent Grants- Governments and Multilateral Agencies**

Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Project Database.  
<http://www.sida.se/ngodatabase>.

World Bank.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/EXTFININSTRUMENTS/EXTTRUSTFUNDSANDGRANTS/EXTDGF/0,,enableDHL:TRUE~menuPK:64283045~pagePK:64283090~piPK:64283077~theSitePK:458461,00.html>.

### **Recent Grants- Foundations**

Ford Foundation. [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_detail1.cfm](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_detail1.cfm).

Gates Foundation. <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Grants/default.htm>.

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. <http://www.fritz-thyssen-stiftung.de/index.php?id=118&L=1>.

Kriable Foundation. <http://www.kriable.org/grants.asp>.

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

[http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1071715/k.8D74/Recent\\_Grants/apps/custom/macarthur/search.asp](http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1071715/k.8D74/Recent_Grants/apps/custom/macarthur/search.asp).

Pew Charitable Trusts.

[http://www.pewtrusts.com/about/about\\_subpage.cfm?page=a6&name=Overview%20of%20Grants%20History](http://www.pewtrusts.com/about/about_subpage.cfm?page=a6&name=Overview%20of%20Grants%20History).

Soros- Human Rights and Governance Grants Program.

<http://www.soros.org/grants/research/>.

Smith Richardson. <http://www.srf.org/grants/grantsdb.php>.

## **APPENDIX M: AUTHOR/ASSISTANT BIOS**

### **JAMES G. MCGANN, PH.D.**

Dr. James McGann is President and founding Partner of McGann Associates, a program and management consulting firm specializing in the challenges facing think tanks, policy makers, international organizations and philanthropic institutions. Established in 1989, McGann Associates is pleased to count many of the leading policy institutions, foundations and international organizations in the United States and abroad as its clients. *Dr. McGann has written four books and numerous articles on the role of think tanks in policy making process developed, transitional and developing countries around the world.*

Dr. McGann has served as the Senior Vice-President for the Executive Council on Foreign Diplomacy, a private organization that assists the U.S. Department of State by providing international and economic affairs programs for senior foreign diplomats, high level government officials and fortune 500 corporate executives. From 1983-1989, Dr. McGann served as the Public Policy Program Officer for The Pew Charitable Trusts, one of the largest private charitable foundations in America. In this capacity, he directed a \$10 million grants program and launched a series of multi-million dollar domestic policy and international affairs initiatives involving many of the leading think tanks and university research centers in the United States. These initiatives included the Pew Diplomatic Training Program and the Economics and National Security Program.

Dr. McGann has served as a Senior Advisor to the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs and the Society for International Development. In addition, he is a consultant and advisor to the World Bank, United Nations, United States Agency for International Development, Soros Foundation and foreign governments on the role of non-governmental, public policy and public engagement organizations in civil society. He served as a consultant to several USAID-supported organizations working in Russia and the Ukraine. This work included a long-term assignment for one of the largest USAID supported organizations operating in the region. Dr. McGann developed a strategic plan that included a blueprint for an endowment for several non-governmental organizations in the Middle East for USAID.

Dr. McGann has been the Assistant Director of the Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, is a former Associate of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, and serves as a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He currently is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Villanova University where he teaches domestic and international politics and public policy courses. He is a member of the Philadelphia Committee on Foreign Relations and is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of both the International Visitors Council and Forum International. He also serves as a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in England. He is a dual citizen and holds both a US and EU passport.

Dr. McGann earned his master's and doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. His doctoral thesis examined the nature and evolution of public policy research organizations in the United States by comparing and contrasting the mission, structure and operating

principles of some of the leading think tanks (Brookings Institution, Rand Corporation, American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Urban Institute, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Institute for Policy Studies, Institute for International Economics and Cato Institute) to determine how these factors influence their role in the policy making process. Dr. McGann also holds a master's degree from Temple University where he specialized in the administration of non-profit organizations. To date he has published extensively on the role, function and influence of think tanks both in the United States and abroad. A sampling of these reports and books is provided below.

### **DARBY G. KREWER**

Darby Krewer is currently working as Dr. James McGann's Research Assistant. Ms. Krewer earned an MA in Political Science from Villanova University in 2006. Ms. Krewer was awarded her BA in Political Science from The College of New Jersey in 2003, where she was active in the Student Government Association, Vice President of the New Jersey College Democrats, President of The College of New Jersey's College Democrats Chapter, and a College Recruitment and Public Relations Ambassador. Additionally, she served as Campus and Regional Director for the WIN2000 Gore/Corzine Coordinated Campaigns. Darby's past internship experiences include both the New Jersey Governor's Office and the Legislative Majority Assembly. While in the Master of Arts program at Villanova, Ms. Krewer focused her coursework in International Relations in anticipation of pursuing a career working in foreign policy for a government agency or nongovernmental organization.

Ms. Krewer has conducted research on think tanks in the Middle East with Dr. McGann and helped produce a report on the current state of think tanks and policy advice in the region. She created the first database of think tanks for the MENA region.

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### **PROGRAM, POLICY, AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS**

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*McGann Associates* a program and management consulting firm specializing in the challenges facing think tanks, policymakers, international organizations and philanthropic institutions. Established in 1989, McGann Associates is pleased to count many of the leading policy institutions, foundations, and international organizations in the United States and abroad as its clients. We have over 25 years of experience in the public and private sectors in the United States and abroad. Our primary clients are leading public policy research organizations (also known as think tanks) and other non-profit organizations that are interested in strengthening their management structure, programmatic focus, and resource base. We regularly advise public and private donors on their grants programs and conduct programs and organizational assessments.