



## **PROGRESS REPORT**

**on**

# **CORE AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT/2010**

**Prepared by Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD)**

**Submitted to OSI Assistance Foundation**

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## Progress Report

According to the agreement between OSI Assistance Foundation and Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD, or the Center), Azerbaijan, the latter commenced the implementation of project on “Core and Institutional Support/2010” on December, 17, 2009. The planning and organizing stages of the project have been successfully completed and different parties involved have been mapped to ensure the greater consistency and effectiveness of future activities. Objectives and aims of the project for half year of 2010 have been completely achieved. Thanks to Core and Institutional support, CESD became one of few leading think tanks in Azerbaijan; the center was single think tank its policy recommendations are widely used by the government. Achieving project objectives sustain the center’s position in the society and the center was able to diverse funding source to some extent and start new projects. Below is the outline of activities conducted by January, 01, 2010, in accordance with the action plan.

- The center engorged activities of the center by regulating its current and strategic management. Within this activity line, we developed job descriptions and responsibilities of all CESD staff members, specific handbooks for employees and new rules for Board members. Board members meetings are regularly hold at least once a month and discussions to set up external board have been started. We expect to finalize external board at the center not later than August, 2010. We also about finish the strategic management plan of the centre and it will be discussed in Board’s July meeting.
- CESD arranged the base for a long-term operation via the provision of its Financial Sustainability. CESD used different ways to diversify financial sources and reduce donor dependency thanks to Think Tank Fund support. The CESD Training Center is used by other NGOs to organize different events with small amount payment. The center has finished negotiations with Middlesex University in London to hold Work Based

Master/Ph.D. Programs in Azerbaijan. The center has translated 4 books from English into Azeri and got some profit from their selling.

- The center enhanced center's relations with international organizations to strengthen think tank community. CESD strengthen relations with leading international organizations, such as CIVICUS, GDNet, PASOS, NISPACE, UN NGO Forum, EaP NGO Forum and etc. The center started implementing joint projects with think tanks from Greece, Georgia, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, USA, Spain, Uzbekistan, Russia and etc. CESD web-site was also developed and new Russian version created.
- CESD worked out Program Management System, and Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Product/Service quality assurance standards have been approved by the CESD Board. 4 new positions (mass-media manager, foreign relations manager, IT manager and quality control manager) were established. Technical capacity of the CESD was increased thanks to OSI Core and Institutional Support to purchase different technology equipments such as computers, scanners and etc.
- The Government of Azerbaijan very often approved CESD Recommendations in the half of 2010 thanks to the extension of CESD activities.
- ❖ The Government of Azerbaijan decided to make amendments to 2010 State Budget based on CESD recommendations. Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) announced on May, 20, 2010, that amendments to 2010 State Budget will be made, soon in spite of the fact that Ministry of Finance declared last week that no amendments were scheduled. Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD) declared on May 17, 2010 that amendments on State Budget should be made and the center sorted out impacts of such amendments

(for more information about CESD May 17, 2010 Declaration in Azeri, please visit <http://www.cesd.az/m60.htm>). The Azerbaijani government will make amendments to the Law on State Budget for 2010, when returns after interval in 2009 to practice of correction of the main financial document in the middle of the year.

- ❖ Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD) developed policy recommendations to enhance Azerbaijan's Accession to the WTO and maximize advantages and minimize disadvantages of the accession. Recommendations are sorted out as general and specific recommendations and discussed by Working Group at the government.
- ❖ The Government of Azerbaijan announced that CESD policy recommendations to improve SOFAZ performance will be considered. It should be mentioned that the financial assets of the State Oil Fund are managed in accordance with the “Rules on the Maintaining, Investing and Managing of Financial Assets of the State Oil Fund of the Azerbaijan Republic”. Under the Rules, the Fund’s partners can be the financial institutions having a credit rating which is not lower than investment credit ratings for long-term debts. Additionally, the maximum weight of is at 15% level of the total value of the whole portfolio.
- ❖ Azerbaijani Parliament announced that CESD recommendations on amendments to the Tax Code of the Azerbaijan Republic will be approved, soon.
- ❖ Presidential decree on measures aimed to adjust checks in business sector and ensure protection of consumer rights was signed based on the CESD recommendations. Government of Azerbaijan accepted CESD policy

recommendations on minimize illegal interference on business activities in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani President signed new on measures aimed to adjust checks in business sector and ensure protection of consumer rights. The decree was prepared based on the CESD policy recommendations submitted to the government in March, 2010. The CESD recommendations have been published in all leading mass-media institutes last month and the center submitted them to the government as well. According to new presidential decree, Cabinet of Ministries will develop new program to adjust checks in business sector and ensure protection of consumer rights. The decree commissions the Cabinet Ministers to prepare and submit to the President for two-month period draft documents with single order of checks organized to protect consumer rights; form and order of single information register run by the Ministry of Justice and allowing to receive information about regularity of checks in the area of business.

❖ Government of Azerbaijan announced that CESD recommendations will be approved, soon. Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD) has launched presentation of Strategy Paper on Agriculture in Azerbaijan in Baku with representatives of government institutes, Azerbaijani Parliament, international organizations/foundations, local NGOs, mass-media institutes and scholars

- CESD web-site became most often attended and cited among economic think tanks in Azerbaijan. According to the Yahoo Counter, number of new visitors to the CESD web-site has been 5 times increased in April, 2010 compare with December, 2009. CESD has the most often attended and cited website among think tanks in Azerbaijan on policy issues. According to the Yahoo Counter, number of new visitors to the CESD web-site

([www.cesd.az](http://www.cesd.az)) has been 5 times increased in April, 2010 compare with December, 2009.

4 000 new visitors, totally more than 10 000 visitors monthly use CESD web-site.

- Russian version of the site was prepared ([http://www.cesd.az/index\\_ru.htm](http://www.cesd.az/index_ru.htm)). CESD is now one of few think tanks in Azerbaijan has web-site in 3 languages (Azeri, English and Russian) and all of 3 pages daily updated. CESD distributes policy papers and different kind of information in 3 languages.
- The first time among Azeri think tanks CESD announced paid Summer Internship Program in Azerbaijan. Through the program, students will be able to apply for full-time summer internships within one of the many divisions of the CESD. Internships are available only for undergraduate students and all positions are paid. 326 applications including 65 foreign applications received for CESD Summer Internship Program (<http://www.cesd.az/htm/internship.htm> ). 2 interns from Europe (Italy and Switzerland) and 2 local interns have been selected to have internship at the CESD. Internship program will be started in July, 01, 2010. One foreign and one local interns will have internship for 2 months and others for 6 months in 2010.
- CESD started organizing Friday Students Seminars Program. Through the program, students are able to attend discussion on economic and social issues with well-known experts at the CESD office each Friday. Attendance is free-of-charge meanwhile the center offers free coffee-breaks in seminars. Many well-known foreign and local experts served as speakers at CESD Friday Seminars.
- Thanks to OSI Core and Institutional Support, the center was able to announce new position on Public Relations Manager. Having Public Relations Manager, CESD

dramatically increases relations with mass-media. National mass-media organizations including TV channels daily reference CESD comments and report. The center comments on different economic and social issues are daily distributed to all mass-media institutes and posted at the center's web-site.

- Government agencies and international organizations very often reference CESD report. Government Institutes (i.e., Ministry of Economic Development, State Standardization Agency and etc.) and international organizations and embassies (USAID, different embassies and etc.) referenced CESD report and activities.
- International Financial Organizations started using CESD macro-economic forecasts. It is the first time that World Bank included Azeri think tank's macroeconomic forecasts together with official forecasts in its report in 2010. CESD macro-economic forecasts on total GDP Growth, Oil GDP Growth and non-oil GDP Growth used by international financial institutes to develop their own reports.
- Number of new programs launched by the CESD has been dramatically increased in 2010. The center started implementing "Sector Policy Convergences in Priority Areas in Azerbaijan to support EU Eastern Partnership Initiative" project with support of PASOS/LGI, "Increasing Public Control over Oil Revenues" with support of USA Embassy in Baku, "Modeling Oil Revenues in Azerbaijan" with support of NUPI, "Monitoring of Oil Tenders in Azerbaijan" with support of PTF, "Spreading new economic values; translated modern books into Azeri" with support of NISPACE in the first half of 2010.
- CESD included in Parliamentary Network on the World Bank. The Azeri think tank is one of 7 leading NGOs in the world considered by the network. CESD was considered as

one of leading research institutes in the region after ABCDE discussions in May 31-June 02, 2010 in Stockholm, Sweden where the CESD chairman also attended. PNoWB provides a platform for parliamentarians from over 110 countries to advocate for increased accountability and transparency in International Financial Institutions and multilateral development financing. Founded in 2000, PNoWB seeks to engage law makers from around the globe in the common mission of addressing good governance and poverty challenges in both their home countries and abroad. Directed by a twelve-member Board elected by their peers, PNoWB is an independent non- governmental organization with a secretariat in Paris. The organization is open to all elected parliamentarians from World Bank member states who hold a current mandate. PNoWB members represent themselves and their constituents, and not their countries, parliaments or governments.

Cordially,

Vugar Bayramov,

CESD Chairman

June, 29, 2010