

Think Tanks, Transparency and Accountability



Key organizations and information sources

second edition (updated)

Transparify, Tbilisi / Georgia, October 2014

If you are aware of any relevant organizations or information sources that are not listed here, please contact us and we will update this list.

www.transparify.org

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Accountability Principles for Research Organisations

APRO is run by One World Trust and is dedicated to enhancing the accountability of think tanks and research institutes. Their website appears dormant, but still contains multiple tools and other resources.

<http://bit.ly/LZ1yag>

Accuracy in the Media (AIM)

Media monitoring group that produces many articles and research related to U.S. think tanks. Archive is easy to search.

<http://www.aim.org/>

Aditi Bulletin

Bulletin discussing think tank issues in South Asia. Launched spring 2014.

[http://www.cstep.in/sites/default/files/Aditi Bulletin March2014.pdf](http://www.cstep.in/sites/default/files/Aditi_Bulletin_March2014.pdf)

Alejandro Chafuen's blog

Forbes blog covering think tanks and scholarship. Focus on conservative institutions, especially free market think tanks located in Latin America.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alejandrochafuen/>

Bright Lines Project

Coalition of US nonprofits and tax law experts set up to propose rules to clarify IRS regulation of nonprofits' political activities. Housed at Public Citizen.

<http://www.brightlinesproject.org/>

Canadians for Responsible Advocacy

Certifies organizations that adhere to its "accountable advocacy principles". Target group includes Canadian think tanks.

<http://responsibleadvocacy.org/>

Center for Media and Democracy

A non-profit organisation that investigates the influence of corporations and "front groups" on public policy, including public relations campaigns and lobbying.

It runs two platforms that cover think tanks extensively:

- **PR Watch** (<http://bit.ly/1iPKnX3>)
- **Sourcewatch** (<http://bit.ly/MzSHNl>)

Center for Political Accountability

A non-profit organization aiming to bring transparency and accountability to corporate political spending.

<http://bit.ly/1gdUGBu>

- Publishes annual **CPA-Zicklin index** (<http://bit.ly/1aBynQT>)

CFR's Research Links on Think Tanks on International Affairs

Provides directories, analysis of the functions, impact, and transparency of think tanks, and tools to search for think tank publications and events.

<http://on.cfr.org/1wLshg2>

Conservative Transparency

Tracks funding by major US conservative donors to recipients, including many think tanks. Large data set with precise funding sources and amounts per think tank.

<http://conservativetransparency.org/recipients/>

Edmond J. Edmond Safra Center for Ethics – Blog

Blog by center affiliated with Harvard University that occasionally covers think tanks in the context of “institutional corruption”.

<http://bit.ly/1IMIoS6>

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)

Media monitoring group that produces many articles and research related to U.S. think tanks. Archive is easy to search.

www.fair.org

Find the Data: Think Tanks

Aggregates information about think tanks, including financial information.

<http://bit.ly/1aHguQJ>

Find Policy

Aggregates search across think tanks, facilitating search for policy positions, donors and shared board members. Covers think tanks from around the world.

<http://bit.ly/1fUBoBd>

(Disclosure: Find Policy is run by some of Transparify's people.)

Glass Pockets

Service by the Foundation Centre in the US that is devoted to increasing the transparency and accountability of foundations. Includes tools and a blog.

<http://glasspockets.org>

LobbyFacts

Aggregates European Union lobbying data to make it more accessible. Has a dedicated “think tanks and research institutions” search category.

<http://www.lobbyfacts.eu/>

Lobby Watch

Organization that “helps track deceptive PR”. Provides background information on selected think tanks.

<http://bit.ly/1dN1H7I>

L'Observatori dels Think Tanks

Catalan and Spanish language blog on think tanks written by Francesc Ponsa.

<http://bit.ly/1gYxqYL>

Muckety

A website that maps connections between people and organisations, visualizing influence using interactive maps. Frequently covers US think tanks.

<http://bit.ly/1fkjiaA>

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

Organization advocating for greater foundation transparency and accountability.

<http://bit.ly/1b16J5x>

Observatoire Français des Think Tanks

Acts as an information nexus for Francophone think tanks, publishing news, interviews and opinion pieces. Sometimes also features Spanish language content.

<http://bit.ly/1m1STMu>

On Think Tanks

A lively blog dedicated to think tanks, including issues related to funding.

<http://bit.ly/1bLL280>

- It has compiled useful list of think tank directories (<http://bit.ly/1xDIJN0>)

(Disclosure: Transparify is affiliated with On Think Tanks Labs.)

Open Secrets

Website run by the Center for Responsive Politics that tracks money in US politics and its effect on elections and public policy. Strong focus on lobbying.

<http://bit.ly/1iUpuYt>

Philanthropy Roundtable

Organization dedicated to protecting and improving philanthropy in the US.

<http://bit.ly/1cBHeTj>

- Its **ACR project** advocates for protecting the privacy and tax deductibility of contributions to think tanks

(<http://bit.ly/1nxA7R7>)

Politics & Ideas

Initiative to encourage the consolidation of a community of practitioners focused on policy research in developing countries.

<http://bit.ly/1bWTfbB>

Powerbase

A collectively written online encyclopaedia of people, issues, and groups shaping the public agenda that was initiated by UK's Spinwatch. Contains background info on many think tanks.

<http://bit.ly/1joASMi>

Public Accountability Initiative

A non-profit organization "investigating power and corruption at the heights of business and government".

<http://bit.ly/1bu2jEJ>

Publish What You Fund

A non-profit organisation promoting aid transparency.

<http://bit.ly/1eaC3iN>

Spinwatch

British organization tracking lobbying activities and advocating for greater lobbying transparency. Frequently publishes reports linking UK think tanks to lobbying work.

<http://www.spinwatch.org/>

Sunlight Foundation

A non-profit organisation that advocates for more transparency in the U.S.

<http://bit.ly/M826er>

The High Horse

Blog about think tank ethics and governance by Marie Newhouse.

<http://bit.ly/1eA632e>

Think Tank Fund

An Open Society Foundations Program that gives grants to think tanks in Europe and the South Caucasus.

<http://osf.to/1mJuAGC>

(Disclosure: TTF funded the first project cycle of Transparify.)

Think Tank Initiative

Initiative aimed at “strengthening the capacity of independent policy research organizations in the developing world.”

<http://bit.ly/1fUXA0p>

(Disclosure: Transparify’s Hans Gutbrod is a former employee.)

Think Tank Map

Worldwide observatory that aims to provide a complete overview of every active think tank in the field of climate change economics and policy, including which projects are currently under development.

<http://www.thinktankmap.org/>

Think Tank Network Initiative

Supports the study of think tanks through a network perspective. Data on hundreds of think tanks and persons affiliated with them, and a blog.

<http://thinktanknetworkresearch.net/>

Think Tank Watch

A lively blog covering think tank “news, gossip, personnel, reports, studies, and pretty much anything else related to think tanks”. Strong twitter presence.

<http://bit.ly/1aGePhz>

Think Tanked

A blog reporting on US think tanks. Hosted by the Washington Post until early 2013. Now inactive, but old posts are still accessible.

<http://wapo.st/1e9B90w>

Think Tanks and Civil Society Program

University of Pennsylvania program that studies think tanks and conducts an annual ranking of think tanks around the world.

<http://bit.ly/KL9rPX>

- Currently runs the “Ensuring the Quality and Integrity of Public Policy Research Project” about think tanks <http://bit.ly/1pXpxEQ>

Think Tanks and Foreign Policy Program

A Foreign Policy Research Institute program that aims to connect regional and international organisations.

<http://bit.ly/1eiU3Wz>

Think Twice Think Tank Review Project

A National Education Policy Center project that reviews selected publications from think tanks focusing on education policy.

<http://bit.ly/1fA6FqJ>

Transparency International

An international anti-corruption organization that promotes transparency and accountability. Currently working to define standards for NGO transparency.

<http://bit.ly/1idOcCK>

(Disclosure: Transparify's Till Bruckner is a former employee and consultant.)

Transparify

Initiative rating the financial transparency of think tanks worldwide. Website includes a blog.

<http://www.transparify.org/>

- Hosts four **annotated bibliographies** on think tanks worldwide:
<http://www.transparify.org/publications-main/>
- Regularly tweets out news related to think tanks via @Transparify

Who Funds You?

A UK initiative to promote think tank funding transparency that has rated several UK think tanks on their disclosure of donors. Note that their rating methodology differs from that used by Transparify.

<http://bit.ly/1hcUVM6>

Who's Lobbying? – Think Tanks

Compiles data on UK lobbying and public affairs activity by think tanks, including lobbying firms retained, government meetings, and evidence given in parliament.

http://whoslobbying.com/uk/think_tanks

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Transparify will release the results of its second round of think tank transparency ratings in early 2015.