

**Policy paper**

**Developing Iraqi Think Tanks  
A Vision for Developing Performance with a  
Code of Conduct**

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## **Developing Iraqi Think Tanks A Vision for Developing Performance with A Code of Conduct**

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## **Executive Summary**

In light of the challenges facing Iraqi think tanks and research centres, there is an urgent and immediate need for a regulatory framework that contributes to enhancing their independence, ensuring their transparency, and increasing their influence in decision-making. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive vision on how to develop this sector through a voluntary code of conduct that works to establish professional and ethical standards governing the work of these centres, while maintaining their academic and administrative independence.

This paper addresses the challenges facing Iraqi think tanks, as these institutions suffer from weak funding, the absence of a clear legal framework, limits the influence on public policies, while on the other hand we also get political interventions. In addition, the culture of scientific research and rational decision-making based on evidence and effectiveness is still limited, which makes the role of these centres less effective compared to their counterparts in other countries (both democratic or non-democratic).

This paper also presents a comparison between international models in organising think tanks, by reviewing experiences in countries in which they have operated, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and the United States, where the nature of the relationship between think tanks and governments differs. In the United Kingdom, think tanks are registered as charities supervised by the Charity Commission to ensure their transparency, while in Germany, some think tanks are funded by political parties and subject to strict financial review by regulatory authorities. In Japan, most think tanks are run with private funding or in partnership with universities, while American think tanks rely on a combination of private funding and research contracts with the federal or state government.

Based on these experiences, which I have interacted with directly, this paper is written from the perspective of a practitioner, I propose a flexible framework for institutionalising Iraqi private think tanks, so that they are organised within a voluntary code of conduct that allows these centres to operate within clear standards of transparency, independence, and cooperation, without imposing legal restrictions that hinder the freedom of the scientific process and academic research. It also calls for the launch of a national fund to support academic research

to ensure the sustainability of funding, in addition to strengthening partnerships between think tanks in the public and private sectors within Iraq and overseas.

Furthermore this paper also envisions the mechanisms for implementing the Code of Conduct, where the first phase begins with reviewing and approving the final version of the Code, organising introductory workshops to ensure that research institutions understand its standards. Then moving to the stage of signing it by interested centres. After that, an independent oversight committee is established to follow up on the implementation of the Code, and establish a system to evaluate the centres' commitment to it, so that it submits periodic reports reviewing the successes and challenges facing its implementation.

In subsequent phases, work needs to be done to expand the scope of adopting the Code, and to ensure the provision of sustainable funding sources, allowing think tanks to operate freely and efficiently without financial or political pressures.

The paper concludes that adopting the Code of Conduct is not just a regulatory procedure, but rather an essential and necessary step towards establishing a culture of scientific research and enhancing the confidence of the public and decision-makers within Iraqi think tanks sector, and the same applies to the relationship between think tanks and politicians. Through this initiative, these centres can become a major partner in formulating public policies, and contribute to producing solid research and analyses that help Iraq face its economic, social and political challenges.

This paper calls on Iraqi think tanks, in addition to academic bodies and relevant governmental institutions, to hold a joint discussion on adopting and developing this code, so that it reflects and addresses the needs of the Iraqi stakeholders and ensures a more sustainable future for intellectual research institutions.

## Introduction

Strategic think tanks are considered essential elements in the world of politics, as they play a vital role in helping decision-makers better understand the reality they live in as well as the complex and interconnected issues they face on a daily business or strategic level. In recent years Iraq has been rich in the establishment of many private research and think tanks, which reflects the general trend to understand, discuss and study important issues in the political, economic, security and social fields in Iraq's, regional and international environment.

Although this sector is new and in its infancy, these centres have begun to give developmental signals and a useful role, knowing that they include many researchers, academics, former officials and experts in various important fields. This paper aims to evaluate the centres and study ways to develop and stabilise them by assessing the elements of their strength and challenges, as well as proposing the establishment of a voluntary code of conduct for them.

There is no precise and agreed-upon definition of what is called a "think tank," and since this sector is new in Iraq, and has not yet reached the stage of maturity, any civil society organisation in Iraq can choose to call itself by this description. In general, they can be defined as institutions that seek to influence policy through research, analysis, and providing advice to decision-makers and those who work in their circles. The non-academic research sector includes a wide range of actors, not limited to think tanks only, but also includes other institutions, such as independent research institutes, trade associations, research bodies affiliated with unions or employers' organisations, and even consulting firms and research departments in private companies or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc.

In addition to this great diversity of institutions, some actors in this field exploit the absence of clear structures to influence policy-making, without revealing potential conflicts of interest. For example, a think tank may be established that claims to be independent and serves the specific interests of a certain party, without being transparent or independent in its activity. Rather, that party may be a major funder of its activities. In light of the political, economic and social developments witnessed by Iraq, the need for an active role for think tanks and research centres in formulating policies and supporting decision-makers with accurate information and analyses and proposing constructive policies that help

society stabilise and progress. With the increase in the number of these centres and the diversity of their orientations, challenges have emerged related to organising their work and ensuring their commitment to ethical and professional standards that enhance their credibility.

The commitment of think tanks to professional principles in their activities contributes greatly to achieving benefits for society, as they play an important role in strengthening democracy by encouraging policymakers to adopt innovative solutions based on evidence, research and field investigation. These institutions are able to build bridges between different stakeholders, and provide a platform for dialogue as well as deliberation based on scientific research and analysis. Non-academic research and policy advice can have a significant impact on decision-makers, as they are characterised by flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to challenges, with a specific focus on policies that can be easily integrated into the decision-making process. However, if these institutions act in unethical or unprofessional ways, they may adversely affect democratic development by, for example, manipulating decision-making and public opinion. The importance of the code of conduct, which I propose in this paper is to be voluntarily adopted by think tanks, includes the impact of these practices on society, the importance of professional behavior for think tanks themselves and for the individuals working on them. Personal and collective commitment to professional principles, along with the independence and credibility of these centres, are the main factors to ensure their effectiveness, legitimacy, stability and development.

Since the primary goal of think tanks is to influence democratic policies and decisions, their legitimacy comes from their commitment to ethical principles. In other words, any think tank that does not adhere to these principles may lack democratic legitimacy in its activities and its influence on the decision-making process, and therefore the interaction of external and foreign research centres with it is weak, especially when dealing with countries with a long history in this sector.

In general, think tanks play multiple roles, as they act as a bridge between academic research and policy-making, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise between the two sides and providing studies and research that contribute to clarifying the various dimensions of political and social issues, which helps decision-makers take more thoughtful and effective steps. They also play a

prominent role in guiding decision-makers, especially in situations that require specialised expertise, clarity and speed in decision-making.

The paper includes several important aspects related to clarifying the differences between academic research institutions and think tanks, the nature of the challenges and opportunities facing private research centres in Iraq, the precautionary and practical steps that must be taken into account, how to institutionalise and sustain the sector? give examples of several important countries which I personally worked and how to support this important sector.

Therefore, the need arose to formulate and propose the adoption of a comprehensive code of conduct paper that regulates the work of think tanks and with two important outputs: “Draft Code of Conduct Principles Appendix (A)” and “Draft Code of Conduct Policies” Appendix (B), to serve as a general reference framework that defines the basic principles that these institutions must adhere to. As well as to regulate the relationship between think tanks and research centres with each other and ensure their cooperation in a spirit of mutual respect and transparency. This code aims to enhance neutrality, protect the independence of these centres, and ensure their commitment to the standards of sound scientific research in a way that serves the public interest, and lays the foundation for building a research environment and making rational and effective policies based on professionalism and transparency.



## **Differences between academic research institutions and think tanks**

One of the reasons why the distinction between academic and non-academic research is important is that institutions operating in these two different sectors face a completely different market and audience, and thus different incentives. With this aim, the table below has been prepared as an attempt to draw the difference between institutions that provide evidence-based analysis and advice (with a special focus on think tanks) and compare them with traditional academic research institutions.

Of course, the distinction in reality is not so clear, and there may be hybrid forms, such as think tanks in universities, so it is important to understand the differences between the tendencies of non-academic research institutions and the tendencies of academic research institutions. In both sectors, there will be exceptions to the general structures drawn in the table below, and it is important to emphasise that this is not a classification that distinguishes between professional and non-professional behavior, but rather an attempt to describe the structural differences between the different actors. In both parts of the presentation, there is a need to adhere to legal requirements and frameworks, for example the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or the amended Iraqi Law No. (3) of 1971 on the protection of copyright.

| <b>Think Tanks</b>  | <b>Academic research institutions</b>  |
|---|--|
| Commitment to a mission, goal, influence, or perhaps a political/ideological direction.   | Commitment to scientific truth   |
| Interpret and analyze a wide range of existing evidence, future outlook, use/application of research findings   | Basic research, often based on historical data, knowledge production   |
| Standard with recommendations in a specific direction.  | Objective and addressing the current state of knowledge  |
| Working on behalf of stakeholders to meet specific needs and interests in a context that aims towards the public interest.  | Providing public benefits.   |
| Evaluation by "customers" and judgment of its suitability through adoption by decision makers. Peer review or critique by other think tanks is rare.  | Peer review, critical assessment by academics/institutions   |
| Diverse funding with distinct interests, short-termism, weak incentive to adhere to research guidelines, sometimes a fragile balance between strategic content and the interest of funding parties. | Basic funding through dedicated research funding but with conditions set by co-funding bodies (governments, international institutions), long-term, strong incentive to adhere to research guidelines. |
| Various organisational forms, various management models, some non-profit and some private.  | A defined, usually non-profit, organisational model.   |
| Competing interests, no clear hierarchy of right and wrong.   | Clearly defined conflicts of interest.   |
| Individuals can be subjects/participants, researchers, funders, founders, decision  | Clear division of roles/clear relationship to the institution or individuals (employment). Clear   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| makers, management at the same time, multiple forms of relationships.   | institutional relationship to individuals.   |
| Provide a platform for discussion.  | Providing a research environment.  |
| Research and analysis that is simultaneously intended to have an impact (e.g. interviews with decision makers, task forces, workshops), is often confidential and “one-off”. Informal, private information. | Research design to encourage objective results, transparency and replicability, public, open access. |
| Active participation in political debate can be biased towards one side or another.   | Presentation of research results in an unbiased manner.  |

Think tanks sometimes face funding crisis, as happened during the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent political, economic and social repercussions. Although the need for their advice and analysis is increasing, the situation calls for rapid responses to complex and growing political challenges in an uncertain world.

However, crises can have a negative impact on funding for think tanks. In times of crisis, support for these institutions is often seen as an easy target for cost-cutting by private companies and public authorities suffering from financial pressures. This increases the weakness of these centres’ funding, making them more vulnerable to the influence of private interests, especially if these interests form the basis of their financial model.

## Challenges of Civil Society Research Centres in Iraq

Civil society research centres in Iraq face a range of institutional, political and financial challenges that affect their ability to achieve tangible impact on public policy and support the decision-making process. The following are the most prominent of these challenges:

**1. Weak funding and financial sustainability:** Most civil society research centres rely on individual donations or limited support from donors, making them vulnerable to regular financial crises. Consequently, the scarcity of funding affects the ability of these centres to attract research talent, implement long-term projects, and update their research tools.

**2. Apprehension between research centres and decision-makers:** There is a trust gap between private research centres and government institutions, as some officials believe that these centres may be biased towards certain parties or not neutral in their proposals. Accordingly, the lack of effective communication with decision-makers reduces the influence of these centres in formulating public policies.

**3. Political interference:** Many think tanks in Iraq are affected by political tensions, which weakens their credibility and makes them vulnerable to accusations of bias. consequently, in some cases, these centres are exploited as tools to spread certain political agendas instead of providing objective studies and research.

**4. Lack of research talent:** Iraq suffers from brain drain, which adversely affects the ability of research centres to attract and continue the work of qualified researchers.

**5. Weak research infrastructure:** Research centres suffer from a shortage of electronic libraries, databases (especially official and governmental), and modern research tools. Accordingly, the lack of technology and digital infrastructure reduces their ability to produce accurate and modern research.

**6. Lack of supporting legislation:** There are no clear laws in Iraq to regulate and protect the work of civil research centres, and therefore some centres face administrative and bureaucratic obstacles that hinder their work.

**7. Weak awareness of the importance of scientific research:** There is a weakness in appreciating the importance of research and studies among some government institutions or politicians concerned with political decisions or society in general. Therefore, decision-makers do not rely sufficiently on the outputs of think tanks and research centres when formulating policies.

**8. Weak field cooperation between centres:** These centres need to support each other through the exchange of ideas and collective work in research and investigation among them.

### **Opportunities for civil research centres in Iraq**

Despite the challenges, there are great opportunities for civil research centres to achieve a positive impact on the Iraqi scene. The following are the most prominent available opportunities:

**1. The increasing need for objective scientific outputs:** With the complexity of the political and economic situation in Iraq, the need for neutral scientific studies that help provide sustainable solutions increases. Research centres can become a key partner for the government and the private sector in providing scientific recommendations for decision-making.

**2. Support from the international community:** There is international interest in supporting think tanks in Iraq to promote democracy and stability. International grants and participation in regional and international research networks can be used.

**3. Cooperation with universities and academic institutions:** Iraqi universities can be a strong contributor to research centres in implementing research projects. Cooperation with international universities will provide opportunities for training and developing research competencies.

**4. The growing role of civil society:** Civil society in Iraq is witnessing increasing growth, which enhances the importance of research centres as institutions that provide scientific solutions to societal issues. Research centres can play a vital role in directing public discussions and spreading awareness about human rights, environmental, and economic development issues.

**5. Digital development:** Technological development provides opportunities for research centres to improve their performance and increase their reach. Creating digital platforms for publishing research and reports will contribute to enhancing the presence of these centres at the local and international levels.

**6. The need to build peace:** Iraq faces challenges in building peace and national reconciliation. Research centres can play a role in providing studies that enhance understanding between different parties and propose solutions to conflicts. Civil research centres in Iraq face major challenges, but they also have great opportunities for growth and influence. These centres can have a significant impact in supporting public policies, provided that their independence is enhanced, their funding sources are diversified, and their research capabilities are developed.

## Support Models in the UK, Germany, Japan, and the US

Government support for think tanks varies from country to country according to political, economic, and cultural contexts. In this paper, we will compare how governments in the USA, UK, Germany, and Japan support think tanks, focusing on the forms of financial, legislative, and political support, while highlighting the management and sustainability mechanisms of the think tank sector. This includes how these centres are organised, legally protected, and financially sustainable, as well as the mechanisms for evaluating and holding them accountable to ensure transparency and credibility.

### 1st - United States of America:

The think tank sector in the United States is organised under a legal and regulatory framework that allows them to operate as non-profit organisations under the tax code. This legal status grants them tax exemptions that enhance their ability to focus on their research tasks without significant financial burdens. In addition, there are regulatory bodies such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that ensure that these centres adhere to financial and tax laws, which enhances transparency and credibility in their operations.

- 1. Indirect government funding:** In the United States, think tanks do not receive direct funding from the federal government. Instead, they are supported through research contracts with government departments such as the Department of Defence, the Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
- 2. Private funding:** Most American think tanks rely on donations from wealthy individuals, large corporations, and charitable foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation.
- 3. Tax exemptions:** Think tanks registered as “non-profit organisations” receive significant tax exemptions, which enhances their ability to raise funds.
- 4. Some centres receive government contracts** to carry out specific studies and research, such as the RAND Corporation, which cooperates with the Ministry of Defence and national security agencies.

### 2nd - The United Kingdom:

The legal and regulatory framework is through registering British think tanks either as charities or as limited companies under British companies law. A monitoring body for registered institutions (Charity Commission) is established as a charitable organisation to ensure their commitment to non-profit objectives.

Type of governmental and non-governmental support and main mechanisms:

**1. Direct government funding:** The British government provides direct support to some think tanks specializing in public policy, defence, and economics. This is done through funding specific research projects or through ministries such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

**2. Research and consultancy contracts:** The British government relies heavily on think tanks to prepare studies and consultations to formulate public policies.

**3. Tax exemptions:** Research centres registered as "charitable institutions" receive tax exemptions, which contributes to reducing the financial burden on them.

Sources of funding are considered one of the main factors in achieving the sustainability and continuity of various activities and projects. Among these sources we find direct government funding, private funding from companies and institutions, as well as self-generated revenues from providing consultancy services or organising various events. These sources vary in terms of their nature and objectives, which contributes to providing the necessary financial support for a wide range of projects such as organising conferences and seminars.

### **3rd - Federal Republic of Germany:**

The legal and regulatory framework determines the organisation of the research and think tank sector through the laws of political parties, where some centres receive direct support from parties, and are supervised by the German parliament, and supervisory bodies such as the Federal Audit Office are formed to ensure that public funds granted to think tanks are directed towards their use in a transparent manner and according to the specified objectives.

Type of governmental and non-governmental support and main mechanisms:

**1. Funding from political parties:** Germany provides direct support to research centres through "party foundations", which are institutions linked to major political parties and are funded from the state budget based on the number of seats the party has in parliament.

**2. Direct government funding:** The German government provides direct funding to think tanks through ministries and public institutions, especially in the areas of foreign policy, defence, and economic development.

**3. Institutional support:** German institutions such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) provide grants to research centres to promote international cooperation in scientific research.

Research centres play a pivotal role in developing knowledge and innovation thanks to the funding they receive from multiple sources, as they receive direct and indirect government support from several ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. This government funding enables the centres to achieve their research goals and contribute to the advancement of the scientific community.

In addition to the above, some research centres benefit from funding provided by political parties, as this funding is determined based on the number of seats the party has in parliament. For example, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation, which is linked to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), is an example of this type of funding. These funds are used to support research activities and provide the necessary resources for various research projects.

#### **4th - Japan:**

There are no specific laws to regulate think tanks in Japan, however, they are registered as non-profit organisations or consulting companies under the Japanese Companies Law, as the Japanese government relies more on universities and academic institutions to prepare research studies, which reduces the need to regulate think tanks directly.

Types of governmental and non-governmental support and main mechanisms:

**1. Limited governmental funding:** In Japan, most think tanks rely on limited governmental funding, while the government focuses more on universities and academic institutions to prepare studies and policies.

**2. Partnerships with Private sector:** Japanese think tanks rely heavily on funding from large corporations and banks, with research projects funded by private foundations such as the Mitsubishi Foundation and the Suntory Foundation.

**3. Funding from ministries:** Some Japanese ministries such as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) provide funding for specific research projects.



Think tanks in Japan rely heavily on private funding from large corporations and prominent foundations, such as the Toyota Foundation and the Sumitomo Foundation. This funding allows the centres to support their research and intellectual activities.

In addition, some think tanks receive government contracts to conduct research and studies related to public policies, which enables them to provide accurate analyses and valuable recommendations to support government decisions.

### Precautionary steps to be taken to advance

Research that have addressed the reality of think tanks in Iraq, of various types, indicate the weak influence of these centres on the political and social environment in general, and on the political decision-making process in particular, on three main levels:

**1st:** weak communication between these centres and political decision-making institutions,

**2nd:** insufficient utilisation of the expertise of those working in these centres to manage state affairs, whether by appointing them to important positions or participating in official delegations inside and outside Iraq,

**Finally:** weak utilisation of the outputs of these centres in providing consultations and analyses, and finding solutions to the problems facing political decision-makers.

Think tanks in Iraq face many challenges that hinder their work, as the lack of funding is one of the most prominent of these obstacles, as most of these centres suffer from a lack of financial resources, which can be understood given that Iraq, like many Arab countries, spends the least on scientific research. This scarcity of funding has had a significant impact on the knowledge production of these centres, hindering their ability to play a vital role in political decision-making.

Moreover, it appears that many decision-makers in Iraq lack faith in the importance of think tanks and their strategic role in supporting the decision-making process. This lack of conviction reinforces the challenges facing these centres, as the absence of independent institutional work is one of the main obstacles. Centres are exposed to political restrictions imposed by the authorities, which affects their independence and increases distrust on the part of decision-makers.

In addition many centres suffer from the absence of a clear strategy, as many of them lack leadership with a strategic vision that contributes to developing public policies capable of effectively influencing decision-makers. Therefore, achieving effectiveness and influence requires strengthening weaknesses and finding solutions to existing challenges.

There is no doubt that organising a protocol or code of conduct for cooperation and coordination between Iraqi think tanks and research centres with diverse political backgrounds is not as easy as some might expect. Rather, these endeavours or efforts may face many challenges, especially in the early stages, which must be taken with caution and preparations to take precautionary steps to avoid facing them. Below, we briefly review the most prominent challenges:

**1. Challenges of political polarisation:** The diversity of political backgrounds of think tanks and research centres may lead to conflicts, reluctance to cooperate, or even the collapse of the cooperation framework. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize neutrality and impartiality in the protocol/code, and to establish clear boundaries between political advocacy and collaborative research.

**2. Challenges of unequal dynamics:** The largest or most funded think tanks and research centres may dominate the decision-making process or impose their agenda, marginalising smaller or less funded institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to establish clear rules for equal and fair participation, ensure that all institutions have an equal voice, and adopt a consensus-based decision-making model.

**3. Challenges of conflict of interest:** Some think tanks may have hidden political, ideological, or financial agendas that could undermine collective efforts or distort research results, so strict rules of transparency and disclosure should be enforced as much as possible regarding funding sources, affiliations, and any potential conflicts of interest.

**4. Challenges of loss of trust and transparency:** Significant disagreements can arise between think tanks, especially when their political ideologies conflict or if there are doubts about good intentions between them, so open communication should be promoted, transparency in research and funding encouraged, and trust-building activities and practices such as joint projects, regular meetings and joint workshops should be carried out.

**5. Challenges of disparity in the quality of work:** Disparities in capabilities, experience and methodological rigor between think tanks and research centres may lead to unequal contributions or substandard research outputs, so it is

important to provide opportunities for capacity building and training to raise the level of work in all allied think tanks.

**6. Challenges of financial dependence and external influence:** External donors may exert influence on collaborative efforts by using their financial influence to direct research agendas or results in a certain direction, so it is necessary to ensure that funding sources are transparent, not allowing any individual donor to dominate the collaborative agenda, and diversifying funding sources to reduce dependence on a single source.

**7. Challenges of cultural and sectarian sensitivity:** Cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity in Iraq can be a source of tension, and improper handling of sensitive topics can alienate certain groups or undermine national unity. Therefore, there is a need to encourage cultural sensitivity training, promote inclusive dialogue, and develop guidelines for discussing sensitive issues in a respectful and constructive manner.

**8. Challenges of short-term focus:** Some think tanks may focus on immediate political issues rather than addressing Iraq's long-term needs, development goals, and important issues and files. Therefore, long-term shared goals for cooperation should be established that prioritise Iraq's stability and development over short-term political gains.

**9. Challenges of competing for recognition and credibility:** Competition may arise over who gets credit for certain research findings or who is considered more credible or influential in the eyes of the public. These risks can be addressed by setting clear definitions of the percentage of credit for contributions, distributing the advantage fairly, and encouraging cooperation over competition.

**10. Challenges of lack of commitment:** Some think tanks may not fully commit to the collaborative process, leading to ineffective contributions or withdrawal after a short period, so setting clear expectations for engagement, identifying potential consequences for withdrawal, and continuing to stimulate collaboration through grants and joint publications is important in this case.

**11. Challenges of managing diverse objectives:** The objectives and orientations of think tanks and research centres may differ, with some focusing on local issues, while others prioritise national, regional, or international affairs, leading to inconsistent objectives. Therefore, setting common objectives can unify the network of think tanks, and creating working groups or projects that allow think tanks and research centres to focus on their strengths while contributing to the larger mission.

**12. Legal and regulatory challenges:** Differences in legal frameworks, restrictions on non-governmental organisations, or government interference can complicate collaboration, especially across different regions in Iraq. Therefore, when organising the protocol paragraphs, it is necessary to ensure that they are consistent with applicable laws and regulations, and to create contingency plans to deal with any expected legal or regulatory difficulties.

**13. Challenges of Overextension and Overstretch:** Overloading think tanks with too many projects or collaborative demands can lead to overextension, especially if they lack the capacity to meet expectations, so it is essential to set realistic goals, maintain a sustainable pace, and allow think tanks the flexibility to engage at levels they can reasonably manage.

**14. Challenges of Sustainability and Continuity:** Changes in leadership, staff turnover, or external crises can disrupt or end an organisation's work, so institutional mechanisms must be built to ensure continuity, such as rotating leadership, clear documentation of transactions, and shared ownership of initiatives.

**15. Challenges of External Criticism or Pressure:** Collaborations may face criticism from political groups, the media, or external entities that accuse them of bias or question their legitimacy, so it is essential to adhere to the highest professional standards, communicate clearly with the public about the goals and processes of the collaboration, and be transparent about funding sources and affiliations.

**16. Security challenges:** Given the security challenges in Iraq, some think tanks may face threats or violence, which may hinder their participation or put members at risk, so it is important to provide security assessments for events or meetings, create contingency plans, and ensure that participation can take place remotely when necessary.

In short, it is worth noting that awareness of these risks and the implementation of proactive precautionary strategies help think tank and research cooperation and coordination to be more flexible and productive, and commitment to transparency, non-partisan cooperation, and capacity building will contribute to building a strong foundation for cooperation that serves Iraq's national interest in the long term.

## **Institutionalising this new sector**

To institutionalise the civil research centre sector in Iraq, systematic steps must be followed that take into account the Iraqi challenges and available opportunities, with a focus on strengthening the legal framework, financial sustainability, and developing human competencies. Below we review a proposed plan that includes practical procedures and institutional tools to achieve this:

### **First - The legal and regulatory framework:**

#### **A- Legal legislation or voluntary commitment to the code of conduct?**

Regulating the work of think tanks and research centres in Iraq is essential to ensure their independence and enhance their influence on decision-making. In this context, there is a fundamental question from the directors of the centres and those who interact with them from researchers, politicians and others about whether legal legislation should be issued obligating the centres to comply, for example, with the code of conduct, or should compliance with it remain entirely voluntary?

The voluntary model is characterised by flexibility and independence. In many countries, think tanks follow a voluntary model regarding codes of conduct, where the code is considered a guiding framework that promotes ethical and professional standards without imposing strict legal obligations. For example, the United States and the United Kingdom follow this voluntary model, where most think tanks rely on internal codes of conduct to ensure transparency and independence without direct government interference.

In the British example, the Charity Commission monitors research institutions registered as charitable organisations, ensuring their adherence to governance and transparency standards without imposing a special law for think tanks. The advantage of this voluntary model is that it gives think tanks flexibility and independence in managing their affairs, as well as reducing government interference, which enhances freedom of research and analysis, and finally allows centres to develop their own standards based on their operating environment. The main challenge is that in the absence of formal legislation, centres will face difficulty in ensuring compliance with the code by everyone, and yet some centres will lack sufficient incentives to adhere to transparency and independence standards.

In some other countries, legislation is adopted that sets a legal framework for the work of think tanks to ensure transparency and financial sustainability. In the Federal Republic of Germany, we see that its research centres rely on a legal system that includes government funding for think tanks affiliated with political parties, which requires them to adhere to strict legal standards related to integrity and neutrality. In Japan, think tanks are registered under the Companies Act or as non-profit organisations, which imposes specific legal requirements on them, especially with regard to funding and governance.

The advantage of this legislative model is that it ensures a clear legal framework that regulates the work of the centres and grants them official recognition, enhances accountability and prevents manipulation of funding or political exploitation of research centres, as well as contributes to protecting think tanks from political pressure or illegal interference. As for the challenges of this approach, adherence to laws and legislation may lead to excessive bureaucracy, which reduces the independence of the centres, and increases the risk of government interference in directing the research produced and controlling the funding of the centres accordingly.

We are facing a difficult equation, especially with our awareness of the complexities of the Iraqi scene and the weakness of politicians' interaction with research centres, especially with the state of weak control over the centres. It is very possible to study a hybrid model between voluntary and legal, i.e. recommending that the centres' commitment to the code of conduct be voluntary, but within a supportive legal framework, so that the code of conduct remains optional for centres that wish to enhance governance and transparency standards, and a flexible legal legislation is approved that regulates the work of think tanks without restricting their independence, provided that it includes transparency standards for funding and disclosure of sources of income with a general framework for registration and obtaining official recognition.

Is there the possibility of establishing a national body for voluntary regulation that supervises the implementation of the code without imposing strict legal penalties? In this way, Iraqi think tanks can operate in a flexible and independent environment, with a supportive legal framework that protects them

and ensures their transparency without imposing governmental restrictions on the content of their research or intellectual activities.

**B. Establishing an advisory body** to coordinate the work of think tanks and undertake the task of providing technical support and monitoring the performance of the centres to ensure their commitment to professional standards.

### **Second - Enhancing funding and financial sustainability:**

**A. Launching a national fund to support research centres** in order to support research projects that serve national issues. This step will reduce reliance on external funding and enhance financial independence.

**B. Encouraging partnerships with the private sector** by setting incentives for companies to support research centres through tax exemptions, to facilitate the process of attracting investments from the private sector to support research activities.

**C. Diversifying sources of income** by encouraging think tanks to provide paid consulting services, organise conferences, and prepare studies for the benefit of the public and private sectors. This approach will help achieve financial sustainability and reduce reliance on donations.

### **Third - Building human capacities:**

**A. Launching training programs** for researchers by organising workshops and training programs to enhance research skills, academic writing, and the use of modern technological tools. This measure will improve the quality of research and enhance the centres' ability to influence policies.

**B. Enhancing cooperation with Iraqi and international universities** by establishing partnerships with universities to provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and develop research competencies, in order to expand the knowledge base and raise the level of competencies.

**C. Encouraging the return of migrant minds** by providing incentives for expatriate Iraqis working in international research centres to return and contribute to building local centres to enhance research cadres with international expertise.

### **Fourth - Developing the research infrastructure:**

**A. Establishing a joint national digital library** by creating a digital library that provides think tanks with access to global research and sources to contribute to raising the quality of research.



**B. Updating research tools** by providing centres with data analysis techniques and modern research tools, to improve the centres' ability to provide accurate, high-quality studies.

**Fifth - Building local and international cooperation networks:**

**A. Establishing a national union** for Iraqi think tanks that includes Iraqi think tanks under its umbrella to enhance cooperation between them, exchange experiences, and coordinate efforts. This procedure will enhance teamwork and provide a unified voice for think tanks on national issues.

**B. Participation in international networks**, which will encourage Iraqi centres to join international research networks such as (Global Think-Tank Network). This step will expand the scope of influence and benefit from international experiences.

**Sixth - Enhancing research culture and policy-making:**

**A. Organising awareness campaigns** on the importance of scientific research by organising conferences, seminars, and media campaigns to enhance community awareness and the decision-making body stressed the role of think tanks, in order to increase reliance on the outputs of research centres in public policy making.

**B. Integrating think tanks into the decision-making process** by allocating seats for think tank representatives in government and parliamentary advisory committees. This measure will ensure that research outputs are part of the policy formulation process.

**Seventh - Enhancing transparency and accountability:**

**A. Imposing financial transparency requirements** by obligating think tanks to publish periodic financial reports that clarify funding sources and expenditures, as this measure enhances confidence in these centres and protects them from accusations of bias.

**B. Establishing an independent oversight mechanism** by forming a supervisory committee to monitor the performance of think tanks and ensure their commitment to professional standards. Commitment to this mechanism will depend on the extent to which one of the two legal aspect proposals (voluntary or mandatory legislative) is adopted.

Institutionalising the private research centres sector in Iraq requires cooperation between the government, the private sector, and civil society, through providing the legal framework, financial support, and developing competencies, as



these centres can become a strategic partner in formulating public policies and promoting national development.

### **Management and Sustainability Proposals**

To ensure the management and sustainability of the code of conduct for Iraqi research centres, and to continuously improve and develop it, a dynamic implementation and operation mechanism must be established that includes several practical and institutional steps to ensure that centres adhere to it and update it as circumstances change. Below, we will highlight an integrated plan to sustain the management of the code of conduct, including mechanisms for follow-up, development, and continuous evaluation:

#### **First - Establishing an Advisory Body:**

Forming an advisory and executive committee to manage the code, whose mission is to follow up on the centres' commitment to the code of conduct, review the code periodically, and submit proposals for its development, including representatives of the research centres that signed the code, as well as managing disputes between centres in the event of differences in application, and finally organising periodic meetings and workshops. The selection of members of the advisory body is done through the conference (or workshop) that establishes the code, and it is very possible that this will be done in a consensual manner between the centres that sign the code and their commitments.

#### **Second - Establishing periodic evaluation mechanisms:**

Reviewing the code periodically (every year or two, for example, but not limited to) to ensure its continued suitability to changing circumstances. This is done by collecting feedback from the signatory centres (accredited to the code of conduct), and organising questionnaires to evaluate the extent of the centres' commitment to the code, while analyzing the challenges facing the centres in implementing it.

#### **Third - Developing a system for follow-up and periodic reports:**

Preparing periodic follow-up reports by requesting the Executive Committee from each research centre to prepare periodic reports on how it adheres to the code of conduct. Here, the reports will indicate the research activities implemented in accordance with the principles of the code and the challenges facing the centres

in implementing the code. It is also worth considering the extent to which the Executive Committee can publish a comprehensive annual report that includes progress, challenges, and future recommendations.

#### **Fourth - Enhancing communication and cooperation between centres:**

Organising periodic meetings and workshops that bring together representatives of centres to discuss challenges and opportunities in implementing the code, while exchanging experiences and expertise in implementing the code, discussing proposals for development and improvement, and enhancing cooperation between centres in joint projects.

#### **Fifth - Providing digital platforms to manage the code:**

Launching an electronic platform to manage the code that aims to facilitate the process of managing the code and enhancing transparency while providing a digital space for immediate communication between centres, including the following:

1. Publishing the code and related documents.
2. Submitting periodic reports by centres.
3. Sharing joint research and studies.
4. Organising electronic discussions on improving the code.

#### **Sixth - Enhancing partnerships with international bodies:**

By building partnerships with international research centres and supporting institutions to enhance the code and exchange experiences, which will benefit from international experiences in managing codes of conduct while providing training and development opportunities for Iraqi centres.

#### **Seventh - Promoting research culture in society:**

Organising awareness campaigns to inform society and decision-makers of the importance of the code of conduct and the role of research centres, and enhancing the status of research centres in society to encourage decision-makers to benefit from the centres' research.

To ensure the sustainability of the code of conduct, a dynamic administrative system must be built that relies on periodic evaluation, transparency, and continuous motivation. It must be a living document subject to continuous development and amendment over time and adapt to political and social changes

in Iraq, to ensure the strengthening of the role of research centres in formulating public policies.

### **Practical steps for adopting the Code of Conduct**

The code of conduct for Iraqi think tanks is a pivotal step to enhance the institutional role of these centres in serving national issues and contributing to formulating knowledge-based policies. However, to ensure the strength and effectiveness of the code, it is necessary to develop practical steps that aim to find ways to adopt it on solid foundations. This requires that the code be compatible with the prevailing Iraqi laws, and that clear implementation and monitoring mechanisms be provided, including monitoring compliance and evaluating performance, which enhances the confidence of the concerned parties and supports the credibility of these centres, in addition to the need to enhance voluntary commitment by involving think tanks in the process of preparing and reviewing the code to ensure their sense of ownership towards it.

To achieve the above goal, there is an urgent and necessary need to organise a detailed symposium or mini-conference whose program includes this paper (as well as other similar or complementary papers) as a regulatory and professional framework that responds to the challenges of research work in Iraq, with a discussion of the practical steps necessary for its adoption. The symposium's themes will clarify the importance of the code and the context that led to the need for it, while explaining its main themes such as ethical principles , the proposed policies, enforcement and maintenance mechanisms. The aim is to ensure that the Code is a comprehensive document that takes into account the different needs and concerns of think tanks and is at the same time a flexible and applicable tool.

The discussions will then move to how to make the Code compatible with Iraqi legislation, ensuring that it does not conflict with prevailing laws, while establishing effective oversight mechanisms to monitor compliance, taking into consideration setting clear criteria for evaluating performance, such as the quality of research outputs, transparency of funding sources, and the level of cooperation between centres. It is also possible to discuss ways to enhance voluntary commitment, such as signing multilateral agreements that express the adoption of the Code by think tanks as a guiding principle in their work.

The final stage includes reviewing the text of the Code, its foundations and policies [as shown in the attached: Annex (A), (B) and (C)] based on the comments and recommendations raised by the participants during the symposium. The aim is to reach a final formula that is agreed upon and adopted by all. After which representatives of the centres will be invited to sign the commitment document. Adopting the code in this way, with the inclusion of sustainability mechanisms for implementation and evaluation, will ensure the desired goals and will enhance the role of Iraqi think tanks as leading institutions in supporting national development and formulating effective policies.

### **Implementation Mechanisms**

As for the proposals for implementation mechanisms, it is very possible to manage this process by identifying stages for translating this paper, which may extend from a few months to a few years.

In the first stage, the final draft of the code of conduct is prepared by establishing a coordination committee between think tanks, which can work within a few months to review the document and approve the final comments received from research centres and specialists.

After that, workshops or founding coordination conferences are organised in which legal and academic experts participate, in addition to centres interested in joining the code, to sign the official document, which confirms their voluntary commitment to the agreed principles. After signing the code, a coordination committee is established to supervise the code and is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the code. A periodic evaluation system is also being developed to measure the centres' commitment to the code, as the Supervisory Committee will work to develop these mechanisms. In parallel, the participating research centres will begin preparing periodic reports explaining how they are committed to the code, reviewing the most prominent challenges and successes in implementation.

In the third and final stage, it is necessary to focus on sustainability and development mechanisms (which may take few years), as the focus in this stage is on ensuring sustainable funding for the code of conduct and the think tanks that join it, e.g. working to provide financial support in cooperation between the

Ministry of Higher Education and other relevant ministries and private sector actors to ensure the continuity of the code. In addition, cooperation is being carried out with Iraqi universities and international research institutions to launch training programs aimed at enhancing the research competencies of participants, which raises the quality of the research that is produced. For the purpose of continuity, a review (every one to three years) of the code is allocated by the supervisory committee to ensure its compatibility with the challenges and developments in the Iraqi research and political scene. With this implementation matrix, it is ensured that the code of conduct turns from a theoretical document into an applicable practical framework. Through this gradual and organised approach, Iraqi think tanks can enhance their role in policy-making and providing impactful research.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worth noting that developing a protocol or code of conduct for cooperation between think tanks and research centres in Iraq represents a necessary step to support the advancement of the decision-making process in the political, social and economic fields, as these centres can play an important role in facing the major challenges facing the country, especially in light of the political division, economic challenges and social problems. The proposed code will provide a general framework that allows the centres to work collectively and more effectively, while maintaining the independence of each of them.

It is essential that the code contains basic principles such as neutrality in scientific research, transparency in work, commitment to research ethics, and respect for intellectual pluralism. These principles are responsible for helping to build respect and help create a friendly environment for joint cooperation, which is necessary in light of the challenges facing the country at the present time. Continued cooperation between centres will contribute to overcoming obstacles related to funding or political interference, while enhancing the exchange of expertise and resources. These three documents: “The Code of Conduct Foundations”, “The Code of Conduct Policies”, and “The Performance and Quality Evaluation Standards” form the basis for a framework aimed at enhancing cooperation between Iraqi think tanks and directing their efforts towards achieving the national interest.

The “Code of Conduct Foundations” document addresses the core principles that should govern the relationship between these centres, highlighting the values of mutual respect, neutrality, and collaborative work. As for the “Code of Conduct Policies” document, it serves as a guide for policies that promote a work environment based on integrity and transparency, which supports national unity and contributes to addressing urgent societal issues. As for the “Performance and Quality Evaluation Standards” document, it provides precise and comprehensive standards aimed at measuring the impact of these centres and ensuring the provision of high-quality research outputs that contribute to formulating effective policies.

If this protocol/code is adopted [Annex (A), (B) and (C)], Iraqi think tanks will be able to provide accurate and objective insights and recommendations that help in shaping public policies. This collaboration aims to strengthen the existing institutional capacities of these centres, with a focus on ensuring the long-term sustainability of their efforts. This initiative will undoubtedly contribute to improving the quality of life in Iraq by providing innovative and sustainable solutions to the multiple challenges facing the country, which supports the process of building a more stable and prosperous future for all.

If research centres in Iraq can organise their priorities, management and outputs, they will be considered one of the basic pillars for enhancing political, economic and social stability, driving economic development and supporting the decision-making process on sound foundations in state and community institutions. However, we all realise that achieving sustainability and continuous development of these centres requires continuous efforts and practical procedures that enhance their efficiency and ability to adapt to changing challenges. I believe that agreeing on the code and its commitments will give these centres the momentum needed to advance the private research sector, otherwise the limits of the sector's development will be modest and subject to many interventions.

In this context, this modest paper seeks to present the participation of some ideas in an interactive manner to shed light on the mechanisms for sustaining and developing the work of Iraqi private think tanks and research centres, to ensure the continuation of their effective role in formulating public policies and providing constructive scientific visions.

By following the performance of research centres and directly dealing with many of them, we can notice that the factors of trust between them or with political institutions have not risen to the point where they can develop greatly as a sector. This paper is the beginning of enriching constructive dialogue and creative interaction by Iraqi think tanks, especially in collective work and building trust between them and with the political class as well, so that these centres become a living framework that reflects the specificity of the Iraqi scene and meets its intellectual and research aspirations at the informal level. As we put these efforts in your hands, we hope that they will be the nucleus of fruitful cooperation that leads to sustainable development and building a stable homeland and a promising future.

With this, we call on everyone, politicians, elites and researchers, to work hand in hand to build a common vision for the future of Iraqi research centres, based on the foundations of sustainability, quality and innovation, as the urgent need for joint efforts to enhance the culture of scientific and academic dialogue and achieve a positive impact in shaping the future of Iraq cannot be ignored.

#### **Annex (A) – Draft Code of Conduct**

1. Encourage constructive dialogue and differences of opinion in a spirit of mutual respect.
2. Members shall refrain from using their platforms to promote their personal political agendas or political affiliations.
3. Accuracy in conveying facts to maintain credibility and trust among the public and elites of research and think tanks.
4. Leaking or misusing information may harm the credibility of the think tank and its partners.
5. Create spaces for cooperation despite political differences, which enhances mutual understanding and joint problem solving if any.
6. Members must work in an environment that promotes equality and ensures everyone's participation.
7. Ethical violations and transgressions can undermine public confidence and the integrity and credibility of think tanks and research centres as a primary and very important source in policy development.
8. Iraqi think tanks are committed to providing an effective and fair mechanism to resolve disputes that may arise between individuals or different centres. This

mechanism should be based on transparency and fairness, and disputes should be addressed through constructive dialogue and listening to all stakeholders, while ensuring that disputes do not affect the quality of research and scientific activities.

9. Promoting equality contributes to a more harmonious and productive environment of cooperation.

10. Continuous review and dialogue ensure that the alliance and cooperation between the centres remain fruitful and adaptable to changing circumstances.

11. Capacity building and strengthening support for enhancing the knowledge base and operational capabilities of all participating institutions and centres, leading to more effective and influential cooperation.

12. Commitment of all participating think tanks to a shared vision to promote comprehensive, evidence-based dialogue that contributes to the development of political, social and economic systems in Iraq.

13. The centres are committed to directing their research and studies towards addressing social and economic issues that affect citizens, with a focus on achieving social justice and sustainable development in pursuit of effective contribution to the development of public policies that serve society in general.

14. Think tanks agree on a common set of national priorities for cooperation despite differences in political backgrounds.

15. Intellectual property protection ensures that think tanks and research centres feel confident in sharing their work without fear of exploitation by adhering to the legal frameworks and limitations in force in Iraq.

16. Research centres shall adhere to transparency in order to enhance trust and ensure that all contributions to the collaborative effort are reliable and verifiable.

17. Work to create joint cooperation in organising periodic meetings, joint publications, and coordinated projects that benefit all.

18. Think tanks and research centres shall maintain the ability to pursue and defend their own research while collaborating on joint projects.



## **Annex (B) – Draft Policies of the Code of Conduct**

1. Members shall respect the political, religious, ethnic, and ideological diversity of others.
2. Think tanks shall be committed to maintaining neutrality in political discussions and avoiding partisanship for a particular political bloc, sect, or nationality, thus ensuring a neutral platform for research and dialogue.
3. Initiatives that contribute to building national unity and spreading peace and stability in Iraq shall be adopted as one main criterion for collaborative efforts in the work of think tanks.
4. Work to localise research, so that the results and analyses presented are based on reliable evidence and proof, peer review, and are free from political, partisan, sectarian, or ethnic bias.
5. All members must be transparent about their affiliations and any potential conflict of interest.
6. Members must respect the confidentiality of sensitive discussions or research results until they are officially and publicly published.
7. Encourage cooperation between think tanks and research centres, and promote open dialogue and collaborative research on national or regional issues.
8. Combat all forms of discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, religion, race, nationality, differences in political views, or social status.
9. All members must adhere to the professional and academic standards in effect in research, including respect for human rights, dignity, and fair treatment of all individuals.
10. Affiliation must be voluntary and not affect the independence of each think tank in its research or opinions.
11. Sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise in agreed-upon topics, while respecting diversity of viewpoints.
12. Membership and participation in collaborative projects shall be open to all think tanks and research centres, regardless of size, political background or geographical location, provided that they adhere to the basic principles of the protocol and code.
13. Respecting intellectual property rights in all joint research projects, with the need to take into account the rights of authors and contributors to original ideas and results.
14. A clear, fair, confidential and acceptable mechanism shall be established for resolving any disputes or conflicts that arise between allied think tanks.

15. Iraqi think tanks shall commit to providing continuous training opportunities for their staff and researchers working in them, including training courses on the principles of scientific research, research ethics, and research project management, while emphasizing the need to develop the skills necessary to enhance cooperation with other think tanks and stakeholders in the academic and political community.

16. The cooperation protocol shall include periodic reviews of the Code and policies document to assess progress, address challenges, and amend the framework as needed.

17. The cooperation shall be committed to providing equal opportunities for all members and their institutions, while ensuring that no institution or individual is discriminated against based on political views, race, religion or any other factor.

### **Annex (C) – Performance and Quality Evaluation Criteria**

To ensure the effectiveness of think tanks and enhance their contribution to decision-making, it is necessary to establish practical criteria for evaluating their performance and striving to meet quality requirements, by taking into account the following:

**1. Criteria Institutional Performance:** The evaluation aims to measure the think tank's ability to achieve its strategic objectives and its impact in supporting policies and decision-makers. This is done by reviewing its achievements, such as reports and studies, and their impact on public policies. The evaluation also includes the centre's financial and administrative transparency and the strength of its organisational structure, as disclosure of funding is an important factor to ensure objectivity and flexibility.

In addition, transparency levels are reviewed by disclosing funding sources and financial reports, which enhances trust and credibility. Through these aspects, the centre's ability to achieve sustainability and create a tangible impact can be determined.

**2. Research and Scientific Standards:** Research and scientific standards focus on ensuring accuracy and objectivity in knowledge production, by adopting rigorous research practices based on reliable scientific methodologies. The scientific methodology is the basis upon which accurate and verifiable results are achieved, as is the case in global think tanks that aim to provide in-depth and reliable analysis.

In addition to the above, the quality of research outputs is evaluated through their impact on political and social debates and the extent to which they contribute to developing public policies or directing public opinion. Influential think tanks often issue studies that inspire decision-makers or change the direction of societal debate.

To achieve objectivity and credibility, research centres subject their studies to careful arbitration through peer review mechanisms, where research is evaluated by specialised experts before publication. This method, which is a global standard, ensures the provision of reliable research that does not rely on personal opinion or individual trends, but rather on sound scientific foundations.

**3. Impact and policy criteria:** Impact and policy criteria focus on evaluating the role played by the centre in directing public policies and contributing to solving national problems. This is measured by the extent to which the research and studies issued by it are able to provide practical solutions that directly or indirectly affect government decisions or societal debates. For example, a think tank specializing in economics may contribute to providing recommendations that helped develop more sustainable financial policies or address unemployment issues.

The actual impact of this research is also monitored by studying the decisions taken by governments or institutions based on the centre's recommendations and the extent to which they adopt the proposed solutions.

To enhance this role, centres should seek to establish sustainable communication channels with decision-makers and stakeholders, ensuring continued dialogue and providing advice and support when needed. This complementary relationship between think tanks and decision-makers plays a role in helping to achieve a real and tangible impact on the ground.

**4. Standards related to human resources and capacity building:** Standards related to human resources and capacity building focus on enhancing the performance and efficiency of centre employees by investing in developing researchers' skills. This includes organising specialised training programs and workshops aimed at honing their research and methodological skills, such as using modern analysis tools or enhancing scientific writing skills. For example, international think tanks rely on

intensive training programs to ensure their teams are ready to provide accurate and influential research.

One of the roles of think tanks is cooperation between local and international researchers, which contributes to the exchange of expertise and raising scientific efficiency. Partnerships with international research institutions provide researchers with opportunities to learn about the best global practices and broaden their horizons, which is something we see in think tanks that hold conferences and forums that bring together experts from different countries.

In addition, the centre adopts clear policies that promote a work environment based on transparency, equality, and non-discrimination, which contributes to creating an environment that stimulates creativity and innovation. Providing a fair professional climate encourages researchers to do their best and enhances their continuity and contributions to achieving the centre's goals.

**5. Continuous measurement and evaluation mechanisms:** Continuous measurement and evaluation mechanisms are an essential part of ensuring the centre's effectiveness and achieving its goals. Periodic performance evaluation reports are prepared that address the centre's achievements and the challenges it faces, allowing for the identification of points that need improvement or modification. For example, these reports may include an analysis of the extent to which research impacts public policies or provides solutions to national problems.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are also relied upon to determine the extent to which strategic goals are achieved. These indicators enhance the centres' ability to measure progress, such as the number of published research, or the level of influence on decision-makers, which helps improve future plans.

In addition, the centre uses independent bodies to conduct periodic evaluations, which ensures that the evaluation process is conducted objectively and unbiased, as evaluations contribute to developing performance and improving the quality of outputs, as is the case in many global research institutions that use independent bodies to evaluate their research and performance on an ongoing basis.

**6. Striving towards quality standards:** The next step is to support think tanks to meet quality standards in several important areas through:

First: The need to encourage the establishment of a national framework for classifying think tanks according to unified standards, which contributes to defining clear standards for measuring performance and quality.

Second: Working to provide financial and technical resources to enhance the capabilities of research and administrative centres, to enable them to achieve their goals efficiently and effectively.

Third: Focusing on the importance of organising workshops and capacity-building programs that focus on quality standards and good governance, which contributes to developing skills and improving performance.

Fourth: Stimulating positive competition between think tanks through annual awards for outstanding performance, which encourages innovation and contributes to raising the level of excellence between centres.