

Independent Experts' Peace Initiatives

How it Works: Methods and Practices

The Independent Experts ' Peace Initiative (IEPI) is an independent and interdisciplinary research platform. Sponsored by the International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue-USA and the European Council for Democracy Development, its members represent many countries and think tanks. They are experts from various fields of sociology, political science, economics and the arts, who work in universities, institutes, non-governmental organizations and policy bodies.

We are very different than other initiatives of this sort: IEPI is not just a new think tank. It is a *mobile tool* that employs a conceptual apparatus capable of quickly providing the collective opinion of authoritative researchers on any given international conflict. Since different experts will surely have different views, moreover, our conceptual apparatus is flexible and it highlights the nuances of the data that has been assembled. The results will illuminate the causes and nature of the given conflict, the pros and cons of possible future scenarios , and the consequences it might have for the region and the world.

IEPI's Operational Approach:

- 1) Preparation and regular updating of a **new database** of independent experts who will participate in analyzing diverse international conflicts.
- 2) Preparation of the database will comply with the **Ethical Foundations for IEPI** operation (see below).
- 3) Carrying out a **survey among experts**. Construction an extensive survey questionnaire along with the collation of responses by experts selected to participate in the preparation of Experts ' Peace Platform (EPP) for each separate conflict. The questionnaire is not fixed; its form will depend on the particular conflict under investigation or the client's specific requests.
- 4) **Processing** of survey results, consultation with respondents, and preparation of a balanced and empirically grounded report on the given conflict.
- 5) Organizing a **scientific conference** of those experts who participated in the survey in order to discuss new developments, and approve the final EPP report.
- 6) **Promoting** the adopted report among potentially interested parties, including think tanks, non-governmental organizations, academic institutes, and political bodies.

Ethical Foundations for IEPI:

- 1) Participation is open to all with the appropriate scholarly expertise or practical experience necessary for investigating any given conflict.
- 2) Participants will not include politicians, activists, or scholars with a preconceived agenda or undue identification with one or the other parties to the conflict under investigation.

- 3) Participants will not include individuals from countries with governments that will pressure or compromise their expert assessments of the conflict.
- 4) Experts will change according to the needs of the given study and inclusion will have a flexible and informal quality that will complement all fixed and formal requirements.

Our common goals:

- 1) To quickly obtain balanced, independent, and empirically verifiable opinions from the many different experts around the world who specialize in the peaceful resolution of international conflicts.
- 2) Provide government officials, advisors, policymakers, and researchers with and existing think tanks advising policymakers and governments with an independent perspective that enables them better to compare and evaluate the information that they have acquired from more familiar sources.
- 3) Foster partnership and collaboration with policymakers, government officials, think-tank researchers, and the rest of IEPI's target audience.

PROMOTION

1. Defining the target audience

- **Think-tanks** specializing in international relations and consulting political and governmental bodies of various countries on issues of international relations.
- Political and governmental bodies in **small countries** that do not have large think tanks at their disposal or, at least, not on a regular basis
- Academic “programs,” **university research institutes**, and professional disciplinary organizations such as the American Political Science Association.
- **International bodies**, such as the European Union, and NGOs involved in peace-keeping and human rights work.
- **Media** that cover international conflicts with some degree of balance,
- **Experts** working in different disciplinary fields.

2. The project's uniqueness:

- It is thoroughly independent.
- It allows for the rapid acquisition of a generalized opinion, based on empirically verifiable data, of a different and large group of professional experts from democratic countries around the world regarding a given conflict.
- It employs a conceptual apparatus that is thoroughly transparent.
- It does not propose a single solution for the giving conflict, but predicts various possible developments based on certain political decisions.