

# **AZERBAIJAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS (UNEC)**

**UNEC POLICY ON LOCAL STAKEHOLDER  
IDENTIFICATION, ENGAGEMENT, POLICY  
PARTNERSHIPS, AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE**

# **Policy on Local Stakeholder Identification, Engagement, Policy Partnerships, and Political Dialogue**

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## Section 1. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes the institutional framework through which Azerbaijan State University of Economics (UNEC) identifies, engages, collaborates with, and supports local, regional, and national stakeholders. As a specialized university with a strong focus on economics, public administration, governance, law, and socio-economic development, UNEC recognizes its responsibility to serve society by contributing expertise, facilitating informed dialogue, and advancing evidence-based policymaking.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a structured, transparent, and accountable process for stakeholder identification and engagement
- ensure meaningful and equitable participation of community groups, governmental institutions, and civil society organizations in relevant university processes
- support public-sector decision-makers through expert advice, training, research, and capacity-building
- foster joint policy-oriented research and collaborative initiatives
- create an academically neutral space that enables open, respectful discussions among political and societal actors
- enhance the university's contribution to sustainable development, socio-economic progress, and community resilience

This policy applies to all UNEC faculties, departments, centers, and administrative units engaged in community relations, research collaboration, capacity-building, or policy advisory work.

## Section 2. Institutional Principles

UNEC adopts the following guiding principles for its engagement with external stakeholders:

### 2.1 Transparency and Accountability

All stakeholder engagement activities must be documented, accessible for review, and consistent with national legal frameworks and university governance standards.

### 2.2 Academic Impartiality and Neutrality

As a specialized economics and public-policy institution, UNEC provides advice, research, and platforms for dialogue while maintaining academic independence and avoiding political partisanship.

## **2.3 Inclusivity and Equal Access**

Engagement processes must include diverse local groups-residents, NGOs, refugees and migrant organizations, youth groups, business associations, and public-sector bodies-ensuring representation across socio-economic backgrounds.

## **2.4 Evidence-Based Contribution**

All advisory outputs, training programs, and research collaborations must follow recognized academic standards and rely on rigorous evidence, up-to-date data, and methodological integrity.

## **2.5 Community Benefit and Social Impact**

Stakeholder engagement must contribute to improving local socio-economic conditions and public institutional capacity.

## **Section 3. Identification and Mapping of Local**

As a specialized university, UNEC interacts with a wide ecosystem of actors whose expertise and needs overlap with the institution's academic mission. To ensure strategic and systematic identification, UNEC maintains the following procedures:

### **3.1 Stakeholder Mapping Framework**

UNEC conducts annual mapping of local stakeholders through:

- consultations with municipalities and district authorities
- review of local development strategies and economic plans
- analysis of civil society directories and registered organizations
- engagement with chambers of commerce and professional associations
- identification of vulnerable groups requiring targeted support

### **3.2 Categories of Stakeholders**

Stakeholders external to the university are categorized into:

1. Governmental bodies – municipal authorities, local councils, ministries, regulatory agencies
2. Civil society and community groups – NGOs, advocacy groups, refugee and migrant support organizations
3. Business and private sector partners – SMEs, industry associations, financial institutions

4. Educational and training organizations – schools, vocational centers, special advisory institutes
5. Residents and community representatives – neighborhood councils, citizen groups

### **3.3 Data Collection and Analysis**

UNEC's Community and Public Engagement Office collects and updates information on stakeholder interests, areas of expertise, policy priorities, and potential for partnership.

### **3.4 Prioritization Criteria**

Stakeholder engagement is prioritized based on:

- ✓ relevance to UNEC's academic strengths
- ✓ community demand and socio-economic need
- ✓ potential for measurable impact
- ✓ alignment with national development strategies
- ✓ capacity for long-term, mutually beneficial collaboration

## **Section 4. Stakeholder Engagement Procedures**

UNEC implements structured engagement mechanisms to ensure active and meaningful participation from local stakeholders.

### **4.1 Advisory and Consultative Structures**

#### **4.1.1 Community Advisory Board**

A permanent advisory board composed of municipal representatives, civil society leaders, private-sector stakeholders, and community members reviews major community-related initiatives and provides structured feedback.

#### **4.1.2 Thematic Consultation Panels**

Panels are formed on major policy topics-economic development, public finance, digitalization, labor markets, social welfare-to facilitate expert dialogue between UNEC and external actors.

### **4.2 Participatory Institutional Processes**

#### **4.2.1 Public Consultation on Strategic Plans**

Whenever UNEC revises its community engagement strategy or launches major applied research initiatives, external stakeholders are invited to contribute feedback.

## 4.2.2 Community Feedback Mechanisms

UNEC maintains multiple channels for stakeholder feedback:

- ❖ open online submission portals
- ❖ community forums
- ❖ scheduled dialogue sessions
- ❖ surveys and assessments

## 4.3 Collaborative Program Development

Community partners may co-design:

- training modules
- public education events
- applied research projects
- entrepreneurship support initiatives

## Section 5. Provision of Expert Advice to Government

Given its specialized expertise in economics, governance, public finance, and policy analysis, UNEC maintains formal processes for supporting government decision-making.

### 5.1 Advisory Contributions

UNEC faculty and research centers contribute to:

- government advisory committees
- parliamentary hearings
- ministerial working groups
- regulatory consultations
- National policy reform initiatives

### 5.2 Policy Briefs and Analytical Reports

UNEC produces:

- ✚ macroeconomic assessments
- ✚ sectoral economic analyses
- ✚ fiscal sustainability reports
- ✚ labor market analysis
- ✚ social policy evaluations
- ✚ regulatory impact assessments

### 5.3 Standards for Expert Engagement

All advisory contributions must:

- be evidence-based
- maintain academic neutrality
- meet professional ethical standards
- Aligning with institutional policies on public communication

## Section 6. Capacity-Building for Policymakers and Lawmakers

UNEC delivers specialized knowledge through training initiatives tailored to the public-sector needs.

### 6.1 Training Program Offered

The university offers both open-enrolment and custom-designed programs in:

- ✓ economics for public decision-makers
- ✓ public financial management
- ✓ tax policy
- ✓ governance and administrative reform
- ✓ legal frameworks for economic development
- ✓ digital transformation in public administration
- ✓ migration, displacement, and social protection
- ✓ climate change economics

### 6.2 Delivery Methods

Training is delivered through:

- short courses
- executive education
- policy workshops
- simulations and scenario-based exercises
- certificate program

### 6.3 Target Audiences

Programs are designed for:

- central and local government officials' parliamentary staff civil society leaders

- regulatory agency personnel
- municipal development planners

## Section 7. Policy-Focused Research Collaborations

UNEC actively engages in policy research with government bodies to advance evidence-based solutions.

### 7.1 Joint Research Projects

Collaborations commonly involve:

- economic modelling for national strategies
- Public finance and tax reform research
- governance system evaluations
- poverty and inequality assessments
- labor market diagnostics
- digital economy and fintech regulation

### 7.2 Research Standards and Integrity

All collaborative research must:

- ❖ follow academic ethics
- ❖ ensure data confidentiality
- ❖ undergo peer or internal review
- ❖ be grounded in transparent methodology

### 7.3 Dissemination of Findings

UNEC ensures that research results are accessible through:

- ✓ policy roundtables
- ✓ public presentations
- ✓ open academic reports
- ✓ published policy briefs

## Section 8. Neutral Platform for Political Stakeholders

UNEC provides a safe and neutral academic environment for multi-stakeholder political dialogue.

## 8.1 Principles for Hosting Political Dialogue

Dialogue platforms must follow:

- non-partisanship
- respect for diverse perspectives
- academic freedom
- confidentiality where appropriate
- professional moderation

## 8.2 Types of Engagement

UNEC hosts:

- ✚ policy roundtables
- ✚ debates among political representatives
- ✚ civil society–government dialogue sessions
- ✚ expert-led mediation forums
- ✚ public seminars on sensitive policy issues

## 8.3 Protection of Participants

The university ensures:

- ❖ safe physical spaces
- ❖ moderated discussions
- ❖ Codes of conduct
- ❖ Privacy Protocols
- ❖ prevention of political campaigning on campus

## Section 9. Governance, Monitoring, and Reporting

### 9.1 Oversight Bodies

The policy is overseen by:

- Vice-Rector for Community and Public Engagement
- UNEC Public Policy and Government Relations Office
- Community Advisory Board

### 9.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Stakeholder engagement outcomes are evaluated annually through:

- ✓ activity reports
- ✓ stakeholder feedback
- ✓ impact assessments
- ✓ review of collaborative initiatives

### 9.3 Continuous Improvement

UNEC commits to updating this policy based on:

- evolving national needs
- international quality standards
- stakeholder consultation outcomes

## Section 10. Stakeholder Registry and Documentation System

To ensure systematic, transparent, and traceable stakeholder engagement, UNEC maintains a centralized Stakeholder Registry administered by the Community and Public Engagement Office.

The registry shall:

- record stakeholder category, sector, and geographic scope
- document engagement history and outcomes
- track stakeholder interests, expectations, and policy relevance
- classify stakeholders by influence, interest, and impact level
- support planning, monitoring, and reporting processes

All faculties and administrative units must submit updated stakeholder information annually or when new collaborations are initiated.

The registry is used exclusively for institutional planning, partnership development, and evaluation purposes and is maintained in accordance with data protection and confidentiality standards.

## Section 11. Annual Stakeholder Engagement Planning

UNEC prepares an Annual Stakeholder Engagement Plan that translates institutional priorities into structured engagement actions.

The plan shall:

- define objectives and expected outcomes
- identify priority stakeholder groups
- specify engagement formats and frequency
- assigning responsible units
- allocate resources
- establish documentation requirements
- define evaluation indicators

The plan is coordinated by the Community and Public Engagement Office and approved by the Vice-Rector responsible for community and public engagement.

Mid-year review may be conducted to incorporate emerging national priorities or stakeholder needs.

## **Section 12. Feedback Integration and Decision Traceability**

UNEC ensures that stakeholder engagement contributes to real institutional learning and decision-making.

For each structured engagement activity:

- written records shall be prepared
- recommendations shall be categorized
- Responsible units shall review inputs
- decisions and actions shall be documented

Where stakeholder recommendations influence institutional policy, strategy, or programming, outcomes shall be communicated back to relevant participants.

This process guarantees transparency, accountability, and institutional responsiveness.

## **Section 13. Performance Indicators**

The effectiveness of stakeholder engagement is measured using qualitative and quantitative indicators, including:

- number and diversity of stakeholders engaged
- frequency of structured engagement activities
- number of joint initiatives and partnerships
- stakeholder satisfaction levels
- number of policy recommendations adopted
- measurable social or institutional impact

Indicators are reviewed annually and may be updated in line with the best international practices.

#### **Section 14. Grievance and Ethical Engagement**

Stakeholders may raise concerns, complaints, or feedback regarding engagement processes through designated institutional channels.

UNEC ensures that:

- all concerns are acknowledged promptly
- reviews are conducted impartially
- confidentiality is respected
- responses are provided within a reasonable timeframe
- no retaliation occurs for good-faith submissions

Complex cases may be referred to relevant compliance, ethics, or legal bodies within the university.

#### **Section 15. Review and Revision of the Policy**

This policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with:

- national legislation
- International higher-education standards
- stakeholder expectations
- institutional strategic priorities

Revisions shall be coordinated by the responsible Vice-Rector and submitted for institutional approval.

### **Section 16. Conflict of Interest and Independence**

UNEC ensures that all stakeholder engagement and advisory activities are conducted free from undue influence.

Staff participating in policy engagement must disclose potential conflicts of interest, including financial, institutional, or political affiliations.

Where a conflict exists, mitigation measures shall be applied, including recusal, disclosure, or independent review.

### **Section 17. Risk Management in Stakeholder Engagement**

UNEC identifies and manages risks related to stakeholder engagement, including reputational, political, ethical, and operational risks. Risk assessments shall be conducted prior to major engagements, and mitigation strategies shall be documented.

### **Section 18. Digital Engagement Infrastructure**

UNEC maintains digital platforms for stakeholder consultation, including online consultation portals, virtual forums, and digital feedback systems.

These platforms ensure accessibility, transparency, and real-time participation.

### **Section 19. Alignment with International Standards**

This policy is implemented in alignment with international best practices in university–society engagement, including principles of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and responsible public engagement.

### **Section 20. Engagement in Sensitive Contexts**

For engagements involving politically sensitive or socially controversial issues, UNEC shall apply enhanced moderation, risk assessment, and ethical oversight procedures to ensure safe and respectful dialogue.

## Section 21. Conclusion

As a specialized university with deep expertise in economics, governance, public administration, and social policy, UNEC recognizes its responsibility to contribute meaningfully to public decision-making and community development. Through structured stakeholder engagement, expert advisory work, training for policymakers, collaborative research, and the provision of neutral dialogue platforms, the university strengthens its societal impact and supports sustainable national progress.

