

Practicing what we preach: Depolicy receives 4* transparency rating

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Transparency is one of the enduring (exasperating, some might say) topics that [we have focused on](#) in our research around Australian aid and global development.

So we were pleased indeed to learn (belatedly; the report was released back in June) that we ourselves were rated as 'broadly transparent' in Transparify's [2016 survey of think tank financial transparency](#) [pdf].

[Transparify](#), a Tblisi-based non-profit funded by the Open Society Foundations, conducted a survey of 200 think tanks in 47 countries, rating them on the extent to which they publicly disclose on their websites where their funding comes from. Institutions are rated on a scale from 0 stars ('highly opaque') to 5 stars ('highly transparent').

Depolicy was a new addition to Transparify's survey in 2016, and achieved a rating of 4 stars ('broadly transparent') out of a maximum of five, as did the Australian Institute for International Affairs (AIIA). Within our region, only two think tanks (in India and Pakistan) scored better than us, and several scored worse – including the Lowy Institute, which received just two stars, and the Centre for Independent Studies, a libertarian think tank which describes itself as "Australia's leading independent public policy research institute" and which received no stars at all.

Globally, the survey findings indicate a trend towards increasing transparency in policy research and advocacy. Whereas in 2013 (the first year that Transparify conducted its survey) only 25 think tanks in their original sample of 169 were rated transparent (4 or 5 stars), by 2016 this number more than doubled. As Transparify [notes](#) on its website, promoting transparency as a standard helps to ensure the credibility of the research and policy advice produced by think tanks.