Advocacy for business associations

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Private sector advocacy

> Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
> Margaret Mead, American anthropologist, 1901-1978

Who is this workbook for?

This book provides an introduction to advocacy for business associations and others who are seeking to influence public policy. Business associations are groups of businesses coming together to promote their common interests. The groups are defined either by a specific geographic area, often known as a chamber, or by a particular sector. In some countries, associations are known as business membership organisations (BMO) and, in others, as private sector organisations (PSO).

Business associations can also be composed of groups of associations, often called apex associations. Examples include the Tanzania Private Sector Forum (TPSF), the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and the (Ghana) Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF).

Associations of associations also exist at regional level. For example, the East Africa Business Council represents business associations, and thus the private sector, within the East African Community.

This chapter explains:

- What advocacy is
- Why business advocacy is important to governments
- The challenges of engaging in advocacy on behalf of the business community

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of influencing, or attempting to influence, the way that a policy maker thinks about, and acts on, an issue. So private sector advocacy describes attempts by the private sector to influence the development and implementation of public policies in an effort to improve the business environment. Depending on the objective and the target audience the advocacy might be intended to raise awareness of an issue, to seek support for a point of view, or to impel someone to act.

The term advocacy is not normally used to describe activities that are simply marketing, or one sector seeking to gain a competitive advantage over another, or dealing with one-off problems for individual businesses.

Advocacy is important

Governments create the political and economic environment in which their countries' businesses operate. They are responsible for providing, or ensuring the provision of, a range of public services. And governments legislate and regulate. Indeed, many politicians think the reason that they were elected to Parliament is to legislate.

You will hear the terms 'enabling environment' or 'investment climate'. These refer to the economic, social and physical context in which businesses operate, and cover a wide range of factors which impact on the 'cost of doing business' and make it more or less likely that businesses, both domestic and foreign, will want to invest:

- Legislative & regulatory framework (including employment legislation, environmental legislation, consumer protection, health & safety, taxation, duties and tariffs, etc)
- Government policy & macro-economy
- Access to finance
- Protection of intellectual property rights

- Availability of skilled labour
- Commercial justice & contract enforcement
- Infrastructure (power, water, telecoms, etc)
- Transport
- Land ownership

Regulations are a form of government intervention in the economy. The OECD explains that regulation covers "the full range of legal instruments and decisions through which governments establish conditions on the behaviour of citizens or enterprises". In this workbook, 'regulation' is used to define all statutory requirements, whether enacted by Parliament or by local government or additional rules prepared by agencies such as the tax authority.

While there are costs associated with regulation, benefits also accrue, though generally it is society that gains from the benefits whilst business pays the costs. For example, imposing health and safety requirements on business creates costs for those businesses, but aims to reduce the risk (and the cost to society and to the business) of people having accidents at work.

Governments need private business

There is a growing body of evidence that investment climate improvements encourage economic growth and so have a stronger long term social impact than similarly sized poverty alleviation projects.

Reducing the burden on business is not the same as reducing the total number of legislative requirements. Some regulations benefit business owners, especially those aimed at helping to create a 'level playing field'. However, even potentially beneficial regulations are often rushed through in response to some apparently urgent need and, even when not rushed, are often poorly designed, so increasing the administrative burden for those firms who attempt to comply, and leaving the door open to corrupt practices.

The World Bank report, 'Doing Business in 2005', stresses that:

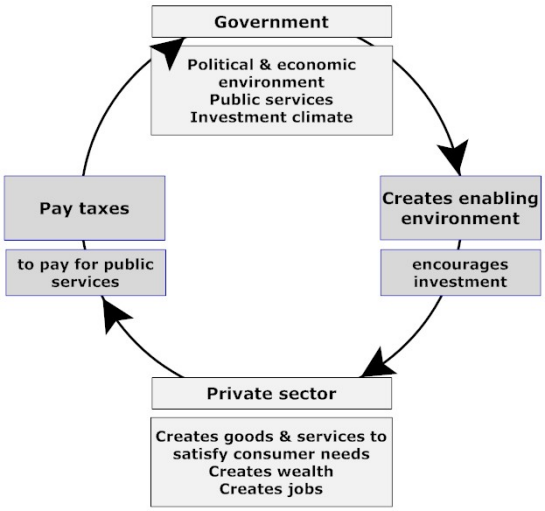
- Countries that reduce regulatory burdens tend to enjoy greater rates of business growth.
- The payoffs from reform appear to be large, with estimates that an improvement in the ease of doing business from the bottom quartile of countries to the top could add two percentage points to annual economic growth.
- Heavy regulation and weak property rights exclude the poor – especially women and younger people – from doing business: countries with simpler regulations provide better social protections and a better economic climate for business people, investors, and the general public.

The World Bank goes on to suggest that regulatory reform fosters non-inflationary growth, boosts consumer benefits, improves the competitiveness of export and upstream sectors, enhances flexibility and innovation in the supply-side of the economy do reducing vulnerability to economic shocks, creates jobs, strengthens regulatory protection for health and safety, the environment and consumers.

The 2005 World Development Report also points out that regulatory reform supports investment, innovation and business creation in as much as it reduces corruption, over-regulation, weak contract enforcement and inadequate infrastructure. It notes that a good investment climate encourages firms to invest by removing unjustified costs, risks and barriers to competition.

Business growth creates a virtuous cycle for government – with the private sector investing and growing and so paying more taxes which government can use to provide more social services.

Figure 1: The virtuous circle



Source: adapted from an original idea by Clive Davis, KIPPRA, 2000

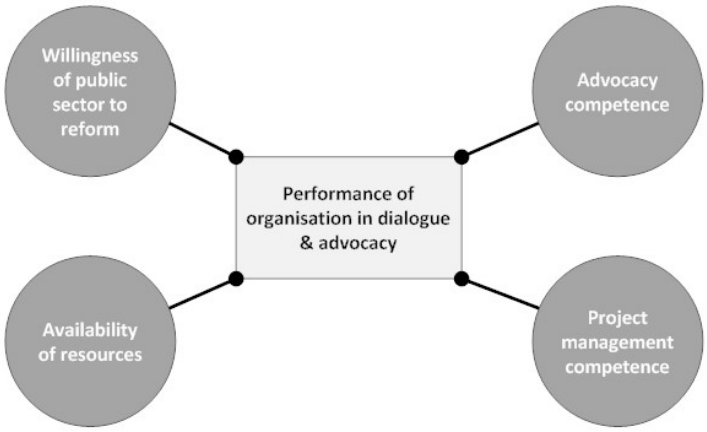
THE CHALLENGES OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy presents a number of challenges:

- **The public sector might not be open to influence**. Willingness or ability to listen is affected by political leadership, the stage in the political cycle, the salience and contentiousness of the issue, the effectiveness of existing partnerships between private and public sectors and the credibility of the BMO or the coalition seeking the policy change.
- **Government might receive conflicting messages from different advocacy organisations with different interests**. For example, trades unions or employers' associations might be arguing for a higher minimum wage, but manufacturing associations might be arguing for a lower minimum wage.
- **Advocacy projects take time**. Associations need the capacity to keep going and the skills to ensure a campaign stays fresh.
- **Writing a research report on the advocacy issue is not sufficient**. Associations need expertise in influencing tactics and approaches so that they can communicate key messages to decision-makers in a persuasive manner. Tactics and approaches might need to change in response to new information, the work of other advocates, changes in the environment, and opportunities that emerge.

The success of an advocacy project depends on four broad factors:

Figure 2: Factors impacting on a BMO's advocacy success



Source: Irwin Grayson Associates

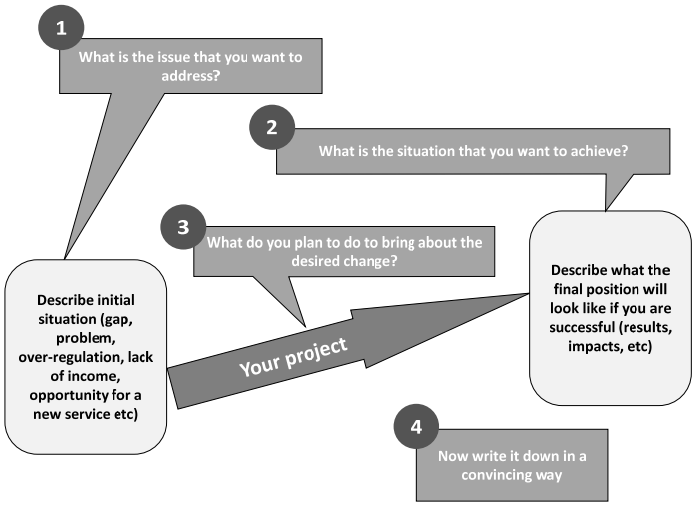
THE FIVE STEP APPROACH

You will be more successful in your advocacy if:

- You have a clear picture of your objectives
- You have thought about how to achieve your objectives
- You understand the order in which actions need to take place
- You appreciate the timescale actions are likely to take

In other words, it helps to have a strategy for your advocacy campaign.

Figure 3: Advocacy strategy

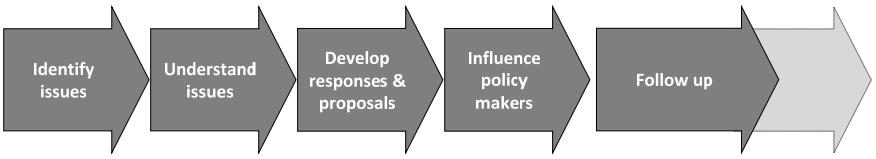


Source: adapted from an original idea by Jean-Luc Aldorf, BUSAC, Ghana

We suggest you structure your advocacy strategy and work by thinking about five steps or elements:

- **Identifying the issues**, that is, defining the problems. This might come from business, from government or from other stakeholders (such as consumers, employees, NGOs, etc) and may require effort before you understand the real issues and can prioritise them.
- **Understanding the issues**, that is, researching and analysing the problems. This requires framing the research question, including a systematic gathering of views, the ability to draw logical conclusions and a process for developing consensus internally.
- **Developing responses and proposals**, that is, offering a solution to the problem, which requires the distillation of objective evidence from reliable sources, the consideration of policy options and the preparation of a compelling argument for the chosen option.
- **Reaching appropriate people in Government** to influence public policy, that is, building relationships based on trust and mutual respect, presenting compelling arguments and adapting tactics to the circumstances.
- **Monitoring progress** to ensure that, when the public sector agrees changes, they are put into practice.

Figure 4: Steps in the advocacy process



Source: Irwin Grayson Associates

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced concepts of public private dialogue and private sector advocacy. It has explained the importance of splitting any advocacy project into the five simple steps required for a successful project. It has explored the factors that might make the difference between success and failure.

In the rest of this workbook, we explore the organisational context for business advocacy, give you some tools to structure your thinking about an advocacy project and provide checklists and resources to support each task in the five step model of advocacy.

Further reading

- Sharma, R. “An introduction to advocacy”, SARA/AED pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNABZ919.pdf
- CIPE (2003), “How to advocate effectively: a guidebook for business associations”, www.cipe.org
- Herzberg, B. & Wright, A. (2006), “The PPD Handbook: a toolkit for business environment reformers”, DFID/World Bank/IFC/OECD
- OECD (1994), “Improving the Quality of Laws and Regulations: Economic, Legal and Managerial Techniques”
- OECD Principles of Good Regulation – which may help in assessing existing regulation as well as in making suggestions – are available at …
- Chapman, J. & Warneyo, A. (2001), “Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study”, Action Aid
- Coates, B. & David, R. (2002), “Learning for Change: the Art of Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Work”, Development in Practice, Vol 12, 530-541.

Creating an effective business association

> Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.
>
> Barack Obama

Introduction

Associations will be more effective in their advocacy if they are well run, respected by their members and other stakeholders, and sufficiently funded and staffed. Advocacy projects will be undermined if the association is criticised by businesses in the sector, if staff are concerned about whether they will be paid, if policy makers see a succession of staff who do not understand the history of an issue or if members spend their time discussing the organisation's structure rather than focusing on the key objectives. While an association's main activity may be its advocacy, it will quickly discover that all businesses in the sector benefit irrespective of whether they join and pay a subscription. So, in addition to representing members on wider policy and practice, associations often also provide services to members which provide benefits sufficient to encourage members to pay their subscriptions.

This chapter explains the importance and meaning of:

- Strong relationships with members
- Long term sustainability
- Operating professionally
- Good governance
- A sound strategy

Strong member relationships

Building strong relationships with members will help associations to be more effective in their advocacy projects:

- Members can help identify, define and prioritise issues.
- Members can help to build a reservoir of data and other information – including the evidence of practices and lessons from other countries – to enable the association better to argue its case and understand other stakeholders' viewpoints on public issues.
- Associations can provide a central point for local and national governments or foreign organisations wishing to deal collectively with businesses.
- Involving members in projects can build advocacy competence within the sector.

Providing services alongside advocacy can assist both associations and members:

- Bringing members together can lead to wider collaboration, enhancing the capability of members to implement larger scale projects beyond the reach of any single business.
- Giving businesses a public profile can encourage integrity, public accountability and professionalism amongst members.

Members will be more committed to the association if it is able to provide good quality services which offer cost-effective support.

Long term sustainability

Business associations often form to give their members a voice. However, as noted above, for most issues businesses in the sector benefit from the association's success in influencing policy irrespective of whether they join the association and pay a subscription. This is the so-called 'free rider' problem. Associations therefore need to provide other services if they are to attract and retain subscription paying members.

Services include trade and market development, training, advice and consultancy, standards setting, information and networking, office facilities, delegated government functions and social welfare.

Table 1: Types of services delivered by BMOs

Services	Examples
Trade and market development	▪ Organising exhibitions and trade fairs ▪ Facilitating market research ▪ Information on export markets ▪ Bringing together buyers and sellers ▪ Trade delegations ▪ Group marketing (possibly allied with standards and membership as assurance of quality ▪ Group procurement ▪ Develop codes of conduct
Training	▪ Management training ▪ Technical and vocational training ▪ Development of training manuals ▪ Training curricula and standards
Advice and consultancy	▪ Best practice benchmarking among members ▪ Business counselling and mentoring ▪ Information on regulatory requirements ▪ Legal services ▪ Financial and taxation advice ▪ Accountancy and bookkeeping services ▪ Quality standards, ISO 9000 ▪ Environment standards, ISO14000 ▪ Hygiene standards, HACCP and ISO 22000
Standards setting	▪ Developing and implementing product or service standards ▪ Developing and implementing professional standards
Information and networking	▪ Regular business meetings ▪ Industry clubs and committees ▪ Internet-based business contacts ▪ Newsletters and publications ▪ Membership directory and database ▪ Annual report
Advocacy	▪ Identify issues of concern ▪ Lobby for changes in public policy affecting all members ▪ Support members with individual cases
Office facilities and infrastructure services	▪ Secretarial services ▪ Computer services ▪ Telecommunications ▪ Internet access ▪ Providing arbitration services
Delegated government functions	▪ Business registration ▪ Issuing certificates of origin ▪ Registration of samples ▪ Develop and supervise industry standards
Social welfare	▪ Setting up and managing a savings and loans scheme ▪ Establishing a social or sickness benefit fund

Source: Adapted from World Bank, "Building the capacity of membership organisations", 2005

Think carefully about the services you provide, or would like to provide, and whether these are expected by members as part of their subscription or whether you could charge extra. Think, too, about whether the services make a sufficient 'offer' to attract members because they perceive the benefits are worth more than the cost of membership.

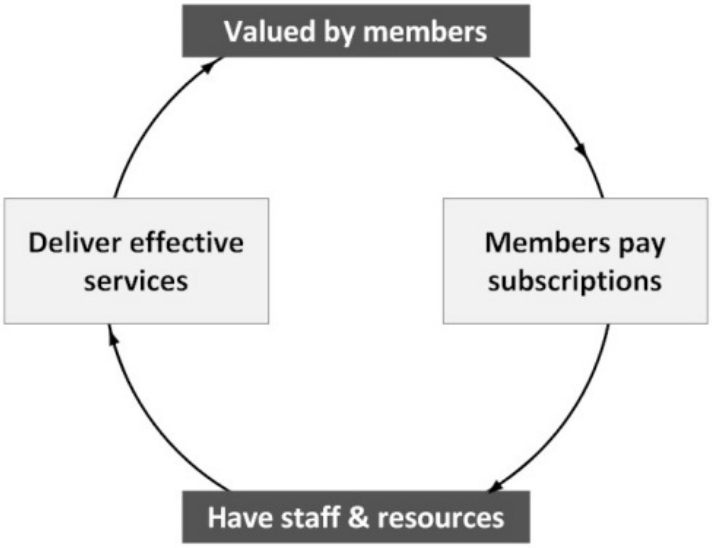
It is not enough simply to offer a range of services and hope for the best. Like any other business, associations need to ensure that the quality of the services matches the needs and aspirations of the members. That way, members will continue to use the service – and will recommend that other businesses join as well.

It is important that the services being offered fit the strategy adopted by the organisation. Offering services simply to make a profit to subsidise other parts of the organisation is unrealistic. However, the provision of services will, if done well, make a contribution to the organisation's overheads, will enable the organisation to employ more staff than it might otherwise be able to employ and thus have more people with more experience when needed, will raise the profile of the association and will expand the offer to potential members – who will pay subscriptions. So ensure that the services offered all reflect, and contribute to, the association's purpose – and that they are valued by the members.

Co-operative societies in Nigeria

In some countries, very small businesses often come together in co-operative societies. This is especially common in places such as Kano in Nigeria. A typical co-op may have 10-20 members who come together originally to provide rudimentary social welfare whereby if one member cannot work for a period, the other members support him or her. Typically they then start to explore group procurement of raw materials, sharing work when one or two members have too much, and group marketing.

Figure 5: The big challenge



Professional operations

Associations benefit from having:

- A core team, with at least one paid member of staff and a permanent office. This gives the association capacity and independence from individual members.
- Technical skills, especially in financial management, project management, marketing, negotiation, research and evaluation.
- Systems for member communications, collection and recording of membership fees, financial management, project management etc.
- Some income so that they are not dependent on donors' grants or public subsidy. This is important to allow an independent voice.

Good governance

Corporate governance is the system by which organisations are directed and managed, including specifying how the objectives of the association are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and assessed, and how performance is optimised.

Good corporate governance structures encourage organisations to create value (through entrepreneurship, innovation, development and exploration) and provide accountability and control systems commensurate with the risks involved.

Good governance principles

The principles of good governance are:

- **Clear direction**. The organisation is led and controlled by an effective board of trustees who have a clear understanding of the organisation's purpose, direction and priorities and act as the guardian of the organisation's values.
- **Strong leadership**. Board members or trustees make strong and balanced decisions and take collective responsibility to ensure delivery of the association's objectives with a focus on long term impact.
- **Clear responsibilities**. Trustees feel collective responsibility and understand they are accountable for ensuring that the organisation is performing well, is solvent and complies with all its obligations. Everyone on the board and all the senior staff have read and understood the Memorandum & Articles, or other governing documents, and is confident that the organisation's systems and procedures reflect the requirements set out in the governing documents.
- **Strong expertise**. The board is structured to add value: its composition, size and commitment are appropriate to discharge its responsibilities and duties effectively including co-opting directors in addition to those elected by the members in order to bring specific expertise.
- **Focus on the strategic.** Trustees hold the executive to account and offers support where needed, but do not interfere in the day-to-day management of the organisation. Everyone on the board and all the senior staff have read and understood the organisation's strategy, business plan and financial plan and are clear about the organisation's objectives and priorities.
- **Management of conflicts of interests.** Conflicts of interests are systematically reported and reflected in decision making, usually by any member withdrawing from a decision from which they could benefit.
- **Good use of time**. Board meetings are well structured and decisive. Trustees are given well prepared reports, papers and proposals. Trustees read the papers they are given before the meeting.
- **Integrity**. Trustees act in accordance with high ethical standards, and promote ethical and responsible decision-making.
- **Control**. Trustees know how to read and interpret management accounts. Accounts are audited and published annually. Trustees ensure risks are assessed, mitigated and effectively managed.
- **Collegiate**. Trustees have good relationships with the executive and other stakeholders, based on trust, openness, transparency and accountability. The board respects the rights of the members and ensures that members can exercise their rights. The board recognises the legitimate interests of stakeholders.
- **Continual improvement**. Trustees periodically review their own and the organisation's effectiveness and take steps to ensure that both continue to work well.

A sound strategy

The organisations that survive and prosper are those that meet their customers' needs by providing benefits to them at prices which cover the cost of providing them and make a contribution towards paying for the overheads. It is therefore important to think strategically. Do you know how you intend to achieve your aspirations? If so, you have a strategy. It doesn't have to be complicated; indeed, the simpler you keep it, the easier it is to remember. Taking a strategic view of your organisation will help you to think about your over-arching goals and how

you expect to achieve them. Having a strategy should not be seen as a straightjacket – but as a framework enabling you both to keep the organisation on course and to exploit appropriate opportunities as they arise. The strategy must be flexible, but without some long term objectives you will not be able to manage your direction.

Strategy needs to consider these issues:

- **Purpose**. What the organisation exists for
- **Vision or direction**. Where the organisation wants to go
- **Values**. How the organisation will assess different potential routes to the strategic goals
- **Environment**. The external pressures that will affect the organisation's journey
- **Stakeholders**. The different people and groups who will interact with the organisation
- **Organisational resources**. The core character of the organisation
- **Strategic fit**. How the different parts of the organisation fit together
- **Strategic options**. The different routes for getting where the organisation wishes to go
- **Positioning**. How the organisation fits with other organisations
- **Risks**. The hazards that could affect the organisation on its journey
- **Logic**. The assumptions the organisation has made about how the chosen route will lead to the destination
- **Success**. How the organisation will recognise when it has reached its destination
- **Measurement**. How the organisation will check that it is heading in the right direction

Effective strategies:

- Define the association's long term direction
- Concentrate on activities the association is best placed to deliver, either because of its structure or skills
- Match the association's activities to the environment
- Match the association's activities to their anticipated resources (and set out how to secure more resources)
- Reflect the values and expectations of the association's members

Every organisation has a strategy of some sort. A tacit strategy, that is a strategy that is not formally articulated, or an emergent strategy, that is one that emerges as the organisation progresses, is unlikely to be as successful as a strategy which is planned, where the organisation is being proactive rather than being reactive and where the business is creating opportunities rather than responding to them.

Strategic planning can help with:

- **Focusing ideas**. The process of planning forces the board and staff to think through and refine goals and objectives.
- **Assessing viability**. Regularly ensuring that there will be sufficient income to cover all the costs and ideally contribute to a small reserve.
- **Maintaining control**. Knowing where the association is now, how it is performing and where it is going.

Conclusion

It is very easy for business associations to drift – the board are all voluntary and have their own businesses to run – or for the staff to pursue their own interests without the support of the members. The associations that are the most successful are those that have committed and competent boards with strong and experienced staff, that have a clear strategy, that involve their members and that deliver services desired by their members.

Further reading and further information

- *"Building the capacity of business membership organisations", World Bank/IFC, 2005*
- *Johnson, G. & Scholes, K. (1993), "Exploring Corporate Strategy", Prentice Hall*
- *Kaplan, R.S. & Norton, D.P. (2001), "The strategy focused organisation", Harvard Business School Press*
- *Trade Association Forum, www.taforum.org*
- *'Best Practice Guide' for Trade Associations – see www.taforum.org/a-*
- *For further information on putting customers first, go to www.customerfirst.org*
- *One component of good practice is having a code of ethics: a model code is available at www.businessadvocacy.net*
- *American Society of Association Executives, www.asaecenter.org*
- *European Society of Association Management, www.esae.org*

Planning for success

> First, have a definite, clear practical ideal; a goal, an objective. Second, have the necessary means to achieve your ends: wisdom, money, materials, and methods. Third, adjust all your means to that end.
>
> Aristotle (384 - 322 BC)

Introduction

Associations involve many members with different objectives. Externally, associations face a wide array of expectations and demands. So, being clear about the issue, the objectives and the intended impact will make an enormous difference in planning effective advocacy projects. Logic models provide a systematic approach, assisting you to think through all the steps in a logical and coherent way linking the activities to the desired results and being clear about the cause and effect. A logic model will enable you to present the plan in a simple, graphical way. Importantly it will help you explore whether there are gaps or flaws in the case you are building.

Logic models can help with:

- **Project design**. Helping you to think through and explain clearly the steps and assumptions, in other words, to be clear about what needs to be done to deliver the desired outcomes, that is to be clear about the theory of change.
- **Project implementation**. Providing a summary of prioritised activities and performance indicators so that you can keep focused on achieving results.
- **Project evaluation**: demonstrating the intended causal connections.

This chapter introduces logic models.

Logic models for advocacy

Members will expect the association to be clear on the cost and other requirements of an advocacy project. There are so many variables that doing this exactly is impossible. However, careful planning, including the preparation of a logic model will provide a broad understanding of your requirements and enable you to manage members' expectations accordingly. However, there is no point in beginning a campaign if it will undermine the credibility of the association with members and policy makers if you do not have sufficient resources to see it through.

A further benefit of developing a logic model is that it will help you to communicate your campaign clearly to members and for them to anticipate its effects on their businesses. For example, a campaign to reduce the price of a raw material may initially seem attractive to manufacturers, but smaller members with weaker brands may be forced to reduce the price they charge to retailers and thus see their margins eroded.

The figure illustrates the requirements of a logic model for a typical advocacy project.

Defining the problem

The first requirement is to be clear about the problem that is to be addressed – and whilst it is generally easy to see the symptoms, the cause is sometimes less obvious.

Goal

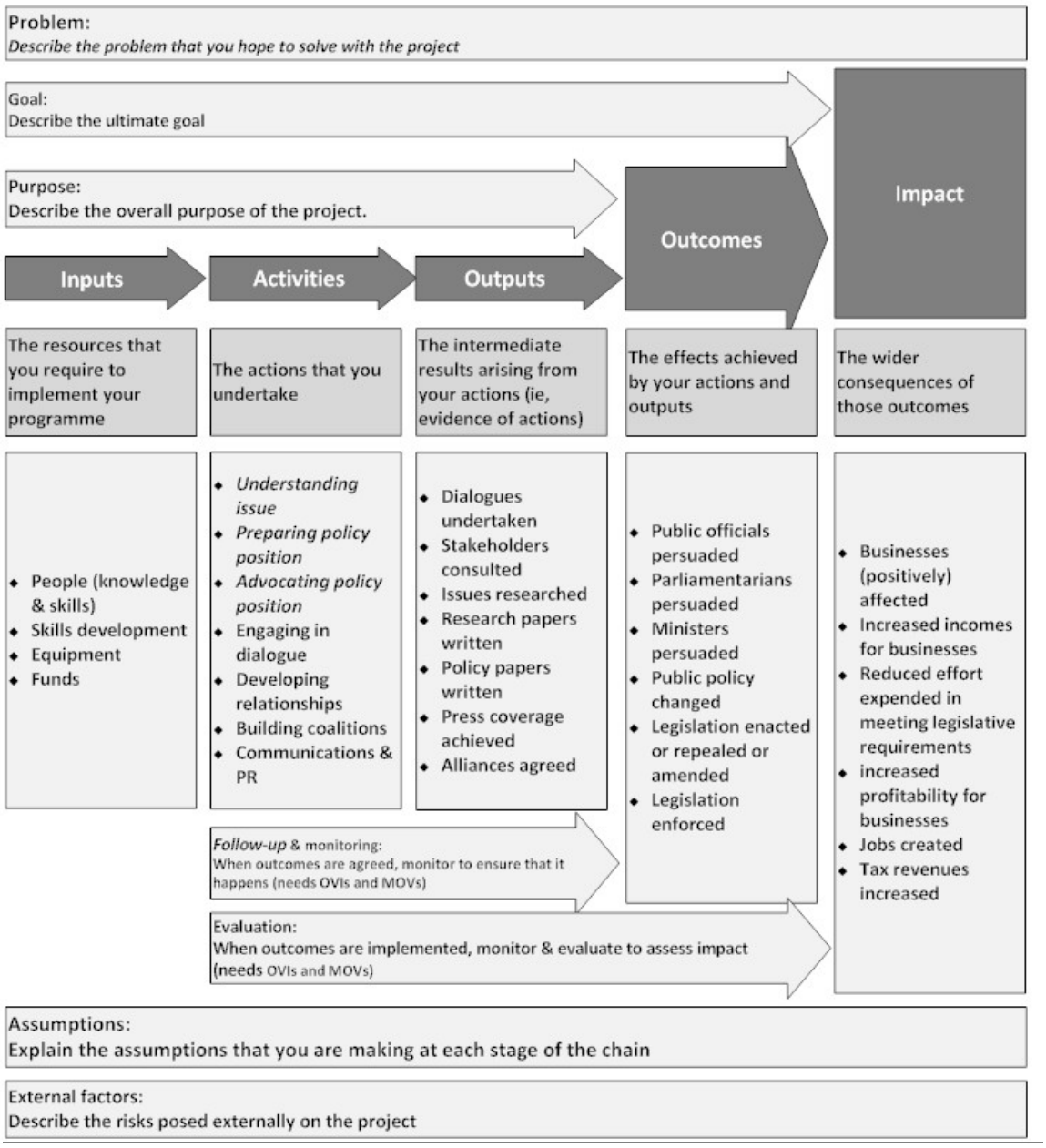
The goal requires careful thought. Often, in emerging economies, it is defined as alleviating poverty or improving livelihoods. There is nothing wrong with this – though the project will not be the sole contributor to achieving the goal and so it will be hard to demonstrate attribution. Don't be afraid to choose a narrower goal. It is important, however, that the goal provides the reason for the project.

Purpose

The purpose describes what the project will do: it should summarise succinctly and clearly the intended outcomes. The purpose might, for example, be to simplify the tax regime or to abolish

the need for businesses to apply annually for a licence to operate. It needs to be clear how the purpose will contribute to achieving the goal.

Figure 6: Logic model for typical advocacy project



The chain

The inputs and activities describe your planned work.

The inputs include human, financial, physical and organisational resources available to the project.

Activities are what you do with the resources and which, if implemented effectively, will lead to the desired results, that is, the outputs, outcomes and impact. It is worth noting that the five step approach focuses on five specific activities. Defining the problem is a pre-cursor to designing a project. Then comes research, policy formulation and advocacy. The last activity is follow-up, shown in a separate box in the figure because until there are some outcomes, there is nothing to follow up, but it is an activity nevertheless.

Outputs are the direct results of the activities. They are the evidence, if you like, of the activities having taken place. They will usually describe what has been delivered or produced, such as research reports completed or participants in training programmes.

Outcomes describe the change in behaviour or attitude (such as agreement to change a public policy or people acting differently following a training programme) or a change in the environment (such as a public policy changed) brought about by the project.

Impact describes the wider consequences arising from the outcomes. An outcome might be that farmers have adopted a new technology; the impact would be higher yields, raised incomes and improved livelihoods. An outcome might be that the business registration process has been simplified; the impact might be that twice as many new businesses have been formed in a similar period.

Assumptions and risks

How will outputs lead to outcomes, and outcomes lead to impact? Assumptions describe the links in the model, the conditions that must be true for the logic to work. They explain why we think something will lead to something else. For example, trainers may assume that participants in their training courses will change their behaviour as a result of their participation. But if they have been coerced into attending, or if their prior knowledge is too basic, or if they are too embarrassed to put into practice what they have learnt, then probably no change in behaviour will occur. An agricultural technology transfer programme many assume that farmers will learn about new technologies and then start to implement them – but if there is a cost, and they do not have the finance, then they will be unable to do so.

Making assumptions

The Business Advocacy Fund in Kenya makes some important assumptions in its advocacy support programme, including:

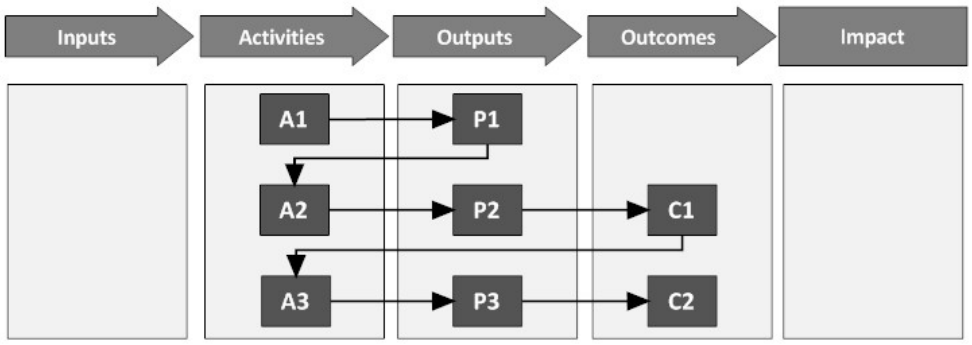
- *that training one or two people in a business membership organisation strengthens the capacity of the whole BMO*
- *that training, mentoring and consultancy leads to an increase in advocacy and institutional competence and a change in behaviour*

Assumptions are generally outside the direct control of the project. If the assumption is particularly important to the success of the project – say an assumption that government will listen when trade associations advocate – then it is sensible to monitor whether the assumption is mistaken. Ultimately the project may need to address the assumption or even redesigned to ensure that the problem does not undermine the project's success.

External factors are factors completely beyond the control of the project – such as the rain failing, or the government falling in a coup. These are not failures in the logic, though they may have a catastrophic effect.

Logic chains are often drawn from left to right, but this is not to say that the action on which they are based is linear. Actions might start and end at different times, for example if they depend on outputs or knowledge from another activity. By way of example, you will need to have completed researching an issues before you are able to develop a policy position and you will need an agreed policy position before you can start to advocate.

Figure 7: Timing in logic chains



Monitoring progress

Targets & milestones

Once you are clear about your intended activities you need to set targets and milestones. If you achieve these, it is highly likely that you will achieve the outputs and – if your logic is right – the outcomes.

A target is a specified level of achievement, for example, government agreement to implement at least half of a list of 20 VAT exclusions.

A milestone is a critical point in the project by which time key activities will have been completed or key targets will have been achieved.

Monitoring progress towards targets and milestones is an important task of project management.

Monitoring and evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation requires that there is evidence of achievement that can be objectively verified. The evidence is provided through indicators (sometimes called OVIs). For an activity, the indicators are likely to be the same as the targets – but sometimes the evidence of achievement is a proxy, or an evaluated assessment. Indicators require a 'means of verification, in other words, a source that will verify the achievement.

Goal evidence

The goal is the over-arching objective, so the indicator needs to demonstrate that there has been some real impact or, at the very least, a contribution to real impact. Note in the example that this is often difficult to assess directly so proxy indicators have to be used.

Purpose evidence

Purpose evidence will need to demonstrate that outcomes have been achieved, often characterised as people behaving in new ways. Purpose evidence may be direct or proxy. In the example box, there are four indicators. The first three are direct but the last one is a proxy – since the advocacy project may not have been the trigger that secured the change, though may well have contributed to it.

Activity and output evidence

The evidence that activities have taken place are the outputs, sometimes call the deliverables. This evidence will always be direct.

Quantitative & qualitative indicators

There may be need for both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Look again at the purpose indicators in the example box. Three of the indicators are a simple count, but the first indicator – improvement in competence – requires some sort of qualitative assessment. In the case of the Business Advocacy Fund, it uses a diagnostic assessment tool to produce an assessment of competence on a reasonably consistent basis. If your indicator is improvements in research reports, then you will need to be able to compare now and then – so will probably design a scoring system based on seven or eight criteria to help you.

Indicators

The Business Advocacy Fund in Kenya has a goal "to improve the enabling environment through the formulation and implementation of policies conducive to private sector growth".

Indicators include business leaders' perception studies, assessments of the number of businesses positively affected by advocacy projects and the World Bank Doing Business report rating.

The purpose is to build the competence and sustainability of business associations to engage effectively in dialogue and to advocate improvements in public policy.

Indicators include improvement of BMOs to engage in dialogue; BMOs actively engaged in dialogue; BMOs actively pursuing advocacy projects; and advocacy projects have secured changes in public policy.

Conclusion

Using logic models will help you clarify, at an early stage, desired outcomes and impacts – and help you think about how you might achieve your objectives. If you have a number of competing issues, preparing logic models for each may help you to prioritise – by thinking through the scale of the potential impact and the effort required to achieve the policy change.

Further reading and further information

- *"Logic model development guide", W K Kellogg Foundation, 2004: see cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/pi/ppf/LogicModel.pdf*
- *www.innonet.org*

Identify the issues

> Issues are never simple
> Barack Obama

Introduction

Business associations do not have the resources to try to influence everything government so, so you need to prioritise and focus your time and effort on a few important issues. If you get this stage wrong then, you could find that

- You are trying to do too much at once and your team is over-stretched
- Your efforts go unrewarded because there is no decision making window and government is not interested in your issue
- You have low credibility because the issue is perceived as driven by a small number of members who are not concerned with the good of the whole sector
- Your activities are going around in circles because your issue is not clear to you or to others you try to involve;
- Any success in advocacy might have limited impact because the issue pursued is not the root of the problem businesses are experiencing

You cannot just guess what is important; rather you need to adopt a systematic approach so that you discover what is important to your members or what would be important if they knew about it. This is especially important for associations with just one or two members of staff or associations that rely on volunteers from amongst their members.

This chapter covers

- Developing a long list of possible issues
- Clarifying what the issues actually are
- Identifying a short list of prioritised issues

Identifying possible issues

Principles

The overall principles of identifying a long list of issues are:

- **Be proactive**. Do not wait for members to tell you about issues. Being systematic in your search for possible advocacy issues will give you a broader perspective and an earlier time to take action.
- **Be always on the look-out**. Searching for issues should be a continuous process, not a one-off activity.
- **Be systematic**. If you are to choose between issues then you need to have comparable information on each.
- **Be impact oriented**. Your aim should be to create the most long-term benefit for the sector.
- **Be transparent.** You will need to explain to members and other stakeholders why you have prioritised some issues over others.
- **Be opportunistic**. Timing is important.

Ways of identifying issues

You can identify a long list of possible issues through several different means:

- **Members**. It is likely that association members, given half a chance, will raise issues of concern. Some of these will be individual rather than advocacy issues, for example securing a trading permit or access to finance or local harassment. Individual issues unlikely to lead to proposals for change in public policy, but supporting members in this way may encourage businesses to want to be members.

- **Member meetings**. If you have regular meetings with members then you can reserve a slot to ask about the issues that are important to them. When someone raises an issue, aim to gauge how important it is by asking whether other businesses have the same issue. Ask about the impact on the businesses. Ensure that the person chairing the meeting makes a note of the issues and feeds it back to the staff person responsible for advocacy.
- **Surveying members**. Surveying members will give a broader view rather than relying solely on the active members who turn up to meetings or those who have felt sufficiently moved to tell you about an issue. This can be helpful in explaining the significance of the issues to government: something along the lines of "we have 20,000 members responsible for 100,000 employees representing more than half the sector; 95 per cent report that they have a problem with…".
- **Surveying businesses in your sector**. If your members only represent a small part of the sector, it can be helpful to survey a rather wider cross-section of businesses, so that you can argue that you are actually speaking on behalf of the whole sector. If there is more than one association active in the sector, or if there are associations with similar interests, then you may wish to do this together. Or you may see it as a way of attempting to recruit additional members to join your association in which case some effort may be required to track down businesses operating in the sector who are not already members. You could try asking your members all to introduce you to other businesses in the sector who they know, or you could use the telephone directory for formal businesses.
- **Newsletters**. Newsletters are a good way of telling your members what you are doing and asking them to provide feedback to you about their needs and about the issues they face as they go about their business. If you cannot afford to print and circulate a hard copy newsletter, then think about doing it via e-mail. This is a very cost effective way of keeping in touch and most businesses now have at least occasional access to e-mail.
- **Internet**. You can use your website to communicate with your members, to offer information to all of your stakeholders and, importantly, to share your policy positions. You can ask visitors to your website to share their issues – and, when they do, use other tools, such as e-mail or SMS or twitter to seek further feedback and assess the scale of the problem.
- **Monitor government**. Once you have identified which Ministries, Departments and Agencies are relevant to you, you should check their websites regularly or use a programme which will do the hard work for you such as Website watcher (www.aignes.com) or www.ChangeDetection.com or www.InternetOwl.com. There is really no substitute for personal relationships, so whilst you are doing all this, aim to develop those relationships as well in order to establish good channels of communication.
- **Monitor statistics**. Government prepares and publishes a wide range of statistics – and so do other organisations. These may give an indication of areas that ought to be taken up as issues: too many people being killed or injured at work may point to health and safety issues; too few people starting in business may suggest difficulties in the start-up process; low levels of cross border trade may be due to too much red tape.
- **Monitor pressure groups.** Pressure groups, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations often campaign for changes in legislation and this can impact on business. So monitor their activities – in much the same way that you might monitor government – by signing up for newsletters and monitoring their websites. If you discover an issue that is being pursued, irrespective of whether it has come from a mainstream or a fringe group, you will need to decide whether the issue is likely to gain a foothold. Clearly some issues taken up by NGOs are likely quickly to become urgent for you, but others may give a steer on your longer-term thinking.
- **The press and media**. The first clue that many people have about changes to government policy is when the story appears in the press or on the television or radio. So monitor the press and media

How to… monitor pressure groups

It is likely that there will be pressure groups who are themselves lobbying for public policy changes which will affect your sector.

- *Identify those pressure groups and then ensure that you keep up to date with their activities.*
- *Ask to be put on their mailing list.*
- *Monitor the press to follow their activities.*
- *Consider whether someone – a member of the board or a member of staff – should join the group as a member in order to receive all their communications and so to receive advance notice of their plans.*

systematically. You may want to sign up to a cuttings service, which will make the monitoring much easier for you, but there will be a charge and they don't spot everything.

- **Networking**. Networking can be an effective way of discovering proposals for changes to public policy – and forming alliances can improve credibility when associations seek modification to those proposals, so it is in the interests of every business and trade association to network widely.

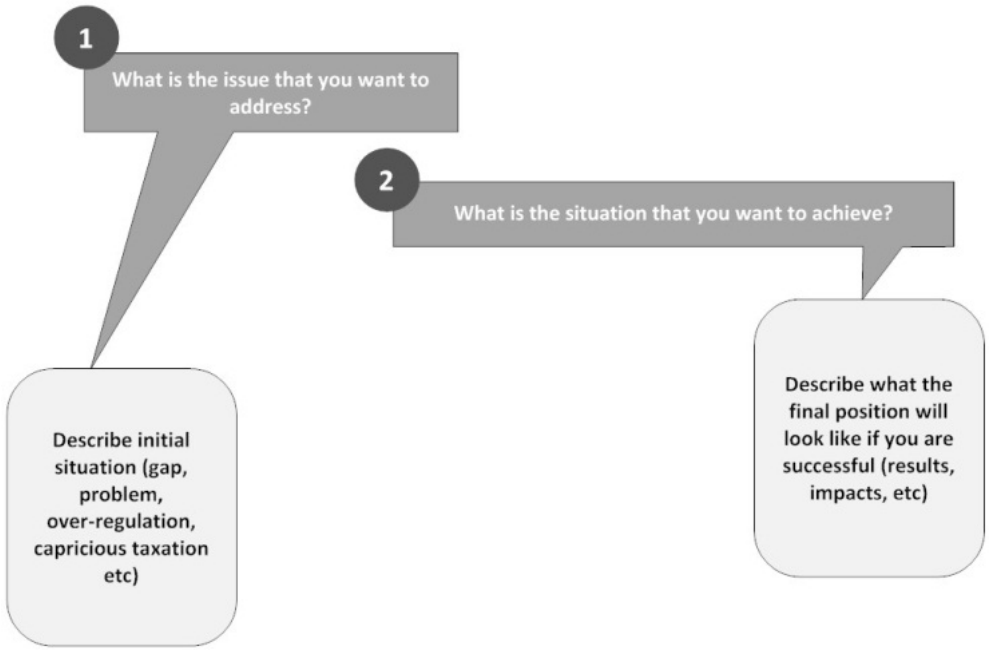
Clarifying issues

Framing the issue

The effort spent in finding issues is likely to result in large numbers of possible issues, so you will need to undertake some basic research to clarify whether an issue is sufficiently important to take up. The purpose at this stage is just to learn enough about the issue to understand the real cause, to decide whether it should be on your list and to assign a priority. You are not aiming to learn everything that you can – that comes later, if the issue is prioritised for action. But you are aiming to frame the issue in a way that secures sympathy from policy makers. This will also help if you subsequently prioritise the issue and need to commission research to understand it better: if the issue is framed too narrowly then possible solutions will be unintentionally omitted but if the issue is framed too widely, or is too vague, then the research effort will be less focused and the argument weakened.

As well as describing the issue, remember that you need to describe your ideal future position. Be realistic. If you are fighting proposals for new regulation, then your desired future may simply be that the regulation is not enacted. But if you are lobbying about existing regulation, consider carefully where you are aiming. It is unrealistic, for example, to expect the government to abolish taxation – but you might argue that there are too many taxes, all of which take too much time and paperwork, and argue that they should be replaced by one or two taxes with simplified paperwork.

Figure 8: Advocacy strategy



Don't be afraid to spend a considerable amount of time thinking about framing the advocacy issue. A common reason for weak research is a vague or unfocused brief.

Exploring the issue

Framing and exploring is an iterative process – the exploration that you undertake will help you to define the issue more tightly. Exploring the issue is intended to help you build your understanding of the issue, the possible impact and the likely implications. You should be able to answer these questions:

- **What is the harm or risk that the public policy is intended to avoid?**
- **Why is the policy a problem to business and what are the specific causes of the problem?** Can the policy be implemented in a way that will not cause significant problems to members? Why is the issue important to your members?
- **What is the scale of the impact?** Who is affected and how many businesses does it affect? How are business affected, what is the cost or benefit to each business etc.

You should consider carefully whether the issue is the policy itself or the way in which it is proposed to implement the policy – this will determine whether you advocate at the policy level or the implementation level. The Government may be totally committed to introducing a new regulation. It may have a choice about the way in which the regulation is framed and enforced. So you may choose to accept the policy but to advocate its introduction in a way that minimises the additional burden imposed on business. Introducing a regulation over a longer period may allow businesses to adapt.

How to… frame the issue

- *In the UK, the government was planning to introduce new rules on packaging for food products. There was no great objection to the specific requirements, but a great desire not to lose money by not being able to use existing packaging.*
- *So the Biscuit Cake Chocolate & Confectionary Association lobbied for a longer period before the new requirements became mandatory – allowing the industry time to use up all existing stocks and to design new packaging to meet the new requirements.*

Summarising the issue

Once you have defined the issue, you should it set it out clearly, on no more than a single page. Ideally, the brief should answer the questions above and outline your initial policy response, recognising that this may need to be refined if the issue is prioritised for more work.

Your policy proposals should not disadvantage other businesses – or you will encourage them to lobby against you. Proposals should not be anti-competitive – for example, seeking to ban imports to give an advantage to local providers.

The brief needs to be written in language that is clear and appeals to your target audiences:

- **Your members**, who want reassurance that you have understood their needs)
- **Policy makers**, who want you to make their lives easier
- **Other private sector and civil society organisations**, who could become your allies for the particular issue
- **And, possibly, the media**, who could publicise the issue widely, helping you to build larger alliances and encouraging others also to lobby policy makers.

Selecting the priority issues

There will always be some issues that crop up unexpectedly and which require immediate attention. In general, however, associations should not take on too many issues at a time. The danger is that none will get the attention that they deserve and all will fail. Issues require effort and resource in undertaking research and in preparing policy positions, not to mention the effort required to meet with and influence public officials and politicians.

You may well need to have policy positions on a much wider range of issues so that you can convey the appropriate messages if you find yourself in dialogue with the government. You may decide, therefore, to run with one or two issues now, to be gathering basic information on several in order to have a basic position, and to be starting the process for the next one or two prioritised issues. You could however identify issues that will need to be progressed when further resources are available, and start gathering data as and when the opportunity arises.

It is likely that some of your members will feel strongly about some of the possible issues, so you need to have a clear and transparent mechanism for prioritisation. Factors might include:

- **Focus**. It will be easier to advocate change if you are focused on just one or two requirements, rather than trying to take on a broad issue – if necessary, split broad requirements into smaller, more focused issues.
- **Relevance to members**. If all or most of your members are affected, then the issue is likely to be more important than if there are only a few members who have a problem
- **Likelihood of achieving consensus**
- **Impact on and cost to members**. Often the biggest driver of whether to pursue an issue, measured in terms of both the actual cost (eg, obtaining a licence, paying more for something etc) and the administrative cost (eg, in increased paperwork etc)
- **Salience of the issue**. Whether it applies to significant numbers of businesses outside of your members, or outside of your sector, or indeed to significant numbers of other stakeholders.
- **Controversy**. If different stakeholders are take a range of competing positions, you may find it more difficult to convey your message. This is not to say that you should not be involved in controversial issues, but rather to recognise that they may need more effort and that you may be taking on more than just the government.
- **Political feasibility**. It might be difficult or impossible for the government to deal with some issues, say because they are covered by international treaty, so do not waste time lobbying for these to be changed.
- **Timeliness for policy makers**. Consider where the government is in the political and policy cycle. If they are considering a new regulation, they will be more interested in your views on that than on an existing regulation which could wait.
- **Complexity**. If you are new to advocacy, start with the issues that you regard as easier so that you can learn about dialogue and advocacy. As you gain experience – and confidence – then you can begin to tackle the bigger, more complex issues.

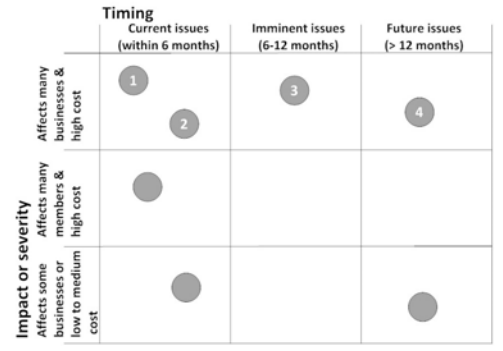
Overall, you need to balance the importance (salience, relevance, impact) against the likelihood of success (political feasibility, controversy, complexity, and timeliness). Many organisations involved in advocacy use an issues grid to monitor and prioritise issues. You will want to design this to reflect the way in which you prioritise issues.

The grid will help you remember the issues that are important and urgent and therefore current.

You should use it, too, to monitor issues that you have not prioritised, or perhaps are relying on others to pursue, to remind you that there may still be merit in gathering and sharing information about the issue.

You should also plot issues that are imminent and further into the future, to remind you that they need to be tracked and that it would be sensible to undertake preliminary work now so that you are in a position quickly to commission detailed research and develop a policy position if and when the need arises.

How to… prepare an issues grid



- *Plot issues for timing and impact.*
- *Focus current activity on the issues at the top of the 'current' column.*
- *Do early research on the 'imminent' issues, so that you are ready to start advocacy at the appropriate time.*
- *Monitor 'future' issues so that you are not taken by surprise. They might become current issues in due course, or they may drop off the list, often depending on the actions of others.*

Conclusion

It is very easy to identify many issues. The trick is to identify those that will make the biggest impact, either on your members or on the economy, and to focus on those. As you develop confidence in your advocacy and as your relationship with the public sector improves, you will be able to pick up more of the smaller issues and feed them back into the public sector thinking process.

Don't forget to look ahead. All too often, associations pick up issues when it is too late. So ensure that you have good intelligence gathering systems in place. Use a matrix, or develop your own tool, to monitor issues and gather information on the issues that are not yet urgent or important so that when they do become urgent, you are ready.

Further reading and further information

- *Examples of good practice in providing policy position papers can be accessed from www.businessadvocacy.net*

Research for advocacy

> Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world
> Nelson Mandela

Introduction

Success in influencing public policy requires that you are well prepared. Whilst a good narrative may help you make a compelling case, it will need to be supported by detailed evidence – and this only comes through thorough and impartial research. Research will help you to:

- Understand the causes and costs of your priority issues
- Compile and marshal evidence to make your case
- Anticipate possible reactions to your advocacy
- Identify other associations with whom you should be working
- Establish yourself as a credible, solid organisation

The aim of this chapter is to introduce research for advocacy and what might be required to help you to build that case.

By the end of this chapter you will:

- Be aware of the need for research
- Understand how to frame issues for research
- Be conscious of the need to check whether additional research needs to be carried out
- Be able to quantify the impact of an issue on the private sector and on the public sector
- Understand the need to consider the unintended consequences of a public policy
- Understand the need to set out a range of costed options
- Be able to commission experts to undertake research for you

The need for research

You need research to:

- **Understand the nature and causes of the issue** and why it is a problem for business
- **Understanding the harm or risk that the public policy is intended to avoid** and understand what government is trying to do, that is, see the public policy imperative and the extent to which the issue is within the control of the government
- **Understand the history and rationale for the public policy or regulation**, whether the issue is new or an incremental step on a path already being taken by the government
- **Understand the implications and the scale and impact, or potential impact, of the issue for business**, say in terms of money or jobs or foreign exchange earnings, and whether any other groups are impacted
- **Be able to demonstrate a range of options that might address the government imperative** and the implications of each to encourage policy makers to select the one that imposes the least additional burden on business
- **Be able to demonstrate the implications of your chosen policy option for other stakeholders** and understand how they will react

Tanzania Horticultural Association

TAHA puts considerable effort into gathering data and, as the CEO puts it, 'doing hard core research'. The CEO says that analytical skills are important, in order to see 'the bigger picture' and stresses the importance goes to government without having done one's homework, there will be no facts and figures to back up the proposed policy).

Framing issues for research

Don't be afraid to spend a considerable amount of time thinking about how to frame the issue to ensure that everyone is clear about what is to be researched. The most common reason for weak research is a vague or unfocused brief.

Whilst developing a response to the research is really step three of the five step approach, it will be necessary to start thinking about possible options whilst you are undertaking the research, so that you can begin to think about the implications – for both the private and public sectors – of what you are proposing:

- Will your proposals reduce the cost to business?
- Will your proposals make it easier to do business?
- Will other groups be disadvantaged in any way by what you are proposing?
- Will government lose potential revenue? Is there an alternative way in which this could be recouped?

It will help when you come to advocate your policy proposal if you also:

- Understand the decision-making processes for the specific issue;
- Research the current opinions and attitudes of policy makers.

Think through the issue and define the problem clearly. It is all too easy to jump to conclusions – or to conflate two problems: a favourite of business associations in Africa is counterfeits and so-called sub-standard goods. Counterfeits are clearly illegal and government need to tackle the problem. But what makes a good sub-standard? Low quality cement may not be suitable for long span bridges or tall buildings – but this does not make it sub-standard, merely low quality, so advocate for the introduction of a quality standard rather than trying to persuade the government to ban the low quality product. Incidentally, this may also provide an opportunity for you to promote your members as meeting the standard (if they do) and thus being of guaranteed quality.

Quite often, it is not the policy imperative that is the problem, but the way that legislation has been implemented by the government to address that imperative. Look at your issues in different ways – consider whether there is really is a problem and what the problem actually is, and then explore other ways of addressing the problem. This will help you to narrow your research – which will then be quicker and cheaper – and reduce the risk that the researcher misses the key points.

Background information

You can save time by using information that others have already gathered on your issue:

- **The government**. If legislation or regulation already exists, then it is likely that the Government itself can be a good source of basic information. What does the regulation require? What justification was used by the Government to support the case for the regulation? Did the Government draw on external research?
- **Other trade associations, research institutions, NGOs, trades unions, consumer groups, the media**. If you are reporting evidence from other sources, make sure that you cite those sources. If people challenge what you say, you can then go back more easily to the original material to check, or perhaps to ask them more questions.
- **Development partners**. The World Bank and FIAS do a lot of work looking at regulatory requirements, not only for the annual Doing Business report, but more widely.
- **The web**. Not everything on the internet is reliable of course, but it can give pointers. In particular, it can give leads to the positions adopted by other countries when faced with the same issue.
- **Internal knowledge**. Compile information across your organisation, being aware that not all information will be written down and some of what is written down will be out of date.

Research which relies on work originated by others is known as secondary research. Once you have identified the gaps you can decide what additional information is required and how you are going to collect that information. You may find that you need to undertake some primary research – seeking answers directly from your members and from other stakeholders. You might have in mind some issues which are longer term issues. If you do, consider whether there is a

need, or whether it would help, to look for trends, perhaps through undertaking a similar survey every year for three or four years.

Choosing research methods

You should choose the methods after you have identified the key research questions. It is important that the methods are credible, rigorous and valid. That is to say, they need to be believable to the reader, replicable and to measure what they say they are measuring.

Think about the following issues in planning the methods:

- **Who should the researcher interview or survey?** It is best to ask questions directly of the person experiencing a problem rather than getting someone else to answer on their behalf or generalise about a broader group.
- **How should the researcher select interviewees?** It is important that the researcher chooses enough interviewees to be representative of the wider group (population) and that the group (sample) is not biased. For example, it is not a good idea only to interview large firms – unless you are only interested in the views of large firms, in which case you need to be clear in your report about who has been interviewed.
- **What method should the researcher use?** All methods have strengths and weaknesses so you might need several different, complementary methods. Generally speaking, written or email surveys are appropriate where you want to ask the same questions of many people and they are self-explanatory. Face-to-face interviews are appropriate where you have relatively few, perhaps important, people, and you want to be able to probe their answers to elicit further information.
- **How will you control and monitor the quality of the research?** Researchers should pilot questionnaires. They should also check the results of surveys early on, and make adjustments to the questions, interviewing technique or training of the interviewers if the results are incomplete.
- **How should the researcher compile data?** It is important that the researcher analyses the data systematically. Survey and interview data should be recorded on a spreadsheet or in a database so that statistics can be compiled precisely. Qualitative data such as comments need to be classified before they are reported: it is not sufficient just to list responses.

Which evaluation method is most appropriate will depend on:

- The type of questions to be answered
- The time available
- The resources available
- The technical skills of the evaluation team
- The intended audience for the evaluation and what methods they consider credible

Evaluation methods can be broadly classified into:

- **Quantitative methods**. Data that can be represented numerically
- **Qualitative methods**. Narrative descriptions or images.

These are better thought of as two ends of a continuum rather than two discrete categories. Open questions, which are by nature qualitative, can be coded to produce quantitative data. Closed questions, which are by nature quantitative, can include space for comments. The two are complementary. Quantitative data helps with generalisation. Qualitative data helps with interpretation.

There are usually trade-offs between breadth and depth. All methods have strengths and weaknesses. Ideally you should use two or more methods which have complementary features. This is described as "triangulating" on the research subject because it gives you different perspectives, rather like taking spatial measurements from two different points.

We summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the five main methods: written surveys, face-to-face surveys, telephone surveys, online surveys and focus groups.

Written surveys

Written surveys are useful for compiling simple factual information across a relatively homogeneous population (homogenous in terms of background or outcomes). They are particularly successful where the subject is easy to explain. They are not applicable for complex or conceptual issues. Nor are they suited to situations where respondents vary widely and would therefore need to answer different parts of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses of written surveys

Strengths	Weaknesses
Cheap	Low response rate
Large numbers do not greatly increase the cost	Response can be biased eg, to those with a strong opinion
Data entry is simple	No assurance the questions were understood
Can be anonymous	No assurance the addressee was the one who replied
Self-administered, so saving the researcher time	Responses can be difficult to interpret
	People often express themselves better orally than in writing
	Limited personal contact to motivate a response
	Assume a level of literacy

Face-to-face surveys

Face-to-face surveys provide detailed, personal interaction with interviewees. This is a strength because of the potential for empathy and probing to explore answers and a weakness because of the scope for personality conflicts and manipulation. Face-to-face surveys are time consuming and best applied when the number of people to interview is relatively small or concentrated in one area.

Table 3: Strengths and weaknesses of face to face surveys

Strengths	Weaknesses
Personalised	Expensive
In depth, free response	Time consuming
Empathy can motivate a longer and more complete discussion	Views or background of the interviewer can introduce bias
Flexible and adaptable	May intimidate some groups
Can see premises or other information	Vulnerable to personality conflicts
Interviewer can look up information in files	Requires skilled interviewers
	Might be difficult to summarise findings
	Might involve the interviewer travelling long distances

Telephone surveys

Telephone surveys combine some of the advantages of written surveys (relatively low cost) with some of the advantages of face to face interviews (personal interaction).

In Africa, many interviewers prefer to administer surveys face to face, but doing them by telephone is much faster, much cheaper and appears to be equally effective. It does however rule out people who may not have telephones, so there may be a need for a small additional survey which is administered in a different way to check for any bias.

Table 4: Strengths and weaknesses of telephone surveys

Strengths	Weaknesses
High response rate	Can be difficult to contact people
Empathy can motivate a longer discussion	Problem with time differences
Scope for checking meaning	Inappropriate for people without telephones
Scope for following leads	Not favoured in some cultures
Cheaper than face-to-face	Respondents might lack privacy
Interviewee is relaxed in own environment and	

Table 4: Strengths and weaknesses of telephone surveys

Strengths	Weaknesses
tends to be more candid	
Lead-in time to start the survey is short	
Contact with the interviewee is used productively rather than in chasing up written forms	

Online surveys

Online surveys provide a cheap and immediate way of gathering data. Data entry and analysis can be simplified through using a tool like Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com).

Table 5: Strengths and weaknesses of on-line surveys

Strengths	Weaknesses
Speed: lead in time is very short	As with written surveys: it can be difficult to interpret answers
No data entry	Might get multiple responses from the same person
Flexibility for the respondent	Delivery issues
No mailing or printing costs	
Questionnaires can be attractively presented e.g. with colour at no extra cost	

Focus groups

Focus groups collect data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. Focus groups provide an excellent method for seeing how people think and what issues are important to them. They help to generate questions but not answers. Results need to be tested using a larger survey to produce generalisations. The group setting means that individuals have to wait for a time to talk which can reduce rather than increase the number of ideas generated. The value of focus groups is strongly affected by the skills of the facilitator.

A typical focus group session will last for 90 to 120 minutes, including a summing up session at the end. The ideal group will have 6-10 participants – too few and you will not get the interaction that adds value over individual interviews; too many and people will not be able to participate fully. Discussions can either be held on a one-off basis or as part of continuing data collection – to record changing viewpoints.

Table 6: Strengths and weaknesses of focus groups

Strengths	Weaknesses
Group interaction	Small sample
Group consensus	Not representative/random
In depth discussion	Responses are not independent Group format fosters conformity: differences might be suppressed or polarised Vulnerable to manipulation by a skilful participant Affected by group cohesion (compliance, identification, internalisation)
More efficient than one-to-one interviews	Questions are not asked the same way each time/research method is not replicated
Democratic process in having the researcher/moderator outnumbered by the participants	Difficult to quantify
Relatively immediate	Not suited to potentially sensitive issues

Analyse the results

There are three requirements for analysis:

- **Analysis should be fair**. The researcher should not distort the data.
- **Analysis should be clear**. The reader should be able to see from where the evidence has come.
- **Analysis should be vivid**. The researcher will need to spend time thinking about the best way of summarising the data, for example, which statistics or indicators to use. Generally it is better to present data graphically rather than in tables.

The objective of the various survey and research techniques is to seek answers to a number of questions, which have already been touched on earlier.

Statistics make an enormous difference and you should aim to prepare comprehensive statistics to support your case. The right statistics can make your case far more persuasive. However, they need to be used with care. You need to explain the figures to ensure that the reader does not misinterpret what you are claiming.

If you make assumptions, you need to spell them out clearly. You may need to test those assumptions.

Be clear about what you are reporting and why you are doing so in that way. Changing the assumptions or changing the building blocks can make a significant change to your results. For example, if you are looking at the impact of heavy trucks, do you use gross weight or axle weight?

Take particular care if you are using percentages and averages (which could be the mean, the median and the mode, any of which might help your argument). If you draw conclusions, you must ensure that they really are supported by the evidence. You will almost certainly want to be selective, but don't be so selective that people opposed to your position can use the omitted figures against you. It is better to provide complete information which is likely to make the research appear more credible and trustworthy. Then emphasise the facts that support your conclusions.

Cost benefit analysis

One way of looking at the impact on business is to undertake a cost benefit analysis. Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is a technique used to estimate the monetary value of the benefits and the costs to the community to assess whether a proposed initiative is worthwhile.

Ideally the Government will be looking at the benefits as part of their argument to support the case for regulation. If the present value of the benefits exceeds the present value of the costs then the project is worthwhile, at least from the Government's point of view! The private sector will want to take a view on whether the benefits have been estimated realistically – but are likely to be far more concerned with the costs.

A cost benefit analysis can be undertaken using only direct financial costs and direct financial benefits. However, to be worthwhile, it is necessary to include indirect costs and benefits. It is helpful to bear in mind the following principles:

- Costs and benefits, whether economic, social or environmental, must be measured in a common unit – and the easiest is money, so all the benefits, if not already expressed in monetary value, need to be converted to a monetary value, and that needs to be at 'present values' to eliminate the impact of inflation.
- Estimating the monetary values can be challenging, particularly where people's time is involved, so estimates need to be rooted in evidence and market choices and it may be better to give ranges rather than implying total accuracy.
- Spell out assumptions and provide references to data sources.
- Think about who exactly will pay the cost or receive the benefit.
- Benefits which involve reducing risk to life and limb are difficult to quantify because of the difficulty of putting a value on a human life – but people already make choices, for example, taking higher pay to work in a more risky environment, so the difference can be used as an indicator.

- The analysis needs to compare the positions with and without the change, and only consider the additional benefits and additional costs, remembering that not changing in the way proposed may force other changes with associated costs.
- Avoid double counting of benefits and costs.
- The analysis for a proposed change in regulation should be proportionate to the likely impact, but should be rigorous enough to inform policy making.

The risks

The risks represent the current problem(s) that necessitate the policy choices being considered. In other words, what is the problem being addressed by the policy and why.

Ideally, the risk should be quantified over a specified period of time – probably a year, but it can be longer depending on the nature of the risk.

Specify the business sectors affected, the number of firms involved and the sizes of the firms (in terms of their employment and turnover).

Some firms may be more affected than others. Identify where the burden is likely to fall most heavily, for example, small firms or agro-processing exporters buying from small scale farmers. What are businesses being asked to do and when, for example, buying new equipment in the near future might be harder for small businesses.

Consider the extent to which other stakeholders (for example, NGOs, consumers and the public sector) might be affected by the proposal. Benefits may accrue to a specific group such as workers, consumers, or low-income groups or to society in general. Common benefits may be a cleaner environment, better health, a safer workplace or improved food hygiene.

Costs

Costs may be one-off or impose a continuing burden on businesses; they may be related to the policy or they may be related to implementation. The separation of policy and implementation costs is important. Policy costs are those that are directly attributable to the policy goal (for example, an import duty, or the cost of a licence, or the costs necessary to meet the policy objective) while implementation costs are those associated with understanding the requirements, keeping records or demonstrating compliance.

High costs of implementation relative to costs of policy might suggest the desirability of using an alternative to regulation. The relative magnitudes will also reflect how efficiently the policy might be implemented and therefore how well it is designed. Keeping the costs separate will also assist in ensuring that all the costs are considered.

Identify the costs by thinking about the aim of the proposal and what businesses, consumers or other stakeholders will be required to do. Think about the impact that the proposals might have on the environment. What will businesses have to do to familiarise themselves with the new requirements in terms of training, employing more people, investing in new equipment, changing their working practices, changing their product, moving to new premises etc? What costs will government incur in developing and disseminating the policy? And in enforcing and monitoring it? Think, too, about any indirect costs – changes in behaviour such as fewer firms setting up in business, reduced consumer choice, less competition between firms, less innovation, etc.

You will need to quantify the costs. Where there is uncertainty, make it clear and spell out the assumptions used to determine the estimates.

Some costs will be easy to estimate while others will be more difficult. Costs might include:

- **Labour costs**. (familiarisation with new legislation, training, new working practices, time spent taking inspectors around the firm etc).
- **Cost of new equipment or new production processes**.
- **Collecting information and providing proof of compliance** – use labour costs, plus the cost of new equipment (eg, computers or software), to do this.
- **Cost of getting licences**. These will involve estimating the fees plus administrative costs.
- **Cost of additional legal, accountancy or other consultancy advice**.

When identifying costs (or benefits) it is important to count them only once. Some regulations are only concerned with transfers from one section of society to another, for example social security

payments. The transfers may change the distribution of income or wealth but they do not give rise to direct economic costs (or benefits), except for any associated costs of administration or compliance. Care also needs to be taken to avoid any double counting of costs and benefits (e.g. one firm incurs a cost which it then passes on to a customer through higher prices) and which should only be counted once in the cost benefit analysis.

Benefits

Benefits do not all accrue at once but are received over time. Identify the benefits by thinking about the aim of the proposal and the risks being addressed.

Some benefits will be easy to estimate – for example, higher wages or increased incomes – but others will be more difficult. In turning benefits into money, you could use the following:

- **Time**. Use wages multiplied by the hours saved.
- **The environment**. You could use surveys which show people's willingness to pay (how much people would pay for a clean river, fresh air or a national park) or their willingness to accept (how much people would be prepared to accept in compensation for suffering from pollution).
- **Life/health**. Use estimates of the value of a statistical life, or the cost of treating the illness.
- **Social benefits**. You could use surveys, e.g. showing people's willingness to pay to have a more equal distribution of income or for better physical security; also again people's purchases might give some idea of people's values.
- **Training**. You could use surveys of firms' increased revenue and productivity gains following training; or use analysis of the higher wages that trained staff can command.

There is likely to be uncertainty over the valuations, in which case, spell out the assumptions and use ranges.

Commissioning consultants

You will almost certainly want, at least on occasion, to use consultants or researchers to assist with your research, rather than doing it all yourself. This section provides a few tips to help you commission consultants.

Prepare terms of reference which are succinct and clear about the objectives of the assignment, the scope of work and the deliverables. It also helps to be clear about the mix of experience and expertise required of the ideal consultant or team of consultants. Before you talk to any consultants, you should consider your evaluation criteria. You may not find anyone who matches all of your requirements, but the danger of setting criteria later in the process is that you are likely to become influenced by any consultants with whom you discuss the work. You may want to weight this so that, for example, relevant experience of the individuals who will do the work counts for 50 per cent down to cost accounting for say 10 per cent. It will also help to be clear from the outset about the budget that may be available for the assignment and to be willing to share this with potential bidders.

The best way to find consultants is by word of mouth recommendation from others. Advertising is likely to lead to lots of enquiries from consultants who do not meet the criteria. When you identify possible consultants, send them the terms reference informally and ask if they might be interested in bidding. Once you have at least three firms, or individual consultants, then you can formally invite them to bid. Give them long enough to prepare a proposal, at least two weeks, but longer for more complex assignments, or assignments that require specialist skills, and be clear about the procedure for returning proposals.

Bidders should be encouraged to submit brief proposals – they do not need, for example, to repeat the terms of reference. Proposals must include fees, expenses, timescales and CVs as well as a clear explanation of how the assignment will be tackled, with the tasks to be undertaken by each member of the team clearly identified.

Ideally, you should ask for proposals to be returned in a sealed envelope. Good practice would require that you say when the envelopes will be opened and that firms may, if they wish, send a representative.

You should have a panel to consider the proposals, using the previously agreed criteria. You may be able to do this based entirely on the written submissions. Every member of the panel should

score the proposals, quantitative or qualitatively, and write down their preferred consultant with a justification. This is so that you have an audit trail if your decision should be challenged. For larger contracts, or where the decision is less clear cut, you should invite some or all of the bidders to make a formal presentation. Provide all the invited firms with a clear brief, so that they know for example whether they will be expected to make a formal presentation or whether you will simply ask them questions. Be clear, too, that you expect the assignment to be undertaken by the people who come to the interview. Think in advance about the questions that you want to ask. Once you have come to a decision, write a short minute for the file, confirming the choice and the justification. If there are conditions to be met, then minute those as well. Note too whether the second or third consultant could be appointed in the event that an agreement cannot be concluded with the first.

There may be occasions when you cannot find three bidders, or when you already have a preferred consultant. Even if you only invite one consultant or firm to pitch, it is good practice to ask them to make a formal bid. In this way, you have a chance to look in some detail at what they are proposing and if it does not meet your criteria, then you should not appoint.

Once you have made your choice, you can offer the consultant the assignment. It is good practice to prepare a contract which sets out exactly what has been agreed, what is expected of the consultant and what you will pay.

Lessons from East Africa

We have analysed a large number of research reports prepared by and for trade associations in Africa:

- Reports generally are too long, with repetition and poor flow. Summaries of evidence could be provided in the main report, as part of the 'story', with detailed evidence provided in an appendix.
- Reports often have good research data, good analysis and sound arguments, but they are poorly structured and so fail to tell as good a story as they could.
- More use could be made of charts and graphs to illustrate the points rather than tables which are often difficult to understand at a glance.
- Some reports fail to identify the critical area, so they produce excellent data to answer the 'wrong' question or else fail to demonstrate that they are researching the 'right' question.
- Some reports start to tell a good story, but then do not go far enough, especially in relation to being clear about the benefits and impact, not only to the private sector but also to the government.
- Few reports considered options with advantages and disadvantages for each. Most gave the impression that the solution had been decided before the research was undertaken and the report simply intended to justify the solution rather than the research being undertaken to understand the issue clearly and then looking at all the possible options to address the issue.
- Many reports make recommendations that would require government to take action – but few addressed adequately whether there was likely to be a cost, either administratively or in terms of lost taxation, or how lost taxation could be replaced. Few reports addressed whether the proposals were feasible – though all implied that they were and there were no obvious reasons why they should not be. However, this is an area where it pays to be explicit – not least to head off possible objections.
- On the whole, reports failed to draw out the full policy implications of their research findings. Doing so effectively may lead to better policy proposals.
- There is a tendency to start reports explaining the history of the association rather than focusing on the issue.
- Some reports draw conclusions which are not supported by the evidence presented.
- Arguments generally need to be more logical and persuasive.

Tourism Confederation of Tanzania

A report prepared for TCT starts:

- *"The administrative burdens in the Tanzanian tourism sector place a heavy cost on businesses in terms of time and money.*
- *Businesses would be more willing to pay levies if the levies were more streamlined and more transparent."*

Right from the start, this sets the tone: it encapsulates the problem, but makes clear that businesses are not necessarily asking to pay less tax.

A report prepared for CTI neatly summed up "the challenge is to rationalise [regulation] of the private sector without adding unnecessary costs and burdens".

Conclusion

Thorough research is essential if you are to be able to make a compelling case to change public policy. You need to influence policy makers, but you may also need to influence other stakeholders. If you publish your research separately from your policy position, aim to do so in a way that is neutral and dispassionate – so that debate can focus on the solution and not on the facts.

Further reading and further information

- *Businessadvocacy.net has links to examples of research reports and policy position papers, so have a look to see how others are putting together policy papers*
- *Worked examples of a cost benefit analysis are available at www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/cba.htm*

Develop policy positions

> Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it
>
> Karl Marx (1845), Theses on Feuerbach (Thesis XI)

Introduction

Research gives the foundation for action, but it does not dictate the direction of action. Stage three is about:

- Choosing a policy position
- Communicating a policy position

The five step approach to advocacy suggests a separation between research and preparation of a policy proposal. These are not necessarily separate processes, but they do have different requirements.

Policy papers will allow you to pick out key points from your research and assemble them to reflect the perspectives of those you are seeking to influence. Writing a position paper will help you to think about the messages and the logic before you meet policy makers and will also give you a written summary to support personal presentations.

The primary audience for your policy position is public sector policy makers – who will likely comprise Ministers, influential Parliamentarians (such as Chairmen of select committees) and senior civil servants. Other stakeholders, including other business associations, the media, NGOs, the general public etc, may well be interested, may support your position, and may ally with you to seek change, but your specific objective is to influence policy makers.

By the end of this chapter, you will:

- Be able to marshal arguments in support of a stated position
- Understand how to write logically and effectively to communicate a compelling policy position.

Formulating a policy position

Your policy position is likely to be formed through careful consideration of:

- Your original ideas on the issue
- The results of your research
- The views of public sector contacts and policy makers
- The views of members

Your policy position needs to be clear and actionable, but also owned by those who might be involved in its implementation. One good approach is to form a task group or working group to draft an outline policy position, ideally with the involvement of public sector stakeholders. Their conclusions can then be circulated to members, comments and feedback can be invited, and discussions and workshops can be held. Once views have been solicited, and perhaps additional evidence and stories gathered, the policy position can be refined and adopted. It is important that, as far as possible, your members share and support your policy positions since otherwise there is a danger that they will undermine you when you start lobbying government.

Your position will depend on the point at which the policy has reached in the policy formulation process. If a public policy already exists, and you want to change it, then you will need to look at the policy, and its impact, in detail. If it is a proposal for a new public policy, in the form of a 'white paper' for instance, then you have something concrete about which you can argue. But if the proposal is at a very early stage, perhaps the setting up of a committee to look at an issue, then you may want to attempt to influence the scope of the review, in an effort to lessen the potential impact.

Business associations often start by believing that they have to oppose the policy proposal being developed or discussed by the public sector. Understanding the policy imperative will help you to develop your own policy position and careful framing – looking at it from a different perspective – may help you to do this.

You may conclude that you can live with a policy imperative provided it is amended at least to some extent to address your concerns – or you may decide that the most effective approach is to focus on the administrative arrangements for implementation rather than on the policy specifically.

Be realistic about how much you may be able to achieve. If Ministers are determined to press on with a policy, you are unlikely to change their minds. Instead, focus on minimising the implementation burden. Influencing is, above all else, an art of achieving the maximum possible.

Reframing the issue

TATO has worked with the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority in relation to the collection of park fees, where they have argued that it is the tour operators who are the Authority's real customers rather than individual tourists.

TATO has also been lobbying in relation to a proposed highway that will cross the Serengeti. Rather than arguing against the road completely, they argued for it to take a slightly different route and to be dirt track for 50kms so that wildlife can still easily cross it.

Communicating your position

Objectives

Policy position papers need to achieve two objectives:

- They need to communicate, clearly and concisely, the position taken by your organisation in relation to a specified policy area, which could be quite narrow or fairly broad.
- They need to influence policy makers, ideally so that they act in accordance with your wishes, but otherwise so that they adopt a position that is close to yours (or closer than it might have been had you not attempted to influence them).

Policy position papers are not the only means of communication or influencing, but they are crucial as they will be the only written explanation of your position. A policy position paper prepared by a business association will need therefore:

- **To describe an issue or problem** faced by public policy makers and, if appropriate, the implications for business and other stakeholders.
- **To explain the current policy** of the government (which will require an understanding of the policy imperative).
- **To describe the possible options** for addressing the issue.
- **To recommend a public policy approach** which will minimise the impact on business.

The objective of a policy position paper is to bring the reader round to your way of thinking – so you need to summarise your policy proposal and the argument needs to be clear, succinct and persuasive.

It should be based on the research you have undertaken and the consultations you have had with your members and other stakeholders and which provides the supporting, detailed evidence for your arguments.

Here are some ways you can ensure the quality of the final policy position paper:

- **Be clear about the purpose of the paper**. Keep it focused. Keep it simple. Think clearly what message you want to communicate – and do so succinctly.
- **Keep the main report short**. The ideal is no more than four A4 pages, which can then be printed as a single, folded A3 sheet. If there is a need to provide detailed evidence, then use appendices, or refer to a separate research report that should also be available to interested stakeholders.
- **Ensure that you take the reader logically through the argument** and ensure that the conclusions flow logically from the evidence. Use new paragraphs for each new idea or proposal.
- **The research to which you refer in your paper needs to be thorough and rigorous** so that your policy proposals flow logically from the evidence.

- **Have a mix of types of evidence**. Include precise statistics showing the individual or global impact, but also include case studies or stories to personalise the impact. If you quote from other reports, remember to cite your sources fully and accurately.
- **Do not rush it**. Ask colleagues and members to read drafts. Check spelling and grammar. Check that everything makes sense. Check that your conclusions follow from the evidence.

The content

The following checklist will help you to think about the structure and the content of your policy position paper

- **Summary**. Start with an opening paragraph which goes straight to the point, summarising the issue and summarising the recommendation(s) – like a good press release, you should aim to grab the reader's attention straight away and encourage them to want to read on.
- **The issue**:
  - **Statement of the issue**. Explain the issue, using relevant data and statistics, which should be complete and accurate, including financial, environmental, cultural and political aspects and consider whether the 'correct' issue is being addressed.
  - **History**. If there is a public policy already in place, explain the policy and what the government was trying to do and why it now wants to do more, or why you now want it to do less.
  - **International comparison**. This will not always be necessary, but there may be occasions when it is worth looking at the approach taken by other countries to the same issue.
  - **Stakeholders.** Identify and state all the stakeholders with an interest in the issue and note why they are interested.
  - **Impact**. Describe the (potential) impact of current (or proposed) public policy; consider the consequence of the government doing nothing and why there is a need to address the issue now.
- **Policy options:**
  - **List the possible options**, including the 'do nothing' option, to address the issue.
  - **Consider each option**, (or explain why some options have been omitted) in terms of costs and benefits for business, government and other stakeholders, and set out implications for business.
  - If there are **constraints** on the choice of option, including political constraints, these should be explained.
- **Conclusions and recommendations:**
  - **Conclusions** should follow clearly from the discussion about the issue and should be rooted in the evidence.
  - **Policy recommendation(s)** should state what should be done and by whom.
  - **Justification**. Make the case in support of your recommendation(s) including financial, technical and political aspects (see below).
- **Implementation**. It is not normally necessary to make proposals for implementation, but there may be some instances where it is necessary to provide a plan or a timescale or to identify the responsible people.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**. You may want to make suggestions for particular activities to be undertaken by the government to monitor implementation, to monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy and to review the policy in due course.
- **Appendices**. You should include a bibliography (if you haven't included citations as footnotes) and may wish to include (some) supporting evidence, or else, you may simply cite your own, more detailed, research report(s).

The presentation

Ensure that the report looks good:

- **Think about the formatting**. If you are publishing a number of documents, then think about adopting a "house" style that makes it easy for the reader to find their way around the document.

- **Adopt a tone and language that the audience will understand** and that will build empathy. Think about the needs of the person who will read the document.
- **Use short paragraphs and sentences**, one idea per paragraph; ensure that you have a logical flow of ideas; be precise and avoid vagueness.
- **Present data graphically** rather than in a table. If you use Excel to prepare charts, then develop your own style (don't just use the default automatically) and be consistent in your use of charts and graphs.
- **If you quote figures, do not imply greater accuracy than actually exists**; avoid decimals – round up (to tens, or hundreds, or even thousands) as appropriate.
- **If you want to include information about your organisation, put it in a side box**, so as not to detract from the key messages
- **Check that the paper has no spelling mistakes**.

Exemplars

Examples of policy position papers prepared by business and trade associations are easily available on the internet. Links to a number of examples, and to more guidance on writing policy position papers, are provided at www.businessadvocacy.net

Oral presentation

If you will be making oral presentations of your position, think about how you will do that. You need to be as succinct and persuasive as in your written document.

Prepare well. Try not to use notes or, if you need a prompt, keep them short rather than reading a speech. Stand up – so that you can breathe fully and deeply which will mean that you project your voice better.

Many people use Power Point. If you do so, follow these simple rules:

- The slides are supposed to summarise the message that you wish to convey, not to replace you, and don't just read the slides
- Design a simple house style and stick to it
- It is easy to write too much on a slide – keep them short
- Use lower case – it is easier to read
- Take care with your choice of font and colour
- Use graphics and pictures where they add value
- Spelling and grammar are important

Writing your slides is only half the communications battle. So, irrespective of whether you use aids, it is important to engage with the audience and seek feedback.

Conclusion

Writing a position paper may help you to organise your thoughts and secure agreement from your membership. A well written position paper will be clear, succinct and persuasive. It does not substitute for oral presentation, but does provide a written summary of your position that policy makers can consult if necessary, and can also provide the core of a good speech or other presentation. It may also provide policy makers with material that they can incorporate directly into their own working papers or policy papers.

Further reading and further information

- *Stephen Denning (2007), The Secret Language of Leadership, Jossey-Bass*
- *See businessadvocacy.net for links to websites and exemplars of policy position papers.*
- *Look for guides on effective writing and public speaking – and practice both*

Influence policy makers

> If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.
>
> Nelson Mandela

Introduction

Influencing policy makers is the process of persuading them to take action that will help you to fulfil your public policy objectives. Influencing policy makers is at the heart of advocacy. There is a tendency to think that individuals are naturally good or bad at influencing, but that is not true. Business associations can learn to improve their influencing skills and so increase the effectiveness of their advocacy. Influencing does not have to be explicit: policy makers don't have to agree with your objectives, so long as you can persuade them that their objectives will be met by implementing your proposals. Influencing does need to be strategic – you need to know what actions you want them to take – but it can be flexible and opportunistic. This guide looks at advocacy approaches, advocacy tools (methods you can use for advocacy) and advocacy tactics (ways of using these tools).

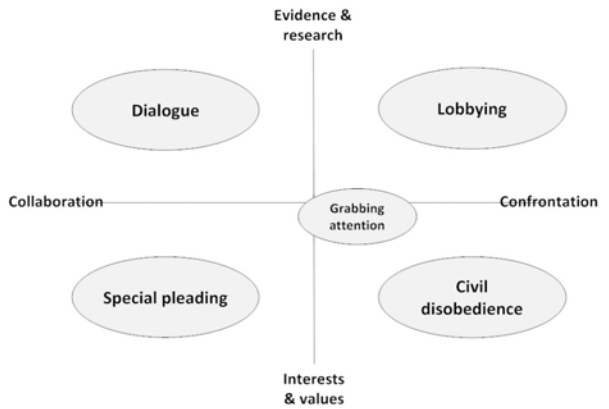
By the end of the chapter you will:

- Be able to prepare an influencing strategy
- Understand the importance of timing of your activities
- Be able to identify your target audiences
- Be able to choose appropriate advocacy tools
- Understand the principles of influencing
- Understand the steps required to influence successfully
- Have identified areas of negotiating and communicating where you may need to develop your skills further.

Strategy

There are a number of strategic approaches that can be taken when attempting to influence policy – you may decide to adopt a mix – and there is a tendency to use the term 'advocacy' to describe all approaches. They revolve around decisions whether to take an 'insider' or 'outsider' approach and on whether arguments are based on research and evidence or on interests and values. Business associations generally find that dialogue – a collaborative, insider approach with evidence based argumentation – is the most effective. It does rely, however, on policy makers being willing to engage. Partners in a genuine dialogue will work hard to understand each other's perspective so partners will tend to look for solutions that satisfy all parties.

Figure 9: Approaches to policy influence



Source: Adapted from an original idea by Start & Hovland (2004)

Many organisations use the term 'lobbying' to describe some of their activities. The word originates from constituents in the UK meeting their MP in the central lobby of the Houses of Parliament. Lobbying, as practised by many associations, describes an approach that is more 'outside' than 'inside', though may still involve face to face discussion and still makes use of evidence based argumentation. Lobbying will often be backed up with

other tools such as media campaigns or mobilising grass roots support.

Approaches based on values or special interests are generally inappropriate for business associations. Organisations sometimes resort to such approaches because they think that they are getting nowhere with their evidence based arguments or because their real objective is to gain competitive advantage at the expense of others. Narrow based interest groups, or large corporates, especially those well connected into the political elite, may engage in 'special pleading', for example, to seek protection from foreign competition or subsidies for inputs.

Sometimes organisations will take the confrontational route – and engage in some form of direct action. Too often, though, this manifests itself in behaviour perceived by most of the population to be unacceptable. There may be rare occasions when groups believe that they have to indulge in direct action, just to grab the attention of politicians. This must be done with care if it is not to backfire on the organisation.

Having a strategy for each advocacy project is important because:

- You need to be clear about your ultimate objectives;
- You need to be clear what actions will achieve these objectives;
- You need to be clear about your priorities: which objectives you would be prepared to concede in order to secure agreement on others;
- It will make it easier to identify potential partners and other interested parties (stakeholders). You might well want to work with organisations that support some or all of your objectives, but are coming from a different perspective.

In developing your strategy, you need to think about your target audiences, about the tools and tactics that are most likely to work with these target audiences, about the appropriate timing for the tactics, including for example, a way to escalate your activities if you feel that you are not getting the attention that you deserve. For example, it will usually be counterproductive to go to the media too early or to start a campaign with direct action.

You need to think, too, about whether you are going to pursue your objectives by yourself or whether you are going to seek to form alliances or coalitions. Working in coalitions has many advantages, which we discuss below. Once you start, you need to monitor progress and be flexible enough to amend the plan.

Timing

Timing is important in advocacy because different tactics are effective at different times and different stages in the decision making process allow different windows for influence. In general, the earlier that you can start seeking to influence government thinking, the more effective you will be.

In the US, with the adversarial nature of its politics, and the ease with which members of Congress can propose or inhibit legislation, lobbyists can wait until quite late. In the EU, by contrast, with its consensus approach, by the time a directive becomes public, it is almost certain that it will be adopted. In African countries, there is often little consultation and few business associations, if any, are actively invited to comment on proposals. However, Parliaments often do not get much of a say either.

Audiences

It is usually fairly straightforward to identify your primary audience – Ministers and senior civil servants for legislation and senior civil servants or Agency CEOs for administrative regulation – but think about your secondary audiences as well. These are the people and organisations who may in turn be able to influence the real decision makers – and include civil servants, special advisers, chairman of Parliamentary committees and even key journalists.

Audiences include:

Public sector policy makers

The public sector is not homogeneous; it includes politicians (executive plus backbenchers), Ministries (policy makers, analysts, regulators), Agencies (regulators, inspectors), etc as well as all those public servants working at local and regional level. You need to be clear about the direct

target for your advocacy and about whether there is, additionally, a need to work through intermediaries.

If the impetus for a new policy is coming from Ministers, then they will be a key target. But you may be less concerned about the specific policy and more concerned about how it will be implemented – in which case public officials may be your key target.

Understanding the public sector, and the way it operates, is as important to private sector advocates as understanding private sector needs and aspiration should be to public sector regulators. Take the effort to identify very clearly the people whom you ought to be influencing and then think about the message that you wish to communicate, how you will communicate it, when you will communicate it and what action you want them to take as a result.

There is often little interchange between private and public sectors and, therefore, little understanding among civil servants of the possible implications for business of legislation and regulation. Furthermore, civil servants working in Ministries see the Minister as their primary, often only, customer and their sole objective is to satisfy the Minister's policy objectives. This can mean legislation leads to consequences which the politicians and civil servants had not foreseen, but which might have been obviated had there been effective consultation with private sector.

Like everyone else, civil servants want their job to be as easy as possible. So private sector advocates should assist them by preparing compelling and succinct proposals (or responses to consultation) backed up by high quality evidence which, as far as possible, offer solutions to meet publicly stated policy objectives.

Ministries

The Ministries are most likely to be the starting point for dialogue. Identify the analysts and the people writing the policy recommendations. Aim to ensure that they understand the implications for the private sector of their proposals. In particular, help them to understand and to separate the economic burden of regulation from the administrative burden; for new and existing regulation, there may well be scope to reduce or even eliminate the administrative burden through carefully thought out proposals for implementation.

Whilst it is the politicians who (largely) set the agenda, it is the Ministries who turn the aspiration into practice, so aim to influence the key people at an early stage. Better still, offer solutions to civil servants in such a way that they can take some credit when putting proposals to Ministers.

Ministers

If there is a requirement to influence policy, as opposed to implementation, it is likely that there will be need at some point to meet with and influence the Minister. This needs to be well prepared. If possible, it will help to have civil servants 'on-side' before meeting the Minister.

Again, you will want offer solutions, especially any that still address the policy objectives, but in a way that reduces the potential burden on business and in a way that allows the Minister to take the credit publicly for improving the enabling environment.

Parliamentarians

Members of Parliament, who are not members of the government, can be amongst the most difficult people to influence, yet once won over can be extremely effective. They are hard to interest because either they belong to the governing party, and want a ministerial job so do not want to rock the boat, or else are in opposition and only want to pick on the salient issues which could be used to embarrass the government. If you can influence MPs to act on your behalf, however, they can lobby ministers and civil servants very effectively.

Try to identify up and coming MPs as one day they may be a Minister and don't ignore the Opposition as one day they may be in power and opposition politicians can often be useful allies or sources of information.

Many countries have Select Committees or Standing Committees – committees of MPs whose role is to provide oversight and accountability for Ministries. Their reports can be influential and an excellent way to influence the Government is to be invited to give evidence to a select committee – but you have to prepare well and make a strong case.

Some countries, in addition to Select Committees, have more informal all-party Parliamentary committees. These coalesce around specific interests such as small business. In the UK, the secretariat is often provided by a sponsor or a trade association. Meetings offer networking opportunities to participants and also brief parliamentarians so that they are aware of, and knowledgeable about, the issues and thus able not only to lobby outside Parliament but also to speak authoritatively when the topic is debated by Parliament.

Agencies

Government agencies, on the whole, do not create policy, but rather are created to implement it. Typical examples would be tax collection agencies or regulatory bodies such as health and safety. In their zeal to impress the government, however, they can often add to the administrative burden placed on businesses by 'improving' the administrative rules within the overall defined policy framework. Agencies may be partly or wholly funded through the fees that they collect – which may drive their behaviour. Agencies may, in addition, have a role in recommending to ministers new or changed policies – and it is rare that they do so in such a way as to reduce or eliminate their influence. Usually, agencies are accountable to a specified Minister though occasionally are set up to be independent of government and are answerable directly to Parliament.

This means that influencing agencies is quite hard. The starting point should be as for Ministries, but recognise that you're more likely to win over the agency if you focus on reducing the burden of administrative rather than arguing for change in policy that leads to them playing a less important role. Policy issues will almost certainly have to be taken up with the Minister directly.

Proposing changes in administration which reduce their own workload whilst maintaining the influence are likely to be most effective. As with other groups, offer solutions for which they can take at least some credit.

Other business associations

Business associations exist to promote the interests of their members – and they may not always be the same as the interests of other sectors. There is obvious conflict, for example, between indigenous manufacturers and importers wanting to import competing goods.

It is important, therefore, to understand the position of other business associations and, where there is a conflict or an over-lapping interest, to regard them as a target audience as well.

Securing consent from other business associations, if not all out support, will add to the credibility of your position, even if it requires some compromise to get there.

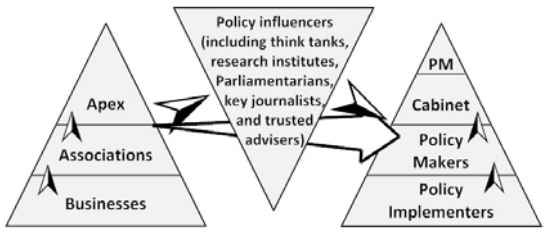
If there is an apex business association, either in the sector, or representing the private sector as a whole, it will be important to secure their consent at an early stage. Indeed, they may assist with achieving consensus across the private sector and may be able to open doors into the public sector.

Opinion formers

'Opinion formers' is the term used to describe people and organisations who are influential but who are not themselves responsible for policy formulation. We have touched on some of them already such as parliamentarians and research institutes. Others include prominent journalists and ministerial special advisers.

You may find that success requires that you work with and through a number of different parties – civil servants, Ministers, Parliamentarians, for example – not only to bring them round to your point of view but also to encourage them to support – and promote – your position. This will require sustained effort over a period of time.

Figure 10: Exerting influence



Other interest groups

The same is true with non-governmental organisations (NGO), civil society organisations (CSO), research institutes, trades unions and others. They can often be a good source of market intelligence, but they often engage in advocacy as well. It is better to have them promoting the same position as you rather than to have them advocating a position diametrically opposed to you.

Research institutes can be especially helpful. They do not often promote specific policy positions, but they do undertake research on important topics – some of which may help you case – and they do, inevitably, influence governments through providing them with what they regard as independent, unbiased research. Feeding your evidence to research institutes may encourage them to follow new lines of enquiry and may subtly change the way that they present their findings to government.

The public

In most cases, business associations will not need to influence public thinking, but occasionally, for issues that are salient or contentious, there may be merit in getting the public on side.

Advocacy tools

There are a wide range of tools and tactics that can be used when seeking to influence public policy. The combination chosen for any particular advocacy campaign will depend on the salience and contentiousness of the issue, the target audience(s), the timing of the intervention and the specific objectives of the advocacy. In this section, we look at tools and then, in the next section, we look briefly at tactics, essential skills for how you implement your chosen tools effectively.

Write policy proposals

> "I'm sorry this letter is so long. I didn't have time to write a shorter one"
> Blaise Pascal, French mathematician & philosopher, 1657

There will always be a need for some written documentation – for policy makers as well as to brief your members and the wider public. You are writing for busy people so take the time to make your written material succinct and impactful. Even if you expect your interaction with policy makers to be face to face, they will benefit from a written summary of the key points of your policy position (and the civil servants and advisers may also want to see written research reports).

Written documents include formal policy positions, letters, emails, newsletters, press releases and the pages of your website.

Advantages of supplying written information include:

- There is time to prepare – complex subjects may be carefully considered;
- you can present your ideas in the most suitable format;
- Your readers can absorb information at a time which suits them;
- A permanent record is provided;
- Readers get a clear message;
- Your comments may be used as a reference.

A good written document is more than an accurate summary of the facts. It has a logical flow of ideas and is cohesive. It provides a major channel of communication and a tool for decision-making. If written well, it will convey what the writer wants to say and ensure that the receiver gets the right message. Your written documentation needs to be consistent, without internal contradictions that can be used against you.

In the right situation pictures or video can be a very powerful way of making your point, but they take more effort and require more resource.

Meet with policy makers

Meetings are important to identify potential allies and informants, to understand the perspective of target audiences so that you can slant your arguments appropriately, to present key points verbally and to develop trusted relationships. Although meetings take more time, they have far greater impact. It is essential to invest the time if you want to influence policy makers. Through the development of your strategy you will have identified target audiences. Even if formal mechanisms exist in your sector, it should still be a priority to get to know the key people in the Ministries or agencies that interact with you and your sector. This will help to build understanding and empathy and give ready-made channels of communication when they are needed. This will be all the easier if you can build a personal rapport.

> ***Cultivate Champions***
>
> *The Tanzania Horticulture Association has identified people within key Ministries whom they hope will become champions of their causes. They cultivate the relationships and keep those people informed with a monthly newsletter.*

To get the most out of these meetings it is essential to prepare. Agree who will say what and how long you will focus on each subject. These meetings are the time to thrash out the detail of regulatory proposals, to sound out ideas and try to identify up and coming issues.

During your meetings:

- ask questions – use open questions, probing questions, hypothetical questions
- listen actively – to ensure you understand what is being said back to you – and summarise regularly
- watch for signals – especially non-verbal signals such as eye contact and body orientation – and take care about the non-verbal signals that you are sending out
- talk the same language

It is important to meet regularly, ideally with a fixed programme of meetings rather than organising them as the need arises. Meeting regularly makes it more likely that you will discover at an early stage about proposals to change public policy and so be in a much better position to do something to influence the eventual outcome. Ideally, you and your key partners (possibly including other business associations or civil society organisations) should aim to institutionalise the dialogue arrangements so that it does not simply depend on the current personalities.

> ***Dialogue***
>
> *In 2005, without warning, the Government of Tanzania announced a 500 per cent increase in park and hunting fees. The Tourism Confederation of Tanzania undertook a very effective campaign, actively engaging tour operators from Europe and the US, and was successful in persuading the Government to limit the increase to just 200 per cent.*
>
> *A key lesson for both parties was the need to engage in regular dialogue to avoid surprises and to allow for proper consultation. As a result, the Ministry of Natural Resources & Tourism has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TCT committing both parties to regular dialogue between the tourism directorate in the Ministry and all the associations representing tourism businesses.*

Keep your members up to date with what you learn at these meetings.

From time to time you will need to meet with Ministers on particular issues. These meetings can be very brief and it is essential that you prepare thoroughly for them in order to gain anything from them. Sometimes it is not possible to meet the Minister and you may need to meet with one of their special advisers. From the association's perspective this can be at least as useful as meeting the Minister as often a special adviser may be more engaged in the detail of a policy proposal or developing the government's position.

First think carefully about who will attend. The people engaging in discussion need to be completely credible with relevant experience and knowledge. Wherever possible ensure that one or more members, especially association board members attend, alongside staff. Find out who is likely to be there with the Minister and aim that a similar number, or fewer, of your representatives attend. The type of board member that you want should be personable and able to think on their feet. Remind them that they are there to represent your sector and not to advocate for their own company. Remind them that you will want to respond positively to Ministerial suggestions but can't make specific decisions without consulting the rest of the sector.

Agree an agenda for the meeting with the Minister's staff. This is not a time for detail or low priority issues. Think carefully about how the Minister might assist you and focus on your two or three most pressing issues. Roughly divide the available time between the issues so that you know that the meeting is running to time and nothing important will be missed. Work out who will lead on which issue. If necessary, rehearse what you might say and examples you can use to illustrate your case. Personal experience can be very powerful in this type of meeting. Think through what props, or even videos, might bring your case to life and what written material you can leave with them. Brainstorm likely questions and think through what you might say in response. It is worth having extra material with you that may answer specific points, but remember Ministers will not have time to read detailed background papers.

Be well informed

Tanzania Horticulture Association and Tanzania Association of Tour Operators both stress the importance of always having facts and figures at their fingertips – just in case they are needed – to add weight to arguments.

Members attending will find it helpful to have a written brief detailing:

- Timing and logistics (including location of meeting and how long to allow to clear any security arrangements)
- Who is attending on the Minister's side and any relevant background
- Who is representing the industry and what role they will play
- What issues the meeting will cover and the main points the association wants to get across, background material including policy and position statements.

During the meeting, association staff should do what they can to ensure that everyone is introduced, and outline the purpose of the meeting. They should do what they can to keep the meeting on track, keeping an eye on the time. Make a note of any action points and thank the Minister and his team at the end.

Following the meeting, write to thank the Minister, confirming any actions and including any additional material that either came up in the meeting or that occurred to you just after you left. If you or your members have committed to action, ensure that it happens.

Lobby Parliamentarians

Talking to Parliamentarians can be extremely effective. They are in a position to hold the executive to account. They quiz ministers about what they are doing and why. In many countries, they hold public hearings, giving a further opportunity to make your case.

Before undertaking any lobbying, it is worth mapping your members against the geographic constituencies that MPs represent. Then contact your members to understand whether they have any existing links or communication with their local MP. This has two benefits for an association. First it ensures that the association does not undermine any work their members are already doing and second, an MP is far more likely to pay attention to an industry with a link to their constituency link. Many members will not have engaged in advocacy before and the association will play an important role in building the members' confidence and supporting them.

Working with Parliamentarians

TATO works with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Tourism, providing briefing materials etc, so that when tourism issues are debated in Parliament, members of the committee are well briefed.

There are MPs, in both the ruling party and the opposition, with a background in tourism (including TATO's executive secretary) – not all of whom are members of the tourism standing committee – so TATO ensures that they are all well briefed as well.

Lagos Chamber of Commerce has appointed a Liaison Office who seeks to work closely with the State Legislature and feeds back intelligence about proposals that might impact on the business community.

If you have the resources, or if you are able to pool resources with other associations, there may be merit in appointing a Parliamentary Liaison Officer – who can closely monitor parliamentary activity, get to know MPs and so be able both to feedback intelligence at an early stage, but also to act as point person when you need to meet with MPs.

Can you facilitate meetings of MPs who have an interest in your area, for example through arranging an interesting speaker, or hosting a lunch or reception for MPs to meet your members who are also their constituents? An

association may have to work quite hard to demonstrate to a MP why their case is of interest, for example by working out how many people in their constituency work in your sector.

Form coalitions

A coalition is an alliance or partnership of groups coming together in order to achieve a common purpose or to engage in joint activity.

The benefits from coalitions go beyond increased power in relation to the target of the advocacy campaign:

- A coalition gives a clearer and more coherent contact point for policy makers. This makes the need for the advocacy objectives more apparent;
- A coalition can appear to represent more businesses, so giving greater weight to its arguments;
- A coalition can bring more expertise to bear on complex issues, so giving different perspectives, networks of contacts and opportunities for influencing;
- Involvement means there are more people who have a better understanding of the issues so helping to build consensus and alignment;
- A coalition might be able to share capacity and therefore be more active, for example, carrying more detailed research than any one organisation could do working on its own;
- A coalition, by virtue of the contacts and exchanges of information and other contacts, avoids duplication of efforts and improves exchanges and shared learning among key players;
- A coalition may raise its members' public profiles by broadening the range of groups involved in an issue;
- The activities of a coalition are likely to receive more media attention than those of any individual organisation;
- A coalition can develop new leaders: as experienced group leaders step forward to lead the coalition, openings are created for new leaders in the individual groups and the new, emerging leadership strengthens the groups and the coalition;
- A coalition can build a lasting base for change: once groups unite, each group's vision of change broadens and it becomes more difficult for opposition groups to disregard the coalition's efforts as dismissible or as special interests.

The obvious partners with whom to form a coalition are other associations, possibly apex bodies or Chambers who already bring together a wide range of interests, or specific business associations who share your interest. Other potential partners include:

- NGOs, especially those who may be able to work with new for small businesses (and which might include, for example, micro-finance institutions and business support organisation);
- Research institutes, not least because they already have research information on the issue but also because they will already have the requisite skills to undertake good research;
- Cross-border BMOs – for some issues forming cross-border coalitions can be a powerful way of ensuring consistent messages are communicated to more than one government.

Forming coalitions will be time-consuming, requiring good research, negotiation and, almost certainly, compromise. Organisational logistics become more complicated than with just one organisation, which can leads to frustration when organisations that have provided a lot of resources and leadership – and for whom the outcomes are relatively more important – get frustrated with other coalition members' shortcomings. But the advantages of credibility and resources will generally outweigh the disadvantages.

You may also be able to form loose policy coalitions in which different parties promote a common cause, without necessarily ever agreeing to anything formal. Identifying public sector sympathisers may be particularly effective. It may seem slightly curious suggesting that a public sector agency could be a coalition partner and, formally at least, they could not. However, it is not unusual for different government departments to have differing objectives but are unable to state publicly the position that they would like

Policy coalitions in Tanzania

The Agricultural Council of Tanzania and the Ministry of Agriculture have lobbied the Ministry of Finance in relation to cess on agricultural produce.

The Tanzania Tourist Board is supporting activities by the Tanzanian Association of Tour Operators who are lobbying for a dedicated tourism division in the national Police Force.

to take, at least until there is sufficient external pressure to encourage Ministers to adopt that position also. They may be able to help with a background, research and intelligence on the position is being taken by other stakeholders. Government departments might have interests that are far broader than their remits. An example would be a tourism department that wants to increase security, which is outside its formal remit.

Mobilise grass roots support

Grass roots support means the support of individual businesses or members – though business associations may also be able to mobilise other stakeholders. Grass roots support is not necessary for all advocacy campaigns but there are occasions when 'people power' can make a valuable contribution to your campaign.

Mobilisation describes the means by which an organisation stimulates its members to lobby Ministers, Parliamentarians and others and encourage them to support or oppose a policy proposal.

Grass roots campaigns tend to relate to large, national public issues which impact on many people; the resolution of more technical and detailed issues may be better suited to direct and private advocacy. A grass roots campaign should not be undertaken simply as an end in itself, but rather as a way of reinforcing more traditional 'insider' lobbying strategies.

> ***Tourism Confederation of Tanzania***
>
> *When Tanzania's MNRT announced the increase in park and hunting fees described earlier, TCT mobilised tour agencies all round Europe to write expressing their dismay and explaining that they would almost certainly recommend tourists to visit other, cheaper and less capricious, destinations. TCT's campaign was ultimately successful and resulted in fees rising by just 200 per cent.*

Successful mobilisation can bring two advantages to a lobby campaign – weight of opinion and credibility. But remember that quality is more important than quantity. Politicians know that there are few issues on which substantial numbers of voters will spontaneously make their views known; most grass roots campaigns are seen by politicians as the result of an organisation mobilising its members. So it is important that individual voters communicate a genuine view of how the proposed policy might relate to their own situation.

Target a limited number of crucial decision makers. On any issue, there will be some policy makers who already hold strong opinions and a grass roots campaign aimed at these people is either unnecessary or counter-productive. Target those who might be swayed: research is required to identify those people. If you have engaged in public private dialogue, it is likely that you will already know who holds what views and the likelihood of changing them.

Use any existing member contacts with the Government. Many are likely to know someone who works at the relevant ministry; some may know an MP or even a minister. Use these contacts – at least to open doors. It is not a replacement for good research and a compelling case, but any shortcuts to the opportunity to make your case should be exploited.

A grass roots campaign may serve to demonstrate the weight of opinion, but be less effective in actually influencing public policy than a more focused campaign. Well organised groups send out 'Action Alerts' informing members of issues and of events; they briefly spell out the organisation's arguments and its position and ask the members to communicate that view to local politicians, ideally in a way that suggests that their contact is spontaneous.

Here are a few ideas for ways in which you can involve your grass roots:

- **Lobbying**. Usually lobbying is undertaken by the board or staff of the organisation, but you can always involve the members. Ensure that they have briefing notes outlining the arguments and your position.
- **Letter writing**. Give members the key arguments so they can write letters, reflecting their own situation; don't use pre-printed letters or postcards, which have little effect.
- **Petitions**. Can demonstrate weight of opinion, but only if you get enough people to sign; gives people other than members a chance to make their views known, but there needs to be evidence that the people signing really did sign.
- **Rallies and marches**. These need considerable organisational ability and effort as they never occur spontaneously; they can demonstrate massive support, but if only a few people turn up, then they will send the opposite message.

- **Internet**. Devote a website to your campaign, not least because this is a powerful way of communicating with your supporters.
- **Public meetings**. A good way to encourage the discussion of ideas and to promote exposure to a diversity of opinions.
- **Direct action**. Can attract media attention but is confrontational and is often counter-productive.
- **Non-participation**. Can be a powerful technique and includes boycotts, not voting, not paying tax (or not paying the proportion of tax that goes towards the thing to which you are objecting).

Organise a media campaign

> *The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about*
> *Oscar Wilde, Irish dramatist, novelist, & poet (1854 - 1900)*

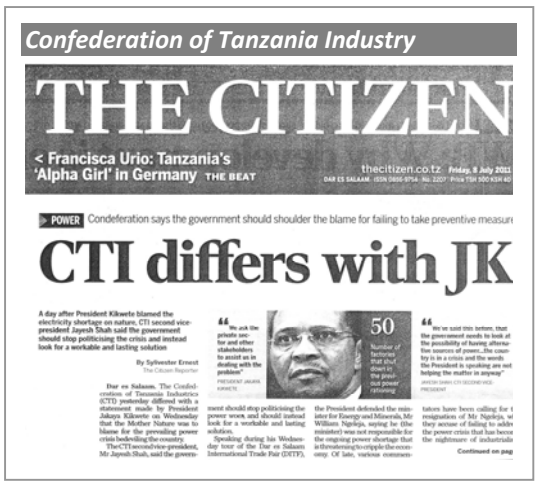
Public relations is about informing and influencing a range of stakeholders through effective public communications. Most, possibly all, of this will be through the media.

The media means the television, newspapers, magazines and Internet. There are three possible reasons to use the media: to grab the attention of the Government when it is refusing to talk, to educate the public and raise awareness of an issue and to praise progress when the Government moves.

Press campaigns – stories in the newspapers and on TV – can be effective provided they are used carefully. Do not rush straight to the press with a story – think through how you want to make use of the press.

Of all the different stakeholders with which an association will need to engage, the relationship with journalists can be one of the most difficult and one of the most productive. It is worthwhile spending the time required to develop a media relations programme, to understand journalists' agendas and even to set up a dedicated press office or press team.

Media coverage should be used carefully. You should only issue press releases once you have thought through the implications. Despite what Oscar Wilde said, in private sector advocacy, bad publicity is likely to be worse than no publicity as it might influence people in a way other than the way for which are hoping. Take care not to offend Ministers, or public officials, or potential coalition partners as you might achieve an effect opposite to the one that you intended. Bad publicity may simply result in your target audience digging in their heels and resisting your overtures.


Confederation of Tanzania Industry

THE CITIZEN

< Francisca Urio: Tanzania's 'Alpha Girl' in Germany THE BEAT

thecitizen.co.tz Friday, 8 July 2011

POWER Condeferation says the government should shoulder the blame for failing to take preventive measur

CTI differs with JK

A day after President Kikwete blamed the electricity shortage on nature, CTI second vice-president Jayesh Shah said the government should stop politicising the crisis and instead look for a workable and lasting solution

By Sylvester Ernest
The Citizen Reporter

Dar es Salaam. The Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) yesterday differed with a statement made by President Jakaya Kikwete on Wednesday that the Mother Nature was to blame for the prevailing power crisis bedevilling the country

The CTI second vice-president, Mr Jayesh Shah, said the government should stop politicising the power crisis, and should instead look for a workable and lasting solution.

Speaking during his Wednesday tour of the Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair (DITF), the President defended the minister for Energy and Minerals, Mr William Ngeleja, saying he (the minister) was not responsible for the ongoing power shortage that is threatening to crippple the economy. Of late, various commentators have been calling for t resignation of Mr Ngeleja, w they accuse of failing to addr the power crisis that has becom the nightmare of industrialis

"We've said this before, that the government needs to look at the possibility of having alterna-tive sources of power...The country is in a crisis and the words the President is speaking are not helping the matter in anyway"

JAYESH SHAH CTI SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

50
Number of factories that shut down in the post-out power rationing

Continued on pag

David Irwin spent two years advocating to the UK government on behalf of small firms; in many instances the proposal that he was seeking to influence was not yet public knowledge and to have issued a press release would almost certainly have led to Ministers digging in their heels. And on some occasions, even when he was successful, he didn't issue a press release, because this would have embarrassed a Minister in public, and he knew that would backfire the next time there was an issue to fight.

In general, media coverage is best used when the issue is already in the public domain. But considerable thought is needed about the purpose – is it to build grass roots support? Or is it to convince Ministers of the merits of a case? Or is it to demonstrate to Ministers that the proposal is already supported by large numbers of people? Or is it to flush out opposition to the proposals for change? All of these need to be handled differently. So you need to ensure that:

- The purpose of all communications is clear – sending a clear message is essential, despite the fact that often issues are complex, if you are to succeed in influencing decision-makers and winning public support;
- Target audiences are known, analysed and identified;
- Timing for the communication is planned, in order not to conflict with other events.

Getting to know key journalists, perhaps taking them for lunch occasionally, will make a big difference to whether you get stories published, whether they are reproduced accurately and help you to work effectively with the journalist by understanding their priorities. Simply understanding the deadlines to which they are working can help increase the amount of coverage your stories obtain.

While there is a huge amount to learn about working with the media, simply being able to write and deliver a good press release and follow it up with a competent interview will go a long way to giving your organisation a reasonable media profile. This is an area where most organisations will benefit from good training. If you have time to prepare for an interview, then take the time to brainstorm possible questions and rehearse the answer.

The media are interested in news. So your challenge is to demonstrate that you are making news. The results of surveys are often an excellent hook, because publishing survey results is clearly news. Your most immediate challenge is to grab the interest of, and motivate, the journalists. Deliver to journalists what they NEED: news that is New, Exciting, Exclusive and hits their Deadline. But always remember that the objective is, through media coverage, to inform readers, viewers or listeners.

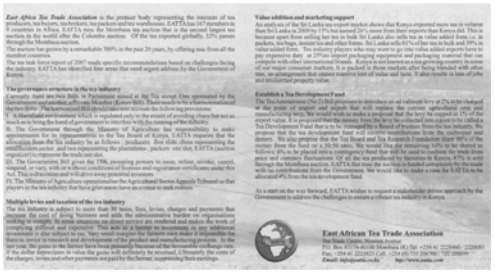
Organise a written petition

Petitions are often used in developed countries as a way of demonstrating a high level of support amongst the general public for a particular issue and generating media coverage. They are generally less relevant for business issues, not least because securing sufficient signatures to look credible will be hard work. On the other hand, collecting signatures for a petition and presenting a petition to the Prime Minister, or President, or Speaker of the Houses of Parliament provide good media stories.

Advertise

Sometimes associations feel that there is a need to advertise in order to communicate their position. This is generally an attempt to rally grass roots support. Whilst there may be occasions when advertising makes sense, perhaps to grab attention, in general it is unlikely to make much difference in changing the opinions of policy makers.

East African Tea Trade Association



Go to court

Some organisations believe that going to court can be effective in influencing to policy. Going to court should generally be a last resort. Organisations may well be successful – but courts are intended to uphold the law and it is too easy for the government simply to change the law in response. So going to court is perhaps best seen as a way of grabbing attention – and securing more media coverage – rather than achieving a long term solution to an issue.

Africa Network for Animal Welfare

Africa Network for Animal Welfare, a pan-African wildlife protection organisation, has taken legal action as part of its campaign against a proposed new road across the Serengeti on the grounds that it would harm the park's ecology.

DRAFT RULES & REGULATIONS

In some parts of the world, especially the US, lobbyists draft legislation and regulation, without waiting to be asked, as part of their lobbying efforts.

There have been attempts to do this in Africa as well, though it is rare that governments take on board the specific proposals. However, there may well be opportunities to work with the public sector to write (or rewrite) the specific rules for the way in which legislation or regulation will be implemented. Drafting legislation may also provide a good media story.

Tanzania Horticulture Association

TAHA persuaded the Ministry of Agriculture that inspectors should inspect farm produce just once, rather than several times – and then worked closely with them to prepare an inspection manual.

BRIEF & TRAIN MEMBERS

It is important when developing policy positions that you involve your members since otherwise you will not know that you have their support. It is also sensible to ensure that they have the ammunition that they need to promote the association's positions on the issues that especially concern them. In other words, you want every member of the association to be an ambassador and advocate for the association. This is particularly important where public officials may have regular contact with your members, as in the agricultural sector for example. So ensure that your members are properly briefed by giving them copies of policy position papers. For complex issues, you may want to provide additional briefing materials including question and answer sheets. If your association has local branches, think about providing materials so that branch officers can give a presentation or can encourage a debate at a branch meeting.

Tanzania Horticulture Association

TAHA involves its members closely in developing policy positions – gathering data, preparing draft policy positions, checking with members that the information is accurate and the policy position reflects their concerns, finalising policy positions – but then ensures every member has a copy of the final paper so if they are quizzed by someone from the Ministry, they will all communicate the same message.

PROVIDE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Some business associations have found that providing training or experiential learning opportunities for stakeholders, especially Parliamentarians and journalists, can be good way of raising awareness about issues and encouraging them to think more deeply about topics that they previously may have ignored.

Encouraging stakeholders to come to an awareness raising session or participate in a field trip also gives you an opportunity to spend more time with them, getting to know them, understanding what makes them tick and discussing their needs. You will then be much better able to address those needs – usually through the sharing of information through regular briefing papers, through newsletters and through passing on titbits of information when you come across them.

Field trips

TAHA arranges an annual programme with the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture which includes taking them on field trips.

They do the same for journalists, providing training and visits to farms so that they can 'see them for real'.

The Tanzania Air Operators' Association has taken the Directors General of the Tanzania Air Authority and the Tanzanian Civil Aviation Authority on a five day mission to Lanseria in South Africa to see how a privatised airport operates.

ORGANISE SOCIAL EVENTS

If people know you, and especially if they like you, you will find it easier to influence them. The best way to get to know people, whether they are your own members, or public officials, or politicians, or journalists, or opinion formers is to organise occasional social events. Participants should feel that they genuinely are social events, so don't be too heavy in discussing the issues, but don't entirely let the opportunity slip either. You may, for example, want to brief staff and

Tanzania Association of Tour Operators

TATO believes informal methods of meeting with public officials, rather than over-reliance on written documents and formal meetings, can make a difference. So they organise monthly 'corporate social network' events inviting members, politicians and public servants from Ministries and Agencies

board so that each person has one or two targets to whom they should talk during the event with a specific objective in mind. Charity and community events can be a useful opportunity to meet.

Invite your contacts to your conferences. Indeed, they can often be a useful source of speakers. Field visits can also provide them useful opportunities to understand your work as well as opportunities to talk less formally.

Successful influencing

Effective influencing is as much about the *how* you employ the tactics you choose as selecting the right tactics in the first place. As well as including some general points on your influencing style this section will focus in detail on two specific areas of skills – negotiation and media relations.

Some people are naturally better at these, but we all improve with practice. If this is not one of your strengths consider what you might do to improve. Start by reading the following section and what else you might do to improve. Is there a course available? Who else on your team would benefit? Is it something you might include as a session at a board meeting or away day? Good advocacy is not just about what you do but how you do it.

Before we get into the detail of negotiation and media relations we will review some general points about communication. Understanding these should improve your influencing skills.

Build rapport

Rapport is about meeting people on their own level, making them feel at home and so developing a feeling of warmth and well-being. Robert Carkhuff identified eight core variables in communication, all of which will help you here:

- **Empathy**. Show acceptance and understanding of the feelings of the other party
- **Positive regard**. Show interest and attention, demonstrate concern
- **Respect**. Do not judge or evaluate, treat the person as an equal
- **Genuineness**. Be sincere, show that you are not playing a role or maintaining a façade
- **Concreteness**. Be specific, avoid vague terms or jargon;
- **Self-disclosure**. Do not be afraid to reveal your own feelings, when relevant to the discussion
- **Confrontation**. Say it like it is. Confrontation must be presented with warmth, respect and empathy and must be specific if it is to be useful and helpful; otherwise it is hurtful and punishing
- **Immediacy**. Respond openly to the relationship and develop it

Principles for successful influencing

Influencing is used to describe an activity whereby you seek to persuade a person or organisation round to your point of view and then to act in a specific way or to support a viewpoint or action. In the case of private sector advocacy, the aim may be to persuade a Ministry or Agency or municipal authority to repeal an existing regulatory requirement, or to implement a proposal for a new regulation in such a way that it is less burdensome that it might otherwise have been, or to enforce an existing regulation, or to create a new regulation, or to stop something that the public agency is allowing to happen, such as a corrupt practice.

When people think about negotiation, they visualise the need for two parties to come to a mutually acceptable solution. Influencing is often more encompassing, not least because there may be more than two parties involved and because influencers often seek to work through others – opinion formers – in their efforts to influence the ultimate target. Influencing a Minister in the Government will be far easier if the Minister thinks that 90 per cent of the population backs a specific proposal rather than just one per cent.

Successful influencing requires a healthy combination of interpersonal, communication, presentation and assertiveness skills. It requires the consideration of a range of options, good preparation and clear prioritisation:

- **Be clear about your objectives and prioritise**. Having clear goals will mean that you are more likely to enjoy a focused discussion in which the objectives can be used to define progress and as a measure of success – but be flexible as well. It is often better to compromise and get some way to your objectives that to lose everything.
- **Understand yourself and the effect you have on others**. Influencing requires adapting and modifying your personal style as you become aware of the effect you are having on other people. If others perceive you as opposing them, that will shape how they interpret anything you propose or question that you ask. Influencing is generally two way – the party that you are aiming to influence will most likely want to influence you to change your position as well.
- **Allow enough time**. Studies have shown that parties who face tight deadlines when negotiating will tend to use competitive strategies.
- Your target audience will be assessing your motives, so **be open about your objectives**. Openness is a major factor in contributing to both communication effectiveness and negotiation success. You might think that knowledge of the other party's positional strength would put them at a disadvantage. Research seems to prove the opposite to be true. Knowledge of the other party's relative weakness seems to lead the negotiating party into responding collaboratively.
- **Do not manipulate**. It is sometimes tempting to exert influence through coercion and manipulation. You might occasionally even succeed but that is not really influencing. It is forcing people to do what you want, often against their will. It fails the test of influencing because it does not win support. In fact, over the long term, it works against you.
- **Take others' views into consideration**. Invite the other party to put their point of view, so that they don't feel forced – especially if they actually do agree with the action proposed. Where they disagree, people are far more willing to come halfway (or more) if they feel acknowledged, understood and appreciated. Because they feel good about making the choice, people may even end up doing or agreeing to something they would not previously have done.
- **Be positive**. Emphasise the positive aspects of your case, rather than being overly critical of the existing public policy position. Look for ways to help policy makers look good by supporting your case.
- **Even when you disagree, do not cause embarrassment**. One of the most powerful forces affecting behaviour is the avoidance of humiliation. No one wants to be embarrassed so take care – offer to work with them, provide them the ammunition that they need to work on your behalf within the organisation.

Negotiating

However brilliant your advocacy campaign is, it is unlikely that you will achieve everything that your sector might hope for because policy makers need to balance your needs and aspirations with those of other groups. If you hold out only for your ideal outcome you are likely to end up with a worse situation than if you are prepared to negotiate.

It is particularly important for an association to be prepared and to involve its members in that preparation so that they have realistic expectations of what can be achieved. Options may be available for a limited time and therefore preparing your members and being clear on their expectations may make the difference between a satisfactory outcome and a disaster.

Steps for successful influencing

Influencing and negotiating skills are very similar and the steps to success are very similar. Effective influencing requires that you:

- Identify the right people to influence and, if possible, get to know them through regular dialogue
- Adopt appropriate behaviours and attitudes
- Engage in effective communication
- Build rapport with your target audiences

- Are clear about your objectives
- Are confident in your position (which requires that you have good research) and able to offer compelling arguments in a logical, rational and reasoned way
- Network widely, build coalitions, mobilise public support, build support and trust.

You will need to understand who you are negotiating with and particularly the values, attitudes, emotions, perceptions and motives that drive them. Sometimes you may find that it is necessary only to use economic or technical arguments; other times you may need to present your case in such a way as to draw on national pride.

Start by ensuring a clear awareness of the issue through articulating the facts – for example: "this regulation affects 90 per cent of our members and costs them 10 per cent of their income because…". There can be merit in following the facts with feelings, though this has to be treated carefully – for example: "as a result, they are very frustrated with the government…".

Once the facts have been accepted, the next step is to promote a change of attitude. Negotiation is often adversarial; wherever possible, you should aim to be collaborative - "We are on the same side on this". Indeed, it is not unusual to find that you really are on the same side, but that the official needs the evidence that you can bring to support the case for change.

You can use the mnemonic "Partners Don't Pick Bad Arguments" (PDPBA) to remember the steps in the negotiating process, which are as follows:

Prepare

Prepare thoroughly. Do the necessary research and gather the evidence. Negotiations often involve a compromise, so you need to decide what you are not prepared to concede. Think of all the solutions which may be offered to you and decide in advance which are acceptable. There will still be times when you must think on your feet and respond to the unexpected, but try to minimise the possibility. Decide your objectives and, as you will be assertive rather than aggressive, decide your fall-back position. Categorise them as follows:

- Must achieve
- Intend to achieve
- Would like to achieve

Think about what you need to do to create the climate for a successful negotiation. Irrespective of the nature of discussion to be held, one should enter the location for the discussion upright, confident and with an open disposition.

If at all possible this preparation should involve your board or a representative group of your members. This will help them to understand the limitations that you face and to set clear boundaries in different scenarios for those involved in the detail of the negotiation.

Discuss

You know what you hope to achieve – the discussion stage is where you establish the other party's objectives and requirements.

Find common ground. Do not concentrate on areas of conflict – instead give attention at the outset to anticipated common ground so that can put on one side the areas where you have agreement and perhaps result in an appropriate compromise being made.

Respond to the mood and tempo of the negotiation process but don't lose sight of your goals. If you are not clear about the procedure and protocols to be followed, now would be a good time to clarify. You will need to sustain personal interaction throughout the discussion and keep the talks on track.

Propose

The opening phase of a negotiation involves both sides presenting their starting positions. Offer proposals and find out what the other person is prepared to trade in return. At this stage, nothing is set in stone - you are tentatively exploring possibilities.

This is the time to ensure that the information received is accurate. Both sides may have given facts and arguments, to convince each other of their case. However, statistics can be misused, facts may be wrong and emotional appeals might have been made. It is always sensible to test the other's statements.

Bargain

You are now moving to firmer ground and your bargaining should take you forward to agreement.

After discussing each other's requirements and exchanging information, the bargaining can start. It is important not to start bargaining too early - you may miss important concession areas or information. Generally, you receive more if you ask for more. If conflict arises at this point, indicate that your opening offer is not necessarily what you will finally accept.

When your offer is made, state this clearly. If you use the word "about", an experienced negotiator can challenge on a variety of issues, and change your offer dramatically.

Throughout the negotiation, examine the other party's reaction and messages to understand their stance and specific objectives.

When the offer has been made, the next step is to find out exactly what it includes. Ask for clarification. You will have prepared a list of your requirements in the pre-negotiation stage, so ensure that your needs have been met. The points to remember when making an offer are:

- Aim high - you can reduce your demands later;
- Make a positive offer;
- Ask for clarification of offers you receive.

The next stage is the most vital phase of the whole negotiating process. The offer has been made, and the two parties have to ensure that this is mutually acceptable. All the issues to be negotiated need to be identified. At this stage, concessions may be introduced. Trade items that are of little value to you, but of great importance to the other party, in exchange for items of great importance to yourself.

If you are offered a concession, it can be dealt with in four ways:

- Be grateful - and ask for more
- Trade with a smaller concession
- Accept it and continue talking
- If it was too small, act as though you had not heard it

Do not trade all your concessions at once. If they are given too early, the other party may expect more. Also, you should record all concessions, to ensure no misunderstandings occur. No deals are binding until you agree.

When making concessions or offering counter-proposals, flexibility should be maintained. This should reduce the possibility of a deadlock. If an agreement cannot be reached on one issue, discuss all the other issues and then return to the final point of disagreement, with the aim of finding a solution.

Avoid immediate counter – proposals. These introduce additional options, sometimes whole new issues, which cloud the clarity of the negotiation. The other side may well be unreceptive because they are still concerned with their initial proposal.

Do not get involved in a spiral of defence or attack. Negotiations do involve conflict but attack and defence never take the process forward. So avoid getting heated and emotional. Once one side attacks, the other tend to defend itself automatically; the exchanges become more and more heated and the downward spiral starts.

Give indicators of your intentions. Provide hints to the other party of how you are going to behave because it enables them take a more considered approach. For example say, "Can we talk about the tax rates now?" "If I could make a suggestion…" This technique also reduces ambiguity. It also introduces a structure which helps keep the negotiation on a rational level. All these create joint ownership of the entire negotiation – and a shared commitment to its outcomes.

Agree

The final stage; an agreement satisfactory to both parties is arrived at and documentation, if appropriate, drawn up to seal the agreement.

When agreement is in sight, the energy level of the negotiators may increase. Other signs to watch for are verbal indications - "maybe" "perhaps", and non-verbal - papers may be placed in

briefcases. It is time to summarise what has been discussed and agreed. Do not start bargaining again.

It is vital to ensure that all points discussed have been clarified. An action plan may be required, giving details of deadlines and allocating tasks.

Test understanding by offering a summary of what has been agreed. This will give a chance to confirm or correct any decisions. Ensure that all concessions have been agreed as part of the total package. It is too easy to feel relieved at the final stage and overlook some detail that could disrupt the whole negotiation.

Use the trial closes. For example, "Is it fair to suggest that we have now discussed all the points?" Although "Your pen or mine to sign the deal?" can be used as a humorous way to test the water, care is required that it does not suggest that the whole negotiation and the consequences ware also just play. The response to the trial close may not be an agreement, but it will probably indicate how far away the other party is from a conclusion.

If there is any disagreement, it may be necessary for negotiations to recommence until a successful outcome is reached again. It is worth writing a minute of the meeting or, failing that, following up with a letter documenting the agreement made and, ideally, who will be responsible for what action together with a timescale.

Collaborative negotiation

The nature of the relationship, the history and the perceived equality of the parties will make a difference. If you value the relationship you will generally use collaborative strategies, which demonstrates concern for the other party. Amongst the best known proponents of win-win negotiation strategies are two Harvard professors, Roger Fisher and William Ury, who have produced a model of "principled bargaining" built around four strategies:

- Separate the people from the problem. Involves communicative strategies, which accept the people as human beings and focus on the problem as a separate issue.
- Focus on interests, not positions. Involves avoiding the opposing party's positional stance, but looking for the underlying interests; a communication strategy, which looks at the underlying message.
- Invest in options for mutual gain. Creating new opportunities based on the free exchange of information about individual need.
- Insist on objective criteria. Creating or using external standards that are untouched by the bargaining process.

Collaborative negotiation can be less intense because of the parties' attitude to power within the negotiation. Where parties set out to balance power in a relationship, this gives clear messages about the quality of the relationship and the degree to which the parties wish it to continue.

Conclusion

Influencing is a means of encouraging others not only to adopt your point of view but also to stimulate them to act. There are many ways of influencing policy makers, but one of the strongest is through personal negotiation with public sector officials and Ministers. This requires having at your finger tips all the evidence and then being able to marshal the arguments in a way that is totally compelling.

This needs to fit within an overall strategy intended to achieve your desired public policy outcome since there are likely to be many people who need to be influenced. You will need to think carefully about overall approach, about tools and about tactics. You will also want to think through whether you need an organisational strategy for advocacy in addition to strategies for individual projects, for example, to ensure that you maintain a dialogue even when there is no specific issue on which you are advocating.

Further reading and further information

- *Robert R. Carkhuff (1969), "Helping and human relations", Holt, Rhinehart and Winston*
- *Roger Fisher and William Ury (1990), "Getting to 'Yes'"; Hutchinson.*
- Start, D & Hovland, I (2004), "*Tools for policy impact: a handbook for researchers*", ODI

Follow up: monitor & evaluate

> True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous and conflicting information
>
> Winston Churchill, British orator, author and Prime Minister, 1874-1965

Introduction

The fifth step in the Five Step Approach is follow up. It is not enough just to secure agreement to change public policy. You will need to watch progress closely until the policy is adopted, implemented and whether implemented in the way that you had anticipated and then evaluate impact. If government does not agree to your proposals, or implements a policy that is less than helpful to business, you should evaluate the impact of that too. You can either applaud them for having made a positive difference or continue to build a case for changing the policy to one that is more conducive.

Monitoring and evaluation are used widely to review the progress and impact of projects and programmes. This is relatively straightforward when the management of the project or programme is wholly or largely in your control. But it is harder when success depends on the actions of others.

By the end of this chapter, you will:

- Have been introduced to a range of ideas to assist you to monitor actions of public sector organisations
- Understand how to evaluate the impact arising from those actions
- Be aware of the stakeholders to whom you should communicate your success.

Monitoring and evaluation

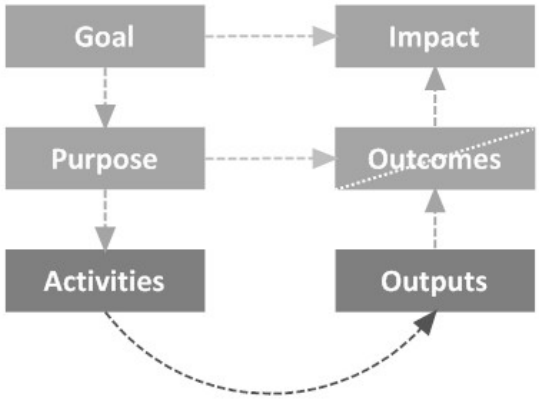
The purpose of monitoring in relation to public policy advocacy is to determine whether a proposal to change a public policy was agreed and whether the new policy was implemented as intended. The purpose of evaluation is to assess whether the new policy achieved the anticipated effect(s) and whether it resulted in unforeseen consequences. Evaluation may also lead to suggestions for further action and to the drawing of lessons that may be transferable to other areas of public policy.

It is perhaps worth reiterating at this point that project and programme design is most effective when the causal relationships are clear – and this is most easily achieved through the use of chains of logic, not least because this approach will help to clarify what is required by way of monitoring and evaluation.

Logic chains are usually shown as straight lines, starting from inputs, moving through activities, outcomes and outcomes and leading to the desired impact. The logic chain in the figure has been redrawn to remind us that the desired impact is defined by the goal and the desired outcomes are defined by the specific objectives. A typical programme, however, only delivers the outputs. The programme design makes assumptions about whether the outputs will deliver the outcomes and ultimately the impact. The programme should be monitored to ensure that the outputs are being delivered and should be periodically evaluated to assess whether the outcomes and impact are being delivered.

A simplified chain of logic is shown in the figure below. You have a goal – and if you achieve the goal you will create an impact. You have a purpose, perhaps expressed as objectives, intended to deliver specific outcomes. Sometimes, as we will see later, there may be a need to differentiate between levels of outcome. In most logic chains, there is an assumption that delivering the outcomes will also deliver the desired impact; ideally, you should test that assumption through your evaluation.

Figure 11: Impact assessment



It is ultimate impact – improved livelihoods, increased incomes, more jobs, greater investment, increased exports, higher tax revenues, reduced poverty – that provides the justification for changing public policy. A typical donor funded project might have job creation or poverty reduction as the goal. A business association's goal may be to improve profitability for businesses in its sector. Its purpose will be very specific, however, such as 'amending the Seed and Plant Varieties Act'.

Monitoring

If you are monitoring a project or a programme under your control, then typically you will adopt a continuous process to gather data on defined indicators in order to provide feedback about processes and performance. That requires regular data collection and reliable record keeping.

Monitoring an external organisation, when it may not be totally co-operative and when it is as large and complex as government, is more difficult. The form of monitoring may depend, to some extent, on what precisely has been agreed and how it will be implemented.

It is fairly easy, for example, to monitor a change that requires legislation. If the new policy requires the government to take one or more steps to implement it, you need to ensure that you follow it through every step. This requires that you have a thorough understanding of the legislative process and that you watch carefully for any watering down of the policy as the implementation process proceeds or indeed for the process stalling completely. Either of these occurrences will require you to start lobbying again.

Kenya Association of Manufacturers

KAM commissioned a study which identified some 1,325 different licensing requirements. As a result, the Government established the Regulatory Reform Business Activity committee which recommended the elimination of 424 licences and the simplification of a further 607. Implementation was slow and effective external monitoring was lacking.

An external evaluation in 2009 revealed that some businesses were still being charged levies and licences according to the 'old' rules and so were paying too much.

It is more difficult to monitor implementation of a change that only requires an executive order, or is about enforcing existing regulation, or is about the way that people in government behave towards business.

Techniques

The techniques for monitoring government action in relation to implementation are very similar to those required to gather intelligence about their public policy interventions:

- Monitor the Government's websites for announcements about changes of policy.
- If the Government has a news release service, then sign up for it, so that you will be amongst the first to know when they make formal announcements.

Seed Trade Association of Kenya

STAK has been working since 2007 to persuade the Government to update 1977 Seed & Plant Varieties Act to become consistent with regional and international standards and allow the commercial cultivation of more modern seeds.

Their advocacy resulted in the Ministry of Agriculture publishing a Draft National Policy Paper and sending a draft Bill to the Office of the Attorney General in 2010. However, for a variety of reasons, it has become bogged down and has made no further progress.

- Keep in regular contact with the people that you know in the government – and ask them to keep you updated about progress and problems.
- Keep in touch with others who might also be interested in what the government is doing. If there is an apex or a pre-eminent business association, perhaps with better links than you, then ensure that you work closely with them. Some civil society organisations or NGOs may also have an interest, so talk to them regularly.
- If there are 'back-bench' committees in Parliament, they may also have an interest in progress, and may be willing to share with you what they learn.
- Importantly, involve your members – through seeking feedback on a regular basis. Survey them formally, preferably by telephone; talk to them at meetings; encourage feedback via newsletters and e-mail alerts. Ensure that the questions posed to your members relate back to the original goal. Analyse the results and, if necessary, go back to the policy makers to demonstrate that implementation is ineffective or patchy. And if the results are positive, go back with those as well, but use them to applaud the government for making a difference

Evaluation

Evaluation seeks to look more strategically at the impact of the policy change. This will require in-depth analysis of whether the policy has achieved its goals and whether there are undesirable consequences.

In an ideal world, governments would undertake cost benefit analyses and prepare regulatory impact assessments before introducing new regulations or changing existing regulations. They would then also be more likely to review the impact of their policies. In any event, it is good practice for governments to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of their policies. However, many governments do not do this or, if they do, use them to justify their approach rather than taking a wholly objective view of the issue.

When business associations advocate change in public policy, it is sensible for them also to suggest ways in which the government can monitor and evaluate the implementation and perhaps commit their membership to working with government on this. For other public policies that impact on business, especially where the government is not evaluating the consequences, it is up to business associations to ensure that governments do not get away with a lax approach and, if necessary, undertake evaluation themselves.

When evaluating the government's performance, you will always want to assess the impact. But in some cases, the impact may depend on achieving outcomes within government. Advocates are not always clear about the outcomes necessary to achieve the desired impact – or fail to recognise that there is a hierarchy of outcomes.

For example, an international trade programme may aim to increase the level of international trade. An intermediate outcome might be that the transaction costs are reduced (by reducing waiting time at ports or cutting transport costs, say); the ultimate outcome might be that the level of international trade increases. The impact, however, comes about because higher levels of trade raise the sales revenue of businesses which thus become more profitable and are able to create more jobs and pay higher wages.

An advocacy campaign may have a similar goal. The purpose may be to reduce the number and complexity of taxes and levies. As a result of the project, the government may agree to abolish a particular levy. This is an intermediate outcome. The collection of the levy may be the responsibility of a different level of government or of an agency. And not every business may know that the levy has been revoked. In some cases, corrupt officials may decide to continue to collect it. The ending of the collection of the levy is the ultimate outcome.

In general, you may find it helpful to think of the change in public policy as an intermediate outcome and effective implementation of the policy as the final outcome. You will then quickly realise that there is a need to assess whether the policy has indeed been properly implemented as well as the need to assess the impact. In this case, the impact is that businesses keep more of their revenue leading to more investment, more jobs, improved livelihoods etc. To demonstrate real success, you have to assess the impact.

Techniques

Reliable data is essential if you wish to determine whether policy measures are properly targeted, efficient and cost-effective. Data needs to be relevant, objective, accurate, up to date, transparent and comparable over time and space.

- Explore whether departments or agencies in government already gather appropriate data and consider whether it can be used to monitor or evaluate the policy implementation or impact. However, you may need to test the data for reliability.
- If the government does not gather appropriate data, or you cannot access their data, then you should consider whether you can do so instead, at least to some extent, by surveying your members.
- Interview other stakeholders.

Gathering data from members to assess impact can be undertaken at the same time as seeking feedback on implementation. You need to be clear about the indicators you will use, though typical indicators may look at increases in sales, reductions in costs, reductions in incidence of corruption, increases in profitability or improvements in livelihoods. Ideally, you will have thought about them when you defined your original goal. Of course, these can all change for many more reasons than your advocacy, so comparing to a baseline will be helpful (and, ideally, you will have undertaken a baseline survey as part of the initial research prior to advocating change). Some public policy changes take a long time to work through the system, let alone have a measurable impact, but doing surveys as soon as practicably possible after a change will reduce the likelihood of impact cause by other factors. Asking about causality can be important – do the businesses attribute the improvements to the change in public policy?

Ideally data gathering should be designed into the policy – something that you may like to consider when attempting to influence the policy measure. Remember however that there is a cost associated with gathering data, even if it is only the time of your members, so minimise the requirement; as far as possible ask for data that businesses are likely already to have anyway; and consider how to use new technologies such as internet or GIS mapping, to minimise cost and maximise efficiency. Providing feedback to the businesses providing data, even if it is only benchmarking data, may encourage them to participate.

If you do not feel confident enough to undertake evaluation yourself, then commission an evaluator to do it for you.

Challenges

Evaluation of public policy presents the following general challenges:

- The complexity of issues can sometimes make it difficult to determine cause and effect between policies and outcomes – general economic conditions, for example, may have a bigger impact than the policy measure
- There may be a lag between the introduction of the policy and the impact on business.
- Measuring some outcomes may be difficult, in which case it may be necessary to use proxies or to look for evidence that the policy measure is leading to some movement 'in the right direction'
- Businesses may ignore public policy requirements completely, or to a large extent, simply by 'keeping their head below the parapet' or by making corrupt payments to keep enforcers at bay or by trading across 'porous' borders, and so some outcomes may be harder to quantify or to obtain reliable information about
- The government may not gather appropriate information, or else its data may not be reliable.

Communicate success

It is important to thank people in government, politicians and civil servants, who have had a role in changing the policy. If they feel appreciated, then they will be more likely to help again the next time. If you are writing to Ministers or senior officials, and you have had particular help from junior officials, name them and express your appreciation for their support. Add them to your mailing lists – keep them up to date with what you are doing, though take care not to over-

burden them. Invite them to participate in conferences that you might be organising. In particular, ensure that you tell them about the positive impact that they have achieved.

Tell your members: it is important not only that they know about the change (so that they can tell you if nothing happens) but also that they recognise that you were responsible for achieving the change so are more likely to stay a member.

Ideally, you should get the message across to a wider audience, especially other businesses in your sector who are not yet members. Usually the best way to do this is via the press and media. Communicating success may encourage more businesses to join the association – on the basis that the more members you have, then the more that you can achieve, and businesses like to be associated with success.

The power of conferences

The UK's Biscuit Cake Chocolate & Confectionary Association used to hold regular conferences to discuss developments, especially technological developments, in the sector. They always invited public officials, especially from the Food Standards Agency, to participate – because the officials had a chance to see at first hand the considerable technological expertise and experience and to get to know people. This increased the likelihood of them seeking technical information and advice from the industry when necessary.

It is sometimes appropriate to use the media as a way of provoking reluctant politicians to take notice and to act. If you persuade policy makers not to introduce a proposed policy that would have been detrimental, but the proposal has never become public, it is generally a good idea not to embarrass the policy makers. But where policy makers have agreed to adopt a new policy, or to change an existing policy, it is almost always appropriate to use the media to praise them for their 'far-sightedness' and to laud their support for the business sector. Importantly, however, it moves the decision into the public domain which makes it harder for them to back down later, though care is required on contentious issues so that you do not upset organisations who have adopted a different, perhaps contrary, standpoint. Being positive about politicians and civil servants will reinforce their position and their authority within government and will generally engender in them warm feelings about you.

If you have secured agreement to change, but the change has not yet occurred, you may want to follow up with opinion formers and influencers to keep up the pressure for things to happen.

Think about whether it is worth writing about the project as a case study. You can then use this in your publicity material, newsletters etc to demonstrate to members that making a difference and to encourage other businesses that they ought to become members. But you might also want to circulate case studies more widely, so that other business associations can benefit from your lessons and insights.

Conclusion

The five steps are usually drawn in such a way as to imply a clear linear progression. However, there will often need to be some iteration around the steps. In particular, you may well think that the public sector has agreed to change – but you soon come to realise that they haven't done anything, so you will need to advocate once again.

Be watchful – even if you think you have 'won', governments never give up if you have persuaded them to do something that they don't want to do. So keep on watching and monitoring and keep on evaluating impact.

Further reading and further information

- *"Logic model development guide", W K Kellogg Foundation, 2004*
- *www.innonet.org*

Manage an advocacy Project

> Begin at the beginning, and go on till you come to the end: then stop
> Alice's Adventure in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll (1832-1898)

Introduction

Regardless of their nature, the key to success in projects and programmes is to plan carefully so that you work consistently and systematically from a clear beginning, through a precise set of steps to a pre-determined end point.

Project management processes provide the framework required for successful implementation. Project management defines the planning, budgeting, organising, directing, controlling and monitoring functions within specified time and resource constraints.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce project planning, management and financial control techniques to help you manage projects effectively.

By the end of the chapter you will:

- Understand and be able to plan a simple project with timescales, milestones, targets and budgets
- Have been introduced to a number of effective project planning techniques
- Be able to monitor progress and measure performance and take corrective action
- Be able to write a proposal to secure sponsorship.

Project planning

If you are serious about engaging in dialogue and advocacy, you need to consider the resources, in terms of people and money, that will be required. There will be specific costs associated with pursuing each issue, for example, to cover research, meetings with policy makers, possibly public launches of a policy position, public relations etc. You also need to cover the costs of identifying and working up the issues to a point where it they become advocacy projects. Ideally, an association will appoint both a board sub-committee which can take policy decisions, such as which issues to pursue, and a member of staff who can be director of advocacy (or some similar title). This person will be responsible for gathering the issues, for managing the research, for making recommendations for which projects to pursue and then managing the advocacy projects. Such a person would probably also represent the organisation in dialogues with government. Depending on the size of the association, it may be possible, indeed desirable, to share this role with that of director of public affairs or director of communications.

Managing the process will be much easier if you develop an appropriate chart so that issues can be tracked. Typical column headings might include:

- Issue
- Basic research (commissioned, completed)
- Issue brief prepared
- Prioritisation
- Stage in advocacy process
  - detailed research commissioned
  - policy proposal prepared
  - policy being advocated
  - policy adopted by government
  - follow up monitoring

A systematic approach will help you ensure that you are using on a regular basis all of the different ways described earlier to identify issues and that all but the most trivial are then being captured and examined with the most important being prioritised for action.

An advocacy initiative, or a step in the Five Step Approach, can be regarded as a project. A project is simply a series of activities and tasks that:

- Have a specific objective
- Have defined start and end dates
- Are constrained usually around time and resources
- Have clearly measurable outputs and outcomes from which one can assess whether the project was successful

In all organisations, it is necessary to plan, implement, manage and evaluate activities and processes. Some organisations find that all their activities are entirely in the form of one-off projects, whereas others have programmes, distinguishable because they do not have a specified end-point. In all cases, however, an individual will be responsible for planning, securing the resources, ensuring the work is carried out on time and evaluating the results.

We plan because:

- We don't want to forget anything
- We want to be confident things will succeed
- We want to be organised

Too often projects are established with vague objectives, poor planning and inadequate resources. Project management requires careful planning and progress reviews. Spending time to plan a project in detail will be rewarded later – in all likelihood, the project will be implemented more smoothly and will require less time doing things that weren't foreseen.

Planning should be a continuous activity. The intention is not to impose a straightjacket, but to ensure that necessary activities happen in a structured way. Objectives must be clear, specific, achievable and should relate to your wider organisational strategy. Hopefully, the planning stage will help you anticipate – and address – potential problems. But as the project progresses, continue to review objectives: they may need to be changed, or the project abandoned, in the light of experience. This is especially true in advocacy.

The aim of project planning then is:

- to determine all the activities required for successful completion
- to determine the relationship between activities (that is, to identify the activities that are dependent on the completion of earlier activities) and which activities are independent and can, therefore, be undertaken in parallel (resources permitting)
- to identify the time required for each step
- to consider the resources, including people and money, required

There are many planning techniques and tools. Most will be more complex than is required for an advocacy project. This section describes a handful of tools which should assist you to explore in detail the tasks that may be required and how they should be put together in a project plan.

Flow charting

Flow charting can help you to think through all the elements of a project including responses at key decision points. It might be intended, for example, to help write a quality assurance procedure or to control progress and expenditure on a substantial capital investment.

A flow chart is simply a model of a process, graphically representing that process and the sequential steps within it. It may identify steps which might be problematic. It should give assistance in reaching a common understanding of a process and thus provide a starting point to re-design the process or project if required.

Start by brainstorming a list of all the activities that need to be completed for a project. If you cannot identify all of the tasks, then it might be sensible to split the project into a series of smaller projects, where the end of one project provides the starting point for the next project. Imagine, for example, that you aiming to persuade the Government to review legislation relating to the export of agricultural produce. You may conclude that the necessary steps are to:

- Consult with your members to identify and agree specific requirements
- Undertake research to demonstrate potential impact
- Prepare draft policy position proposals
- Consult with members to ensure consensus

Figure 12: Flow chart

- Build alliances with other stakeholders
- Seek initial meeting(s) with policy makers
- Modify draft proposals if it appears that you might be able to reach a compromise
- Seek meeting with Minister
- Publish final proposal(s)
- Issue press release

In practice, you would probably have rather more steps than this. Look at how these steps (well, the first few) are represented in the flow chart below. Note the decision points – written as questions – and, in particular, the feedback loop from asking whether your policy proposals are acceptable to your members and the possible need to refine or even rewrite the proposals.

Flow charts use standard symbols such as rectangular boxes for activities and diamond boxes for decisions. Generally the flow is down the page unless a decision takes the flow back to repeat an earlier activity. Software packages, such as Smart Draw (www.smartdraw.com), can make the production of flow charts very simple.

A carefully thought out flowchart can be used as the basis for preparing Gantt charts and critical path analyses.

Task analysis

A flowchart summarises the activities and decisions. It provides some understanding of the dependences, but it does not show durations, timescales or resource requirements. So, once the steps are identified, it is essential to prepare a project plan which sets out the objectives, responsibilities, tasks, resources (people and money) and schedules for the project. Producing the plan will help you to refine ideas and is a vehicle to ensure everyone understands what is expected of them.

The detailed scheduling of tasks can be particularly difficult when resources are scarce or have to be shared. To make things happen, people need to know what they have to do and when they have to do it. Accurate scheduling is necessary to ensure that team members have carried out their tasks. A task analysis chart is a useful tool which will give you an "at a glance" picture of your project.

Table 7: Task Analysis Chart

No	Task	Dependence	Duration	Resources
A.	Consult with members		30 days	Staff
B.	Undertake research	Task A	60 days	Researcher
C.	Prepare draft proposals	Task B	20 days	Staff/ board
D.	Build alliances	Task A	30 days	
E.	Seek meetings with policy makers	Task A	10 days	
F.	Modify draft proposals	Tasks C,D,E	10 days	
G.	Meet with Minister	Task F	1 day	
H.	Publish final proposals	Task F	5 days	
I.	Issue press release	Tasks G,H	1 day	

At the very least, a plan needs to group tasks, to allocate responsibilities and to set deadlines. It is not always easy to determine the entire timescale from a task analysis chart, but a Gantt chart many be used to co-ordinate workloads and check the availability of resources.

Budgeting is covered in the next section. However, it needs to be undertaken in conjunction with the planning process. It is only when you come to define the specific tasks that the costs will

become apparent. A number of options may need to be costed before the final plan can be approved. Do not be vague about costs as this can undermine overall commitment to the project: rather, agree a detailed budget and then stick to it.

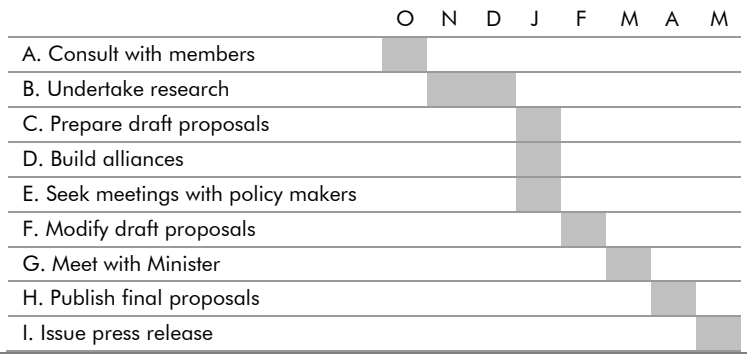
Gantt charts

The Gantt chart – named after the person who originally devised the idea: Henry Gantt – is used for planning and scheduling and is probably the most useful of all project planning techniques. A Gantt chart provides a simple overview of related activities and their expected durations. A Gantt Chart is drawn as a series of horizontal bars with each bar representing a specific activity and the length of the bar representing the time required.

The starting point is to brainstorm the activities – you will already have these if you have prepared a flow chart – and then think about the time required for each. The chart is set out so that dependent activities are sequential though the chart does not force you to do this (and dependences may not always be obvious simply by looking at a chart) so need to take care as you prepare it.

The Gantt chart below uses the steps identified in the earlier flow chart and task analysis examples.

Figure 13: Gantt chart



Note that some activities in the example are independent and can be undertaken simultaneously, provided that sufficient resources are available. However, some activities cannot start until others are complete. For example, you cannot prepare the draft policy proposal until you have completed the research.

If it is important to keep this chart in front of you all the time for management purposes: think about using a dry wipe board. The chart can be used to check regularly on what needs to be done when, and whether everything is going according to plan. It is a tool to be used. This way you can control the changes rather than allowing the changes to control you.

If you have complicated projects to manage, you may find project planning software such as Microsoft Project helpful. For simple projects, most people use Excel: a template is available at www.businessadvocacy.net.

Critical path analysis

In a network the planned activities are linked logically – to show the dependences, that is, where tasks cannot be started until earlier tasks have been completed. Networks provide a model of the overall project and, unlike a Gantt chart, specifically show which activities are dependent on others and which are critical.

It is important to differentiate between events and activities. An activity needs time to undertake whereas an *event* is a milestone: a specific point in time such as the end of an activity. This may also be a signal for the next activity to commence.

Figure 14: Simple network

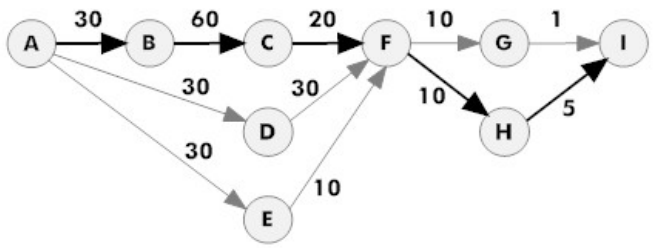
Critical path analysis is a project planning technique that can assist in identifying all the activities required for

the successful completion of a project and the expected time required to complete the entire project. The critical path refers to the set of activities in which there is no 'slack'; in other words, if any of the activities on the critical path over-runs its time, then the whole project will be delayed.

Remind yourself of the tasks shown in the task analysis earlier. Now look at the network diagram which shows the dependences.

The network shows a typical set of activities (shown as lines, with their durations) and events (in this diagram, the start of an activity, shown as circles). The path requiring the longest time (and which will therefore delay the entire project if a delay in any activity occurs) is *critical* and is highlighted.

Figure 15: Network and critical path



Computerised project planning software makes the preparation of critical path networks very easy. Most have the facility to add resource requirements. Critical path networks can be used to monitor progress and are easily amended if necessary. They can also, at least to some extent, handle uncertainty in estimates of time scales.

Event schedules

It is sometimes necessary to put together a meticulous plan for a specific day. You might be organising a consultation, or a presentation to a Minister, or arranging a press call. On such occasions you are on show, so it is crucial that everything runs smoothly if your members and other stakeholders are to believe that you are professional and well managed.

Planning for the event should be done as a project plan, and the workloads programmed into the organisation's long-term schedule. In addition a master schedule for the event can be very useful. The schedule (running to no more than two pages) should summarise everything about the occasion. It should contain:

- An outline with specific times of everything that must be done during the day, and who will do it, from the first arrival to packing up and finishing
- Key events/moments (eg, "arrival of guests", "presentation starts" etc) incorporated into the schedule, with times
- A list of everyone involved, including those you might have contracted in support, listing their responsibilities for the day
- Contact information (eg, organiser, venue manager, etc), and any other important facts or instructions you want to stress
- It is often helpful to attach a map of the venue to the schedule.

Make up the schedule when you first plan what will happen and update it as things develop, providing all those involved with a revised copy. Compiling a master schedule is an excellent prompt to force you to think of everything, and is a useful document for future reference. Paper is kept to a minimum and you can be confident that everyone has been put in the picture and knows what they have to do. This is particularly useful if subcontractors (such as caterers, stage managers etc) do not live up to expectations. On the day of the event, the schedule serves as a hand-out for a team briefing session before the action starts.

Budgeting

> Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and six pence, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds and six pence, result misery.
>
> Mr Micawber in David Copperfield by Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Every business association needs to ensure that it lives within its means, and that requires accurate budgeting and effective financial control. This is as important for individual projects as it is for the organisation as a whole – and it is essential if you are seeking support externally to cover the costs of your advocacy project.

Exercising effective financial control is important not only to ensure that you do not run out of money part way through a project but also to demonstrate, to members and other donors or sponsors, that you are responsible and professional. There are three requirements: you need to prepare a budget which is as accurate as you can make it; you need to record carefully all income and expenditure; and you need to compare the actual against the budget and take corrective action as and when necessary.

Costs

If there was no difference between the project and the organisation, allocating costs would be very easy, because every cost would be charged to the project. As soon as you have more than one project, you need to be able to allocate costs fairly. Some allocations are obvious, but others are more difficult, So, a good starting point is to divide costs into different categories.

Some costs can be directly attributed to the project and these are usually known as direct costs. The cost of a consultant to do research, or travel, or hosting a workshop for a specific project are direct costs.

Costs to the organisation such as rent, insurance, marketing, accounting, audit, staff training, etc are overhead costs. They do not vary, or at least not much, in the short term and also known as fixed costs or as indirect costs.

If you buy capital assets, such as computers, or furniture, or vehicles, you will make an allowance each year, for 'wear and tear', known as depreciation. The money that you spend on capital assets is not an expense, but the annual depreciation is an expense and should be included in the overheads.

You will also have to cover the costs of your staff. Some staff will be working only or mainly on projects; some staff will be providing support functions such as accounting or reception or general management. Some organisations treat all their staff costs as fixed costs; others split them between direct and fixed.

For the purposes of dividing costs amongst projects, it is helpful to think of staff costs separately from the other costs. This gives three costs: direct costs, staff costs and overhead costs.

For most organisations, where staff are contributing to more than one project, and where time is split between overheads and projects, allocating staff time accurately will require time sheets. Many organisations do this already; it will add marginally to the paperwork, but is a good discipline and should be very straightforward.

The table provides a list of possible costs to get you started.

Table 8: Examples of costs

Cost headings	Typical costs
Project staff	▪ Include recruitment costs eg, advertising or agency fees ▪ Is it more cost effective to employ full time staff or outsource and use consultants ▪ Include employers' own-costs eg, pension, health insurance etc ▪ Where staff are on incremental pay scales allow for annual increments ▪ Allow for annual pay increases ▪ Do you need to allow for overtime working rates also? ▪ What will happen at the end of the project – do you need to build in redundancy payments or bonuses?

Table 8: Examples of costs

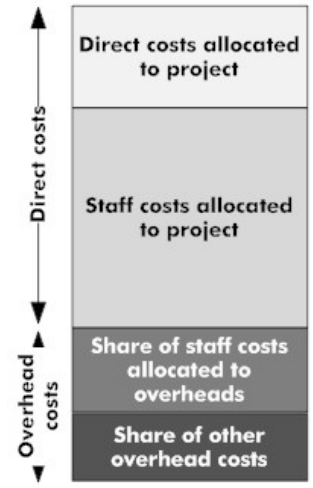
Cost headings	Typical costs
Consultancy	▪ Are consultants paid a daily rate or a fee for the job? ▪ What are their daily travel and expenses limits? In what currency? ▪ From where will they be travelling and how often?
Staff development	▪ What training is required at each stage of the project and for how many people? ▪ Can you save money by advance block booking of external training? ▪ Is it more cost effective to train on-site rather than pay travel costs? ▪ Are there any on-line training materials available? ▪ Weigh up the cost (including time) of training versus taking on skilled staff at higher salaries.
Travel	Include clear budgeting policy and amount limits for: ▪ Venue and travel to meetings, conferences and training courses ▪ Rates applicable to whom, for travel (eg, flying or bus) and hotel accommodation etc ▪ Reimbursables for meeting and training participants
Hospitality	▪ Will you be required to provide catering for meetings or training events?
Office overheads	▪ Items such as copying, telephones, security etc are generally an organisational overhead; if any are going to be particularly high for the project, then add them to the direct costs.
Equipment	▪ Is it more cost effective to buy or lease? ▪ Do you need maintenance agreements? ▪ Equipment has a cost but generally it is only appropriate to charge the depreciation for the period of the project; if you need new equipment, you will need to have sufficient cash when you buy it in the first place and to be clear about how any residual balance will be covered.
Contingency	▪ What unpredictable factors do you need to consider – currency exchange rates, inflation, delays in access to agreed funds etc? ▪ What is a reasonable contingency amount given the level of risk and uncertainty in the project? Amounts of the order of five per cent of the total budget are common though it is sensible to include this in the individual budgets rather than showing it separately as some funders refuse to cover contingency costs.

Calculating the project cost

The calculation of total project cost is straightforward – it is the direct costs for the project plus its share of the staff costs plus its share of the overhead costs.

It should be easy to identify the direct costs for each project. This might include, for example, the costs of renting equipment, or hiring trainers, or undertaking a survey, or travel costs, or printing costs.

Figure 16: Project costs



You need to know your staff costs for each project. Calculate a daily rate for each person (or for each grade) by taking their salary costs plus social security contributions plus pension contributions plus other staff benefits and divide by the number of chargeable days. Assess the number of days of each person for each project, and therefore the staff cost, to add to the budget for that project.

Calculate the total overhead – in practice, you will probably do this as part of your organisation budgeting process at the beginning of each year. Ensure that you include all the costs – including depreciation and the costs of non-chargeable staff time.

The question, then, is how much overhead you allocate to each

project. You could divide the overhead by the number of projects, so if you have four projects, each carries 25 per cent of the overheads. But if the projects vary in size, this is unfair on the smaller projects. In most cases, the easiest and simplest way to divide the overhead is in the same proportion as the staff cost allocated to that project. So if a project requires 20 per cent of the organisation's total chargeable staff time, then it should also carry 20 per cent of the overhead.

Adding together the direct costs, the project staff costs and the fair proportion of overhead costs gives the total cost for each project.

Raising sponsorship

Once you know the expected cost, you are in a position to think about how the project will be funded. Some of the funding may come from internally generated resources such as membership fees, but you may need to raise some or all of the required funds externally.

The ideal proposal for sponsorship will be clear, succinct and comprehensive. It needs to convey a compelling message to a potential sponsor as simply as possible. It has to retain interest. And it has to persuade. Sounds like a tall order, but it can be done – and in just a few pages. Most proposals can be described in no more than four or five pages. Remember that you are not trying to tell the sponsor everything about the organisation; you are just telling them enough to secure their support. The following sections are essential, and usually enough, though there may be occasions when you need to add more sections:

- Introduction
- Background
- Proposal
- Budget
- Justification
- Appendices

The proposal

Introduction

The introduction is not a summary of the proposal. If your proposal is no more than four pages then a summary is not really necessary. But there should be one or two sentences at the beginning which explain the purpose of the document. For example: "This proposal has been prepared by the Timbucktoo Enterprise Development Institute to seek $25,000 to launch an entrepreneurship awareness programme in secondary schools". Note that it says who wrote it, what is for, and implies what will happen if they are successful. You may feel a need to go a little further: "Last year a school supported by TEDI won first prize in the All Africa Schools Entrepreneurship Programme and this project is intended to build on that success". That is enough to stimulate interest and encourage the reader to continue reading.

Background

The background section should explain how the organisation has reached its current position. It may, for example, need to give a little bit of history about the organisation. If you have a good annual report, then keep this summary to just one (short) paragraph and attach the most recent annual report.

If the proposal is for a continuation of an existing project, describe previous performance and successes and why further support is needed. If you have a good evaluation then keep this also to one (short) paragraph and attach the evaluation.

If the proposal is for a new project, then explain how the organisation has come to the conclusion that this project or approach is needed.

It is easy to slip into attempting to justify the proposal in the background section but, as far as possible, that should be avoided.

Proposal

Explain precisely what is being proposed: "We plan to work with 50 schools over the next three years. In each school, we expect to support a minimum of 30 students who will be taken through a programme of guided learning and who will start a small scale business activity in order to learn more about entrepreneurship." You will want to start with a an opening paragraph that

summarises the proposal and, for most proposals, then need to give more explanation about the activities that will be undertaken, the numbers of people that will be supported and the outcomes. Remember that outcomes are different from outputs.

You may want to include monitoring and evaluation in this section together with a note about how you will identify the lessons from the programme and how these can be disseminated more widely so that others can learn from your experiences.

You may also want a paragraph that talks about the possible risks and indicates how the risks can be mitigated.

Budget

Set out clearly the expected costs of delivering the project or programme, including staff time, direct costs and share of overheads.

If some of the required budget has already been secured from other sources, this should be explained, not least because sponsors and donors like to think that they are making their money go further by leveraging in money from other sources.

If you think that it is unlikely that a single sponsor will cover all the costs of a project, you may want to indicate how much you are hoping to secure from each sponsor: "Our total requirement is $100,000. We intend to find $20,000 from our own resources and are aiming to find four sponsors each willing to contribute $20,000". If you prefer, you could use percentages: "We are able to find 10 per cent of this budget from our own resources and are looking for three sponsors each willing to provide 30 per cent."

Justification

This is probably the most important section in your proposal. This is where you justify what you are proposing; it is where you rehearse the arguments that you think will convince prospective sponsors actually to support you.

You need to stress the 'community benefit'. You need to explain how the project will make a difference and the level of the expected impact.

You need to explain why you are the best possible organisation to undertake this project and make a success of it.

If there will be benefits to the sponsors, other than simply feeling good about providing support – perhaps they might get some good publicity, or staff on secondment might get good personal development, or they might get introductions to prospective customers, then you should explain those benefits as well.

Appendices

If there is a need for more detailed explanation than you want or need to put in the proposal itself, then you may need to add some appendices. You may, for example, have the results of specific research. You should include the headlines in the main proposal, but back it up with evidence in an appendix so that the detail is available should the reader want it. You may want to give supportive information about similar projects run in other countries.

Formatting

If you do not already have a 'house style', that is, an agreed design that your organisation always uses, take time to think about how you are going to present your proposal. The overall design needs to communicate to the reader that it has come from a professional and competent organisation. If it is poorly laid out, then you will communicate exactly the wrong message. But if you present a well-designed proposal, that is easy to read, it will communicate that you are professional and know what you are doing, so a sponsor is more likely to entrust you with spending their money.

Follow up

Often all a proposal does is open a door and you need to follow up with a personal presentation. Take as much care with this as you have taken to write the written proposal. Dress appropriately. If it helps, take a power point presentation, but the best presentations are the ones where you come across, like the proposal, as professional and competent together with the passion and commitment to make the project succeed.

Everyone expects that sponsors will support their projects, but foundations, donors, corporates all receive many more proposals than they can ever hope to support, so do not be too surprised or down-hearted if you do not secure grant aid straight away. Do take the time, however, to call the organisation and explore why they didn't like your proposal. If it doesn't fit their criteria, there is little you can do about it; if you do fit their criteria, try to find out what they thought was weak about your proposal and then ensure that you address that point in the revised proposal that you send to other prospective sponsors. If you are determined, then it is likely that you will eventually succeed.

Project management

The activities

It is very easy, with advocacy projects, to say that they are difficult to manage because the ability to meet with and to influence policy makers is outside your control. Whilst this is true, the other steps are entirely within your control. So you can keep tight control by using the timetable that you prepared as part of your project plan.

Be clear with all members of the team, including external consultants and researchers, that every task has a deadline and stick to the deadlines. If tasks start to fall behind, take corrective action to bring it back on track. Paying close attention to progress on a day to day is essential.

When you do get to the part of the timetable where you have less control, you still need to be proactive. If someone in government says they will 'get back to you', ask how long they need. Give them that time – and then remind them. If necessary, look to others. If you are struggling with the officials, this may be a good time to talk to the politicians and put some pressure on the officials. If you decide there is a 'blockage', think about what is necessary to grab their attention – perhaps a story in the press or a demonstration.

It is sensible to keep notes recording actions and decisions – as a reminder for you, to satisfy your colleagues and to satisfy external sponsors if they should ask about progress.

If you are managing a team, and everything is on target, praise them for achieving the plan. It is a frequent complaint that managers are quick to criticise but never give praise, so seize the opportunities when they present themselves.

The finances

Keeping good financial records is very important – to exercise control, to demonstrate probity and to enable the preparation of end of project and end of year accounts. You will need to ensure that you set up a system to record at least receipts and payments. For many organisations, there is a need to record income (money due to the organisation in a specified period) and expenditure (incurred by the organisation in a specified period) separately from receipts (money coming into the organisation) and payments (money leaving the organisation). This is because you may pay in advance, say for raw materials that have not been used, or you may sell a product but not receive the money for 30 days.

For short projects, it is simpler to work on a cash basis. If you are setting up a system specifically for the project, the easiest way to do it is with an accounting analysis book, or on a computer spreadsheet, usually called a ledger. It may be that your organisation already has a computerised accounting package – in which case your accountant can help you set up a section within it specifically for your project. An essential mark of good financial management is a clear record of all receipts and payments each with an 'independently verifiable paper trail' of supporting documents.

Supporters of projects may require that you set up a separate bank account for your project. Unless you have a sophisticated book-keeping system, this is sensible as it will help you to keep track of all of the money intended for the project and make reconciliation much easier. Good practice requires two signatures on cheques.

Some simple book-keeping systems are available. See for example 'Accounts in an Envelope' available at www.businessadvocacy.net. A good system, even a paper one, will speed up considerably the process of extracting the appropriate and relevant information.

At least monthly, you should reconcile the financial record to the bank account to confirm that your books are accurate. If the books are accurate, it will be possible at any time to prepare a comprehensive financial picture of the financial position of the project. You should do this monthly and then look at the *variances.*

A variance is simply the difference between the target and the actual performance. Whether variances are positive or negative, they may have implications.

As explained earlier, budgeting is based on estimating future costs. It is essential, therefore, to monitor actual costs against budgeted costs to ensure that you are on track. Many businesses fail because action has not been taken to rectify problems that variance analysis would have highlighted.

If the actual expenditure closely reflects the budget, well done. If it doesn't, you may need to take action. Differences may be due to timing issues (such as project implementation delays) rather than decisions not to spend, or savings in forecast expenditure. It is sensible, therefore, to revise the cash flow forecast each month as well, so that you can ensure that you stay within the total budget. If expenditure really is higher than the budget, you will need to look at ways in which it can be reduced in the future to get back on track to the approved budget. Can you undertake activities in different ways in order to save money? Can you find cheaper suppliers? Can you merge, or even cut, activities without detracting from the overall project? When you notice variances, act immediately. Do not wait until the problem has got worse.

If there is a staff team, and not just one person, encourage them to feel responsible for keeping costs under control, and involve them in discussions regarding corrective action.

Evaluate your own activities

> Knowledge makes good men better
> Anonymous

Evaluating the way that you managed your advocacy project is an important part of project management, and should not be overlooked. Reflect on what you did: what went well? What went less well? The lessons that emanate from such evaluation may help you to think about the way in which you engage with policy makers in the future as well as helping you to identify organisational and personal development needs.

Run through the following questions with your team:

- Did the campaign deliver the desired outcomes and impact (you may not yet know about the impact)?
- Has the campaign improved your relationship with government? Or harmed it?
- What aspects of the campaign went well? What aspects could be improved?
- Was the campaign completed in a timely fashion? Could anything have been done differently that might have speeded it up?
- Do you need to improve your understanding of the legislative process?
- Do you need to improve your project management skills?
- Do you need better procedures to maintain effective financial control?
- Do key members of staff need further training?
- Do you need to improve liaison between staff and board?
- Do you need to improve your writing skills?

A good technique, if people are reluctant to be in any sense critical, is to ask the team how they would go about the campaign if they were starting again from scratch.

Conclusion

Managing projects does not have to be difficult. Take time to plan what you are doing. Whilst it may feel as though it is taking up too much time, it will save considerable time later. Make use of flow charts, Gantt charts and critical paths – they will all help you to organise your work efficiently and effectively. Monitor expenditure like a hawk and keep it to a minimum. Keep careful records. Learn from the process.

Further reading and further information

- *David Irwin, "Financial control for non-financial managers", Pitman, 1995*
- *For a very simple, project based book-keeping system, use our 'Accounts in an Envelope' package available at www.businessadvocacy.net/dloads/fsAcctsEnvelope.pdf*