Business Advocacy Network

Planning advocacy projects

Managing advocacy projects

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Planning an advocacy project

1. Introduction

This handbook makes suggestions to help you plan for the implementation of your advocacy project. Careful planning will provide you with a detailed list of actions targeting key people and milestones to help you measure progress. It will help to ensure that you use your limited resources in the most cost-effective way.

In many cases, you may be able to secure reform through dialogue between public and private sectors, particular where issues are technical and uncontentious. There will, however, be occasions when it is necessary to do more to persuade policy makers. Sometimes, it will seem that it is only the policy makers who need to be persuaded; but often, to create momentum for change, there will be others with a stake in the issue who also need to be influenced.

As well as groups outside government, sometimes known as interest groups, public officials aim to influence policy: officials make proposals within their Ministries and Agencies (at national level, or through similar arrangements at County level); Agencies make proposals to their line Ministries; Ministries make proposals to the Ministry of Finance or the Office of the President. This handbook is aimed at anyone who seeks to influence public policy and is just as relevant for public officials as it is for business associations. Indeed, sometimes a business association and a government agency or Ministry may ally to lobby another part of government.

It is assumed that you already have a clearly framed issue, with comprehensive research evidence and a persuasive argument for reform, though some elements, such as the stakeholder analysis, will help your research and preparation of your policy position.

By the end of this handbook, you will:

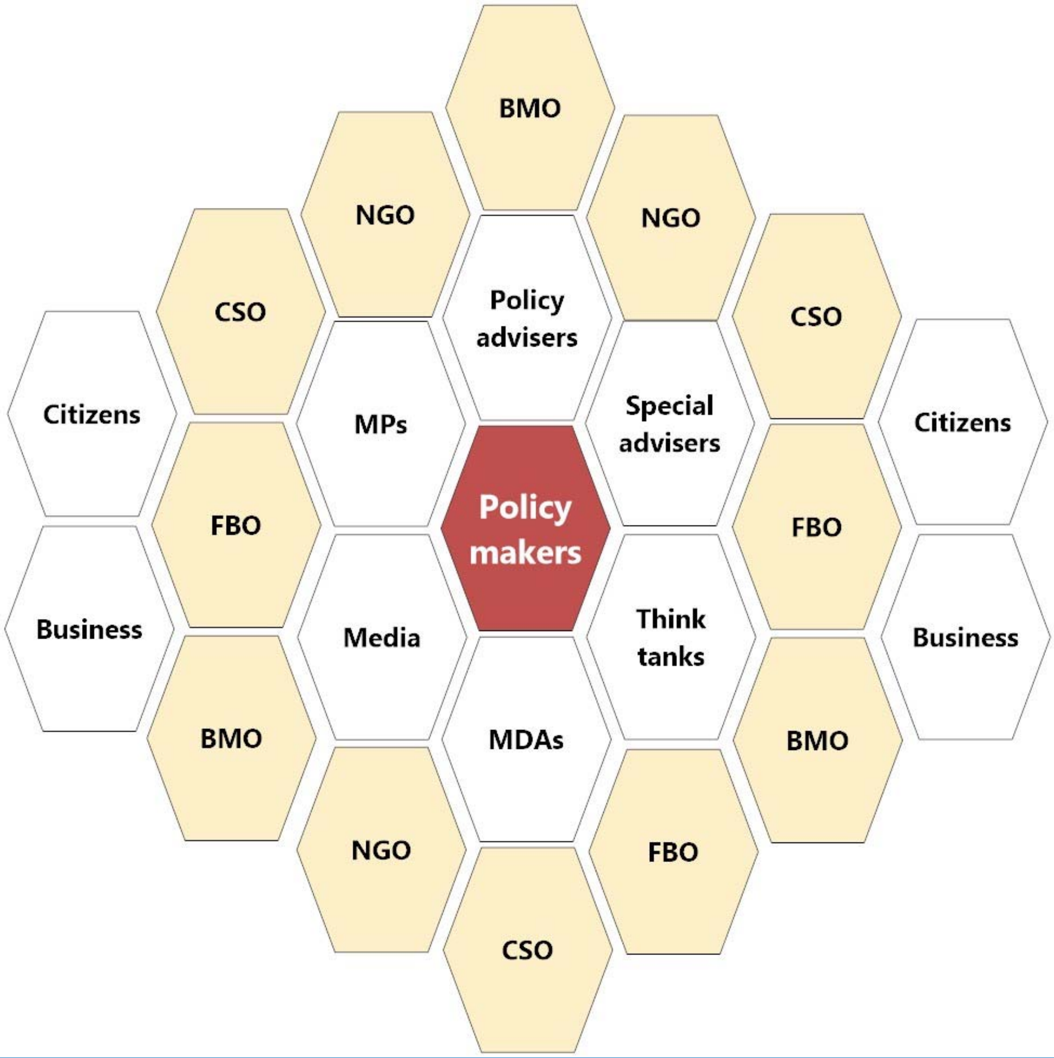
- Be able to define your stakeholders and target audiences
- Be able to prepare an overall approach to guide your advocacy project
- Understand how to prepare messages and match them with your target audiences
- Be able to define all the required activities
- Understand how to put all the activities together in an action plan

2. Stakeholders

Stakeholders are all those people and organisations with a stake or interest in the issue. Within your stakeholders, you will have more specific target audiences with whom you will plan to communicate, including members, allies and opponents.

It is usually fairly straightforward to identify the policy makers – Cabinet Secretaries (or Ministers) and senior civil servants for legislation and senior civil servants or Agency CEOs for regulation – but think about influencers as well. These are the people and organisations who may in turn be able to influence the real decision makers – the opinion formers – and include civil servants, special advisers, chairmen of Parliamentary committees (or County Assembly committees), academics and think tanks and even key journalists. Think too about the organisations who may be opposed to your views and who will seek to frustrate you from achieving your objectives.

Figure 1: Stakeholders



Remember that organisations are just groups of people, so specify the key people by name.

2.1 Policy makers

The public sector is not homogeneous: it includes politicians (executive and backbenchers), Ministries (policy makers, analysts, regulators), Agencies (regulators, inspectors), etc as well as all those public servants working at county and regional level.

If the impetus for a new policy is coming from Cabinet Secretaries, 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 – helping policy makers deliver their policy imperative whilst minimising any burden on business can often be a good approach and secure public sector buy-in – in which case public officials may be your key target.

Understanding the public sector, the way it operates and the policy process is as important to private sector advocates as understanding private sector needs and aspirations should be to public sector regulators. There is often little interaction between private and public sectors and, therefore, little understanding among civil servants of the possible implications for business of legislation and regulation. This can mean legislation leads to consequences which the politicians and civil servants had not foreseen and for which they do not want to be criticised.

Like everyone else, civil servants want their job to be as easy as possible, so it is sensible to assist them by preparing compelling and succinct proposals backed up by high quality evidence which, as far as possible, offer solutions to meet publicly stated policy objectives.

2.1.1 Ministries & County Departments

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 officials in 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.

2.1.2 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 Cabinet Secretary. This needs to be well prepared. If possible, it will help to have civil servants 'on-side' before meeting the Minister.

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.

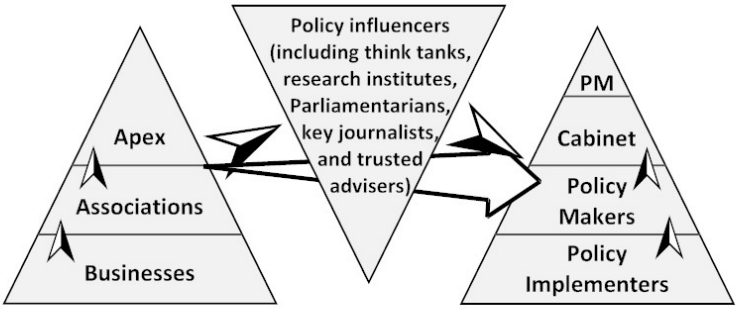
2.1.3 County level

For many BMOs and many issues, the stakeholders may be at county level, rather than a national level, though sometimes they will be at both.

2.2 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. They will be secondary, but nevertheless important, targets. They typically include parliamentarians, ministerial special advisers, prominent journalists and academics.

Figure 2: Exerting influence



You may find that success requires that you work with and through a number of different parties – civil servants, Cabinet Secretaries, 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.

2.2.1 Parliamentarians & Members of County Assemblies

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, 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.

The National Assembly convenes both Select Committees and Standing Committees – committees of MPs whose role is to provide oversight and accountability for Ministries or to undertake detailed review of proposals for legislation. 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.

2.2.2 Agencies

Government agencies, on the whole, do not create policy, but rather are established 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 Cabinet Secretary 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 are more likely to win over the agency if you focus on reducing the burden of administration 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 Cabinet Secretary 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.

Depending on the issue, agencies can be good allies. The Kenya Tourism Federation, for example, has worked very closely with the Kenya Tourism Board to prepare Kenya’s tourism strategy.

2.2.3 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. However, there may be joint interests, for example, between soft drink manufacturers and confectionery companies on changing the regulation for sugar supply.

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.

2.2.4 Other interest groups

The same is true with non-governmental organisations (NGO), civil society organisations (CSO), research institutes, trades unions and others. They can 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. If they do oppose you, and are unlikely to be won round to your point of view, then you need to understand their position and have the evidence and arguments to rebut their position.

Research institutes and academic think tanks 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 your case – and they do, inevitably, influence governments through providing them with what government regards 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.

2.2.5 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. By way of example, public opinion influenced alcoholic drinks regulation in Kenya and stories in the press about injuries sustained as a result of treatment by people masquerading as physiotherapists encouraged the policy makers to pass legislation promoted by the Kenya Society of Physiotherapists.

2.2.6 The media

The media can be an ally or an opponent or can be completely neutral. In general, you would be unlikely to want to influence the media to take a particular position just for the sake of it. Rather, you are likely to want to use the media to influence one or more of your other audiences. However, this will be much easier if they are at least sympathetic to your case. Occasionally, however, the media can become a campaigning organisation. The media is also a good way of generating responses, for example, from the public, so if you use the media, monitor it carefully.

You need to be clear, before using the media, about your objective, since this may affect the particular media that you use. Like policy makers, they are not a homogenous mass. If the objective is to reach policy makers, then you need to know which newspapers they read; if the objective is to reach the general public, then you might choose local radio so as to get to a much bigger audience. If you want to reach your members, then you may use your own newsletter, but if you want to recruit members, you may use the trade press. Or even start your own magazine as the Petroleum Institute of East Africa has done with Petroleum Insight.

2.3 List your stakeholders

Make a list of all the organisations that you think may have a stake in your issue. Be as specific as possible. This will make it easier to remember them all and make it less likely that you forget about a key target or key influencer. It will help you later if you note why they are, or in some cases, ought to be interested in the issue.

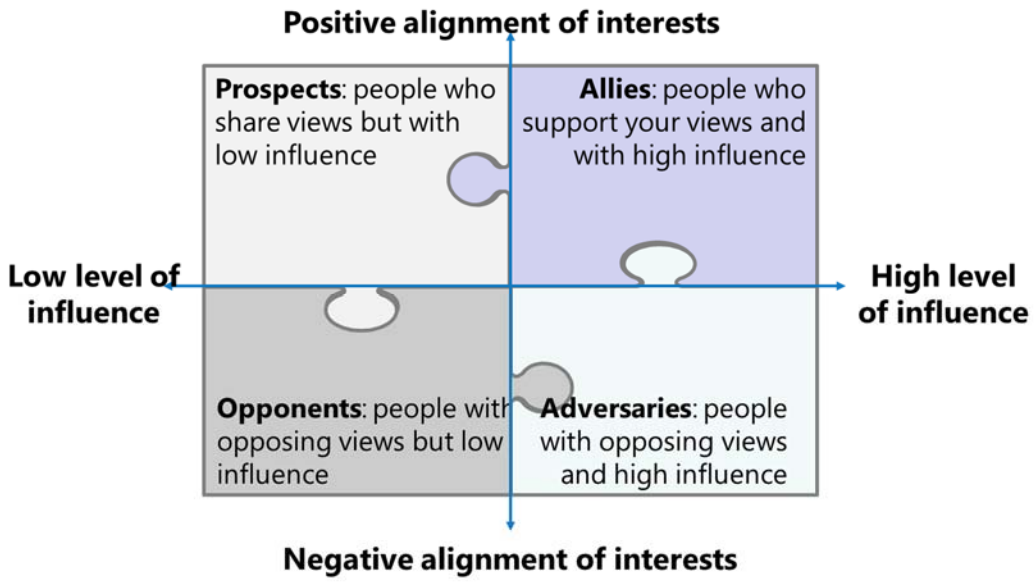
Table 1: Summary of stakeholders

Stakeholders	Interest
Ministry of Tourism	Want to increase revenue secured by government from the promotion of tourism
Kenya Tourism Board	Want to increase number of tourists and want to push Kenya up the league table of desirable destinations
Kenya Tourism Federation	Want to increase number of tourists because will support members to grow profitably
Kenya Private Sector Alliance	See tourism as a major contributor to the economy, creating wealth and jobs, and want to retain more of the tourist spend within the country
Environmental NGOs	Worried that increasing number of tourists will have a detrimental impact on the wildlife and the natural habitat

2.4 Assessing the Stakeholders

You will benefit from assessing whether your stakeholders are likely to be supportive or obstructive. The UK based Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has developed a tool to help: the Alignment of Interests and Influence Matrix (AIIM). We have adapted it for our purposes as follows: The x-axis provides a measure of their likely influence; the y-axis provides a measure of the alignment of their interests with yours. All the people whom you have identified can then be allocated to a quadrant, depending on whether you see them as allies, prospects, opponents or adversaries (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Alignment & influence



Source: adapted from an idea by Mendizabal, ODI

Do not just guess where organisations sit. You need to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise. Undertake desk research and review websites and other materials to understand their position. If you are in regular dialogue, check your notes to develop understanding. If you cannot find the information that you need, ask their opinions either through a survey or, more likely, by meeting them or those close to them. Members of your board and staff may already have links or be close enough to outline their position. You will be interested in:

- Whether they are interested in the issue at all: if not, ignore them, or perhaps monitor them in case they become interested
- How much information they already have about the issue and whether they would like more, in which case you might share your research (and they may have research that they can share with you)
- Whether they already have an opinion on the issue and, if so, how firm they are
- Whether they have taken a public position (and whether they already have their own policy paper)
- If they do not share your views, or are agnostic, what objections to your position, if any, do they have

Talking to stakeholders allows you to clear up misconceptions, to explore what might prevent them from sharing your position and then to explore whether you can link support for your issue to something that they already support. Once you have spoken to stakeholders, you can allocate them to the matrix. You will probably not have the luxury of sufficient resources to tackle all stakeholders, so use the matrix to prioritise the top five or six. These are your “target audiences”. Focus on those organisations likely to be allies – you want to encourage them to co-operate with you – and your adversaries – you need to be able to answer their criticisms. Monitor the other stakeholders through media, social media and websites.

Some organisations may include key individuals who do not share their organisation's policy position. If they work for adversaries, aim to supply them with information and arguments. They may be able to influence a change of view from the inside. And even amongst your allies, you will want to work with the people who are likely to be the strongest performers.

2.5 Form alliances & coalitions

You may decide, having identified your potential allies, that there is merit in working together more closely, perhaps through an alliance or coalition. This is simply a group of organisations with a common interest that has coalesced around a particular issue 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. This can also apply across county boundaries.

Forming coalitions will be time-consuming, requiring good research, negotiation and, almost certainly, compromise. But the advantages of credibility and resources will generally outweigh the disadvantages.

You may 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 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 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.

2.6 Conclusion

It is important to identify and list all possible groups of stakeholders and, within those stakeholders, your priorities. You need to assess whether they support your position or oppose it and then whether it is worth taking time to attempt to bring round to your point of view those that appear to be opposed. Think about the other organisations as well, both those that might support your desire for policy reform and those that are likely to obstruct it, and think about whether it may be worthwhile spending a little of your resource to communicate with them. You are now in a position to think about the strategy that you will adopt.

2.7 Checklist

- Brainstorm the stakeholders for the issue you intend to address. Be specific. Do not just say, government; rather, say the Ministry of Finance or the Export Credit Guarantee Department. If possible, name specific individuals.
- Identify whether members of your board, or members of staff, or association members have links to any of the key stakeholders.
- Identify the top stakeholders that you intend to engage directly, within the resources that you have available.
- Contact stakeholders to identify their view and opinions and where they might fit in the matrix.
- Monitor all the stakeholders through media, social media and websites.

3. Strategy

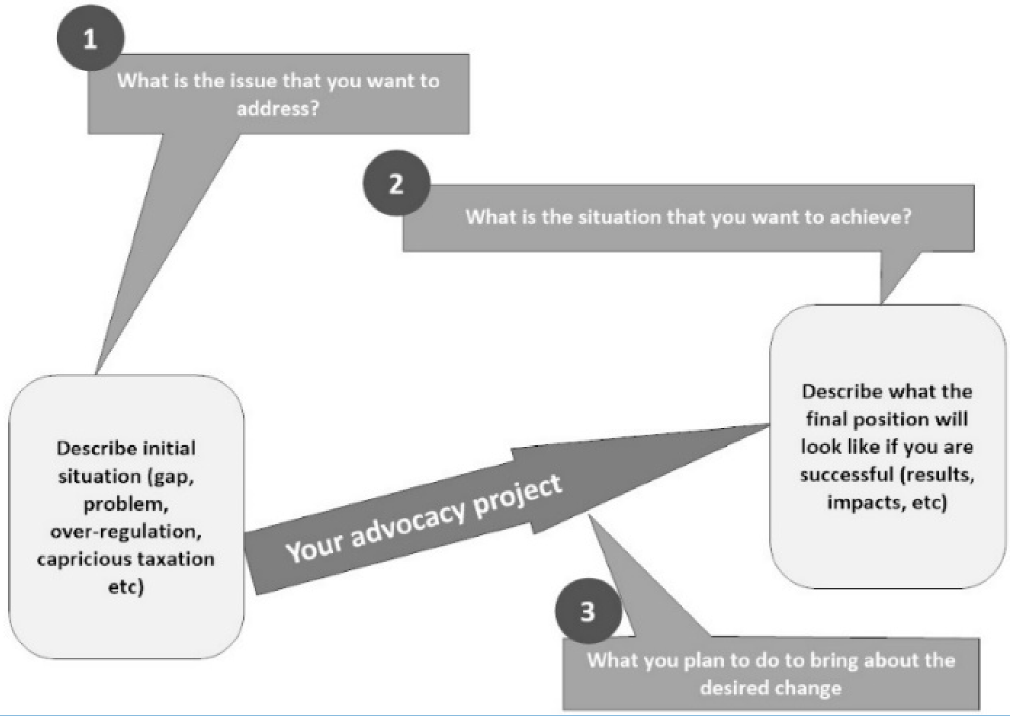
Advocacy is the act of influencing, or attempting to influence, the way that a policy maker thinks about, and acts on, an issue. So private sector advocacy describes attempts by the private sector to influence the development and implementation of public policies in an effort to improve the business 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. It describes any and all activities intended to bring about a policy reform. The strategy adopted for a particular issue may depend on the issue, on the policy to be reformed and on the target audiences. It is likely that an effective strategy will therefore include:

- A clear view of what the world will look like if the advocacy is successful;
- The publication and dissemination of information, research and evidence about the issue and the implications;
- The publication and dissemination of succinct and compelling recommendations;
- Activities to bring the issue and the recommendations to the attention of key policy makers and to persuade them to do something;
- Monitoring to ensure that a decision to reform one or more policies is implemented.

3.1 From here to there

Very simply, an advocacy strategy is a plan to take you from the current position to a different position (Figure 4). This requires that you are able to describe the current situation – so framing is important – and that you are able to describe a satisfactory alternative situation, a goal.

Figure 4: Advocacy strategy



Be realistic. If you are lobbying against 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.

3.2 Strategic approaches

There are a number of 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. Early decisions should be whether to take an 'insider' or 'outsider' approach and whether arguments are to be based on evidence or on interests. Business associations generally find that dialogue – a collaborative, insider approach with evidence based argumentation – is the most effective. Public officials like such collaboration as well, because it makes it easier to access information, expertise and opinion. 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. It is likely that partners engaged in dialogue will regularly share information and evidence and do their best to ensure that the evidence is objective and reliable (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Approaches to engagement

Source: Irwin (2017)

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 tends to describe an approach that is more 'outside' than 'inside', though may still involve face to face discussion and still makes use of evidence based argumentation. Face to face lobbying will often be backed up with other lobbying tactics such as media campaigns or mobilising grass roots supporters, for example, to contact their MPs.

Approaches based on vested and often narrow 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 or subsidies for exports, all of which distort the market and usually impact on another sector.

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 occasions when groups believe that they have to indulge in direct action, just to grab the attention of politicians. Sometimes this can be useful in demonstrating just how much people care about a particular issue. However, this must be done with care if it is not to backfire on the organisation.

You will need to think carefully about whether and how to use the media. Some organisations lobby through the media. In general, this is not an effective approach. Some organisations shun the media completely. However, some organisations place stories in the media with the aims of reinforcing their message to policy makers, of demonstrating their proactivity to their members and of raising public awareness. However, they do not see their media coverage as a substitute for their other activities.

Most associations do not consciously think about their approach; rather they hop from one activity to another without thinking about the way in which they interact. Taking a conscious decision could make it easier for associations to think about the specific actions in which they will engage. This is important because:

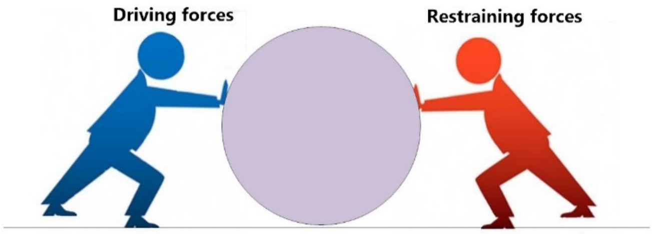
- You need to be clear about your ultimate objectives;
- It helps to keep the organisation together;
- You need to be clear about the actions that you plan to undertake and how you think that these will help you to achieve these objectives;
- You need to be clear about your priorities: which objectives you would be prepared to concede in order to secure agreement on others;
- You can link actions to potential allies and supporters, even if some are coming from a different perspective.

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. Once you start, you need to monitor progress and be flexible enough to amend the plan.

3.3 Force field analysis

Force Field Analysis is a simple tool that can be used to summarise the forces driving change and opposing change. It can help you to consider possible responses. You may decide that listing stakeholders in the alignment and influence matrix gives you what you need, but in a force field analysis, you can add other forces. These might include, for example, lack of technical capacity, corruption, vested interests, lack of resource, limited power. Often, these other forces may be more important. A force field analysis allows you, indeed encourages you, to provide a pictorial representation of the forces. You can show the forces, perhaps as arrows or as balls, with larger arrows suggesting greater force, so you can use it to prepare your strategy and to prioritise your activities (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Field force analysis



Rank the forces in order of the level of influence they are likely to have over whether the desired reform can be achieved. You are then in a position to think about the activities you can undertake which may increase small driving forces or reduce large restraining forces.

3.4 Perspective

Some advocacy projects are relatively simple and progress can be made quite quickly; others are much more complex and will take much longer. Indeed, sometimes it is necessary to wait for an external event to trigger a government response and then be ready with a solution. Often you need to be opportunistic, grabbing opportunities as they appear. But bear in mind that successful advocacy may require several steps: you are unlikely to achieve your objectives in a single step. Be clear about objectives at each stage of the process and be opportunistic, within a framework of strategic priorities.

3.5 Timing

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 process of policy making or legislation. 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. And it is beginning to change: the East African Community has written a clause into the Treaty to say that it must consult both with the private sector and with civil society. The Constitution of Kenya also requires consultation in policy making.

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. It is worth thinking about the stages in the policy formulation process. Broadly, these are:

- Agenda setting,
- Policy formulation,
- Seeking legitimacy,
- Implementation and
- Review and reform (of existing policy)

It seems that most success comes in review and reform of existing legislation (perhaps not surprising given that it already exists and that there are usually many businesses with ideas on how the regulations could be improved) followed by the two earliest stages of agenda setting and policy formulation. Sometimes an external shock is required to put an issue on the agenda. Formulation of policy through to the creation of legislation, where none exists, tends to be driven by government. However, there are good examples of where BMOs have taken something all the way from putting on the agenda to securing legislation. In most cases, however, the best that business associations can do is respond to proposals from the public sector. This is still important, of course, but sometimes the timetable leaves little time to consult with members so the association is forever being reactive.

Most associations therefore mostly seek reform of policies, legislation and regulation that already exists. This at least allows the association the luxury of time to pull together evidence and arguments and then to pick the targets of its advocacy and the timing of its intervention. Sometimes, however, the initiative for reform comes from the government, often because it wants to tighten the regulation, which transfers the issue back to agenda and policy formulation.

It appears that there are advantages to BMOs involved in proposals at an early stage:

- Commitment of the public sector to the proposal is likely to be lower, and less formal, so it is easier to reform: it is easier to influence ideas than laws;
- Depending on the circumstances, the issue might be less politicised or public, and so more fluid with more scope for change;
- The BMO may already know the key officials but, if not, they have more time to build a relationship;
- The BMO can help the government, for example, by providing evidence and opinion.

This makes it important either that the BMO is setting the agenda, or that it has sufficiently good intelligence to know what issues are likely to be forthcoming.

3.6 Checklist

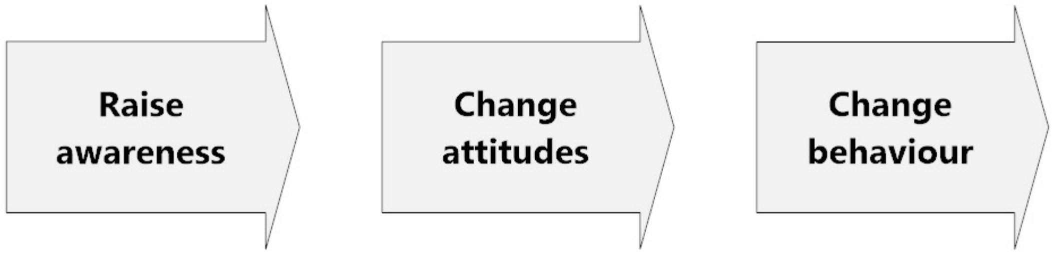
- Be clear about your overall objectives: what do you hope to achieve?
- Decide on your overall approach – whether you going to take a predominantly insider approach, for example – and whether this is appropriate for your allies.
- Consider the forces that may help you to achieve what you want (the driving forces) and the forces that are likely to restrain you.
- What stage has the policy process reached and what approach therefore is likely to be most effective?
- You may want to think about your fall-back position, though you not want to publicise that.

4. Purpose of communication

It is highly unlikely that your research evidence and policy position will be influential by themselves. You will need, in some way, to exert influence. You will have defined the broad approach in your strategy. Now you need to think about how you will communicate your message to your chosen audiences.

Effective advocacy requires that you can communicate your message convincingly. This requires not only that you have persuasive evidence but also that you can prepare and convey your argument in a way that is totally compelling. That means that you need to develop good communication skills. It is also likely, especially if you want or need to win over public opinion, that you will need to develop good public relations skills. The two are closely linked.

Figure 7: Steps in public relations



Gregory (2000), in her book on planning and managing public relations campaigns, suggests that public relations objectives should be defined to address one of three levels, though for the purposes of private sector advocacy, it might also be sensible to consider this as a progression. There may be a need to raise awareness, perhaps amongst members or the wider business community, about a specific issue. There will most likely be a need to raise awareness amongst public servants and politicians. There will be a desire to change attitudes amongst key publics so that they become supportive. Most important of all, there is a need to encourage public servants to act.

4.1 Targets & Actions

4.1.1 Identify your target audiences

You may have started to think about your target audiences when you identified your stakeholders. It can help to divide them into primary audiences – the policy makers who can enact the change that you need – and secondary audiences – the opinion formers who will create a suitable environment in which change is likely to happen. In both cases, include them on your priority list. For each, identify, by name if possible, the specific people whom you need to influence. Following your stakeholder mapping, you will also be able to list their current view and then consider what arguments, and so what messages, will persuade them to act.

Table 2: Example of a summary of target audiences

Target audiences	Target people	Current view
Ministry of Tourism	The Cabinet Secretary (+ details of how to reach)	
Kenya Tourism Board	Name + contact details	
Kenya Tourism Federation	Name + contact details	
Kenya Private Sector Alliance	Name + contact details	

4.1.2 Action(s) sought

The ultimate objective could be delivered in a number of ways. For example, the requirement for a coffee movement permit could be abolished. An alternative might be to license authorised transport companies to move coffee and that a requirement is for them to keep careful records including the ability to trace individual consignments. But what is that you specifically want from the person whom you are targeting? The response you seek will clearly depend on the specific audience.

If you are meeting the CS, your objective may be persuading him or her to agree to abolish the licence. Even the CS, though, cannot usually change policy unilaterally, so your objective might be that he or she agrees to take a proposal for change to the Cabinet. In other words, the response that you want is for the CS to acknowledge that the existing requirements impose an unnecessary burden on coffee producers with the consequence that more farmers are reducing the amount of coffee that they grow because it is becoming unprofitable, which results in less foreign exchange and lower tax revenue, and that he or she is willing to take the next steps.

If you are meeting the apex BMO, the objective might simply be to persuade them to open a door to a particular person in government. But it may also be to ask them to raise the issue at specified meetings of public and private sectors.

4.1.3 Messaging

You have thought about this is some detail already, when you framed the issue and then made recommendations in your policy position statement. Your overall message needs to be broadly the same for every audience, supported by appropriate evidence and examples for each. Set out your message based on the difference that you are seeking for your members or other businesses. For example: Our objective is to reduce the paperwork, time and cost in securing a coffee movement permit. Note that this does not say that you hope to abolish the requirement, though that would be one way of delivering the objective. So you now need to consider, for each of your target audiences:

4.1.4 Evidence, examples & materials

You should ensure that you have good evidence and examples to support your case. You may have all the evidence in your research report – but if it 100 pages long, the Minister will not plough through it – so select and emphasis the key evidence to support your case with each target audience. Choose the evidence that meets the information needs of each audience.

Table 3: Information needs of target audiences

Target audience	Information needs
The Cabinet Secretary (or County Exec Committee)	Short, to the point and visually appealing, with the arguments in favour of taking action, and good narratives to show the difference that could be made.
Policy officials	In addition to the information provided to the Cabinet Secretary, policy officials will generally require more detail, both about the specific recommendations, but also about alternative solutions.
Policy analysts	Will probably want still more detail, ideally including costings of alternative solutions, so that they have the evidence to reassure the Minister that decisions are sensible.
Media	Human interest stories describing problems arising from a particular issue – and how addressing the issue would make a difference to those people

Your materials and, in particular, examples bring lobbying to life: if you have an example of a farmer that has been hit hard, then use that to show the problem that the regulation is causing.

Policy position papers will need detailed evidence; a website will need photographs; if you are working with a radio or television production company, you need to know what is of interest to them. The 'messaging matrix' template in the appendix provides a useful means of summarising your messaging across audiences.

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.

4.2 Activities & communications channels

The activities that you undertake to communicate are closely connected to the communication channels that you choose. These might include, for example, preparing written statements, holding press conferences, organising meetings or visits. Which activities are likely to communicate your message most effectively?

There are many different channels available which provide a means to communicate your message. Some of these are shown in Table 4. Choose the combination that is likely to be most effective in reaching your target audiences and prioritise those, taking into account your available time and money. Adopting an insider strategy, and seeking meetings with key officials and politicians, is usually the best approach, not least because you can engage in two-way communication, which is much better than one-way communication. In general, two-way communication takes twice as long, makes people more confident that they have understood and is more accurate than one-way communication. Importantly it allows you to deal with misunderstandings and clarifications; it provides an opportunity to hone your argument.

Table 4: Communications channels

Face to face	Printed media	Digital media	Other
▪ Meetings – with policy makers & influencers ▪ Lobbying Parliamentarians ▪ Field visits & experiential learning ▪ Seminars & conferences ▪ Community events ▪ Networks ▪ Social events	▪ Research reports ▪ Policy position papers ▪ Case studies ▪ Press releases ▪ Briefing notes ▪ Opinion pieces ▪ Advertisements & posters ▪ Letters ▪ Leaflets	▪ Website ▪ Blogs ▪ Social media ▪ E-newsletters ▪ Radio broadcasts ▪ Podcasts ▪ TV broadcasts	▪ Via members (who may need to be supported through printed and web based materials)

The following are some of the communications channels you will need to understand and use when advocating policy reform.

4.2.1 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.

To get the most out of 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. This makes it more likely that you will discover at an early stage about proposals to change public policy and so be in a better position to influence the eventual outcome. Ideally, you and your key partners (including other business associations or civil society organisations) should aim to institutionalise the dialogue arrangement so that it does not depend on the current personalities. Keep your members up to date with what you learn.

From time to time you will need to meet with the Cabinet Secretary 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 video clips – very easy to have available on your tablet – 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.

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. Aim to keep the meeting on track and keep an eye on the time. Make a note of any action points and thank the Minister and his team.

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.

4.2.2 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. In the case of new or revised legislation, they are likely to consider the proposals in detail and to make their own proposals. Monitor the activities of parliamentarians so that you know when they may be actively taking an interest in your area. This is a mixed blessing as it makes engagement easier but there is usually the threat of restriction.

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. First it ensures that the association does not undermine 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. 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.

If you have the resources, or if you are able to pool resources with other associations, there may be merit in appointing a Parliamentary (or County Assembly) Liaison Officer – who can closely monitor parliamentary activity, get to know MPs (or MCAs) 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 an MP why their case is of interest, for example by working out how many people in their constituency work in your sector.

Offering dinner or inviting MPs to a reception can be a good way of getting to know them and gently to start to influence their thinking.

4.2.3 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 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.

4.2.4 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 or on a factory visit 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.

4.2.5 Involve 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.

4.2.6 Mobilise grass roots support

Grass roots support means the support of individual businesses or members – though 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.

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.

You can involve your grass roots through letter writing, petitions, rallies and marches, internet, public meetings, direct action and non-participation.

4.3 Timing

Think about the timing for each of your actions. Is there an external timetable, for example because the government is on a schedule, or do you have the luxury of being able to set your own timetable? Even if you do, you may want to set a timetable to keep you on track.

4.4 Responsible person

Actions are much more likely to happen if you appoint someone to be responsible. Otherwise, it is too easy for everyone to conclude that it is someone else's responsibility.

4.5 Checklist

- Prioritise the stakeholders: communicate with allies and potential allies at an early stage and if possible agree how you will work together on the issue; identify adversaries at an early stage so that you can refine your arguments to answer their criticisms and concerns
- Identify target audiences
- Articulate the message for each audience, and specifically the key messages that you will communicate to your allies and to the ultimate audience, the policy makers.
- Choose the communication channels for each audience
- Explain how you will know if you have been successful with each audience

5. Action plans

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 section is to introduce project planning, management and financial control techniques to help you manage projects effectively.

5.1 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 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
- We need to be able to share the activity with members

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.

5.1.1 Flow charting

Flow charting can help you to think through all the elements of a project including responses at key decision points. A flow chart is simply a model of a process, graphically representing the steps and the sequences within it. 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. Flow charts will assist you to reach a shared understanding of a process and the steps required for effective implementation. It should help identify steps which may be problematic.

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

Figure 8: Flow chart

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. 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.

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

5.1.2 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 5: Task Analysis Chart

	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 unit 5.2. 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. 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.

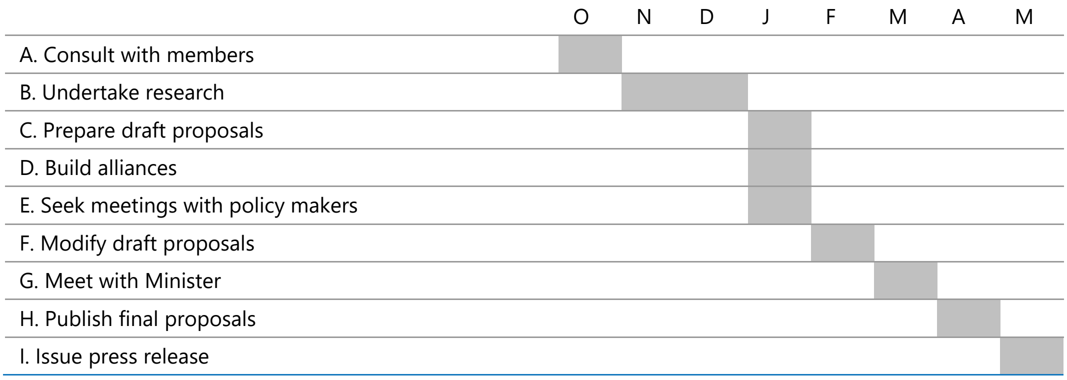
5.1.3 Gantt charts

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 9: 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 Checklist

- Prepare a flow chart to manage your advocacy project
- For each step in the chart, consider the time required to undertake the step, the duration to deliver the step and the resources required
- Prepare a Gantt chart to provide an overall timescale and project checklist
- Prepare a budget

- If you don’t have the budget available, prepare a funding proposal and look for the money

Further reading and further information

- Mendizabal, E The Alignment, Interest and Influence Matrix (AIIM), ODI, see www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6509.pdf
- Johnson, G. & Scholes, K. (1993), “Exploring Corporate Strategy”, Prentice Hall
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This series of advocacy competence handbooks – divided into modules and units – is intended to support business member organisations (BMOs) to engage in public private dialogue and to advocate improvements to the business environment. You are free to use the units and other materials provided that the source is acknowledged.

Foundation Unit

0. Introduction to advocacy & dialogue

Module 1: The policy process

1.1 Understanding policy and regulation

1.2 Policy analysis

1.3 The process of formulating and reforming policy

Module 2: Policy positions

2.1 Identifying, understanding & framing issues

2.2 Preparing policy positions

2.3 Influence & argumentation

Module 3: Communications

3.1 Communications & public relations

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Module 4: Written communications

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Module 5: Managing advocacy projects

5.1 Planning an advocacy project

5.2 Budgeting & financial management

5.3 Evaluation of advocacy

Module 6: Managing a BMO6.1 Leadership, strategy & business planning

6.2 Governance and ethics

6.3 Members and member services

Module 7: Research

7. Research methods

The Business Advocacy Network is an initiative of Irwin Grayson Associates and can be found at businessadvocacy.net. IGA can be found at irwingrayson.com and contacted at david@irwin.org. You can follow David Irwin on twitter at @drdavidirwin.