Business Advocacy Network

Managing advocacy projects

Evaluating advocacy projects

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Public policy dialogue & advocacy
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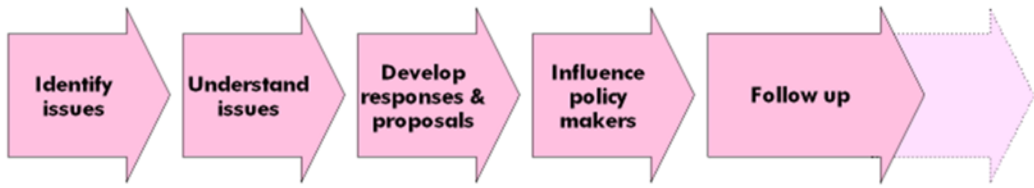
1. Introduction

Business member organisations (BMOs) advocate for a conducive business and investment climate policy environment. For this to be effective it is necessary to adopt a logical approach. The five step approach to advocacy provides a logical framework for any advocacy project and has been shown to be effective (the actual number of steps is less important than the discipline that it imposes regarding the process). This starts with the identification of an issue and concludes with follow-up

Figure 1: Five step approach to advocacy



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. Ideally, then, you will want to evaluate impact, not least because this will help to justify subsequent proposals for reform. 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.

This handbook introduces the concept of monitoring and evaluation as applied to advocacy. For your work with government, you are probably only concerned with whether the agreed reform was implemented and what difference it has made, but for your own learning, you will also be interested in what difference you made along the way, so may want to review the project more widely. You may also want to evaluate the way that you managed the project. However, this handbook is primarily about evaluating the advocacy.

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, especially the government.

By the end of this handbook, you will:

- Understand the importance of clarity when designing an advocacy project
- Have been introduced to a range of tools and techniques to assist you to monitor and evaluate your advocacy projects

2. The purpose of monitoring and evaluating advocacy

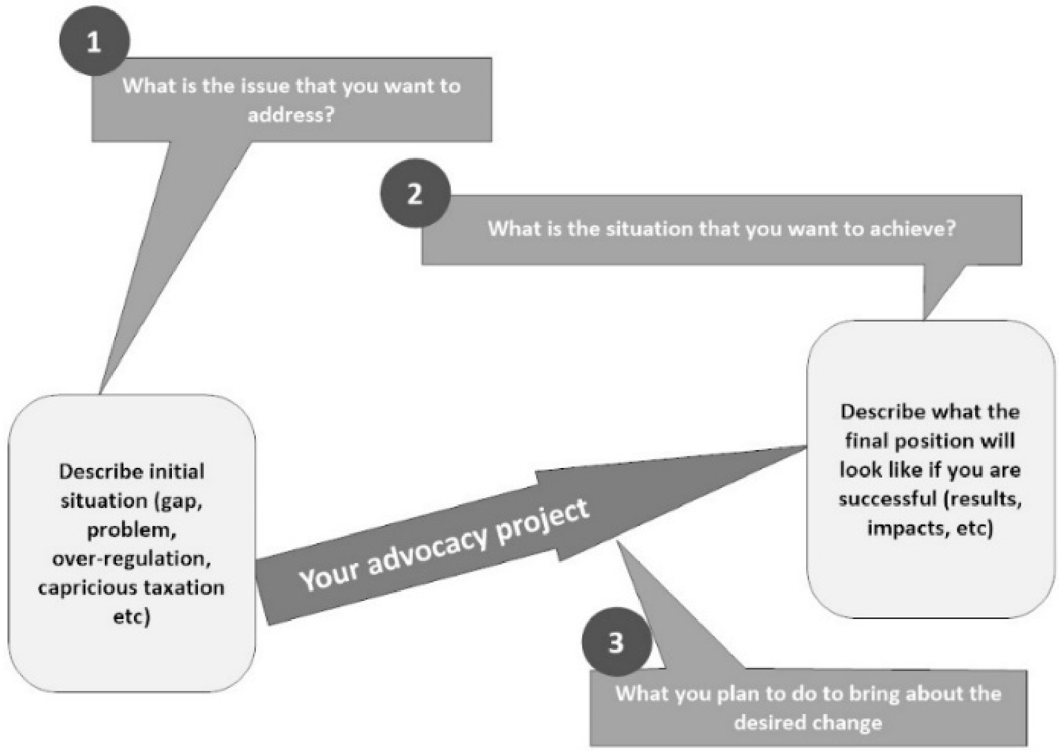
The purpose of monitoring in relation to public policy advocacy is to determine whether a proposal to change a public policy was agreed and whether the new or reformed policy was implemented as intended. The purpose of evaluation is to assess whether the new policy achieved the anticipated effect(s) 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.

3. The starting point

The starting point for our monitoring and evaluation is actually the starting point for our whole project. If we are clear from the outset what we are trying to achieve, then it will be much easier to assess the extent to which we have achieved it.

In simple terms, as described in the *Introduction to advocacy and dialogue*, our advocacy is intended to bring about a change in a situation which is causing difficulty for businesses (see Figure 2)

Figure 2: Planning an advocacy project



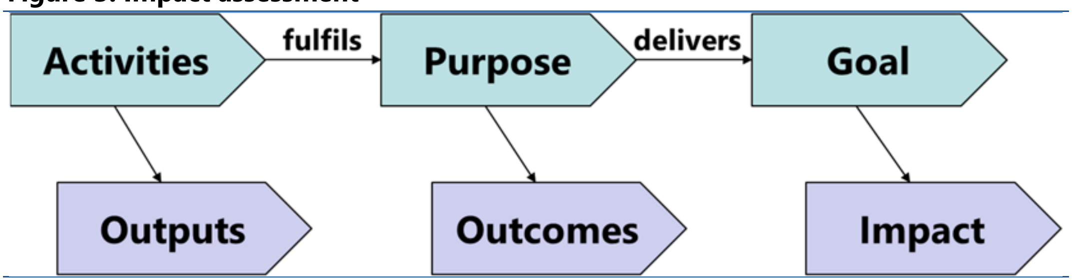
Once we know our desired endpoint, that is, our goal, we can prepare a logic model (sometimes described as an intervention logic or a theory of change). We start with a clear description of the problem. This is often the hardest task, because it is very easy to look at symptoms and not to look at causes. It is important, therefore, to describe the problem in terms of its effect on BMO members, or perhaps more widely on the private sector. If we understand the problem, then it becomes much easier to define the goal. Again, it is important that this is described in terms of the change that will be experienced by BMO members or the wider private sector.

> ***Define the problem***
>
> Consider which of these scenarios actually defines a problem and a goal.
>
> A. Parastatal organisations are inefficient. If they were reformed then they would be more efficient.
>
> B. Parastatal organisations impose costs on farmers but the associated benefits are worth less than the cost. If they were reformed, then the costs to farmers would be lower and farmer incomes would rise.
>
> The purpose of the advocacy may be the same in each case, but the goal is different.

Once you are clear about the problem and the goal, it is much easier to determine what should be done to deliver the goal. The goal explains the desired impact. The change that will bring that about is the outcome, that is the effects achieved by your actions, for example reform of legislation or change in the way that a policy is implemented. The purpose of your advocacy, then, is to deliver the desired outcome(s). This is achieved through the activities in which you engage and the outputs that you deliver. Outputs are simply the other side of the coin of your activities and will include for example research reports published, policy positions prepared, dialogues undertaken, press coverage achieved, etc. Outcomes reflect a change in behaviour so will cover for example public officials persuaded or public policy reformed or legislation enacted. These steps are summarised in Figure 3. Activities lead to outputs and fulfil the purpose of your advocacy project. In turn these lead to outcomes, or at least they do if the advocacy step of your work is successful. This in turn delivers the goal and leads to impact.

As presented here, logic chains are usually shown as straight lines, starting from inputs, moving through activities, outcomes and outcomes and leading to the desired impact. But real life rarely follows straight lines. You are likely, as you pursue your goal, to go backwards and forwards a number of times.

Figure 3: Impact assessment



It is the 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 for a project may be to improve profitability for businesses in its sector. Its project purpose, however, will be very specific such as 'amending the Seed and Plant Varieties Act to increase seed varieties available in the market and thus liberalise the seed trade'

Monitoring and evaluation will be much easier if you are clear about appropriate indicators. Ideally you will set indicators to monitor each of your outputs, outcomes and impact. Moreover, you should define these at the start of the project.

Being clear about the problem, the goal and the purpose is essential when you are attempting to assess whether you have been successful, though it is still not always easy to evaluate.

4. Challenges in evaluating advocacy

Evaluation of public policy suffers from several challenges directly related to the nature of advocacy and public policy:

Context is important. The political and economic framework within which BMOs work will affect choices of strategy and tactics. Understanding the context will help you to understand the choices.

Time frames can be unpredictable, long and slow, often measured in years.

Strategies and milestones change. Not a bad thing if strategies are unsuccessful, but makes it harder to draw conclusions about what generated the success.

The **complexity of issues** can sometimes make it difficult to determine cause and effect between your actions and policy outcomes, let alone between policy reform and impact.

There may be a **time lag** between the introduction of the policy and the impact on business.

Success is subjective Defining success is tricky especially if it has been necessary to compromise.

Measuring 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.

Assessing progress, and just as important, impact. The evaluation should review the journey and not just the destination, not least to reduce the risk of concluding that the effort was a failure if the goals were not achieved.

Demonstrating attribution is extremely hard, so instead look for contribution**.** To show that a BMO brought about a reform entirely through its own efforts is hard; it is much easier to show that a BMO contributed to achieving reforms.

Moreover, evaluation of advocacy is made harder by the inability to apply techniques that may be utilised under other circumstances. Often evaluators employ experimental designs or undertake randomised control trials or, at the very least, look for counterfactuals, that is, evidence of what might have happened without the intervention. This is all but impossible in advocacy since all businesses get the benefit of any change in regulation. You can however improve the validity and reliability of your findings, for example, through using mixed methods, through thinking critically about other factors that might have brought about the change, through triangulation and through both key informant review and peer review.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring measures progress towards specific results as defined by the indicators. **Evaluation** seeks to demonstrate systematically and objectively the relevance of the project, though could go rather further.

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee, for example, suggests that programmes and projects should be evaluated against six criteria[1]:

- Relevance: was the project relevant to the target groups? Was there a clearly defined problem? Was solving the problem likely to lead to a significant impact?
- Coherence: did the project design make sense? Was it considered likely to have the desired effect? Did it align with other aspects of work by the BMO?
- Effectiveness: did the BMO achieve, or come close to achieving, its objectives? If not, why not?
- Efficiency: were activities undertaken in a cost-efficient and timely manner?
- Impact: what happened as a result of the project. This can be described firstly in terms of outcomes (a new law or a revised policy etc) and then in terms of impact (what difference did it make to businesses). What was the breadth and depth of the impact?
- Sustainability: to what extent will the benefits continue after the end of the project. This could be considered in two ways. Firstly, is it expected that the change in policy will endure or is it likely to change again at the whim of the policy makers? Secondly, what difference has it made to the BMO? Is the

[1] OECD (1991) The DAC principles for the evaluation of development assistance, Paris: OECD (https://baf.fyi/dac)

BMO stronger? Has it developed its competence? Has it become more financially sustainable?

Ideally you would aim to assess impact. Often, this is impractical, either because the reform has not been implemented for long enough or because such an assessment would require an expensive survey. Even if it is not possible to assess impact, we are still interested in the processes. Evaluators talk about formative evaluation and summative evaluation. In essence, both examine the activities that were undertaken and the results of those activities. A summative evaluation is undertaken at the end of a project; a formative evaluation is undertaken during the project, when there is still time to change tack or do things differently.

6. Tools and techniques

6.1 Scientific realism

Unless you are really interested in what social scientists call methodology, you will not need to worry too much about your overall approach. For those you who are interested, the techniques suggested here are rooted in an approach usually called scientific realism[2]. This approach seeks a disaggregated understanding of programmes, distinguishing between different programme elements, outcomes, contexts and mechanisms. The aim is to identify the specific mechanisms that generated the cause and link them to contextual factors. This approach is important for advocacy given the multiple factors that might lead to different mechanisms. This is sometimes called a generative approach. In general, mixed methods – that is a mix of quantitative methods and qualitative methods – is needed to deliver this approach.

6.2 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

> ***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.

[2] Pawson, R. & Tilley, N. (1997) realistic evaluation

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.

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.

6.2.1 Techniques

There are a wide range of techniques that can be used. UNICEF, for example, list 19 tools in their guide to monitoring and evaluating advocacy (Coffman 2010). Drawing a clear distinction between monitoring and evaluation can be hard, so the tools in this section are those that are predominantly focused on monitoring. It is worth noting that ideally monitoring will start from the launch of the project. It is difficult to piece together a story three or four years later!

Before getting into detail of the specific tools, you should note that there are some general techniques to gather data that will be used in many of the tools:

Interviews: To gather hard data, opinions and perceptions from stakeholders and policy makers, generally using semi-structured questionnaires to explore issues, challenges, advocacy approaches and successes.

Surveys: face to face or (less likely) online questioning, using predominantly closed questions, with similar objectives to interviews, though could be extended to wider audiences, such as the members of business associations.

Document review: Review of documents which may include reports, policy reform proposals, meeting minutes, newsletters etc.

Analysis: of the logic chain and intervention, of the quality or research reports and policy position papers; of comparisons of proposals and achievements, for example, in legislation; of minutes of meetings; of economic statistics.

Observation: not easy to arrange unless you are also one of the participants, but observation of meetings can provide first-hand experience and data.

Focus group discussions – Facilitated discussions with stakeholders to explore reactions, opinions and ideas.

6.2.2 Advocacy competence assessment

An important intermediate indicator is whether the organisation has improved its competence. The Alliance for Justice (2003) defines advocacy capacity development as “activities that build an organisation’s ability to sustain advocacy efforts. Examples include building partnerships with other organisations, securing a commitment by the organisation’s board to advocacy efforts, organising constituency groups to influence policy, and strengthening the advocacy skills of staff, board and members".

BAF has in the past used an 'advocacy competence diagnostic assessment' – you may have participated in it. This asks a series of questions designed to assess the BMO. This can be used as a development tool – to identify areas where the BMO needs to develop its competence. But it can also be used an M&E tool – to assess whether the competence of the BMO has actually improved. This can be important given that level of competence cannot be easily assessed from whether the BMO was successful. If you want to use this tool, it can be made available. Note that it is important to do a baseline assessment and then a follow up assessment at a later date.

6.2.3 Diaries

Encourage key people, such as the BMO's policy director and CEO to keep a diary and to record key meetings – when they occurred, who participated, what was discussed, what was agreed, etc. Indeed, this is good practice in project management but is essential if you want to be able to review and evaluate the activities and the progress at a later date.

6.2.4 Policy tracking

This method is a simple but important requirement to monitor the progress of proposals during the policy formulation process. Indeed, you need to do this just to manage your project effectively. The objective is to track policy proposals as they are introduced and as they progress through deliberation and adoption.

Tracking other public policy may simply require keeping in close touch with key informants in the administration. This links closely to process tracing.

- Monitor the Government's websites for announcements about policy reform.
- The progress of legislation can be tracked through the Hansard and Kenya Law.
- 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.
- 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. For example, KEPSA or KAM may have better links than you, so ensure that you work closely with them. Some civil society organisations or NGOs may also have an interest, so talk to them regularly.
- Keep in touch with relevant committees in Parliament as they will also have an interest in progress, and may be willing to share with you what they learn.

6.2.5 Media tracking

This method examines whether, and to some extent how, media coverage of an issue changes over time. This does not mean that you will only seek to progress your advocacy through the media; but securing media coverage can reinforce other activities, for example, by raising awareness of the issue. Monitoring whether issues or messages are appearing more in targeted media will indicate whether your media outreach activities are leading to media coverage.

Media tracking requires that you (a) identify the sources (print, broadcast, social) to track, (b) specify the specific outlets (such as the Daily Nation), (c) specify the time periods to review, (d) specify search terms (which will depend on the issue that you are aiming to track), and (e) count how often the search terms appear.

Tracking the media, unless you use an online database, is not easy. However, there are good tracking services available, for a fee, from organisations such as LexisNexis (www.lexisnexis.com), which includes Kenya's media in its database. This will give you a count of how often your search terms appear and detail, if you want it, about article positioning, length etc. There are also available free search tools such as Google News Search (news.google.com).

If you are hoping to change how the media covers the issue, then you will need to undertake "content analysis" of the articles to determine how the issue was framed and the sources that were used. Content analysis software includes NVivo, MAXQDA and ATLAS.ti.

6.2.6 Media scorecards

Media scorecards offer a method to compare media coverage generated by different issues or organisations over time. The starting point is media tracking. There is then an extra step in which you identify the issue(s) or organisation(s) to be tracked as comparators. You may need to develop a suitable scoring protocol. In particular, you may want to assess media stories on the basis of whether they may change public opinion and whether they influence policy makers. You need a means to assess this though and not just to guess!

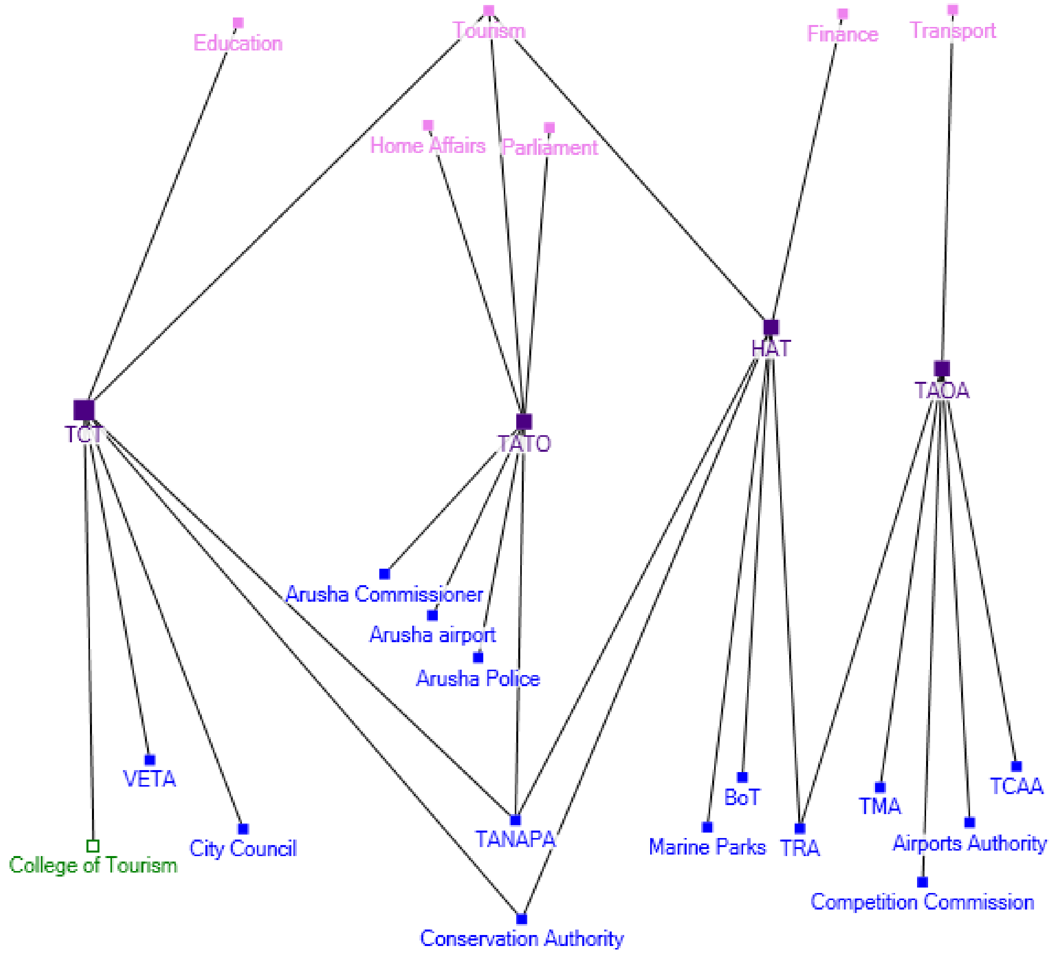
In the advocacy competence assessment diagnostic, we set out a scale for media coverage, which you may find useful:

- The association has not received media coverage on its issues
- The association has received substantial media coverage on its issues
- Media coverage has depicted the advocacy relatively accurately
- Media coverage has mentioned the association appropriately

6.2.7 Social network analysis

Social network analysis, sometimes called network mapping, explores the relationships between people or organisations.

Figure 4: Tourism network in Tanzania



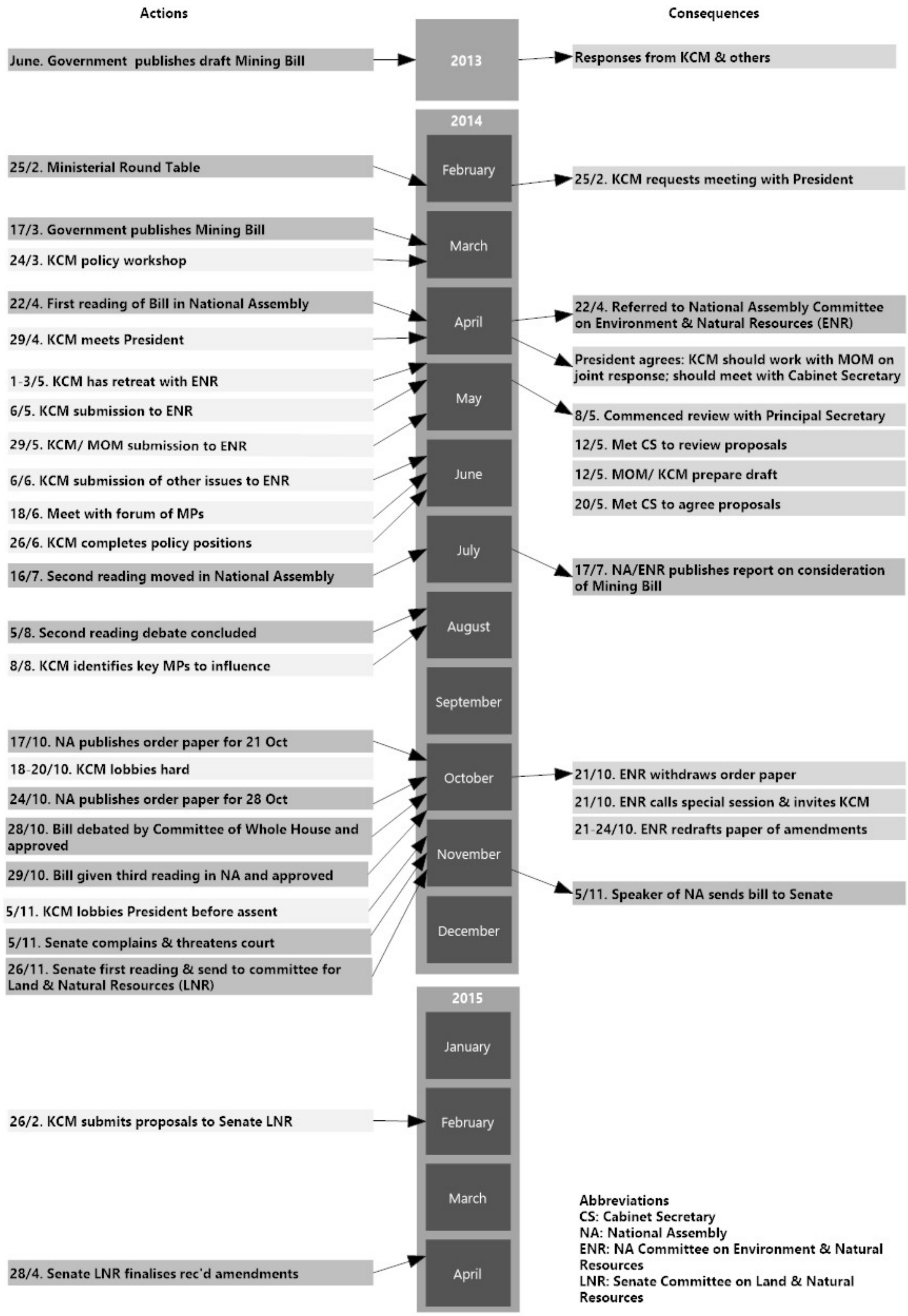
Source: Irwin (2011)

It is relatively easy to do, simply by asking people about their connections, though better still if those connections are recorded in a diary over a period of time. There is a great plug-in for excel, called NodeXL, which allows you quickly to draw social network maps. This potentially provides a good way of showing BMOs relationships and interrelationships.

6.2.8 Process tracing

Process tracing, sometimes described as critical incident timelines, is a method that allows you to illustrate the relationship in time between your activities and your outcomes or achievements.

Figure 5: Timeline



Source: Irwin (2018)

Whilst you can never 'prove' cause and effect, process tracing allows you to infer that outcomes arose as a consequence of your actions. The timeline shows actions or critical events together with important results or outcomes. Ideally, it will also show contextual incidents that might have brought about or contributed to those outcomes. Critical incident timelines encourage you to describe your strategy and activities in actual time and bring context to bear. They should provide information about both the process and the outcomes. If done well, they will show how strategy evolved in response to progress and setbacks. They can stimulate reflection on the causes of reform.

Timelines are prepared using a combination of document review and key informant input. They will be most accurate if they are prepared as the activities are underway, rather than attempting to put them together when everything has concluded and memories have lapsed.

Figure 5 shows an example of a timeline which illustrates efforts by Kenya Chamber of Mines to amend what became the Mining Act, 2016.

6.2.9 Bellwether method

The Bellwether method was developed for the evaluation of policy advocacy. A bellwether is the leading sheep of a flock, on whose neck a bell is hung, so in this context the bellwethers are those influential people in the public and private sectors whose positions require that they are politically informed and who might be expected to track a broad range of policy issues. The method is intended to show where a policy issue or proposal is positioned on the policy agenda, how policy makers and influencers are thinking about it and whether they are likely to act on it.

There are four steps: (a) identify the types of bellwether – such as key public officials, special advisers, MPs, media, researchers, NGOs – to interview; (b) specify selection criteria (such as gender, role, etc) and then select individual bellwethers from the identified groups, at least half of whom should not have a specific connection to the issue (intended to raise the probability that issue awareness amongst interviewees is due to your advocacy); (c) set up interviews (but at this stage only talk generally rather than about the specifics of the issue so that responses are authentic); and (d) interview with a semi-structured questionnaire to explore what the bellwethers think and know about the particular issue.

It should be possible to repeat this approach, after a decent time lag, to explore how the issue's positioning on the agenda has changed.

This approach may be of more interest to a research institution or university but should give valuable feedback. A similar approach can be adopted by a BMO at an early stage of its research to explore the views of critical stakeholders in an issue.

6.2.10 Policymaker ratings

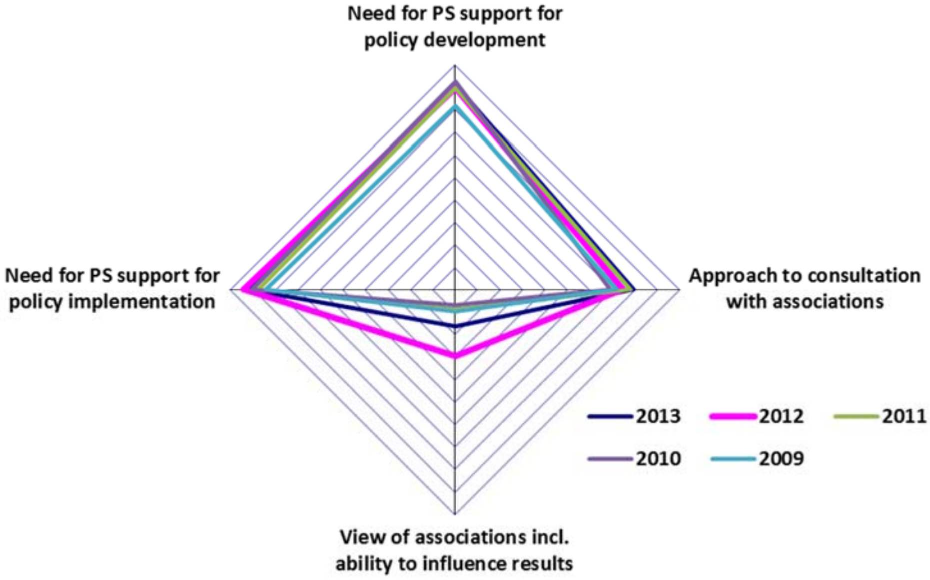
This method may be harder for a BMO to implement but could be quite revealing. Policymaker ratings attempts to gauge political support for a policy reform proposal among a defined group of policy makers (e.g., parliament, executive, administration). The objective is to assess the impact of policy advocacy efforts. It utilises advocates' insider knowledge about policymakers' stances on specific issues to assess perceived levels of support and influence. It neatly fits, therefore, with work to assess the support and relevance of stakeholders.

There are three steps: (a) a policymaking body is selected for review; (b) advocates (ie, the BMO's policy advocacy team, but possibly also advocates from allies) rate the policy makers on three scales (say 1 to 5) to assess: (i) level of support for an issue based on their actions; (ii) level of influence on the issue; and (iii) level of confidence in the accuracy of the ratings on the first two scales; (c) calculate composite ratings across the policymakers, or across groups of policymakers.

The results will help you to identify which venue or which group(s) of policy makers are most sympathetic to your cause.

The advocacy fund in Tanzania has commissioned research which, inter alia, reported MDAs' perceptions of BMOs though id not seek to identify respondents' views on specific issues. Officials said consistently that they believed that the government required the support of the private sector for policy development and required the support of the private sector for policy implementation. They said that they approached associations to seek their views. Officials then said that their experience was that, in general, associations had limited ability to influence results (Figure 6).

Figure 6: MDA views of BMOs in general



Source: BEST-AC surveys of MDAs 2009-2013

6.3 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.

However, you may wish to assess how well you have progressed by positioning yourself on two scales, also lifted from the advocacy competence diagnostic assessment:

Building momentum

- The association has gained the support of relevant politicians in, or responsible for, the public body
- The association has gained the support of senior officials in the public policy body
- The association has gained the support of other important stakeholders
- The association has generated external pressure for the proposed change

- The association and its partners have influenced public policy bodies to increase their budgets towards the advocacy issues

Changing views

- The public policy bodies have changed the way they see the issues
- The public policy bodies have given a higher priority to the issues
- The public policy bodies have made a commitment to address one or more of the issues
- The public policy bodies have programmed a solution to one or more of the issues
- There are specific cases where public bodies have changed policy to address the issues, for example, published a white paper or secured executive change in regulation
- There are specific cases where the public policy bodies have implemented (Parliamentary) legislation to take account of the issues

6.3.1 Tools

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.

6.3.2 Contribution analysis

As noted it is difficult both to assess cause and effect and especially whether the BMO was the primary cause and so assessing attribution is difficult. As a result, evaluators have largely stopped trying to assess attribution and instead look at contribution, an assessment of the effect of the work of the BMO on the observed outcome. In other words, is there evidence that the BMO made a contribution to achieving the policy outcomes?

The first step is to map the results, perhaps using a logic model or an outcomes chain. The second step is to gather evidence about those results. The third step is to consider alternative explanations for the mechanism that led to the results and whether they offer a better explanation. The fourth step is to prepare a narrative that sets out the context, the objectives, the apparent results, the more likely alternative explanations and why they are in fact less likely than the advocacy. In this step, you may also want to identify the lessons. In cases where alternative explanations are plausible, there may be a need for a fifth step in which you look for additional evidence to support your claim. If the narrative, and evidence, is not strong enough, then you will struggle to argue that its was the advocacy that led to the observed reforms.

6.3.3 Cost-benefit analysis

Cost benefit analysis aims to capture all the benefits and all the costs associated with a reform. If the ratio of benefits to costs is more than one, that is, the benefits outweigh the costs, then the outcome is positive. In the case of advocacy, the benefits are the net financial benefits that accrue as a result of the reform and the costs are the costs of the advocacy project. Quantifying the benefits, however, can be challenging. To look at some simple cost benefit analyses of BAF supported projects, go to businessadvocacy.org/public.php. BAF has a factsheet at businessadvocacy.org/dloads/fsCostsBenefitAnalysis.pdf.

7. Conclusion

Evaluating advocacy can be hard, but it is well worth the effort, both from the point of view of reflecting on what you did and what you will do next time, and to demonstrate to your members how you are helping to reform policy to their benefit.

Further reading and further information	
	▪ Logic model development guide, W K Kellogg Foundation, 2004 ▪ Coffman, J, (2010) Monitoring & evaluating advocacy: companion to the advocacy toolkit, UNICEF (see http://baf.fyi/evalad1) ▪ Snowdon, A (2004) Evaluating Philanthropic Support of Public Policy Advocacy: A Resource for Funders, Northern California Grantmakers (see http://baf.fyi/evalad2) ▪ Tsui, J, Hearn, S & Young, J (2014) Monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy, Overseas Development Institute (see http://baf.fyi/evalad3)

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.

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.