

## BMOs & member services

### Introduction

The factsheet about the role and purpose of BMOs stresses that simply representing and advocating for their members is unlikely to be enough to keep members paying their subscriptions. So BMOs need to provide a range of services which will benefit their members.

### Member services

BMOs therefore need to think carefully about the services that they may be able to provide to members, which services might perhaps be provided at no cost (other than the cost of membership) and which services might incur an extra charge. Table 1 sets out some of the services offered by business member organisations.

**Table 1: Types of Services Delivered by BMOs**

Services	Examples
Trade and market development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organising exhibitions and trade fairs</li> <li>▪ Facilitating market research</li> <li>▪ Information on export markets</li> <li>▪ Bringing together buyers and sellers</li> <li>▪ Trade delegations</li> <li>▪ Group marketing (possibly allied with standards)</li> <li>▪ Group procurement</li> <li>▪ Develop codes of conduct</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management training</li> <li>▪ Technical and vocational training</li> <li>▪ Development of training manuals</li> <li>▪ Training curricula and standards</li> </ul>
Advice and consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Best practice benchmarking among members</li> <li>▪ Business counselling and mentoring</li> <li>▪ Information on regulatory requirements</li> <li>▪ Legal services</li> <li>▪ Financial and taxation advice</li> <li>▪ Accountancy and bookkeeping services</li> <li>▪ Quality standards, ISO 9000</li> <li>▪ Environment standards, ISO14000</li> <li>▪ Hygiene standards, HACCP and ISO22000</li> </ul>
Information and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regular business meetings</li> <li>▪ Industry clubs and committees</li> <li>▪ Internet-based business contacts</li> <li>▪ Newsletters and publications</li> <li>▪ Membership directory and database</li> <li>▪ Annual report</li> </ul>
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify issues of concern</li> <li>▪ Lobby for changes in public policy affecting all members</li> <li>▪ Support individual members on specific cases</li> </ul>

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Office facilities and infrastructure services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Secretarial services</li> <li>▪ Computer services</li> <li>▪ Telecommunications</li> <li>▪ Internet access</li> <li>▪ Providing arbitration services</li> </ul>
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Delegated government functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business registration</li> <li>▪ Issuing certificates of origin</li> <li>▪ Registration of samples</li> <li>▪ Develop and supervise industry standards</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from World Bank, "Building the capacity of business membership organisations", 2005

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

It is not enough simply to offer a range of services and hope for the best. You need to ensure that you offer a service which is second to none. That way, members will continue to use the service – and will recommend that other businesses join as well. You also need to ensure that all of your services confer benefits for members.

### **Benefits for members**

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There are many benefits associated with membership organisations including:

- Forming a cohort of businesses who can engage in dialogue with national and local governments on policy issues of collective interest;
- Forming a body for official contact, consultation and contracting with local and national governments or foreign organisations wishing to deal collectively with businesses;
- Contribute to building up of a reservoir of data and other information – including the evidence of practices and lessons from other countries – to enable the association better argue its members' and understand other stakeholders' viewpoints on public issues;
- Uniting like-minded businesses towards common goals by the creation of a forum for exchange of ideas between individuals and organisations interested in engaging with them;
- Creating a body for the empowerment and capacity building of participating organisations for influencing and lobbying;
- Enhancing the capability and resourcing by participating institutions to implement larger scale projects than any one organisation can carry out on its own;
- Enabling small businesses to increase their bargaining power in national, local and individual affairs of collective interest;
- Promoting the integrity, public accountability and professionalism of each member organisation in its affairs; and
- Creating a network for exchange in the generation of the national or sectoral vision on the place of business in the national and local future.