Part 3

How to formulate enabling environment reforms

3.2

Section 3.2:
Implementing & Managing an advocacy process

Purpose and structure of this section

This section provides EOs with guidance on managing and implementing an advocacy process. It outlines the specific efforts the EO must take to ensure a smooth running process.

Part i: Set specific targets

Developing a clear understanding of what success will be and what it will look like. The EO's policy goal should meet the following criteria: it should be *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and tangible (or time-limited).*

Example:

The EO is seeking a two per cent reduction in the VAT rate from 21 per cent to 19 per cent, in order to bring VAT rates in line with regional competitors in advance of a regional free trade agreement.

Does this policy objective meet the *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-limited* criteria?

Specific: YES; it seeks changes in a particular tax band (it does not call for example for wider changes in the taxation system).

Measurable: YES; The government will lower the rate by 2 per cent (or less) or it will not. The EO and its members will clearly see the result.

Attainable: YES; the EO has called for changes that will level the playing field for domestic business and encourage investment. Government has committed to this policy direction in its national plan.

Realistic: YES; the EO is calling for a minimal tax change that will not massively reduce government revenue. The EO is also arguing that a reduction in the VAT rate will actually encourage increased commercial activity and actually raise government revenue.

Time-limited: YES; action needs to be taken in advance of the regional trade agreement coming into force.

Part ii: Define advocacy activities

Though the EO may have to change activities once advocacy efforts get underway, defining them at the planning stage helps put in place the resources needed.

Advocacy strategies usually have to be adapted over time, making it difficult to set a specific activity plan. In advocacy, you will often have to invest in a variety of activities and cultivate a large number of contacts in order to cover a range of potential opportunities for influencing your target audiences. So while it is important to have a sense of the range of activities that you will undertake, you should also keep a flexible activity schedule. Innovating and seizing opportunities that may emerge are critical for successful advocacy, even if you have to make changes to your original plan. A schematic plan, such as the one below, can assist in outlining the "who, what, and where" that needs to be done.

ISSUE: INCREASING SKILLS AND EDUCATION LEVELS

Target Audiences	Key Messages	Activities
Education and Skills Ministry (and other Ministries identified with policy influence)	▪ Poor standards are negatively impacting on competiveness (e.g., jobs and enterprises) ▪ Impacting on investment decisions ▪ Reevaluate mechanisms for business to input into education policy	▪ Gather data from primary and secondary resources into a position paper ▪ Commission report on specific case for increasing the level of private operators in the education market ▪ Brief Minster or adviser on the EO's position
Educationists; Trade unions and civil society	▪ Best and brightest choosing to go abroad for education ▪ Demoralised education providers who lack training and materials	▪ Establish discussions on areas of joint interest ▪ Explore where joint positions could be presented
General Public & Media	▪ Explore decreasing second level fees ▪ Increase ability of private operators to increase choice ▪ End brain drain by creating more domestic opportunities	▪ Identify EO spokespersons to front the issue with the media ▪ Identify journalists active on this issue

Part iii: Set timeline

It is important to set a timeline at the beginning, but also to keep in mind that political events beyond your control may force you to change it. For example, your target audiences may unexpectedly change, an opponent may turn into an ally, or a strategy which seemed adequate to begin with may not yield the expected results. Advocacy initiatives require continuous and careful monitoring, since your strategy will need to adjust along with the political climate. Advocacy activities will often need to be revised and re-directed. In short, it is important to remain flexible.

One reason that flexibility is so vital is that valuable windows of opportunity often come up suddenly; a policy change which you thought would take five years to achieve could be accomplished in a few months, if the public takes an interest in your policy issue. If a new government is elected, your issue could rise to the top of key policy-makers' agendas. In contrast, a policy that you thought could be easily changed may instead encounter unexpected opposition and require a longer time frame than you thought at first, this is because the policy environment is unpredictable and it is probably best to schedule conservatively, so always include extra time for unanticipated events. If, in the end, you accomplish your goals earlier than expected, your initiative will seem even more successful in the eyes of members.

Part iv: Prepare budget

Preparing a budget is the next step. Estimating the cost of an advocacy project can be difficult. For example, your initial strategy may not include a media campaign, but later, once you have started implementing your plan, such a campaign may seem vital.

You should base your budget on your advocacy strategy and activities (such as research and survey work, media work, working with coalitions, and/or mobilizing constituencies). There are of course inexpensive and expensive ways to pursue each strategy. Hiring a public relations or consulting firm, for example, can be an important way to communicate your key advocacy messages, but it is costly. Holding meetings, writing media commentary, or arranging site visits are relatively lower-cost activities. Always plan for contingencies, as this helps you keep a flexible activity schedule and allow for changes.

- What is possible in terms of your resource base – both financial and human?
- Is the issue important enough that it could garner additional resources from members – from other sources?
- How could partnerships reduce the EO's costs?
- Can particular member firms take the lead on a given issue and help with costs?

Worksheet 3: Assessment Budget

Expenses	
Personnel expenses	
Employers' Organization staff	
Consultants/Advisors	
Other	
Data expenses	
Purchase of data	
Meetings and consultations	

Venues, catering, etc.	
Transportation	
Data analysis	
Computing, programmes, data input, etc.	
Report production and distribution	
Printing	
Distribution	
Other expenses	
TOTAL EXPENSES	
Income	
TOTAL INCOME	

Part v: Prepare to adapt

It is unwarranted to think that all dimensions to a major constraint on economic activity are binding at the same time. They will change. As a developing economy grows, its market and regulatory institutions change and their capabilities increase. As a result, growth strategies and policies and the role of government shift. In short, while there may be one immediate major constraint that requires immediate attention, this will change and evolve requiring focus elsewhere on 'new' constraints. Policy development and the EO's position needs to reflect this reality.

The EO may have started by advocating a change in policy but concluded that there are some issues where the government is going to proceed in a different direction to the wishes of the EO, irrespective of the evidence that it can provide.

If for example the government has included in its campaign platform higher regulation on temporary employment agencies (in response to some real or perceived concerns) then it is highly likely this will happen. An EO is probably engaging in a futile battle to stop this happening, it will waste political capital and probably goodwill in such an exercise.

If that seems likely, it is better to accept the issue as it stands and move on for the following reasons:

- If the government is determined to pursue a particular course of action that the EO did not want, for example to regulate, then the EO may well want to shift focus from opposing the regulation to trying to influence its content, in order to minimise the burden on its members;
- relationships need to be preserved; fighting every issue to a standstill is not a sustainable strategy, nor an effective one. If an issue the EO is advancing has hit an insurmountable wall, call it a day and move on to the next issue.

As far as possible examine unintended outcomes from the EO's proposal. For example, there can be negative consequences even from a positive course of corrective action. For instance, imagine that energy monopolies have been identified as the most significant cost for business. The EO (and others) over time successfully lobbies for the privatisation of this sector but the existing providers in a monopoly situation may well have become inefficient and uncompetitive by global standards. Opening the sector up carries the risk of short-term bad economic outcomes (e.g., immediate layoffs / closure) notwithstanding the longer-term macro gain. However, this may in itself generate political resistance, perhaps even leading to a change of government and further resistance to reforms identified by the EO.

Part vi: Member communication

The EO's members need to be regularly updated on the organization's advocacy objectives, the actions being taken by the organization, the actions it would be helpful for them to undertake, and how the advocacy effort is progressing. They will also need to have available the most up to date facts on the issues on the advocacy agenda.

Member communication is vital if the EO is to secure commitment to its objectives and solicit member help in advocacy azctions. Communicating priorities, actions and successes is about more than commitment and support. The EO's members and non-members will judge the success of the organization as a whole on how influential and successful its advocacy efforts are seen to be.

Advocacy successes are normally qualified and are rarely explainable in win or lose terms. Even where there are relatively clear "wins", it is often difficult for the organization to claim and broadcast them. For the EO to proclaim a clear "win" means declaring an equally clear "loss" for someone else. This may not help its ongoing relationship with policy-makers and other interest groups like trade unions.

For these reasons, members will often judge advocacy success by the effort they witness the EO putting in, the relevance of the issues it is working on, and the volume and tone of media coverage. In short, they want clear evidence that the EO is working hard on the issues that matter to them.[1]

For employer organizations to be true to their purposes and relevant, they must be member-driven. An organization cannot be a credible voice of employers without knowing and advocating what members believe, and without meeting their actual needs at a given point in time.

Being member-driven has both internal and an external elements. An employer organization is member-driven if it has governance and organizational structures that provide for meaningful consultation with, and feedback from employers in the development of policy, strategy, and work priorities. This internal element should operate both prior to the delivery of services by an employer organization (i.e. consultation in planning) and after the delivery of services (i.e. feedback on the effectiveness of services).

The external element of being member-driven involves the employer organization communicating to external stakeholders those matters that members have collectively agreed on through internal member consultation and feedback. In practical terms, this means that the employer organization is truly the voice of its employer members and the bridge to external stakeholders. External stakeholders include unions, governments, or the broader community.[2]

In both these internal and external processes it is important that employer organizations do not exist for the purpose of one individual office-bearer or the commercial interest of a single member. Rather, the collective nature of employer organizations means that they must operate in the service of members at large. Often this requires governance and consultative structures in employer organizations to be robust,

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1 ILO: "Guide Three" *Advocacy Effective Employers' Organization Series,* ACTEMP, 2005

2 This section is adapted from an article by Peter Anderson, Chief Executive Australian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in "What the Private Sector expects from its representative organizations" in *IOE Labour and Social Policy Review,* 2009: http://www.acci.asn.au/text_files/submissions/2009/Peter%20Anderson%20IOE%20Article%20June%202009.pdf

inclusive, and fair. Employer organizations must ensure that powerful or loud voices in their membership are reflective of majority views, if they are to be given influence. Office-bearers and executives must always be aware that members are commercial organizations competing against each other, and not put the organization in a position of conflict of interest by associating with the views of one member or a group of members against the interests of other members. These are not always easy matters to resolve. The values of executives and senior officers can sometimes be tested in ensuring that the organization remains truly member-driven and professional in this broad and collegiate sense.

When an employer organization is truly member-driven the benefits can be significant. First, the standing and goodwill of the organization is enhanced, making it more likely that external stakeholders such as governments will listen and take action as advocated by the organization. Second, the advocacy and representation work of the organization is made easier because members are more motivated to be involved and express third-party support for the work of the employer organization. This too can increase the chance of successful outcomes being achieved. Third, there are membership benefits. Existing members are more likely to maintain membership if their views influence strategies or outcomes. Non-member employers in the industry or region are more likely to join if they believe their involvement would be valued and able to make a difference.

ANNEX

Intervention framework (log frame)[3]

An intervention framework is a tool used for capturing and summarizing intervention strategies and specific activities for their implementation. This Tool will help the EO to have all the necessary information about planned interventions in one comprehensive table, and will allow it to keep track of the overall strategy. The intervention framework provides the following information.

Activities

Activities give further details on exactly how the implementation of a particular intervention is planned. The formulation of activities should be as specific and practical as possible, reflecting the steps of implementation.

Outputs

Outputs are products which the EO is responsible for delivering.

Time frame

This gives information on deadlines for producing certain outcomes, or time frames within which certain activities are to be implemented.

Responsibilities

Who is going to implement which specific activities.

Expected outcomes

How do specific activities and outputs contribute to the EO's short and medium-term policy objectives? The intervention framework includes a column which the EO can fill in with expected outcomes,

Resource allocation

What is needed in terms of human, material and financial resources to implement interventions (not necessarily specific activities)?

The abovementioned components form together the intervention framework, which can be put into an easy to use Excel spreadsheet: the intervention framework as a tool for daily management.

The intervention framework is not a purpose in itself, but can be used for various purposes: a) the assessment of the feasibility of an objective; b) as a management instrument for the EO to ensure that targets are achieved; and c) to "market" interventions to potential partners.

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3 ILO: *Value Chain Development for Decent Work A guide for development practitioners, government and private sector initiatives*, 2009.

INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

Name of Issue:

EO's Objective	Activities e.g., press briefings, etc.	Timeframe for activities	Outputs e.g., policy papers produced	Timeframe for outputs	Responsibilities	Expected outcomes e.g., policy or regulatory change	Resource allocation		
							Human Resources	Materials	Financing