

How to Advocate Effectively: A Guidebook for Business Associations

Center for International Private Enterprise





The Center for International Private Enterprise is a non-profit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and one of the four core institutes of the National Endowment for Democracy. CIPE has supported more than 1,000 local initiatives in over 100 developing countries, involving the private sector in policy advocacy and institutional reform, improving governance, and building understanding of market-based democratic systems. CIPE provides management assistance, practical experience, and financial support to local organizations to strengthen their capacity to implement democratic and economic reforms. CIPE programs are also supported through the United States Agency for International Development.

For more information, contact

Center for International Private Enterprise
1155 Fifteenth Street NW • Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
USA

telephone (202) 721-9200 • fax (202) 721-9250
web: www.cipe.org • e-mail: cipe@cipe.org

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Contents

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Section 1: Introduction |
| 2 | Section 2: What Is Advocacy? |
| 10 | Section 3: Why Is Public Policy Advocacy Important? |
| 13 | Section 4: How to Develop a Successful Advocacy Strategy |
| 13 | Step 1: Form an Advocacy or Government Affairs Committee |
| 15 | Step 2: Select Issues to Advocate |
| 17 | Step 3: Research Proposed Solutions |
| 18 | Step 4: Develop Your Overall Advocacy Strategy |
| 21 | Step 5: Develop Targeted Advocacy Materials |
| | <i>Tools 1-9</i> |
| 25 | Section 5: How to Implement a Successful Advocacy Strategy |
| 25 | Step 6: Apply Strategic Tools |
| 37 | Step 7: Prioritize Time-Sensitive Issues |
| 38 | Step 8: Establish a Budget |
| 38 | Step 9: Evaluate |
| | <i>Tools 10-16</i> |
| 40 | Appendix A |
| | The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's National Business Agenda Priority Issues Survey Questionnaire, 2003-2004 |
| 45 | Appendix B |
| | Coalition Building Promotes Reform |
| 47 | Appendix C |
| | Successful National Business Agendas |
| 50 | Appendix D |
| | Effective Legislative Advisory Programs |
| 53 | Appendix E |
| | Overcoming Challenges to Public Policy Advocacy |

CIPE's Role

CIPE helps business organizations around the world to develop and implement their advocacy programs. While local organizations identify constraints to business and develop policy recommendations to improve the business climate and unleash entrepreneurship in their own country, CIPE provides financial and technical assistance in the advocacy process. CIPE also maintains a reform network of like-minded organizations, which allows private sector organizations to learn from the experiences of their counterparts in other emerging markets. The following pages draw on lessons learned from successful advocacy initiatives.

Section 1

Introduction

Business represents an important segment of society – one that provides goods and services, creates jobs, attracts investment, drives innovation, and increases the standard of living. Yet, to fulfill its functions, business must be able to operate in a sound legal and regulatory environment. Experience of various countries shows that for such an environment to emerge, it is imperative for the private sector to participate openly in the policymaking process.

Business associations provide the private sector with such an opportunity. Although many think of business associations as providers of business information, networking opportunities, education and entrepreneurial training, they actually do much more. As a voice of the private sector, voluntary, independent business associations can lead advocacy efforts to create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship and business development and growth. Effective business associations combine member services with advocacy programs for policy reform in areas that affect their members and societies in which they operate. In today's world of global competition where businesses are looking for associations that will help their bottom line, no association can afford to overlook advocacy. In fact, advocacy is the key to an association's success and survival.

The rewards for associations that advocate effectively are a stronger membership base and a better business climate for members. Yet, successful advocacy programs mean more than building a stronger membership base. By engaging the private sector in policy debate, transparent advocacy processes strengthen democratic governance and market institutions.

Section 2

What Is Advocacy?

Understanding Advocacy

In simple terms, advocacy means actively supporting something or someone (an idea, action, or person) and attempting to persuade others of the importance of that cause. More specifically, as the term is used throughout this handbook, advocacy is a group effort focused on changing particular public policies. It is an effort to influence government policy in an open and transparent manner and to represent the views of members of a particular group by making their positions known to legislators, regulators, and other policymakers. Advocacy can be implemented on a local, regional, or national level.

The issues addressed by public policy advocacy may include:

- laws and other legislative acts,
- regulations,
- court decisions,
- executive decrees and orders,
- political party platforms, or
- governmental policies.

Advocacy, especially public policy advocacy, can be challenging because it may involve opposing the government's stand on specific issues. At the same time, advocacy is an expression of the most basic rights of any constituency to have its voice heard and in that sense it is an essential element of a functioning democracy. Because many public policies affect business activity and consequently the health of a nation's economy, the private sector has a right and a civic obligation to make its voice heard on policy issues. In turn, businesses have resources, human capital, and problem-solving capabilities that can benefit society as a whole, including workers who find employment in the private sector and consumers who stand to gain from cheaper, better goods and services when businesses are thriving. It logically follows that policies hampering entrepreneurship

and private sector growth negatively affect the livelihood of a society at large. Policy advocacy by the private sector represents a key part of a truly democratic process, as it extends civil society's participation in governance.

Issues most crucial to the private sector include laws and regulations concerning various aspects of business operations and business environment. For example:

- **Starting a business:** ease of establishment (especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises – SMEs), availability of capital and credit, support for business incubators.
- **Running a business:** corporate governance, property rights, labor issues, non-wage labor costs (such as social security), safety regulations, finance, taxes, transportation.
- **Competing in a global marketplace:** anti-trust and fair competition laws, enforcement of contracts, technology development, trade regulations.

A common misconception is to regard these as “corporate” issues important to large businesses but of little relevance to the average citizen. In reality, business is not a monolith; it consists of various companies, sectors, and interests. In different economies one finds combinations of large national and multinational companies, small- and medium-sized enterprises, informal sector entrepreneurs, state-owned companies, and leading-edge firms, among others. The issues related to starting and running a competitive business matter most to firms that do not benefit from government connections but possess enormous potential for innovation and growth. Frequently one finds that the majority of business interests – especially those of smaller firms and informal entrepreneurs – are not represented in the political process.

Such representation of different business interests in an open and transparent manner is essential to the successful economic and political development of countries.

What public policy advocacy is not!

Just as important as understanding what public policy advocacy is, we must realize what it is not. From the perspective of business associations, public policy advocacy is geared towards creating a hospitable business climate for all its members. It is not designed to:

- Obtain preferential treatment for one company, business sector, or individual.
- Solve problems concerning members' day-to-day business activities. (If, however, daily obstacles are indicative of a larger problem plaguing the business community at large, then public policy advocacy is warranted. In such cases, special attention needs to be given to attack the real cause as opposed to the symptom.)
- Provide members with daily problem-solving services related to conducting routine business transactions or settling disputes between members and the government. To resolve such matters, members should obtain the services of lawyers, collection agencies, consultants, and so forth.

The Power of Advocacy

Business organizations around the world in partnership with CIPE have accomplished highly significant policy changes on issues of prime importance to the development of the private sector, free markets, and democratic governance. Consider these success stories:

The Romanian **Coalition of Women's Business Associations (CAFA)** grew out of a coalition of loose, volunteer-based local associations of women-led businesses with a limited focus on social and gender causes. As it developed and matured, CAFA launched successful national advocacy efforts and was asked to participate in high-level policy consultations on important issues such as the code of conduct for public officials inspecting businesses, income tax legislation, labor regulations, women's entrepreneurship, and SME legislative initiatives.

Challenges to advocacy in conflict-torn Iraq are immense and until recently there was little institutional infrastructure or organizational capacity for the private sector to advocate for sound economic policies. However, 20 dedicated and determined business associations, chambers of commerce, and economic think tanks came together and formed the **Iraqi Business Council (IBC)**, giving Iraqi businesses one strong unified voice in policymaking. IBC conducts training programs, issues policy papers on important economic challenges, and is regularly invited by the government to participate in the research and review of legislation vital to the economy.

The **Egyptian Junior Business Association (EJB)** was an unprecedented effort to create the association of first choice for young reform-minded Egyptian businesspeople. Today, EJB has more than 350 members representing over 170,000 thousand employees. Its National Business Agenda project became a turning point in engaging the Egyptian government in dialogue with the private sector and brought the policymakers' attention to such important issues as decentralization of government agencies, creating "one-stop shops" for investors, reforming competition and consumer protection laws, and introducing reforms for customs duties and taxation.

The Dominican Republic shared a problem common in the policymaking process in many countries: legislators with few analytical resources proposed new laws but had limited capacity to understand their economic impact. The **Center for Economic Orientation (COE)** recognized this detrimental scarcity of information and launched a legislative advisory program, which provided a means for the private sector to convey its view on pending economic legislation. This initiative became so successful that it has served as a model for similar activities worldwide, not just in the Caribbean and Latin America, but also Central and Eastern Europe, Ghana, and Sri Lanka.

A common challenge to public policy advocacy in many developing countries is the lack of voice of a large informal sector in the existing forms of business representation. In Senegal, the **Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels du Senegal (UNACOIS)** addressed that challenge and today has 100,000 small business members, 70 percent of whom operate informally. UNACOIS educates these members on fiscal, economic, and regulatory issues that present barriers to business and keep many small enterprises from entering the formal economy. It also publishes policy brief papers and is implementing a new communications strategy to take the members' concerns directly to government officials.

For more information on these and other programs and CIPE's role in facilitating successful public policy advocacy around the world see Appendices B-E.

Engaging the broader business community is necessary for meaningful reform and strengthening business diversity. It increases the likelihood that the government will adopt specific measures aimed to establish, nurture, and maintain a favorable business environment. Finally, broad-based public policy advocacy provides a strong context for healthy political competition.

Advocacy in Different Country Contexts

The type of advocacy that an association can be involved in heavily depends on the context of the country where it is conducted. Experience shows that in many places the practice of public policy advocacy remains challenging. A well-designed, locally appropriate advocacy strategy can overcome these challenges.

In countries where the concept and practice of advocacy is fairly new, the first challenge often comes from defining the very term “advocacy,” as many languages do not have a native word that would fully express that concept. Therefore, simply making advocacy the subject of public discourse and private sector initiatives sometimes requires the introduction of a whole new vocabulary. It also involves building public awareness of the concept and challenging any misconceptions that can derail even best-intentioned efforts. Broadly speaking, business associations aspiring to engage in advocacy in countries with little precedent for this way of business representation face significant **internal challenges**:

Expanding role and vision

Associations previously focused on member services, education, and training may find that there is a need to redefine their mission if they are to be involved in advocacy. This new, broader role should reflect consensus among the members on the overall vision for what the advocacy efforts are to accomplish.

Scarce resources

Feasibility of engaging in advocacy depends greatly on the availability of financial and human resources. Many associations find that taking on advocacy efforts may put a strain on their budget and personnel, especially if they are not in a position to hire additional staff to conduct legislative research, prepare advocacy materials, etc. Therefore, it is crucial to educate your members on the importance of the advocated causes so that the association can count on their active involvement. It may also be helpful to consider pulling your resources together with another association pursuing similar policy goals.

A common hurdle encountered by many business associations in emerging markets is overcoming the “donor mentality” and becoming self-sustaining. Failure to develop internal financial and human capital to sustain organizations may ultimately mean that the association will not be able to implement consistent advocacy programs, be responsible to members (rather than donors), or survive once the donor funds dry up.



Dispersed membership

The logistics of organizing an association in support of advocacy efforts may be challenging due to the nature of its membership pool. In many countries, a large portion of the private sector consists of small and micro-enterprises. For instance, some 85 percent of Lebanese firms have fewer than ten employees and 90 percent of these firms are family-owned. Also, cumbersome laws and regulations often create serious barriers to legal entrepreneurial activity, so the majority of the population works informally. In Kenya, employment within the informal sector in 2002 was 5.1 million, accounting for 74.2 percent of total employment and 18.4 percent of the GDP. Recognizing that reality, the special focus of advocacy should be on representing the segments of society that may have been shut out of economic and political opportunity (small, informal, women- and minority-owned) and that are crucial to the future development of the country.

Business associations that want to pursue advocacy efforts also need to take into account unique **external conditions** in which they operate, such as:

Political conditions

While in some countries business associations are exercising freedoms to debate, critique, and propose policy alternatives directly and with the help of the media, in others the idea of democratic governance is new and the role of the private sector as an engine of good public policy is not fully appreciated. Advocates for private enterprise should seek transparent rules permitting participation of diverse business groups in governance. Look for political openings – in the legislature, the executive branch, or public opinion – that present opportunities for reform.

Corporatist legacy

The type of advocacy that an association can pursue also depends on whether it is defined under public law and has mandatory membership requirements or whether it is completely voluntary. Government-funded business associations with mandatory membership may have restrictions on their scope of activities or may jeopardize their funding if they engage in certain types of advocacy. This type of association is especially common in developing and transitional countries where historically the state played the dominant role in the economy. Such corporatist legacy of state-controlled associations typically makes them vested in preserving the status quo rather than pursuing reforms. In those countries, private voluntary associations – representing the previously muted voices of businesses that do not belong to public-law associations – are the key to reform-oriented advocacy.



UNACOIS is the largest and most dynamic business and trade association in Senegal; nearly 70 percent of its members operate in the informal sector. In Senegal, the informal sector accounts for more than 50 percent of the country's workforce and GDP.

Legislative process

Understanding how laws are made is crucial to any successful advocacy effort, because your association needs to know exactly who, when, and how to approach with your message. Yet, it is also one of the hardest initial steps to accomplish. Given that legislative rules and procedures can be complex, convoluted and often in flux, understanding them and keeping up with any changes takes a concerted effort of the association leadership and members.

Whatever the country context and local challenges may be, voluntary business associations constitute an important segment of a civil society. Even though conditions are different in each country and some are more conducive toward public policy advocacy than others, the basic elements of a transparent decision-making process remain universal. The process is based on several key factors. Decision-makers have to have the right information in order to make educated policy decisions. They must solicit feedback and views of the interested parties, whom they ultimately serve. Also, timing of policy decisions matters – public policy advocates should aim to be proactive, rather than reactive.

Keeping in mind that each factor creates avenues for voicing the opinions of your association, you can design a strategy uniquely suited to the circumstances in your country that would allow you to reach the decision-makers with relevant policy information at the right time. This handbook provides a set of tools based on experiences of a global network of CIPE partner business associations. Please feel free to pick and choose the tools and approaches that are the most applicable to the conditions shaping your particular organization.

Change takes time and one has to remember that truly successful public advocacy efforts do not just ameliorate immediate problems – they ultimately help transform the relationship between the public and private sectors from one of antagonism and distrust to one of partnership and cooperation. But to start that process, all you need are good policy ideas and an enthusiastic base of your association's membership determined to push for public policies that would best serve the economic progress of your country. (For examples of business associations successfully overcoming local challenges to public policy advocacy, please see Appendix E.)

If your business association is relatively young and has not had much experience with advocacy, one beneficial approach may be to define a narrow scope of advocacy issues and begin your work at the local level. Starting small will help you better understand the advocacy process, gauge your strengths and weaknesses, and is more likely to bring confidence-building successes.



Advocacy and Ethics

The terms “advocacy” and “lobbying” are often used interchangeably. In the broadest definition, they both refer to the process of trying to influence policymakers in favor of or against a specific cause, but in practice the scope of lobbying is narrower. While lobbying remains mostly limited to direct face-to-face interactions with decision-makers, advocacy is much broader and involves grassroots mobilization, coalition building between many like-minded groups, getting the message out through the media, etc.

In recent years lobbying has also come to be associated with allegations of corrupt practices such as back-door dealings or illegal financial kickbacks to lawmakers, giving rise to the public perception of political corruption. Public policy advocacy, on the other hand, emphasizes openness, transparency, and need for the highest ethical standards in all stages of the advocacy process, especially during interactions with decision-makers. Advocacy is focused on delivering the message from a particular constituency to policymakers rather than financially contributing to a particular political outcome.

Rules of Conduct to Combat Extortion and Bribery

- Never become involved in coercion or bribery
- Maintain transparent financial recording and auditing of your budget
- Monitor for prevention of any payments being made on behalf of the association that contravene the rules of ethical conduct
- If making a lawful financial contribution is the only viable way to have a chance to address policymakers directly with your plea, proceed in accordance with the applicable law and all requirements for public disclosure of such contributions
- Where appropriate, draw up your own code of ethical conduct and apply it in the particular circumstances of your association.

Source: www.iccwbo.org/home/extortion_bribery/rules.asp

One challenge for business associations has been to find a source or standard that can anchor an ethics code for conducting public policy advocacy, independent of a particular national culture or issues advocated. The most obvious sources from which such ethical guidelines can be derived are laws of countries in which business associations operate. However, quality of the relevant regulations as well as their enforcement varies and in many cases the “dos and don’ts” for conducting public policy advocacy are not well defined. The challenge for a business association becomes then to set a standard by which its members can know what is expected of them and how they should go about their advocacy work in a transparent and professional manner.

A few useful guidelines can be found in the International Chamber of Commerce's Rules of Conduct to Combat Extortion and Bribery Transactions. These rules are intended as a method of self-regulation by business, but a few of them can easily be adapted to the context of business associations engaged in advocacy (see box on previous page).

Remember, the best way for your association to fight corruption is to be incorruptible yourself and demand that your member businesses and the policymakers whom you are trying to reach with your message are also impeccably ethical.

Section 3

Why Is Public Policy Advocacy Important?

Public Policy Advocacy Gives a Voice to Business

The advocacy process encourages business associations to use their expertise in an open and transparent manner in order to shape public policy and provide oversight of laws, regulations and policies adopted by the government. Effective advocacy makes crucial, policy-relevant information widely available to several key audiences that influence public policy:

- **the media** who benefit greatly from the private sector's policy input. Journalists gather a great deal of their information from official government sources, but they are better able to analyze this information once they have listened to the alternative voice of business associations and think tanks.
- **lawmakers** who need sound information because they make policy decisions that affect their citizens' lives. These citizens, in many cases, will decide on whether or not to re-elect these same legislators. Sound policies foster a favorable business environment, advance market-oriented reforms, attract investment, stimulate entrepreneurship, and generate economic growth and jobs, all of which benefit society as a whole.
- **regulators, bureaucrats, and administrators** who, when provided with solid information about the underlying objectives of specific policies and regulations, are able to do a better job implementing and enforcing them.
- **researchers and academics** who use information provided by business associations to conduct their studies; in turn, researchers and academics raise awareness of the issues important to the private sector and illustrate linkages between the private sector and development.

- **the public, including business association members**, who influence policymaking decisions. Having access to key information about policies under consideration educates business association members and the public on policies that affect them and helps them know what elected officials are doing – or failing to do – on their behalf. Citizens and business associations can then hold these representatives accountable.

Public Policy Advocacy Strengthens Business Associations

Advocacy is also vital to a business association’s survival and growth. Business associations aim to serve members. To this end, they offer many services such as business education and training. Yet, these efforts may be in vain if laws and regulations make it very difficult to be a successful entrepreneur. Advocacy is needed in order to eliminate such barriers so that association members’ businesses can survive and prosper.

Successful advocacy raises an association’s profile amid policymakers and enhances its reputation within the business community as a useful membership service provider. This increases contributions from existing members and attracts new ones. With more funding, associations can devote more resources to advocacy and enhance advocacy strategies and tactics. Weaker associations may also consider joining stronger and better funded ones in order to bolster their advocacy activities. A larger membership means more voting constituents and thus more clout amid elected policymakers. Consequently, advocacy allows business associations to take a strategic and process-oriented approach to private sector development.

Business associations with successful advocacy initiatives:

- Articulate members’ concerns in a unified voice attracting policymakers’ attention.
- Meet regularly with decision-makers to discuss key policy issues and establish channels of communication and close working relationships with their staff.
- Provide sound policy-relevant information to policymakers so that they may start automatically turning to business associations for policy advice.
- Engage in both proactive and reactive advocacy (help to set the policy agenda by voicing concerns and proposing specific policies as opposed to only reacting to proposals already on the table).
- Keep abreast of imminent and current policy proposals so that they can thoroughly examine the issue and prepare a sound policy response.
- Help prevent frequent changes to the business-related legal and regulatory framework that scare away investors and hinder entrepreneurship.
- Monitor implementation of advocated policies to ensure that they are administered fairly, consistently, and swiftly, thereby strengthening the rule of law.
- Publicize successes to “brand” the association as an active agent of positive change.

Public Policy Advocacy Improves Democratic Governance

Business associations engage the private sector in democratic processes by reconciling and representing various business interests and enabling private sector participation in open policy debate. This serves the dual purpose of nurturing business support for democracy and pressuring the government to respond to democratic processes. In short, advocacy equips business association members with the necessary information, motivation, and tools with which to protect and improve not only business climate, but also democratic governance.

Section 4

How to Develop a Successful Advocacy Strategy

Steps in Developing an Advocacy Strategy

- Step 1: Form an advocacy or government affairs committee
- Step 2: Select issues to advocate
- Step 3: Research proposed solutions
- Step 4: Develop your overall advocacy strategy
- Step 5: Develop targeted advocacy materials

STEP 1: Form an Advocacy or Government Affairs Committee

The committee should be small, have between five and seven members, and be representative of the association's diverse membership segments. For example, if your association represents small, medium, and large companies that are in different industries, your advocacy committee should have representatives from all company sizes and from several industries. Of course, some individuals may represent both an industry size and type.

Committee members

Beyond being representative, advocacy committee members should be familiar with key regulatory, legislative and policy issues facing association members and have a good understanding of the policymaking practice in a given country. Depending on the chosen advocacy strategy, this may involve familiarity with legislative procedures, executive hearing rules, and/or regulatory process. It may be necessary to set aside time for training your advocacy team to ensure everyone has a shared understanding of the policy issues at hand, individual roles and responsibilities, and the advocacy procedures.

Committee members have to agree to advocate on behalf of issues that concern all association members, rather than focus exclusively on issues of direct concern to their business. They must also be willing to devote a significant amount of their time to advocacy-related matters on a regular basis. This entails:

- attending committee meetings;
- shaping and overseeing advocacy efforts;
- reading, editing, and approving strategy documents and publications; and
- contacting association members and policymakers when appropriate.

Committee chairperson (chair)

The chairperson is responsible for keeping the committee's activities on track and ensuring that the targeted goals are met. The chair should have the following qualities:

- proven team-building and leadership skills,
- a thorough understanding of the policymaking environment, and
- professional contacts with relevant policymakers.

In practice, association members often are very busy individuals and have only a limited amount of time to contribute to the committee activities. If that's the case, the chairperson should play the major role in steering the committee's work. To ensure



In Nicaragua, the Superior Council for Private Enterprise hosted a high-level meeting for businesspeople and public sector officials. The meeting was a forum for the private sector to advocate directly before the highest levels of government, including President Daniel Ortega.

that the chair can devote enough time to committee activities, he or she should probably not be the director of the business association. The chair should, however, have a good working relationship with the association director, with the other committee members, and with the association members at large.

Staff

In order to accomplish its mission in an effective and timely manner, it is recommended that the advocacy committee have a budget and a staff at its disposal. The types of skills to look for in committee staff members are:

- advanced research skills concerning association-relevant issues,
- well-developed media and public relations skills,
- coalition building capacities,
- marketing know-how,

- the ability to network with policymakers and to establish cooperative working relationships with policymakers' staff, and
- the ability to remain current on the changing policy issues that affect business and any new challenges that the association may face.

Committee members should consider using staff from their businesses to help whenever possible. At times, the committee may need to hire legal or advocacy experts in order to draft key legislative proposals or to handle a particularly important issue. Such individuals can be hired on a contractual or part-time basis as needed. Many former congressional representatives and influential retired lawyers are willing to offer their services at reasonable rates.

Certain staff members and/or outsourced professionals should be designated as watchdogs responsible for monitoring new developments on a set of issues. This entails keeping abreast of what policymakers as well as the public and non-governmental organizations relevant to those issues (both pro and against) are talking about and doing. This will minimize the possibility of policy surprises and give your advocacy committee adequate time to shape discussions and policies before they are officially debated or enacted.

An association often has a better chance of influencing policies before they are enacted than afterwards. Once policies are enacted, proponents will often fiercely defend them.



Meetings

Once the committee is formed and staff is recruited, the chair should consult with committee members and staff and establish a tentative meeting schedule. Regular meetings are very useful to ensure effective collaboration and to troubleshoot if necessary. It is recommended that the chair pick a consistent time, such as every Tuesday morning at 9:00 am, for example, so committee members can keep that time free. The frequency of meetings depends on the amount of advocacy activity and therefore might change from time to time.

STEP 2: Select Issues to Advocate

Once the advocacy committee is formed, it needs to have issues to advocate. Because business associations are established to serve their members, it makes sense to ask the members what issues are of concern to them. This can be done through membership surveys, for example.

The expertise and knowledge of business association leaders and advocacy committee members should be tapped to design the survey questions. These individuals regularly follow policy issues and communicate with legislators and regulators; they are aware of upcoming important issues. Based on this information and on the following criteria, a list of issues should be selected for members to rank in order of priority. These criteria include issues that:

- promote market-oriented reform and free enterprise;
- shape corporate governance rules as well as transparency and accountability in business-government relations;
- are relevant to a significant number of association members;
- concern flaws of particular policies, law, or regulations (as opposed to isolated incidents not necessarily resulting from them);
- can be resolved by specific policy proposals that have a reasonable chance of success in the short term (avoid issues that require an overhaul of the constitution or of the entire regulatory system);
- are backed by the majority of association members and board members (avoid controversial issues);
- are both proactive and reactive;
- are not strongly opposed by powerful groups or legislators or the general public; and
- will not damage your association's image or reputation.

Develop and distribute survey questionnaire

Based on the above criteria and on input from business association leaders and advocacy committee members, the committee should draft a survey questionnaire and send it to all association members. The questionnaire should ask members to:

- Identify and rank a set of specified issues in order of priority.
- Identify and rank a set of proposed solutions for each issue.
- Complete the questionnaire by a certain date.

If possible, such surveys should be conducted at least once a year to ensure that the advocacy committee is addressing members' interests. (Please see Appendix A for a copy of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's 2003-2004 National Business Agenda priority issues survey questionnaire.)

Hold focus group meetings

Another way to select key issues is for members of the advocacy committee to meet with a handful of association members to discuss policies that concern them. Each group should be led by an advocacy committee member who will steer the discussion towards identifying particular business concerns (according to the criteria mentioned earlier) and then devising straightforward solutions for each issue. The meeting could also incorporate presentations of case studies by association members explaining particular problems they encounter in the greater context of the need for policy change

on a given issue. Alternatively, the advocacy committee could also conduct company visits to gather a first-hand sampling of the issues faced by individual association members.

Select advocacy priorities

Obviously, the association will not be able to advocate for every issue that concerns its members. In order to narrow the list to a feasible number of issues, the advocacy committee staff needs to:

- compile the results from the survey, focus groups, and/or other relevant meetings into a single list;
- examine the budget to determine if sufficient resources exist to advocate on behalf of each priority issue;
- eliminate issues from the list with the lowest ranking until sufficient funding is available for each issue;
- list each priority issue and the highest ranked policy solution next to it (At this point, the proposed solutions should be short and simple policy recommendations; subsequent research will be necessary to flesh out the proposed recommendations and provide solid evidence. It is important to note that some issues may not require any new legislation, but rather the administration and enforcement of existing laws and policies); and
- send this list to the association's board for approval.

When an association begins advocacy efforts, the priority issues should be ones that can be sufficiently addressed in the near future. This will help demonstrate to members that engaging in advocacy is beneficial. As the advocacy committee improves its strategy and techniques, it can then take on more challenging and long-term issues.



STEP 3: Research Proposed Solutions

Once the priority issues have been identified, the association needs to elaborate on the suitable policy solutions you are going to advocate. It is imperative that the advocacy committee develop a detailed position document on each issue clearly stating your association's rationale and supporting evidence for the proposed solutions. This document will help your members structure their ideas on a given policy issue and prepare strong arguments either for or against it.

The solutions may or may not be obvious after gathering feedback from the members. In either event, your proposed solutions will be stronger if they are derived from thorough research and interviews with issue experts. Therefore, the advocacy committee should reach out to academia and think tanks in order to open the discussion and acquire valuable input. Be as specific as possible in your policy

recommendations, since stating a general wish such as “lower taxes” is too broad to be an actionable suggestion. Well-prepared policy position documents include:

- overview of the issue;
- impact of the issue on the private sector, government, and society (why it is important);
- the business association’s concrete policy recommendation (supported by evidence, discussing relevant experiences from other countries or regions, etc.); and
- likely opposing arguments and their rebuttal.

It may be very tempting to skip this somewhat tedious stage of research and argument preparation for an association that feels it simply “knows” what needs to be done and is anxious to start advocating that particular solution. The danger of such a zealous approach, however, is that it prematurely pushes the organization to the next phase of the advocacy process: direct contact with the decision-makers, media, and the larger public. Attempting this external persuasion without paying enough attention to the preliminary research frequently backfires when the association representatives are caught ill-prepared to talk about the specifics of their policy recommendation or fail to support it with credible evidence.

It’s Important to Gauge Public Opinion

An important influence on policymakers’ decisions is public opinion. Staff members need to find out what the public opinion is regarding the issue in question. This will help prevent an advocacy committee from expending resources to advocate for a policy proposal that the public is staunchly against and thus fighting a battle it is likely to lose. There are many ways to gauge public opinion. First, find out if any recent surveys and polls have been conducted with regard to this issue at hand. If so, staff members need to determine if the methods were sound and if the results are accurate. If no recent studies are available, then staff members (or, if necessary, hired professionals) can survey public opinion through polls or focus group tests.

STEP 4: Develop Your Overall Advocacy Strategy

Now that the committee members have identified advocacy priorities, the time has come to develop a strategy. A strategy consists of a set of tools that are implemented according to a specific timetable to achieve a particular objective—in this case affecting policy decisions.

Identify key leverage points

In order for advocacy efforts to be successful, it is extremely useful for members to have a thorough understanding of how the policymaking process works and what the leverage points are for each issue. By following the procedures listed below for each priority issue, committee members can perfect their knowledge of policymaking.

First, determine which among the following levels the issue pertains to:

- Local
- State/provincial
- National

Second, identify which of the following branches of policymaking the issue concerns:

- Legislative
- Regulatory or executive
- Judicial

Staff members should then analyze the policymaking process to determine how policies are made in the association's particular country for that level and issue type. In doing so, staff will gain an understanding of the points of leverage and the key policymakers they need to influence in order for their association's position to be adopted. A list of this information should be kept and updated when necessary.



Businessmen come together in Mazar-e-Sharif to discuss priorities for a National Business Agenda in Afghanistan.

Identify the proponents and opponents of each issue

A successful advocacy effort also requires a thorough understanding of who supports or opposes a particular issue and why. Based on the leverage points previously identified, staff should find out, for each issue, the stances of the key decision-makers. This can be obtained by reading publications or briefings from policymakers' offices, their website or staff. This information should be subsequently organized so it is clear what position each key decision maker holds. If possible, compile a table that indicates who is for, against, and undecided concerning each issue.

Because policymakers' stances are often influenced by the positions of important interest groups on particular issues, the advocacy committee will also need to identify key interest groups for each issue (either for or against). The staff needs to find out where each key group stands on a particular issue (and why) by obtaining their publications and materials or, if necessary, meeting with some high-level representatives. Based on this research, staff members should compile a table indicating those key organizations for, against, and undecided concerning each issue. The advocacy staff now knows:

- important decision-makers who have the power to influence policy outcomes,
- key actors with a stake in influencing the issue, and
- the direction the policy is heading.

Staff should use this information to develop an effective advocacy strategy.

Advocacy Questions to Guide Strategy

- What needs to be changed?
- Who can make the changes?
- How much change should be made?
- When should the changes be made?
- How can the case for change be made?
- How will the changes be implemented?

Tailor your message to your audience

A successful advocacy strategy entails communicating effectively with many different audiences in order to:

- win the support of those who are undecided,
- earn the support of some individuals and groups who were initially opposed, and
- strengthen the commitment of original supporters.

To achieve this, advocacy materials must be targeted to the audience you are trying to influence and delivered in a timely manner. In some cases, for example, you'll want to present a short, straightforward account of the issue; in other situations, you'll need a more in-depth treatment of the issue in order to be persuasive. In each case, the message must:

- appeal to an audience's self-interest,
- be convincing as to why the issue is important and why they need to support your position,
- be concise,
- indicate what steps, if any, need to be taken, and
- provide answers to anticipated questions, including possible ramifications of successful or unsuccessful advocacy efforts.



Remember, it is easier to motivate someone around something they already believe (at least to some extent) than to convince them of something new. That's why, whenever possible, effective tailored advocacy should remind the target audience of what they already know in order to evoke and strengthen pre-existing feelings on a given issue. (Source: "Now Hear This" from Fenton Communications. Please see www.fenton.com.)

Messages to policymakers should include:

- Why this issue is important.
- How many people and/or groups support it (having a list of signatures can be very convincing here).
- The positive and negative impacts of the proposal.

An effective public policy advocacy strategy:

- Disseminates information about laws and regulations affecting business as a whole.
- Interprets laws and regulations to educate and equip people in compliance.
- Influences the course or form of legislative or regulatory actions.
- Identifies emerging issues so business can decide whether to preempt legislative proposals by action or work to reshape existing laws.
- Provides guidance to members on how to act and address legislators.
- Provides a legal vehicle for organized access to government officials.
- Provides knowledge of people, procedures, and structures involved in policymaking.

- How the proposal will help or hurt specific constituent groups such as employees, investors, suppliers, and customers.
- How the proposed action will be viewed by the policymaker's political base.
- What specific action needs to be taken (i.e., which policy, law or regulation needs to be adopted, repealed, or modified).
- Specific language or actual drafts of proposed laws, policies, or regulations.

STEP 5: Develop Targeted Advocacy Materials

One of the most effective ways to accomplish political and economic reforms is by educating the public on your key issues – swaying public opinion until a broad consensus for reform is established. The easiest and least costly method for doing this is by using existing print and broadcast media. There are a number of different tools available that will help you take advantage of media resources and tailor your message to the particular audience you are addressing.

Tool #1: A key advocacy piece is a press release. Press releases are obviously useful to send to media outlets, but can also be sent to association members, other organizations, and government representatives.



Guidelines on how to write an effective press release

These guidelines are intended to make your press release stand out from competing news stories so that journalists, who are always rushing to meet deadlines, are more likely to select your news for a story. The key elements of a good press release are:

1. **Clarity.** Certain key facts must be immediately apparent to a journalist viewing your press release. The date as well as the name and logo of your organization should be at the top of the release, along with the name and phone number of the contact person. The press release must have a clear title (bolded and large font) similar to a newspaper headline briefly describing the content. Reporters will not want to read your materials if the content is not discernible.

2. **Brevity.** Press releases should rarely be more than one page and they should be double-spaced (although you may use single spaces if it helps you keep the release to one page). There is a natural inclination to include all of your information in a press release, but you need to prioritize and only include what is the most essential. The purpose of the release is to provide salient information and encourage reporters to contact you for additional details.
3. **Details.** Determining what key information to include can be difficult. A good rule to follow is: What is it you are trying to say? Who are you? Where did this take place? When did it happen? Why is this important? You may not need to answer all of these, but you should go through the exercise just to make sure you did not miss anything. Again, answer each question as briefly as possible using only the most essential information.
4. **Format.** A press release should follow a standard format. Whenever possible, add a short and relevant quote in the first or second paragraph from a leader in the community or an organization member involved in the issue. The last paragraph should be used to provide a short description of the organization. Conclude the press release with a symbol that indicates to reporters that there are no additional pages of information (# # #).

Special case: event invitation format. If a press release is being used to announce an event, it should be sent in the form of an invitation. However, unlike an invitation you would send to your members, a press invitation needs to contain some of the same details as a press release: your name and logo at the top, followed by: “You are cordially invited to attend...” or “(name of important person) invites you to attend...” Be sure to include the title of the event in large letters, the date, time, and place where it will be held. A single-spaced paragraph should then be devoted to identifying the name and title of the guest speaker and a brief explanation of why this event is important. At the end, add the appropriate contact information and the RSVP (Répondez S’il Vous Plâit – Please Respond).



Press releases are the most common way to get your message out to journalists. In order to use them efficiently, you need to establish clear lines of communication with journalists who regularly cover your issues. Over time, they will come to rely on you as a resource for information.

A Note on Distribution. In distributing press releases you should try and address them to specific journalists by name. For an event, send the announcement again the week of the event as a reminder. Don’t be afraid to call journalists and bring their attention to your release once it is sent. Make sure you send your releases to both

print and broadcast resources. Also, if possible, make use of the electronic modes of distribution such as e-mail, web postings, listservs, etc. Depending on the availability of the Internet in your country, electronic modes of distribution represent a fast and cost-efficient way to reach a potentially broad audience.

Tool #2: Another useful tool is an issue brief. Issue briefs are short, one- to two-page summaries of why the issue is important and what needs to be done in the short term. They are useful during interactions with policymakers and administrators, whose time is typically too limited to read in detail more comprehensive publications.



An effective brief should do the following:

- Identify the problem or issue under consideration and briefly describe relevant laws or regulations in a language that the target audience can easily understand. Include a legislative history of the issue if available.
- Explain why the issue is important to the target audience by describing in simple terms how it affects business. Use straightforward economic vocabulary familiar to most readers. Whenever possible, use graphs and charts to visually demonstrate how the law or regulation hurts or helps your audience and/or the public.
- Propose a specific policy recommendation that provides a clear solution to the existing problem in the short term. Use simple graphs or charts if possible to illustrate how it will remove the business obstacle. The recommendation should show the target audience exactly what needs to be done to resolve this issue.

Tool #3: Policy position papers present another useful way to convince those who are knowledgeable in the issue and who are likely to spend time reading something a bit longer than a brief. This includes policymakers or members of organizations actively engaged in or affected by the particular issue.



A position paper contains the same components as the issue brief, but elaborates on each component with more developed and lengthy discussions, more evidence, and additional examples. Position papers should stick to the main points concerning the issue and be both incisive and persuasive. The average length of a position paper is five to six pages.

Other advocacy tools include:

Tool #4: Op-eds (opinion pieces submitted for publication in newspapers)

Tool #5: Fact sheets that answer frequently asked questions





Tool #6: Speeches (tailored for congressional testimonies, workshops, seminars, conferences)

Tool #7: Press kits

Tool #8: Website presence

Tool #9: Talking points for the appearances of the association's leaders on radio and TV (in debates, interviews, etc.)

Having these materials ready and delivered to key players and audiences at the right time will help your association to influence the policy debate and, hopefully, the outcome.

Select the messenger

As the advocacy materials are developed, it is a good idea to start thinking about who will present them to the target audiences. Although what is said is important, how it is said is equally important. Having the right messenger can make or break an advocacy effort.

The messenger should be:

- a good speaker both informally and formally, and
- knowledgeable on the issue in question, preferably with personal experience in dealing with the issue.

It is preferable to have messengers who have some positive connection with the audience. For example, having a former member of parliament or relevant legislative body speak to current representatives would be a good idea. Similarly, it would be advisable to send a business representative to speak to chambers of commerce members, and an expert or an academician to present an issue to think tanks.



The Advocacy Academy is a leader for reform in Romania. It reinforces and develops the private sector through advocacy, training, consulting, monitoring, and research programs. The academy is known as one of the country's most representative watchdog organizations.

Section 5

How to Implement a Successful Advocacy Strategy

Steps in Implementing an Advocacy Strategy

- Step 6: Apply strategic tools
- Step 7: Prioritize time-sensitive issues
- Step 8: Establish a budget
- Step 9: Evaluate

STEP 6: Apply Strategic Tools

Now that you know whom you want to influence with what materials, the next step is to use the most effective method to get your message across. Here there are a number of tools that you can draw on. Each tool is designed to use your association's advocacy materials and skills to garner maximum support within the target audience, whether it is an individual, an organization, a policymaker, a regulator, or a government official. These tools are useful to design a business association's overall advocacy strategy as well as the strategy for a particular issue or set of issues.

Tool #10: Educate your members and enlist them as advocates.

Your members need to know what their association is advocating for and why. They and their contacts can also be an important source of support for your advocacy effort.

- Begin by providing a summary of the results from the membership questionnaires, focus groups, or meetings conducted in Step 2. These results will show members that they are the ones who helped select the issues being advocated.



- Follow with a short issue briefing (see Tool #2 in Section 4) accompanying each advocacy priority. It can be included in the newsletters or periodic reports. This will indicate to members why the issue is important and what the association's position is.
- Point your members to any other materials that are available, such as a fact sheet or a position paper. Having advocacy materials on your association's website is a great way to disseminate them quickly and inexpensively.

Once your members have been familiarized with the issues, they should learn what they can do to strengthen advocacy efforts. The advocacy committee staff can hold seminars that explain how the policymaking process works, why members' support is crucial, and how they can contribute. Channeling members' support will depend on the strategy that your association chooses to adopt. Members should be asked to execute this strategy by using various points of leverage to reach target audiences. They should:

- Meet with different groups (government and media contacts, employees, colleagues from other organizations, business partners, family members, and so forth) to explain why the issue is important and what action is being advocated.
- Write letters, faxes, or e-mails to relevant government representatives or policymakers.
- Make telephone calls to relevant government representatives or policymakers.
- Make personal visits to relevant government representatives or policymakers.
- Attend social events organized by the advocacy committee or by other groups that also address the key issues and communicate the association's position (having fact sheets and other materials available for distribution is a good idea).



The "elevator speech" is a technique that might come useful for audiences whose time is very limited. The concept is to be able to express your association's position on a given issue in a brief amount of time, such as the few moments you have to talk to someone in a moving elevator. Your point should be well thought out and attention catching so that the person feels interested in learning more.



Tool #11: Mobilize grassroots networks.

A grassroots organization is a group of individuals that are united around common hopes, goals or fears. These groups take a stand on a particular issue or set of issues, and participate in the political system on behalf of these positions. Such organizations are essential vehicles for popular participation in a democratic society. Grassroots organizations get their name from the fact that they are formed in a bottom-up process (i.e., by citizens and not the government) and attract members from the community – in other words, they spread like grass roots would.

Business associations should begin mobilizing a grassroots network by tapping into their own networks. This includes:

- Employees and retired employees of association members
- Shareholders of association members
- Suppliers of the association and its members
- Retired association members
- Customers/clients of association members
- Family members
- Affiliated organizations

Advocacy committee staff should also try to enlist the support of other groups and individuals who have an interest in the particular issue. This includes other professional associations, consumer groups, students, or members of the public.



Business associations in Iraq face many challenges to building the economy and creating a sustainable, positive business environment. These associations are working to overcome huge obstacles and cooperate across regional divides.

Association members and advocacy committee staff should use advocacy materials to raise awareness of and garner support for the key advocacy issues among these groups. This can be done informally through telephone calls or e-mails or more formally by inviting them to attend briefings, breakfasts, lunches, or dinners hosted by advocacy committee staff. Again, the format of the message and the messenger should be tailored to the particular audience. In each case, the invitees should leave knowing:

- Why the issue is important to them.
- What position the association takes on the issue.
- What they need to do to support the cause.

If the time and resources permit, another highly effective way for your association (or coalition of associations) to raise grassroots support for your issues is organizing national or regional advocacy tours. Such a tour typically involves meetings with business representatives and other private sector stakeholders instrumental to the success of the advocacy effort. It can be used to educate the private sector and the public about the advocacy process, introduce and/or refine your policy proposals, and gauge the degree of grassroots support.

In order to conduct a successful advocacy tour, thorough preparations need to take place in advance:

- Define the geographic and thematic scope.
- Develop a strategy for what is to be accomplished (e.g., surveying public opinion, developing grassroots support for particular policy issues).
- Prepare the timetable of the tour events.
- Coordinate with the media, local officials, stakeholders, and members to ensure good attendance and adequate media coverage.
- Develop materials to promote tour events and to be distributed on site.
- Create a special team within your association to handle the logistics of each event and identify local partners to assist you with the logistics.

It is important to follow up with the newly found supporters to ensure that the momentum of the events is not lost. After an advocacy tour or any other grassroots outreach event, advocacy committee staff should compile lists of individuals and groups who support the association's position, complete with contact information. This will help keep them informed of news and events related to the issue, to follow up on agreed advocacy tasks, to show policymakers the breadth of supporters, and to maintain a network that can be mobilized into action for intense advocacy activities prior to a specific debate or a vote.



Tool #12: Work with the media to shape public opinion.

Shaping public opinion in favor of your association's stance on an issue before you meet with government representatives and policymakers can greatly increase the success of your advocacy campaign. One of the best ways to shape public opinion is through the media. There are two types of media coverage: earned and paid.

Free, or earned media, is one of the most effective methods of influencing public opinion. Earned media coverage is information and reporting on an issue because it is deemed newsworthy. It can take the form of unsolicited articles, op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, or press releases about the issue in question or about your association's activities related to this issue (conferences, workshops, meetings). Earned media has significant credibility with the public because it is not purchased, as is advertising. Hence, obtaining significant favorable earned media coverage can really help to garner public support for your association's position.

It is recommended that one of the advocacy committee staff members be in charge of developing and implementing a media relations strategy for every issue. This person should have:

- prior experience in dealing with the media,
- good written and oral communication skills,
- the ability to interact with different types of people,
- a solid understanding of the policymaking process,
- a sound understanding of the issues, and

- good working relations with government representatives and their staff, and with like-minded associations.

The media relations individual will work closely with the other advocacy committee staff to maximize results. Advocacy committee staff members, for example, should inform the media relations person of important events in advance, of key players and audiences bearing on a particular issue, and of timing that could affect media coverage or public perception. The media relations person should:

- Develop a schedule of media relations activities that includes inviting press (as well as other target audiences when appropriate) to particular events or briefings and delivering key materials to members of the press beforehand.
- Work with advisory staff to put together press kits that include fact sheets, background information, and other advocacy materials related to the key issues.
- Cultivate good working relationships with the media and other target audiences not just by inviting them to attend events, but also by keeping them informed of important events and facts related to the issue of mutual interest, e.g., new legislative proposals that will affect this issue, groups that have come out in favor or against it, and new facts that support your stance. This can be done through phone calls, e-mails, and/or faxes. Every communication should be straightforward, brief, and to the point.
- If paid advertising is used, establish an advertising schedule for each issue.

Whenever possible, it is best to use earned media to promote your cause. However, using paid media – paying for an ad or producing your own news sources – may be called for occasionally. Some reporters in different countries may, in fact, expect payment to print a story. This type of “checkbook journalism” is not an acceptable journalistic practice and should be avoided.



Working with the Media

- Always tell the truth.
- Don't try to “spin” issues.
- Be able to articulate the opposition's argument as well as the organization's point of view.
- Be proactive.
- Use the organization's facilities to conduct media events as much as possible.
- Craft a clear and concise message and don't digress from it.
- Select a spokesperson that has media experience as well as knowledge of the particular issue(s) to be discussed.
- If using electronic media, talk in sound bites.
- Create media kits that are concise, professional, and complete.

When there is already a reasonable degree of public support for your association's stance on a given issue, earned media coverage should normally suffice. If this is not the case, then making use of paid media is advisable. Paid media is basically advertising in the form of television, radio, newspaper ads, billboards, banners, placards, and so forth. Because paid media can be quite expensive, it should be used wisely and deliberately. The media relations person should work with advocacy committee staff to determine the specific audience and timing of paid media so messages are tailored accordingly and the resources invested will achieve their objective. Survey results or opinion polls conducted in Step 2 should be used to select the right audience. Tailoring messages may require hiring media or advertising specialists that have expertise in advocacy. In each case, the message should be clear, concise, and should elicit support.

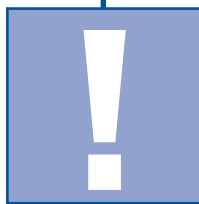


Tool #13: Earn the support and respect of policymakers, regulators, administrators, and their staff.

The main goal of advocacy is for associations to become part of the policymaking process so that they can regularly shape policies, laws and regulations of interest to them. This involves establishing good working relationships with target policymakers (the targets may change from issue to issue) and their staff. Staff members provide public officials with essential information that influences their perception of issues. Moreover, many mid-level administrators and staff will remain in their positions despite changes in government. Hence, your advocacy committee staff should establish good relationships with the policymaking staff.

Frequent and useful communication is the basis of any productive relationship. By taking the following measures, business associations can build positive relationships with policymakers and their staff. (Again, the exact sequence and the measures taken will depend on the strategy crafted for each particular issue.)

- Establish contact with candidates for public office by meeting with them and providing them with information about your association's position on particular issues. Be sure to mention the number of your association members and the number of others who support your association's stance on each issue. Fact sheets and/or issue briefings can be extremely useful in presenting your case. Encourage each candidate to publicly endorse your association's position.



Over-reliance on personal meetings with high-ranking policymakers can be problematic. As your advocacy efforts mature, it is crucial that your association understands what other actions need to be taken to see the laws you support enacted (track legislation, work with the media, etc.). This requires in-depth knowledge of the policymaking process, which goes beyond just meeting with top officials.

- After elections, invite successful candidates and their staff to briefing sessions, social events, where the association's position on an issue will be elaborated and situated within a set of overall goals. Guests will meet with association members and other proponents of the relevant issue(s).
- Regularly monitor the agendas of policymakers and regulators so your association can participate in policy debates and voice its concerns in a timely manner. Advocacy materials are useful for effective participation.



Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif speaks at a conference organized by the Egyptian Junior Business Association (EJB). EJB has been a key advocate for the democratic reform of Egypt's economic policy.

- Keep your issues alive in policymakers', legislators', and regulators' minds by regularly inviting them and their staff to attend briefings or roundtable discussions.
- Keep track of legislators' and policymakers' statements and voting records, and inform them that you are doing so. Publish this information and distribute it to your members, your grassroots network, and to other interested groups. Using fact sheets and sending them by fax or e-mail is a cost-efficient and timely distribution method.
- Keep track of legislation: know when it was sent to special committees for discussion, when the debate will occur in plenary session, and so on. Use this information and your contacts with staff members to arrange and send a delegation to observe or participate in the discussions.
- If asked to testify on a given issue in front of the legislative or regulatory body, learn the appropriate procedures and follow them. Pick a knowledgeable, well-respected, good public speaker to present a concise account of the issue and your association's position. Indicate how the legislation or regulation will affect the main stakeholders. The presentation needs to be short and crisp, leaving ample time for questions. Avoid long, tiresome, overly detailed speeches.
- Do not link your association with a particular party, but ally your association with government representatives who espouse your stance.
- When policymakers' staff members are helpful, thank them in writing and provide a copy to their boss.

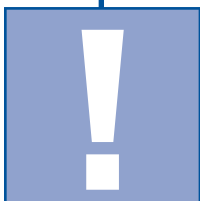
- Regularly provide policymakers and their staff with advocacy materials on relevant issues.
- Meet with policymakers and their staff to discuss pertinent issues while parliament is in session.
- Host “recognition events” such as banquets, lunches, or other special events to honor policymakers; invite key association members and representatives from other organizations that support your cause; issue press releases that commend policymakers for their work and support.
- Organize meetings that bring together key players who do not normally interact on a particular issue – such as national, state, and local representatives or officials from diverse departments or regulatory agencies related to the issues. One form that such meetings can have is a periodic public policy roundtable. If you organize a policy roundtable, you should develop an issue paper to be distributed prior to the event. During the meeting itself, encourage audience participation. Depending on the scale of the event, you may also want to invite the press and hold a press conference at the end.
- Personally thank all those who have supported your issues and advocacy efforts.



Tool #14: Build effective coalitions.

Coalitions are a useful way to increase the number of organizations and individuals that support your association’s stance on an issue or set of issues. There is strength in numbers: the more voters favoring a position, the more likely it is that policymakers will listen. Coalitions enhance the visibility and credibility of your advocacy efforts. Building coalitions is especially important when your association is small in membership and when a broad base of support is needed to ensure adoption of a specific policy, legislation, or regulatory change.

Using the information gathered earlier, contact leaders of organizations that are in favor of your position on an issue and ask them if they would like to form a coalition in support of the particular issue or set of issues. Once all potential coalition members have been contacted, organize a meeting with key representatives from each



Developing a common message will help coalition partners to speak with a unified voice to maximize effectiveness, but may require that you compromise and change your position slightly. Be sure that the compromise consensus is in sync with your association’s goals and objectives before you endorse it.

organization. During the meeting, each organization needs to indicate the degree to which they are willing to be involved in coalition activities. The nature of the coalition will depend on the issue and on the type of commitment each partner is willing to undertake. Some partners may be willing to actively participate while others seek minimal involvement. Based on this information, coalition members need to agree on:

- a chain of command,
- a division of labor,
- an advocacy strategy and timetable (the strategy developed in Step 4 can be used as a starting point),
- expense sharing,
- a designated coalition spokesperson(s),
- a coalition coordinator,
- a common message. (The use of advocacy materials described in Tools 1-9 above will help to forge a uniform position based on current facts and research.)

The coalition coordinator should communicate regularly with coalition partners to ensure that they are well informed about coalition activities, events, initiatives or developments related to the coalition's tasks and objectives. The coordinator should:

- Provide ample notice to coalition members of important events bearing on an issue such as hearings, debates or conferences so that they can participate. This will help maintain solidarity and commitment within the coalition.
- Seek the support of other interest groups who may not wish to join the coalition, but may want to endorse the coalition's positions on some or all of the issues. Provide these groups with relevant advocacy materials from either your association or the coalition. This will help garner additional support for your position, thereby increasing the likelihood that policymakers will take your recommendations seriously.

(For examples of successful advocacy coalitions, please see Appendix B.)

Naturally, you will not be able to form a coalition with just any association. Since advocacy is a part of a democratic governance process, it is not surprising that associations representing various constituencies may have different views on a given policy. However, coalition building helps to reach consensus and consolidate advocacy efforts where possible.

Successful coalitions are typically formed between business associations within the same sector where a lot of interests are shared. Multi-sectoral coalitions are harder to build but may still manage to find a common ground on larger issues affecting all kinds of businesses, such as:

- customs duties and regulatory costs of running a business,
- excessive taxation and non-wage labor costs, and
- corruption and corporate governance issues.



Tool #15: Develop and advocate a national business agenda.

When the business climate in your country needs some major changes that require broad-based support, a national business agenda is likely to be a very useful mechanism. It is a vital tool for the business community to encourage investment and stimulate business activity and economic growth. Building an agenda mobilizes the business community to use its skills to affect public policy by setting legislative and regulatory priorities and communicating these priorities to policymakers.

What is a national business agenda?

National business agendas identify laws and regulations that hinder business activity, and offer concrete recommendations and reforms to remove these barriers and improve the business climate. Developing a national business agenda also educates the private sector on public policies that affect business and allows them to present the concerns of the business community to government officials in a unified voice, increasing the likelihood that their agenda will be adopted.

National business agendas have proven to be an effective tool for removing barriers to entrepreneurship in countries across the globe such as Egypt, Malawi, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, and the United States.

The key to developing any business agenda is to encourage participation by addressing specific regional and industry needs and providing the business community with a sense of ownership in the final product. Business leaders must take the initiative in organizing numerous different business groups and building a coalition that can reach a consensus on major issues.

For example, when members of the Federation of Egyptian Industries developed a national business agenda, they took the following steps:

- Analyzed policies and formed recommendations.
- Met with members in open forums to discuss alternatives.
- Published in the media to gain input from concerned parties.
- Formulated policy reform programs.
- Publicized the agenda.
- Engaged in advocacy directed at the government, including the executive and the legislative branches.

Freedom of association and the right to petition the government are the most basic of democratic institutions, but even in emerging democracies it is still possible to influence policy by building grassroots coalitions and consensus for change. When business associations come together to promote a core set of market-oriented policies, they can be much more effective than if they pursued policy change individually.

For step-by-step instructions on how business associations, professional organizations, and other interested parties can build a national business agenda, please see CIPE's "National Business Agenda Guidebook: A Formula for Success," available online at: www.cipe.org/pdf/training/natlbusagenda.pdf (also available in French and Ukrainian).

(For examples of business associations – including women's business groups – that have successfully developed and advocated national business agendas, please see Appendix C.)

Helpful Hints When Meeting with Policymakers

Before the meeting

- Research your interlocutor's profile and political career.
- Familiarize yourself with their voting record.
- See if they belong to other organizations/associations.
- Read available interviews or statements relevant to your cause.

During the meeting

- Be brief, factual, and truthful.
- Start with the main points (not the specifics).
- Have documentation ready.
- Be prepared with draft legislation or policy proposals.
- Ask specifically for his or her support on the particular issue either through a vote, sponsorship of a proposal, or support during policy or legislative deliberations.
- Do not mention or discuss problems or issues that are unrelated or for which you do not have a sound answer.

Tool #16: Develop and implement a successful legislative advisory program.

If a good number of policymakers in your country are reform-oriented, yet lack the resources and expertise necessary to make sound decisions on economic and business-related issues, then a legislative advisory program can be very useful. Legislative advisory programs are designed to analyze proposed legislation and regulations and provide simple cost/benefit assessments of their impact. These are then distributed to legislators and the public. They contribute to more informed policy debates and offer the private sector an opportunity to shape government policies.



Steps in a Legislative Advisory Program

1. **Select a draft bill of national economic importance that is currently under policymakers' consideration.** This will position advocacy efforts at the center of public debate. Avoid issues that narrowly concern one sector. Concentrate instead on issues that affect the economy widely, such as issues affecting competition and property rights. It is occasionally necessary to mix responsiveness to current draft bills with a proactive role in putting neglected issues on the national agenda.

The process of selecting issues for analysis should engage business leaders, legislators, and other prominent people within a non-partisan framework. Legislators themselves may invite an institute to analyze bills they have sponsored. These issues should only be considered if the legislators agree to full transparency and public dissemination of the analysis.

2. **Analyze the contents of the bill to determine its economic impact.** Economic analysis should be topical, locally specific, and focused, not broad theoretical or legal research. It should be performed by credible economists and cover both the benefits and costs of proposed legislation.
3. **Prepare a brief, readable report containing the problems, findings, and recommended actions concerning the issue.** All economic terms must be clearly and consistently defined. Clearly identify the bill under consideration, include the legislative history, and list the pros and cons of enactment.
4. **Distribute the report** to all members of the legislative body, as well as other key decision making officials and leaders of influential institutions. These include the executive branch, political party leaders outside the legislature, the media, academics, and business leaders. Establish a clear, consistent distribution plan.
5. **Advocate the views presented in the report** at press conferences, meetings with legislators, roundtable seminars, and congressional committee meetings. Follow up with periodic meetings.
6. **Work with the media to reach a larger audience.** The media often seek independent, non-government sources of information and analysis. Have the entire report or excerpts reprinted in different daily newspapers, journals, and other publications. Consider using broadcast media such as television.

Conditions for a success of a legislative advisory program include:

- The program is intended for a country where the congress (or other legislative body) needs strengthening and suffers in particular from a shortage of information.
- The business community must be supportive of economic policy reforms in order to have meaningful public-private dialogue.
- Professional economists with a free-market perspective and experience solving local problems are essential.
- A free press can be effective in informing the public if journalists are provided reliable information and analysis.
- The country's executive must be open to, or at least tolerant of, economic reform.

STEP 7: Prioritize Time-Sensitive Issues

Once the advocacy committee has decided which tools it will use to advocate for each issue or set of issues; policy priorities that are more time-sensitive need to be identified so they can be addressed first. Resolving these issues is likely to swiftly benefit association members and garner support for future advocacy initiatives. An issue is time-sensitive if:

- There is currently widespread support.
- Advocacy would offer significant benefits to members in the near term.
- Failure to take immediate action could seriously harm association's members.
- Failure to take immediate action jeopardizes future chances for policy changes (e.g., if the legislature is debating a decision on a particular issue, or if the current administration favors a policy change, but the next one probably would not).

Sample Overall Timetable

| Issue | Timetable |
|--|-----------------------|
| Reform business licensing requirements | January – March, 2009 |
| Pension reform | February – June, 2009 |

Sample Specific Timetable

| Goals | Timetable |
|--|--|
| Contact other business associations | January 15 |
| Contact key legislators, policymakers and regulators | January 15 |
| Build pro-reform coalitions | February 1 |
| Host several events and briefings for policymakers, business associations and the general public and distribute advocacy materials; distribute press releases the day after each event | January 15 – March 1 |
| Meet with members of the press and distribute advocacy materials | January 15 – March 1 |
| Meet regularly with key policymakers and relevant organizations and present advocacy materials | January 15 – March 1 |
| Evaluate advocacy strategy | February 15 |
| Mobilize your coalition at least one week before legislators vote | March 1 – March 31 (depending on the day of the vote) |



Whenever an issue stays on the agenda for too long (say, for more than six months), this should be a warning sign that something has gone wrong. Typically, it is the result of mistakes made earlier during the advocacy process, whether due to insufficient information, time, or staffing. Such issues should be re-prioritized or altogether dropped if successful advocacy no longer seems feasible.

After having identified the time-sensitive issues, the committee should establish an overall timetable that indicates which issues will be tackled when.

Next, for each issue or set of issues the committee should develop a specific timetable indicating particular goals that are to be achieved. Be sure to allow enough time for the committee to attain each objective. Also, be sure to take into account when the issue will be discussed and voted on by policymakers and regulators. Each goal within each timetable should be clear and measurable so staff can gauge their progress.

Advocacy committee staff should periodically evaluate the effectiveness of their advocacy strategy. The timetable should specify when evaluations are to be conducted. Please see Step 9 for techniques on how to assess your strategy accurately.

STEP 8: Establish a Budget

Based on your association's advocacy strategy, committee members need to allocate resources to ensure that advocacy efforts have the means to be successful. This entails determining the staff and financial resources that will be necessary to achieve each advocacy objective for each issue or set of issues. In short, a detailed budget needs to be developed that contains specific line-item indications of how much staff time and funding will be devoted to each activity when advocating for each issue. Having a budget will enable the committee to determine if:

- its strategy is realistic.
- its strategy needs to be modified.
- certain activities need to be eliminated or postponed.
- certain activities can be added.

STEP 9: Evaluate

As mentioned before, the efficacy of every advocacy strategy needs to be periodically assessed. This helps ensure that the goals and objectives of advocacy efforts will be achieved in a reasonable timeframe. By answering the following questions, members of the advocacy committee can accurately assess the effectiveness of their strategy and then make the necessary changes.

- Is this issue still relevant to association members?
- Has the issue changed in any way?
- Is further research required?
- Are the goals and timelines still feasible?
- Is the advocacy committee respecting the timeline?
- Do the goals or timetable need to be revised?
- Have we identified the correct advocacy targets?
- Are we succeeding in reaching these advocacy targets?
- Do we have the right messengers?
- Are the target recipients responsive to our message?
- Does the message need to be modified or fine-tuned?
- Are our advocacy tactics proving to be effective?
- Are the financial and human resources adequate?
- Have coalition opportunities been taken advantage of?
- Are coalitions operating effectively?



In Russia, regional business associations have expanded on the concept of the National Business Agenda, implementing Regional Business Agendas with great success. Media coverage has helped spread awareness of the reforms these associations advocate.

Based on the answers to these questions, the advocacy committee should make the necessary changes. Before any suggested modification is implemented, consideration should be given to how the change might affect other components of the advocacy strategy. Any positive results from the assessment should be relayed to association and coalition members through e-mails, faxes, and/or newsletter announcements to demonstrate that the advocacy efforts are paying off.

Finally, it is important to make some time for recognition of the association members' common efforts. Once the progress on the advocacy agenda issues has been evaluated, the association's leadership should emphasize celebrating successes rather than dwelling on failures, and should underscore each key member's active role and contribution to the process. Even if the results were not entirely satisfactory, this recognition of the common effort is necessary to sustain enthusiasm for future work, encourage even more member involvement, and attract new supporters. This approach also benefits the organization's image and credibility by reassuring the membership of its determination to conduct further advocacy campaigns.

Appendix A

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Priority Issues Survey

The following pages are one example of a priority issues survey that can help an association plan its advocacy agenda (see Section 4).



Building the National Business Agenda 2003-2004

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRIORITY ISSUES SURVEY

I. POLICY PRIORITIES

Please indicate the level of priority you believe the U.S. Chamber should place on the following policy issues:

Tax/Economic Policy

| | Extremely High | Very High | High | Somewhat High | Low | No Opinion |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Permanently repeal the estate and gift tax | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Increase the small business expensing allowance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Reform the S-corporation tax rules | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Repeal/reduce the corporate and individual Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Repeal/reduce the corporate and individual capital gains tax | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Simplify/clarify the worker classification rules (employee vs. independent contractor) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Replace/reform the current federal tax system | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Reform the process the Joint Tax Committee uses to evaluate tax proposals | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Strengthen Federal Government Programs that provide small business access to capital | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Expand government contracting opportunities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Legal Reform

| | Extremely High | Very High | High | Somewhat High | Low | No Opinion |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 11. Stop government lawsuits against industries that are legal (e.g., tobacco and gun manufacturing) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Stop excessive punitive damages | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Support efforts to preserve the availability of alternative dispute resolution | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Ensure that the same rules apply to all parties in litigation, including the government | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. Preserve the principle of "sanctity of contract" so agreements are fully enforceable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. Reform product and service liability laws so parties are only responsible for harms they actually caused | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Reform class action laws to limit the number and scope of lawsuits filed by plaintiffs' trial lawyers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. Reform the current system dealing with company liability for asbestos exposure | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. Support efforts to reform securities litigation to limit the number and scope of securities class action lawsuits | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. Support reforms that limit attorneys fees | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Regulatory Reform & Environmental Policy

| | Extremely High | Very High | High | Somewhat High | Low | No Opinion |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 21. Ensure that regulatory agencies use sound science to support new rules | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. Ensure information that agencies disseminate is accurate and objective | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. Ensure that federal agencies periodically review existing regulations to determine whether they should be repealed or modified | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. Ensure that regulatory agencies focus on the particular harm caused to small business by agency regulations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. Ensure that environmental regulations are cost-effective | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. Ensure that environmental regulations are more market-oriented | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. Reform the Endangered Species Act by balancing all interests when managing property on which endangered species live | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. Oppose labeling of food containing genetically modified ingredients | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

International Policy

| | Extremely High | Very High | High | Somewhat High | Low | No Opinion |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 29. Open foreign markets multilaterally through the World Trade Organization and bilaterally with non-WTO member countries | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. Make the World Bank and International Monetary Fund programs more market-oriented | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. Prevent access to the U.S. markets of subsidized foreign exports | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 32. Increase U.S. access to foreign markets by countering foreign governments' subsidized export finance, investment and aid programs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. Eliminate economic sanctions against other countries imposed solely by the United States, but not by our friends and allies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 34. Eliminate the double-taxation of Americans working overseas | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. Enhance America's trade negotiating ability by passing "fast track" trade negotiating authority for American Presidents | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 36. Improve global protection of intellectual property rights | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. Accelerate the negotiation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 38. Eliminate foreign tariff and non-tariff barriers to American exports | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. Prevent attempts to politicize international standard-setting processes that are supposed to be based on science (e.g., precautionary principle and Codex Alimentarius) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Transportation Infrastructure

| | Extremely High | Very High | High | Somewhat High | Low | No Opinion |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 40. Support alternative funding sources for transportation programs (e.g., public/private partnerships, innovative financing) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 41. Accelerate delivery of transportation projects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 42. Support efforts to increase airport capacity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 43. Support efforts to improve our national intermodal transportation network | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

II. MEMBER OPINIONS

After each question, fill in the circle that best reflects your views. The answers should reflect your opinion on the issue regardless of how important the issue is to you.

Labor/Employee Benefits

| | Definitely Yes | Generally Yes | Generally No | Definitely No | No Opinion |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Should the use of unemployment compensation funds to pay workers on family leave be opposed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Should an increase in the federal minimum wage be opposed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Should federal labor laws allow employers to offer employees the option of paid compensatory time for overtime worked? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Should the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) be amended to address technical issues concerning compliance? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Should the power of unions to collect mandatory dues from workers for political purposes be restricted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Consistent with national security, should immigration laws be changed to ease worker shortages? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Does the complexity of pension laws deter employers from providing retirement plans to their employees? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Should alternatives to employer-based health insurance be developed so workers can own individual health plans to which employers can opt to make contributions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Should any expansion of liability for health plans be opposed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other Federal Government Regulations

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 10. Should businesses continue to have access to federal lands for logging, mining, cattle grazing, and oil and natural gas production? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Should the federal government continue to provide aid to farmers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Should Congress exercise greater oversight over proposed and current rules by regulatory agencies? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Should the Social Security System be reformed for the 21st Century? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Should the federal government establish Internet restrictions or regulations? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. Should retailers who collect marketing information off-line be subject to the same standards as those retailers who collect marketing information on-line? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. Should government food safety functions be consolidated into a single federal agency? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Should people take personal responsibility for their own food and nutrition choices, and additional government regulation be opposed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Appendix B

Coalition Building Promotes Reform

Romania

As the changes of 1989 triggered the development of the private sector in Romania, new women business leaders came to feel that their specific needs were not fully represented by the existing professional associations. These women created many local business associations. However, most of these associations focused exclusively on social and gender issues and functioned only through the dedication of volunteers.

In 2000, a CIPE initiative formed the Romanian Business Associations Development Project, recognizing that women's business associations could take on an enhanced, advocacy-oriented role. CIPE provided these women with technical assistance in organizational development through conferences and seminars and encouraged public recognition for the members through the "Women of Success" CD, a multi-media collection of success stories that caught the attention of the business community, policymakers, and the media. Finally, nine women's business associations came together in January 2004 to create a larger and more unified coalition, and with the support from CIPE Romania the Coalition of Women's Business Associations (CAFA) was officially launched.

CAFA has been growing each year and went on to organize workshops on strategic planning, advocacy, public perception, and members' involvement. CAFA has sustained the tradition of an annual Women in Business Conference, and has trained more than 150 entrepreneurs, managers, and association volunteers. In 2004, CAFA was asked by the Romanian Government to assist with amending the code of conduct meant to limit abuses by public officials during inspections of private companies. This high-level participation in policymaking led to similar invitations. The Ministry of Finance requested CAFA's input on drafting income tax legislation, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection invited it to cooperate permanently with the Division of Equal Chances, and the National Agency for Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Cooperatives included CAFA in a partnership program for women's entrepreneurship and

SMEs legislative initiatives. CAFA also provides the Senate's Economic Commission with feedback on the Fiscal Code and other laws relevant to the business community, meets regularly with members of Parliament, and even had an opportunity to present its vision to the President of Romania.

CAFA has become a self-sustaining organization and since January 2006 it no longer receives outside support; it is instead fully funded by its members. What is more, many CAFA members have expressed interest in joining a future Balkan Coalition and becoming involved in advocacy activities and networking on a larger regional scale.

Iraq

Building private sector coalitions can be especially challenging in a volatile and ethnically divided country such as Iraq. Yet, the Iraqi business community is determined to play a positive role in the country's democratic and economic development. Economic policy has emerged as one of the few areas where a constructive consensus can be reached amongst parties that are otherwise at opposite ends of the political spectrum.

Until recently, business associations in Iraq had little institutional infrastructure and were individually too weak to advocate for sound economic policies on behalf of the private sector. To change the situation, in 2006 CIPE helped form the Iraqi Business Council (IBC), comprising 20 of the largest and most established national business associations, chambers of commerce, and economic think tanks in Iraq (the majority of which have been trained and have received support from CIPE over the past two years). IBC represents the culmination of CIPE's extensive work with private sector organizations in Iraq, bringing together diverse groups from different economic sectors, regions, and cultural backgrounds to become one strong, unified voice in economic policymaking.

Thanks to IBC, both the Iraqi government and the international business community gained one authoritative interlocutor with whom to consult on issues of economic reform. IBC conducts training programs, issues policy papers on important economic challenges, and is working on a National Business Agenda. It is also regularly invited to participate in the research and review of legislation pertaining to the economy and trade.

On a regional level, CIPE has helped create a similar umbrella organization, the Kurdistan Business Council. The Council represents more than 20 Kurdish private sector organizations and is working on the regional business agenda with recommendations from the private sector regarding economic reform in 12 key industries, including agriculture, banking, and healthcare. As the security situation in Iraq improves and new opportunities emerge, CIPE plans to work in other areas of the country to develop similar councils and business agendas.

Appendix C

Successful National Business Agendas

Egypt

The Egyptian Junior Business Association (EJB) was established in 1999 and formally registered in 2001, with a vision to become the association of first choice among young Egyptian businesspeople. Its mission is to maintain a dialogue with policymakers and other stakeholders in pursuit of comprehensive development of Egypt and its business community. While CIPE's initial role was limited to helping EJB deliver services to its members and build organizational capacity, the focus of cooperation eventually shifted to implementing a major advocacy effort: the National Business Agenda.

The development of the National Business Agenda was an incremental process. First, a drafting committee was formed to plan awareness-raising events and publications. Then, a series of roundtables and meetings with industrial sector committees and other stakeholders were held to gather input from the business community to build a consensus on what reforms needed to be pursued. Finally, the Agenda was officially launched in December 2004 at a conference attended by more than 400 guests, including EJB members, five ministers, regulatory authorities, research institutions, academia, associations, parliamentarians, business people, and the media.

EJB's National Business Agenda was subsequently reissued in 2005 and 2006 (with another update underway), matching the government's continuous need for the business community to present suggestions and input on how to shape the country's economic policies. Throughout the process, CIPE's Cairo office has been sharing with EJB its technical expertise in developing national business agendas and helping to advocate them to policymakers. In fact, this project became a major cornerstone in engaging the Egyptian government in dialogue that contributes to the enhancement of business environment in the country. So far, it has successfully brought to the government's attention such important issues as decentralization of government agencies, creating "one-stop shops" for investors, reforming competition and consumer protection laws, and introducing reforms to customs duties and taxation.

Montenegro

The Montenegrin economy took a sharp dive after the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the end of socialist regime in 1991. Existing economic ties were disrupted and entrepreneurial activity was discouraged by a maze of cumbersome regulations, limited access to credit, and high taxes and customs rates. The Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED), an independent institute dedicated to supporting economic reform, understood that without a national organization representing the interests of small and medium businesses in the public sphere the Montenegrin economy would stay in the doldrums. That is why, with technical assistance from CIPE, CEED helped found the Montenegrin Business Alliance (MBA) in 2001.

CIPE fostered the development of the MBA from a loose alliance into an effective advocacy association with a permanent footing. Its first order of business was to draft a National Business Agenda of major issues facing domestic entrepreneurs, based on the input from diverse businesses and following the process proposed by CIPE to build a private sector consensus on public policy change through grassroots advocacy. The agenda's overriding goal was to create greater participation of the private sector in formulating public policy in order to foster a legal environment favorable for economic growth. The results were tabulated and distributed to businesses and lawmakers, and the process was repeated in subsequent years. MBA soon became a go-to organization whenever lawmakers wanted to solicit the private sector's advice on upcoming legislation.

Even before the formation of MBA, CEED advised the Montenegrin legislature on the Securities Law (2000) and the Corporate Profit Tax Law (2001), easing the tax burden on growing businesses. However, with the founding of MBA and annual publication of the National Business Agenda, the process became more streamlined and effective. The National Business Agenda, a concept originally championed by CIPE, played a pivotal role in the ensuing accomplishments, as the government of Montenegro incorporated sections of the agenda in its economic reform package and relevant laws.

To date, eight key pieces of legislation were passed thanks to support from MBA and CEED, defining the country's new economic environment and addressing several of the most pressing needs of entrepreneurs. High tax rates were lowered, new business formation was encouraged through eased registration and licensing requirements, the informal sector was reduced, accounting standards were raised, understanding of the law by businesspeople was improved, and new avenues for business were created.

Russia

CIPE has also assisted local partner organizations with successfully implementing the National Business Agenda blueprint on the regional level. Several examples can be found in Russia. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a governance gap developed between federal and regional government policies. In many cases, regional legislation contradicted federal laws and lacked enforcement mechanisms, undermining the health of the local business environment. SMEs were particularly affected, as they struggled with constrictive statutes, complicated tax codes, poor property rights protection, lack of transparency, and corruption.

To remedy the problem, CIPE has worked with organizations like the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and the Russian Union of Business Associations (OPORA) to train local business coalitions in promoting a better small business environment in their respective regions. The approach, the Regional Business Agenda (RBA), aims to train and equip local business communities to vigorously participate in the public policy process and represent their interests at the regional level. CIPE has provided hands-on training in advocacy techniques as well as technical support in reaching out to business coalitions in other regions of Russia.

Eight regions within Russia were chosen for the program in 2002. The key to their successful advocacy efforts was a regional business agenda, providing each regional government with a set of reform proposals that the local business community felt were necessary for continued economic development. The RBAs were specifically oriented toward SME growth, an area of the economy where many regional governments had little prior experience.

The results of the RBA program have exceeded expectations, as the membership of the regional coalitions soared by 45 percent during the first year of the program. There were also a number of individual success stories. For instance, armed with CIPE-provided know-how, a business coalition of the Perm region approached the regional legislature chairman, who agreed to incorporate many of the coalition's recommendations into law. A business coalition in Primorsk region has had similar success with the region's governor, who founded a number of roundtables that were instrumental in starting a public-private dialogue on reforms of local laws dealing with small-scale entrepreneurship.

The success of the RBA program was underscored two years later when it expanded to four more regions in Russia. Its impact was also recognized on the national level when President Vladimir Putin signed a law that significantly simplified the SME taxation code, reduced onerous licensing requirements, and extended property rights protection for small businesses.

Appendix **D**

Effective Legislative Advisory Programs

Dominican Republic

As in many other countries, the Dominican Republic's legislators had few resources to analyze new legislation; they had no personal staff and only meager committee research staff. As a result, the legislators were at the mercy of the government bureaucracy in terms of estimating the economic impact of proposed laws. The Center for Economic Orientation (COE) was formed in 1985 in recognition of this scarcity of information available to the legislators for economic policy formulation. It subsequently launched a legislative advisory program with support from CIPE.

In concise and timely reports, COE analyzed laws of national economic importance under current congressional consideration, summarizing their effects on the public and private sectors, national budget, and legal system, and concluding with specific recommendations for enactment, repeal, rejection, or amendment of the draft bills. Between 1986 and 1990 alone, COE published 62 analyses, each sent to more than 450 legislators, private sector and labor leaders, academics, and media representatives. Through these reports, COE was able to widely disseminate information on the economic consequences of the specific laws and regulations and assist public interest groups in holding legislators accountable. COE's advisory program strengthened democratic governance, as it provided a means through which the private sector was able to convey its view on economic legislation, weakening the monopoly of the executive branch on shaping economic policy. What is more, COE targeted legislation essential to opening the Dominican economy, such as analysis of free trade zone legislation or Dominican incorporation into the Lomé Convention.

The tremendous effect that COE's program generated both inside and outside the Dominican Republic placed it among CIPE's most successful contributions. It became a trailblazing initiative that has served as a model for similar activities worldwide: COE's example helped inspire think tanks and business associations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, Ghana, and Sri Lanka to develop their own legislative advisory programs.

Argentina

The Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) started working with CIPE in 2002 to formulate an advocacy strategy for reforming federal fiscal institutions in Argentina. Given the country's long history of fiscal mismanagement and reoccurring crises, the need to reform the corrupt and inefficient tax system was evident.

In the past, attempted reforms bogged down in Congress, mostly due to a shortage of technical staff able to evaluate the implications of proposed fiscal policies. Consequently, a serious lack of understanding hampered the objectivity of debates and the ability of the legislature, the media, and citizens to meaningfully participate. With support from CIPE, CIPPEC established a caucus of legislators, business leaders, and academic experts to improve the democratic functioning of Congress and consolidate support for reform of the fiscal and tax laws. Launched in December 2004, it was the first legislative caucus in Argentina formed to gather support for a policy initiative.

Around 30 reform-oriented legislators (out of a total of 329) from different parties have actively participated in the fiscal caucus. An additional 45 legislators and 60 advisors participated in nearly 100 meetings. CIPPEC has focused on working closely with the Senate Co-participation Commission (charged with overseeing legislative proposals on the federal tax system) and supporting the caucus by providing technical advice in the form of policy briefs and complementary communication strategies. CIPPEC has also organized several workshops to encourage policymakers, businesses, journalists, and other civil society leaders to discuss how to shape specific policy reforms and disseminate ideas.

Legislators now have a credible source of information on key economic issues to make more informed decisions. CIPPEC's surveys of legislators indicate that concrete changes in legislation took place at least in part as a result of the caucus's efforts. Several CIPPEC-supported tax bills were passed, including the Fiscal Responsibility Law limiting the growth of spending and the levels of debt and deficit both at the national and provincial levels. The caucus is currently the only vehicle in Argentina for organizing a reform-minded coalition of legislators (across party lines), civil society leaders, and academics.

Bangladesh

More than 80 percent of industrial employment in Bangladesh is provided by SMEs, whose growth is the engine of the economy. However, they face a slew of obstacles to doing business, such as scarcity of capital available for investment, wide-spread corruption, limited opportunities for business expansion, and a heavy tax burden. The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) has been the leading champion of small businesses in Bangladesh, but it lacked a consistent strategy on how to make small businesses' concerns a part of the national policymaking process.

Since 1999, CIPE has been helping DCCI create and refine an advocacy model to convey the needs of the local business community more forcefully to government officials at all levels. In addition to technical assistance and funding, CIPE also provided a blueprint of effecting policy change by issuing economic policy papers – an approach that has been tried earlier with great success by a CIPE partner in the Philippines. The ensuing advocacy campaign was broad-based, as DCCI's 4,500 members enthusiastically supported the new approach – making the organization a credible ally and partner in the eyes of legislators willing to turn its policy suggestions into law.

The economic policy papers reflected the concerns and priorities of DCCI member businesses in improving the overall business climate in the country and creating additional growth opportunities for SMEs. The papers covered a wide variety of topics including corruption in the public sector, unfair taxation issues, the advantages of introducing a floating exchange rate, and the woeful state of higher education. The papers were written by experts in the respective fields who did original research and have continued to revise the papers through presentations at various seminars.

Many of these policy papers resulted in the passage of specific pro-business legislation and other reforms enhancing private sector development in areas such as taxation, export/import and exchange rate policy, and corporate governance. For example, the Public Procurement Act of 2005 was passed in response to the many abuses documented by DCCI's policy paper on corruption. The act established clear and transparent guidelines that government officials and suppliers are now obliged to follow. Since 2006, DCCI has been Bangladesh's leading chamber of commerce, and is nationally recognized as a watchdog for the business community and proponent of democratic decision-making. The reforms it helped to shape have been liberalizing the economy, developing human capital, shoring up infrastructure, and making government more responsive and accountable.

Appendix E

Overcoming Challenges to Public Policy Advocacy

Senegal

A common challenge to establishing public policy advocacy efforts in many developing countries is the prevalence of the informal sector that is frequently excluded from existing forms of business representation. A large informal sector weakens democracy, hinders necessary reforms and excludes millions of citizens from the political and economic system of a country. Businesses operating outside the formal economy are often small, resource-poor, and geographically dispersed, making it even harder for them to organize and make their voices heard.

An example of the successful inclusion of informal businesses in the public policy advocacy process can be found in Senegal. The country's Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels du Senegal (UNACOIS) is the largest business association with 100,000 members – from shopkeepers and petty traders to small-scale industrialists, 70 percent of whom operate in the informal sector. With CIPE support, UNACOIS is working to educate its members on fiscal, economic, and regulatory issues that present barriers to business and keep many small enterprises from entering the formal economy. UNACOIS is also publishing brief papers on customs duties and regulations, the tax code, the code governing small business, and basic information on starting and running a formal small business.

In addition to providing its members with information that may otherwise be hidden in bureaucratic lingo or simply unavailable publicly, UNACOIS is implementing a new communications strategy to take members' concerns to government officials. It hopes to improve the flow of information between the public and private sectors as a first step towards a more hospitable business environment. CIPE continues to build the association's capacity by making it possible for UNACOIS to improve its website, broaden the distribution of its newsletter, publish economic indicators, and institutionalize the important operations of its organization.

Kenya

Another example of forming informal sector business associations comes from Kenya. Known as the *jua kali*, the sector faces numerous challenges. Cumbersome laws and regulations out of step with current realities tend to inhibit the growth of *jua kali* businesses. As business owners are unable to secure ownership over their shops and land, it is difficult to access credit and developers frequently encroach onto their workplaces. Weak property rights are compounded by deficient infrastructure, such as poor roads and no electricity or running water in *jua kali* work spaces. The government's response has been mixed, largely because of a lack of dialogue between the government and the informal sector. Most policies have been formulated without consulting *jua kali* business operators and as a result have failed to address the specific needs of this sector.

There are over 600 *jua kali* associations in Kenya, with a further 300 awaiting registration. Most of them, however, do not have the capacity to address the problems that their members face. Many exist in name only, have no elections, hold infrequent meetings, do not keep proper records of their members, and do not observe internal transparency in the distribution of association resources and collective decision making. To help overcome these challenges, CIPE organized a workshop in Nairobi, which was attended by the most important informal sector associations. They learned how to clarify their associations' overall direction and involve their membership through strategic planning.

Recently, individual *jua kali* associations have enjoyed some success in getting the attention of authorities. For instance, the Mchanganyiko association convinced the municipal council to allocate about two acres of land for the *jua kali* sector. Also, various associations have been communicating and cooperating with one another, especially those that participated in the CIPE training program. Most significantly, many *jua kali* associations have joined forces to form the National Informal Sector Coalition (NISCO). The coalition is an umbrella body for local *jua kali* associations, giving them a common voice in addressing the problems inhibiting the development and growth. NISCO obtained a commitment from the government to set aside 10 percent of its procurement contracts for small businesses, which previously never had the opportunity to participate in government tenders. The government also agreed to take joint action with NISCO to enhance job creation. NISCO followed up by delivering an actionable proposal for rapid reform.

Romania

In many countries, the first hurdle to launching a successful advocacy effort is a low level of familiarity with the advocacy process among the business community and society, rooted in the lack of transparency in business-government relations. In Romania, more than 60 percent of business associations had only limited (if any) involvement in the public policy arena prior to 2001, and most of the remaining 40 percent focused only on specific issues, some of which were special-interest in nature. To address this situation, CIPE brought together a number of its Romanian partners to cooperate in the highly successful Open Doors Advocacy Campaign. The campaign was designed to create entry points for the private sector to interact with government in an open and transparent manner.

This coordinated initiative involved three coalitions of business associations representing distinct economic sectors. The sectors compiled their recommendations into a single policy document and pursued joint action. In 2002, the three coalitions involved in the Open Doors Campaign initiated a 10-city grassroots National Advocacy Tour, consisting of seminars and roundtables to create support for their business agendas. The tour cemented the business community's support for both the general concept of advocacy and the specific issues raised by the sector coalitions. Over 1,000 business leaders received training on the concepts and skill-building of modern advocacy. The tour also convinced many government officials that popular support could be obtained for the reforms necessary for economic rejuvenation.

As a follow-up to the tour, the business coalitions held Advocacy Days in 2002 and 2003 in Bucharest, during which a total of 300 business participants had the opportunity to meet with government officials and attend public hearings. These events highlighted the grassroots support for the Open Doors Campaign and the importance of public involvement in policy decisions, transparent legislation, access to information, and accountability in government.

These business association advocacy initiatives in Romania led to the formation of The Advocacy Academy, an organization developed specifically to train advocacy professionals. Established with technical and financial support from CIPE, the academy was based on successful models used in other countries, but used local expertise to build a uniquely Romanian system for advocacy. The city of Timisoara was chosen as the location of the new academy, and when the academy hosted its first public hearing in June 2003, the hearing was attended by nearly 400 government officials and private sector leaders. The hearing focused on a proposed law, drafted by the Ministry of Justice, to govern advocacy professionals. Subsequent initiatives featured discussions on the labor code, information technology outsourcing, and tourism taxation. The Advocacy Academy's efforts continue to show that the public and private sectors mutually benefit by sharing policy input.

Colombia

While organization-specific ethical codes play an important role in driving transparency and accountability reforms in business and government alike, other broad initiatives have also made their mark in combating corruption. For example, in the late 1990s the Colombian Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (Confecámaras) recognized that on paper Colombia had a sophisticated set of norms and instruments for detecting, controlling, and punishing corrupt practices. However, these mechanisms were often not applied, partly because of a fear of backlash from entrenched, corrupt politicians. Confecámaras put forth measures to ensure application of anti-corruption initiatives on the supply-side of the corruption equation – the private sector.

Confecámaras works with local businesses to establish clear rules and codes of conduct in procurement processes and to demonstrate the benefits of compliance. With input from business leaders, Confecámaras has developed local codes of conduct, which over 1,000 businesspeople voluntarily signed in the first year alone. Furthermore, to ensure transparency in public procurement, Confecámaras proposed the development of integrity pacts. In the first year, 12 integrity pacts were signed between local businesses and governments. In January 2005, 16 governors and 78 mayors delivered their electoral promises and signed official agreements in public, committing to a transparent relationship with the local business community.

In cooperation with CIPE, Confecámaras has also been educating Colombian public and private stakeholders on the sound principles of corporate governance. By engaging policymakers, businesspeople, and academics, the initiative is formulating a Declaration of Corporate Governance Principles for Colombian businesses, seeking to establish a set of universally accepted ethical business practices. To date, Confecámaras' advocacy activities have contributed to legislative reform concerning shareholders' rights and equitable treatment, as well as conflict-of-interest issues, alternative dispute resolution methods, and board of directors responsibilities.