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AGRICULTURE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR IRAQ

FORMING AND STRENGTHENING ASSOCIATIONS IN IRAQ Technical Manual

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FORMING AND STRENGTHENING ASSOCIATIONS IN IRAQ

Technical Manual

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Technical Manual is based on *Facilitator Guide to Strengthening Associations*, which was originally developed in 1999 for the USAID Agricultural Policy Reform Project in Egypt by Wilma Gormley of Training Resources Group (TRG) and Fatma Khatab of Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI). It was revised by TRG and DAI in 2004 for the USAID Agricultural Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI).

Much of the information in this manual is taken from two sources:

- *Business Associations for the 21st Century – a Blueprint for the Future*, published by The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and authored by L.S. Milner, J. Low, G. LaBranche, E. McMillan, and J. Baker. The authors have many years of experience with associations throughout the world, both in highly developed industrial countries as well as those countries that are building more liberalized, market based economies.
- *Essential Skills in Public Affairs and Advanced Communication Skills*, TRG Training Programs provided to the Cable Television Industry in the United States, 1992-1998.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the USAID Agricultural Reconstruction and Development Program in Iraq (ARDI) will be promoting the establishment of several associations, as well as helping to strengthen existing associations. The MOA and ARDI are ready to assist new and existing associations by providing technical advice and by assisting them in seeking financial support, such as international grants, as well as training inside and outside the country.

Strong trade associations can help to improve the competitiveness of the various industries involved in the agricultural sector. Examples of activities to strengthen trade associations are: helping them develop their strategic and business plans; determining their priority policy agenda; fine-tuning their advocacy efforts; providing technical input for the development of policy positions to be presented to the government, and helping with public awareness to increase the membership base.

Associations that are very newly formed can face serious problems in the first few years. They need to develop a clear vision and purpose for their association, identify and work with their constituency groups; develop the appropriate mechanisms of governance; and recruit members.

This Manual will address many of the “best practices” that lead to strong associations in the following sections:

- Strengthening Governance of the Association.
- Forming Effective Committees.
- Creating and Implementing a Policy Advocacy Program.
- Building an Effective Communication Program.

The following topics will also be introduced in this manual, but will be addressed in more detail in a follow-on technical manual:

- Recruiting and Maintaining a Membership Base.
- Building a Strong Financial Base.
- Using Effective Techniques for Building Consensus and Resolving Conflicts.

2. OVERVIEW OF HOW ASSOCIATIONS ARE FORMED AND HOW THEY FUNCTION

An association is a collection of individuals willfully working together to improve the commercial, economic, and regulatory environments in which these individuals operate.

In order for an association to become a legally sanctioned entity with the right to function as an organization, it must comply with the laws of the country in which it operates. Associations are ruled by legal documents called statutes or by-laws. These statutes or by-laws must be officially approved by members.

Typical Data Included in Association Statutes or By-Laws

Although newly formed associations may not have nor need all these component parts, these statutes or by-laws normally include this type of data:

Name and location of the association

The purpose of the association

Names and addresses of founding members

System and conditions of membership, including the rights and obligations of members

Governing bodies of the association, including the basic responsibility of each; methods for selection, reelection, and discharge; and the quorum necessary for valid meetings and resolutions. Governing bodies usually include:

General assembly *composed of all voting members of the association,*

Chair *of the general assembly (usually the same person as the chairman of the board of directors), sometimes elected by the general assembly, sometimes selected by the board*

Officers *of the general assembly, (usually a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and sometimes the immediate past president), elected by the general assembly*

Standing committees of the association, including the basic purpose and duties of each committee, how committee members are appointed and for how long and how other committees as deemed appropriate are formed. Many associations have standing committees for the following:

Nominating Committee that works to see that well qualified members are recruited (encouraged to volunteer) to serve on the Board of Directors and other key positions.

Finance Committee that works to make certain that the finances of the association are being handled appropriately and honestly. This committee often makes recommendations to the Board for various financial decisions.

Special Committees for areas or issues important to members.

Membership Committee that works to recruit new members as well as to make certain that current members are satisfied and apt to remain members.

Staff that run the day-to-day operations for the association.

As the association grows, normally the Chair of the Board with the approval of the Board has the authority to hire an Executive Director. This person carries out responsibilities as assigned by the Chair and the Board of Directors, and is usually the professional manager of the day to day activities of the association. This individual, with board approval, then hires and manages any other paid staff the association needs to run its operations.

Meetings that the association will hold each year.

Most associations have an annual meeting of voting members. The by-laws or statute contain a description of how the annual meeting will be conducted and describe how often the board of directors meets.

How assets and finances will be handled.

This usually includes a description of the source of funding, dues structure, how funds will be used, and how audits will be conducted, bonding of key officers, assets, and the fiscal calendar.

Code of professional responsibility.

Some associations adopt a code of ethics for association officers.

Amendments to the statute or by-laws, specifically how amendments can be made.¹

¹ Milner, Larry S. et.al. *Business Associations for the 21st Century, A Blueprint for the Future*. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Washington, D.C. 1997

3. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Associations in a market-driven economy are private voluntary, non-governmental organizations established to further the common interests of their members. Both members and other stakeholders are often unfamiliar with the way this type organization is formed and operated. There are common practices and lessons learned from well-established associations throughout the world that can contribute to successful association governance.

Governance – What must be Commonly Understood and Agreed Upon

Following are aspects of governance that must be commonly understood and agreed upon:

- Required documents such as statutes, by-laws and registration.
- Role and responsibilities of the association members.
- Roles and responsibilities of the association board of directors.
- Roles and responsibilities of chair of the board of directors (sometimes called the president of the association).
- Roles and responsibilities of standing committees.
- Roles and responsibilities of paid staff, particularly the executive director (or similar title).
- Strategic thinking and planning.

Roles and Responsibilities of Association Members

In a successful association, the roles and responsibilities of members include paying their dues on time, attending meetings or conferences held by the association, participating in association activities, serving on committees, and promoting the association to colleagues.

But they also have a role and responsibilities in relation to *governing* the association. They participate actively in electing the officers, including Board of Directors, share ideas and opinions about key issues with the board members, and support board decisions.

Moreover, members are both customers and consumers of association products and services and owners of the association. Thinking as consumers, members may be inclined to concentrate on the many products and services they would

like to have available, but thinking as owners, members know the association must follow sound business practices in order to survive and prosper.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

At this time (July 2004), it is unclear what the status is of Iraqi law regarding independent associations. ARDI legal advisors are in the process of reviewing this issue.

The legal requirements vary from country to country. The example below is from Egypt, where several current ARDI specialists helped form and strengthen associations:

Example from Egypt

- BOD composed of odd number of at least five at most fifteen
- Elected by the association general assembly (membership)
- Term of 6 years; 1/3 re-elected every two years
- Cannot combine directorship with employment in a government entity supervising or application granting body
- BOD shall manage the affairs of the association
- BOD shall have a chair
- BOD shall hold at least one meeting every 3 months
- Meeting valid only if attended by a majority of BOD members
- BOD may appoint a manager of the association

Roles and Responsibilities of the Association Chair of the Board of Directors

In some associations, the Chair of the Board of Directors is elected by the general assembly and in others the board itself selects this person.

It should be noted here that the demise of many associations can be linked to the leadership of the Board Chair or Association President as the “one-man show.” This model usually does not result in a sustainable and successful association. The likelihood of an association’s success increases significantly when leadership is more of a team effort.

In an association wishing to promote a leadership model that is more of a team effort, the following duties are normally those handled by the Chair of the Board:

- Has a thorough understanding of the role of the board of directors and acts as a leader for this board as it carries out its responsibilities.
- Has vision for the future of the association and is able to express this in powerful and motivating ways.
- Plays key role in representing the association throughout the stakeholder community – is respected by this community and seen as credible with a good deal of experience in the business of the association.
- Represents the board of directors and association membership at appropriate external events involving the public, governmental officials or other key stakeholders.
- Has a comprehensive knowledge of all the key issues – problems and opportunities – of the association and is articulate in communicating about these issues.
- Works with the executive director to plan board of director meetings – builds the agenda and communicates with board members about the meetings.
- Leads all board of directors meetings.
- Communicates with all board members, making certain they are informed about key association issues.
- Ensures that members of the board work well together - able to explore and debate issues, comfortable with disagreement, able to compromise and reach agreement when decisions must be made.
- Sees that the board makes the decisions it needs to make. Has one vote on that board just like any other member.

- On behalf of the board works closely with the executive director to assist this individual and ensure that she/he is able to carry out their role.
- In coordination with the executive director maintains contact with appropriate governmental officials and other key stakeholders.
- Understands or seeks to understand the various perspectives of the members on key association issues.
- Communicates effectively with association members, conducts him/herself as the leader of the board of directors that was elected by these members.
- Motivates members to be active in the association, often recruiting them as a volunteer for association efforts.
- Exercises good judgment, inspires others, and operates at a high ethical and moral level.

The above list assumes that the association has hired an executive director; therefore, the responsibilities listed above are for a Board Chair in an association that has a paid executive director (see next section).

If there is no executive director, then the Board Chair normally handles both functions.

Roles and Responsibilities of Standing Committees

Few associations have sufficient money to hire enough staff to carry out all its work. Members must be organized into working groups, task forces, or committees to perform special functions for the association. These “standing” committees are the mechanism for participation by members, and as such are a very powerful and important part of any successful association.

A standing committee simply means it is a committee that exists year in and year out. Committee members may change, but the committee itself remains. Committees that are common to newly forming associations are: policy advocacy committee; By-laws committee; membership committee; and finance committee.

Role and Responsibilities of the Association Executive Director

It is common that newly formed associations, as they grow, soon hire an Executive Director that is responsible for providing leadership and managing the day-to-day work of the association. When an Executive Director is hired, there

will need to understanding and agreement around key issues of role definition, job descriptions, teamwork, and day-to-day management.

Establishing the proper relationship between the elected volunteer officers and the paid executive director is of major importance to the association.

Relationships – Board of Directors, Board Chair and Executive Director

- Role Definition: the Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. The Board Chair is the spokesperson for this body.
- Written Descriptions of Responsibilities (i.e., job descriptions) for each of these roles.
- Teamwork: these two individuals need to talk about and plan how they will work together – how often they will meet and what the agendas of these meetings should cover.
- Day-to-Day Management: the board chair should not micromanage, but should help the board monitor progress against the strategic plans.

The Executive Director works for and reports to the volunteer officers (Board of Directors). The following duties and authority are normally assigned to this Executive Director:

- Administers programs approved by the directors to promote and protect the welfare of the members.
- Prepares reports and agenda for board meetings, annual membership meetings, and other conferences or special meetings designated by directors.
- Is responsible for having minutes recorded of all meetings of the board of directors or other designated meetings of official bodies of the association.

- Develops and recommends new policies or changed policies for consideration by the directors and membership.
- Prepares and submits for the directors' consideration an operating budget for the organization's next fiscal year and maintains and administers proper accounting procedures for the receipt and disbursement of funds.
- Collects and disseminates all appropriate information that will be beneficial to members' business or professional activities.
- Hires personnel necessary to carry out association programs and services.
- Advises the board of directors on adjustments to unexpected changes in matters affecting industry, profession, or community.
- Assumes full responsibility for purchase of equipment and supplies necessary to maintain and carry out the association's operation.
- Originates and carries out a program of membership solicitation and retention.
- Has a comprehensive knowledge of the legislative, administrative, and technical policies and regulations governing operation of the association.
- Plans, directs, and organizes beneficial programs for association members in the field of management or technical subjects.
- Maintains contact with governmental officials and monitors legislative developments, operations, and actions of governmental agencies.
- Prepares and submits to the membership an annual report of the organizations activities and accomplishments.
- Prepares an annual financial report.
- Establishes regularly scheduled updates to an organization's external and internal policy manual for reference by leadership.
- Establishes job descriptions for all association staff employees.
- Prepares a staff policy manual reflecting the organization's internal policies.

- Maintains a close liaison with all news media.
- Exercises good judgment, inspires associates, and operates at a high ethical and moral level.

4. FORMING EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES

Individuals join an association because they believe in its purpose and mandate, and they believe that over the long run they will benefit from the accomplishments of the association.

For an association to be successful it must have active, interested, and enthusiastic members who are willing to invest their time, their skill, and their money (dues) toward the common interests the association represents. No association can hire paid staff to do all the work it wants done. Members volunteering to serve on committees do a good deal of the work of an association.

At the same time, committees staffed by volunteers must be seen by committee members as productive, enjoyable, and effective. If committee members don't feel their time is well spent, they will withdraw either entirely or partially from the committee.

Committee's Start-Up Meeting

At the time of a committee's first start-up meeting, its members will need to:

- Agree on the purpose of this committee.
- Clarify the responsibilities of committee members.
- Agree on the role of the committee chairperson or leader.
- Agree on norms for how members will work together.
- Agree on a "first draft" list of outcomes to achieve over the next 12 months.
- Agree on the date for the next meeting and its agenda – to review the draft list of outcomes from the start-up meeting, reach agreement on a final list of outcomes to achieve, and begin to develop an action plan.

Characteristics of an Effective Association

The Center for International Private Enterprise, from which much of the information in this manual derives, has worked with over 300 associations over the past fifteen years in sixty countries. The Center describes the characteristics of an effective association committee as follows:

- Has a written statement of purpose that all members have reviewed.

- Is chaired by an individual who guides the committee process.
- Consists of members who are interested, qualified, and compatible.
- Carefully plans its agenda.
- Approaches assignments one at a time.
- Has a sense of priorities and timing.
- Keeps thorough minutes and records.
- Is periodically infused with new members.
- Regularly evaluates its activities against its statement of purpose.

Developing Committee Operating Norms

Operating norms are principles or guidelines that committee members agree to follow when they work as a committee. Agreement on operating norms can help a committee be more effective and avoid conflicts.

Typically, committees develop operating norms around how often and when to have meetings, starting meetings on time, attending meetings, listening and honoring one another's opinion, confidentiality, how decisions will get made, and how work will be shared equally.

The committee members should revisit these agreements every six months to review how they were doing.

Reaching Agreement on Outcomes for the Next 12 Month Period

If the association has developed a strategic plan for the entire organization, it should be reviewed by each committee. It may be that several members of any given committee were involved in the development of the organization's strategic plan and can speak about it. Committee members should read the plan and discuss how it should guide this committee in its work over the next year.

After brainstorming possible outcomes (or achievements) that committee members would like to see over the next 12 month period, review and priorities the possibilities by asking for each which of the following three categories it falls under:

1. Very, very important. We must do this.
2. Important. We should do this.
3. Good to do, but could be postponed if we can't do it.

From this prioritization, committee members should make a list of the items that fall in the category – very, very important.

The next question is: can we do all these things? The committee will need to be realistic in its planning. It is easy in planning sessions to overestimate what can be accomplished, only to find in implementation that committee members are discouraged because they can't achieve all that they had intended.

Developing Detailed Plans for Each Outcome

More detailed plans will need to be developed for how the committee wants to approach each of the priority items on its “very, very important” list. It is expected that the committee will do this in subsequent meetings.

The following meeting format for developing detailed plans is recommended.

1. Priority Outcome.
2. List the steps needed to accomplish this.
3. Decide who will work on each step.
4. Agree on a time line for completion.

5. STRATEGIC THINKING AND PLANNING

Associations that think and plan strategically are better focused, have better member commitment and participation, and achieve better results than those that are more reactive in nature.

Planning is important because it causes discussion, debate, and generates consensus among the association leaders about direction and priorities. Good planning requires consensus building, which is an integral part of an effective association.

Associations should not be predominantly “top-down” structures. In reality, these organizations by their very nature are consensus organisms. If this consensus breaks down, it will have a negative impact on results.

It is important that effective strategic thinking and planning result in:

- An agreed upon mission statement that answers questions such as:
 - What kind of organization is this?
 - Why does it exist and whom does it serve?
- Agreed upon strategic objectives that determine future direction over the next 3 to 4 years
- Agreed upon organizational structure that is both feasible and desirable
- Agreed upon plans (action items) for what the association will do in the upcoming year and who will be responsible

The point of strategic thinking and planning is to imagine a feasible and desirable future and plan in a careful way how best to reach that future. Strategic planning is not an evaluation framework, rather it is a planning framework that should be kept clear, easy to explain and remember so that it guides the organization to its desired future in very practical ways.

Common Terms Used in Strategic Thinking and Planning

Association members need a common vocabulary to use in strategic thinking and planning. The following terms are widely used:

Strategy

Carefully considered general approaches to fulfilling the purpose of the organization. Takes into account the current situation, creates a vision of the future, and develops approaches for how to reach that desired future.

Goal

Broad statement describing what the organization intends to achieve. A goal is usually broad enough to remain relevant for more than one year. An organization usually has several goals that it intends to achieve over the next 3 to 5 years.

Objective

A statement that describes the more specific, time-bound, intentions of an achievement. An objective is narrower than a goal and is often for a shorter time frame. It is usually stated as a measurable outcome that if achieved will help attain the broader goal to which it is related.

Actions

Statements of actions or tasks that must be completed in accomplishing the objective. Usually these actions or tasks are defined for the upcoming 12 months

Developing a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a written and agreed-upon statement that describes the organization, identifies whom it serves, and clearly states the organization's purpose in fifty words or less.²

The following is an example of a mission statement from the Egyptian Seed Association (ESAS) and another from the National Association of Women Business Owners:

Mission Statement Example – ESAS

ESAS is a non-profit association organized by private sector seed producers and traders to represent their common interests. The ultimate goal is to create a liberalized and integrated seed industry conducive to private investment for the benefit of Egyptian farmers, exports, and agriculture.

Mission Statement Example – NAWBO

The mission of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) is to strengthen the wealth-creating capacity of our members and promote economic development to create innovative and effective

² Etcheberry, Suzanne, "A Tool for Building a Better Business Association". CIPE (Center for International Private Enterprise) taken from their web site www.cipe.org

change in the business culture; to build alliances, coalitions and affiliations; and to transform public policy and influence opinion makers.³

Some organizations also develop a vision statement, which describes an anticipated future condition to which the organization aspires. Examples of this: “The Chamber of Commerce will unify the business community and optimize an environment conducive to commerce and industry.”⁴

Some organizations have a statement of purpose in the mission statement and a sentence describing the anticipated future condition. The second sentence in the ESAS mission statement is an example.

Most importantly, a mission statement should be memorable and inspiring.

Developing Goals

Goals are written statements developed by association members of what they believe their organization should focus on and achieve over the next 2 to 3 years. Goals should be “big picture” items and most associations will have four to eight strategic goals at any given time.

Because goals determine the future direction for the organization, the following questions should be asked of every set of “draft” goals:

- Are these goal areas aligned with our organizational mission?
- Are these goals of interest to our larger stakeholder community?
- Have we been overly optimistic? Are these goal areas achievable?

Developing Objectives for Each Goal

The next step is to develop the objectives or accomplishments they believe will be necessary to achieve each goal. The objectives for each goal should meet the following criteria:

- Is the objective possible given the resources (time and money) we have.
- If we can't do all these objectives, which are most essential.
- Which ones will bring the most value.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Milner, Larry S. et.al. *Business Associations for the 21st Century, A Blueprint for the Future*. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Washington, D.C., 1997

Developing Plans for the Next 12 Month Period

Once objectives are developed and agreed to, the next step in strategic thinking and planning is to identify the priority actions that need to be taken over the next 12-month period that will ensure that objectives are being achieved.

For each action, there will need to be agreement on “who” will be responsible for carrying out it out. These agreements should be documented.

Questions to ask once “draft” actions have been developed are the following:

- Can these actions realistically be achieved over the next 12 months?
- Have we been too ambitious? If so, which are the most essential to accomplish first?
- How do we want to monitor how we are doing?

For an example of a strategic plan, see Appendix A – Strategic Plan for the Egyptian Seed Association.

6. CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Policy advocacy is the presentation of a case to promote an “interest” or a perspective. It is concerned with bringing about change. It has two key aims:

- To carry out a long-term process of affecting changes in target audiences’ views on a wide range of issues.
- To influence the legislative process so that laws and regulations are enacted that support that “interest”.

Most associations will have some type of advocacy as a major goal. Trade associations want to make certain that government actions encourage appropriate growth of the private sector. An association that is active in advocating for favorable public policy should have a work plan that identifies, analyzes and advocates for improved laws and regulations that affect its members.

Creating and implementing an advocacy program will require that leadership think through these issues:

- What governmental and/or international laws, policies, regulations, and procedures constrain the growth of our industry?
- What are the impacts of these constraints?
- What new laws, policies, regulations, and procedures are needed that will encourage the growth of our industry?
- Which areas of reform (constraints and opportunities) are most important to do something about?
- What reform actions by the government will bring about desired change?
- Which reform action(s) will have the most impact? Which reform action(s) do we feel we can realistically expect to bring about?
- What are the necessary steps for the association to take to bring about the reform action? What tools or strategies do we need to develop?
- How might we work in partnership with the government?

Association members and leaders will need to work together to develop a policy agenda for the organization that best serves its members, and to select and use the appropriate advocacy methods and tactics to achieve this agenda.

Why Policy Advocacy Is Important

In market-driven economies, government can either help or hurt the expansion of business enterprises. The role of associations is to make certain that government encourages business growth. Government actions affect the operations of business either positively or negatively. Influencing the passage of better laws or helping to repeal unfair regulations is an important role for associations. Unnecessary regulations increase the costs of production, and slow-moving bureaucracies hinder the ability of a business to take advantage of market opportunities.

Governmental and business groups should work together as partners with a common goal – improving the living conditions of all people by creating additional job opportunities. Effective governmental policies encourage investment, entrepreneurship and help create economic growth. When a strong case can be made for or against a particular policy by showing how the policy affects a certain business, government officials will usually listen and make informed decisions.

Public policy advocacy is a very useful way to explain the effects of a law on the citizens. Many times government officials do not have the time or resources to enough background study to understand all the perspectives of every issue that comes before the legislative body.

Components of Effective Policy Advocacy for Associations

1. Listen to Members

To form a policy advocacy agenda, seek input from the members of your association. Ask them what laws or regulations need to be changed. A good way to develop a public policy program that is supported by members is to carefully survey what members have to say about how laws and regulations are affecting their business operations.

It is important that the association's advocacy agenda truly reflects the opinions of the members. It is a grave mistake when association executives form or appear to be forming an advocacy agenda that is based on their own personal political agendas.

2. Use a Step-by-Step Approach to Developing an Advocacy Agenda

Many associations establish a public policy committee to analyze legislative and regulatory issues. In newly formed associations, the Board often plays this role.

Paid association staff should gather appropriate legal and economic information and prepare issue briefs for the committee or Board to use in their deliberations. An issue brief is a one or two-page document that concisely explains the problem, outlines what actions could be taken that would have a positive effect on the problem, and describes the reasons why others might support or oppose this action.

The committee or Board should use these briefs in analyzing the issues and developing preliminary advocacy positions.

Components of Effective Policy Advocacy

Listen to members

Use a step-by-step approach to develop the policy agenda

- *Establish a policy committee*
- *Gather information; create policy briefs*
- *Develop preliminary advocacy positions*
- *Select which issues to pursue (involve members)*
- *Selected issues become the policy agenda*
- *Board approves*

Know the legislative process; get involved with it

Contact key lawmakers and government officials

Insist on integrity from association leaders and members

Build coalitions with other interest groups

Using the issues and the preliminary advocacy positions, the committee should make priority recommendations on which issues are most important and which issues the association can really influence. It will be very important to gain member input and support for these priorities through communication and discussion meetings.

Once priority issues have been agreed upon and the policy advocacy positions are agreed upon and clearly stated the list should be presented to the Board for approval. Once adopted by the Board, the positions become the policy advocacy agenda for the association. Associations must be seen externally as a single

unified voice for the industry. It must not break up into the representation of a few special interests of a few companies or individuals.

3. Know the Legislative Process and Get Involved With It

An association wanting to influence the lawmaking process must understand the details of how the legislative body works. This, of course, differs from country to country, but all governments have established traditions and entrenched proceedings to which lawmakers adhere. The association must know how to use hearings, legislative debates and proceedings to their advantage.

Associations wanting to influence the legislative process should find opportunities to be involved in this process. There are a number of ways to do this. Several are listed below:

- The association can disseminate information to members, legislative leaders, governmental officials, news media and the general public about the need for legislative reform.
- The association can create the forum for government officials and members of the business community to discuss how the proposed regulations or laws can affect the economy.
- The association can provide guidance for its members on how to contact politicians and government officials directly.
- The association can prepare its leadership to testify before appropriate governing bodies.

4. Contact Key Lawmakers and Government Officials

An effective method of direct advocacy is sitting with key persons in the legislative process to present the case for the association's policy agenda. Of course, it is important to prepare carefully for such a meeting. It will be necessary to be brief and concise, present the facts, and be truthful. Ask for their support. Try to get a commitment for a particular vote.

Many associations ask their members to contact appropriate officials by letter, phone, or fax. They often provide the content of the letter or fax for the member. It will be important that the member speaks for her/himself as a private citizen, not for the association. The leadership should always represent the association.

5. Insist on Integrity from Association Leaders and Members

Effective advocacy requires that associations develop carefully considered positions on public issues. Government officials should be able to expect from an advocacy group an honest presentation of the facts based on good research.

Deception never works in the long run. Using inflated figures, untrue analogies, or false data will cause enormous problems. Once an association is seen as factually or truthfully unreliable, their ability to influence the political process has been severely damaged.

Some associations develop a set of clear, agreed upon member's business practice guidelines that go hand-in-hand with advocacy efforts. This can help to ensure that the association is seen as transparent and honest in its dealings with the government.

6. *Build Coalitions with Other Interest Groups*

Coalitions with other special interest groups can broaden the base of support for a particular position. Associations need to find like-minded partners with whom they can ally to form a special purpose coalition. Partnering around one issue is possible even if the interests groups do not at all agree on other issues.

Suggested Tools and Methods for Advocacy

To advocate is to plead for or make a case for a cause publicly. It is to espouse a cause by argument. In many ways it is the construction of an argument. Advocacy for an association includes the gathering of information that will support a particular position and the preparation and dissemination of this information in ways that can inform and persuade others.

For each major issue concerning governmental laws and regulations affecting the businesses of the members of the association, there needs to careful analysis. Of course, different issues will require emphasis on different elements of the advocacy process; however, the main steps of analysis would include the following:

1. What is the issue to be advocated for?
2. Who does it affect?
3. What is the status of any legislation regarding it? (Does any exist or not? Is it in the form of an old law/decreed? Is there any legislation being developed?)
4. What is this association's ideal position?
5. What are the arguments to support this position?
6. Who/what are the individuals or bodies that will be the decision-makers on this issue?

7. Are these individuals likely to be for or against our position? If “for”, how best could we recruit their assistance? If “against”, how best could we make them neutral change their minds?
8. Who can bring positive influence to bear on the situation?
9. What are the implications for agriculture (or appropriate sector) by not agreeing with our position?
10. Is there a compromise position, which we will accept?
11. What time scale is realistic to achieve change?
12. Which tools would be appropriate for this issue?
13. How will we make certain we have the support of a majority of our members?
14. How will we monitor our progress within government or follow up on inactivity?

Some common tools used for advocacy are:

- **Verbal** – informal conversations with deciders (governmental officials) to assess government views on a particular issue involve them in the advocacy process or provide advance notice of your position.
- **Written** – studies to research a particular issue to help in developing a position; position papers on an issue to outline arguments backing your position; formal policy papers to recommend legislative change; briefing notes to key target audiences; resolutions passed by the association and formally passed to the government body; and member newsletters outlining main objectives, current issues and efforts to resolve them.
- **Organizational** – workshops to discuss issues and develop arguments; formal training sessions for groups involved with reform; involvement of the association in all relevant government committees to provide a representative private sector voice; and inviting officials to relevant parts of association meetings to participate in discussions.
- **External influencers such as the media** – if involved selectively, the media can be of great benefit in advocacy campaigns. They can influence ideas, prepare the ground for presenting an argument, ensure wide awareness amongst key audiences, and help publicize

successful achievements in order to help stop backsliding by government.

In working with the media, it is important to identify independent journalists and publications; develop a relationship through informal briefings on your industry, providing background information on size, key sectors, main issues facing the industry, key factors for development; prepare press releases on specific issues of concern to obtain editorial coverage on your position; carry out interviews on major issues; and keep journalists interested by occasional update on issue progress.

Developing an Advocacy Agenda

An advocacy agenda for your association is composed of these parts:

1. Identification of the legal and regulatory issues the association has determined it will work on and why they are important.
2. A description of the position that the association has taken regarding the issue – what it is advocating.
3. A list of advocacy activities that will be undertaken for each issue.
4. The advocacy agenda has been approved by the Board.

Key questions in developing the agenda may include the following:

- What is the legal/regulatory issue or problem?
- Whom does this issue affect (either positively or negatively)?
- What is the status of any legislation connected to the issue?
- What should be the association's ideal position?
- What are the arguments to support this?
- Who/what are the individuals or bodies that will be decision-makers on the issue?
- Will they be for or against our position?
- How could we best influence them?

See Appendix B for an example of the advocacy agenda for the Egyptian Seed Association (ESAS).

Developing an Action Plan for Implementing the Agenda

Once an agenda has been agreed to, the next step is to identify and agree on the activities that will be undertaken to implement the advocacy agenda.

These agreements should also identify who is responsible for seeing that the activities get done. Often these responsibilities are done partly with the association paid staff and partly with volunteers. If there is no paid staff, then the entire thing will need to be done by Board members or other volunteers. If that is the case, then the number of activities they undertake will need to be reasonable. Most Board members and volunteers have other jobs.

7. BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

An association must communicate the positive contributions it is making to both its members and the greater public. The right information can sell the benefits or value added by the association, and it can demonstrate the organization's ability to accomplish desired goals and achieve policy agendas.

Many associations generate a good deal of information for members, such as marketing, pricing, industry trends, etc. Making this information available to members is an important service. The following can be an important part of a good communication program:

- Defining the core messages that the association wants to communicate to its members and the public
- Determining the information that it will provide members as a service or benefit of membership
- Establishing a communication committee – clarifying its roles and responsibilities, and helping it become operational
- Creating a communication plan for a one or two year time frame, including the mechanisms that will be used

The best communication programs come about when association leaders and members work together – teamwork – to develop the program, and to continuously craft the messages that are valued by their audiences.

Elements of an Effective Communication Program

- Develop through good teamwork – association leaders and members
- Identify major audiences for the association
- Develop key messages for each audience
- Select most appropriate communication tool for conveying messages
- Develop and implement a communications plan

Why Communication Is Important

By using the term *communication*, we mean the approach, strategy, and tools used by an association to tell its story to its members, stakeholders, and the general public. This includes publicity for the association, public affairs, marketing, and advertising.

An effective association will need to be purposeful about communicating with its key constituencies. It is important that association members, other stakeholders, and the general public know about the organization's mandate, its goals, and the positive contributions it is making to the economy and society as a whole. The association must be seen as honest, credible, and effective in achieving its goals.

A communications program conveys this information in interesting and compelling ways. Good communication helps members know the benefits they are gaining from their fees and keeps them motivated to participate; it helps government officials understand the purpose of the organization and where it stands on key issues; and it helps the general public understand how the organization contributes toward a better livelihood for everyone.

An Effective Communication Program

- An association needs to be purposeful about communicating with its key constituencies.
- It is extremely important that members, other stakeholders, and the public have opportunities to know about the organization's mandate, its goals, and the positive contributions it is making to the economy and society as a whole.
- The association must be seen as honest, credible, and effective in achieving its goals.
- A communications program purposefully sets about conveying this information in ways that others see as interesting, meaningful, and valuable.

Identify Major Audiences

Each association has several major audiences. Obviously, members are a very important audience. Other audiences may be government officials and politicians – those individuals you need to influence or persuade so they support your policy positions. Another audience may be advocacy groups that do not agree with

your positions. The general public is always an audience. They will be interested in the contributions you are making to society as a whole.

Each association should identify who it believes to be its major audiences – those who need to be kept informed about the association, the progress it is making, and its contributions to the greater good.

Develop Key Messages for Each Audience

The term “message” is used to describe in a broad sense the vision and goals of the association. The message can tell of activities and achievements of volunteer workers, or it may argue a particular point of view or explain a program. It is the essence of the written or oral communication, the core meaning of what the organization is trying to accomplish.⁵

For your audience...

Identify the “interests” of this audience vis-à-vis your association

Define what this audience might expect, need or want from the association – what are their opinions and perspectives about our mandate and the issues and topics with which we will be working. If the association is to communicate effectively with a specific audience, we need to know what its interests are – how they might understand or experience the work of the association.

Describe how you want this audience to “view” your association

How does the association want this stakeholder or audience to feel, believe, and understand about it, its mandate, and its position?

List the key “messages” that your association should communicate to this audience

What does the association need to communicate to this audience in order for them to view the association as it wants to be viewed?

An important part of communicating effectively with audiences is carefully crafting the key messages that will be essential for that particular audience to hear.

Behind a well crafted key message is a good understanding of the audience – what their concerns and aspirations are, how they tend to relate or react to critical issues, how credible they believe the association to be, etc. Carefully crafted messages convey the essence of what needs to be said: 1) in ways the

⁵ Milner, Larry L. et.al. *Business Associations for the 21st Century, A Blueprint for the Future*. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Washington, D.C., 1997

audience can easily understand, 2) with words that convey positive outcomes, and 3) in ways that are memorable.

Effective communication is truthful. Associations that tell partial truths, distort the facts, or make unfounded claims will in the long run have serious problems. It is essential that audiences believe and trust in what the association is saying.

Select Most Appropriate Communication Tools for Conveying Messages

There are many tools to use to convey messages. The most appropriate ones will be those that fit the needs of your association and the requirements of your audiences.

Determinate Appropriate Communication Tools for Each Audience

- Consider both the nature of this audience and key messages you want to communicate
- Consider the resources that are realistically available
- Identify which communication tool(s) you recommend

The communication committee can work to identify the most commonly available tools, and of those, the tools that are the most essential. Committee members will need to agree on priorities – perhaps a list of what tools must be used, and another list of tools that the association ought to use and will if it can.

Following is a partial list of communication tools.⁶

⁶ Milner, Larry S. et.al. *Business Associations for the 21st Century, A Blueprint for the Future*. Page 108. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Washington, D. C. 1997.

- Face-to-face discussion
- Speeches
- Interviews
- Web Sites
- Telephone calls
- Questionnaires
- Letters
- Press releases
- Media contacts
- Media background briefings
- Television/radio news interviews or talk shows
- Featured articles in newspapers
- Letters to the editor
- Opinion articles on editorial pages
- Brochures and flyers
- Paid for advertising in mass media
- Magazine articles
- Special research reports on trends
- Policy papers on political issues
- Academic and scientific journals
- Books
- Photographs
- Videotapes
- Bulletin boards
- Membership solicitation
- Call-to-action mailings
- Newsletters

Association meetings or events can serve as communication tools. The following are examples:

- Fairs
- Trade exhibits
- Awards banquets
- Special lectures
- Political debates
- Town hall meetings
- Annual meetings of the association
- Committee meetings
- Workshops on issues, laws, regulations
- Business subject seminars
- Tours of members' plants and offices

Working with the Media

The media – newspapers, radio and television – can be helpful to an association by accurately reporting about association purpose and current activities. Of course, the media sees its role as objectively reporting the news. While you may not be able to tell the media what to say, you can make sure they are well informed about your issues. The following are suggestions for working effectively with the media:

- Keep a current list of key media that cover agriculture – newspapers, radio, TV, or magazines – and the individual reporters who report on agriculture. Update this list at least once a year.

- Take the initiative to develop a good working relationship with each of these key people. If you don't know who these individuals are, call the editor or other person in charge and find out who reports on agriculture or business. Call this person, introduce yourself and set up a time to meet. Provide a media information packet that includes information about the association, biographical data on key members or the Board (with their permission), fact sheets on the association, etc.
- Maintain the good media working relationships you have established. Quarterly, schedule time to call and visit with each of the people who cover agricultural news. Provide information on national issues involving agri-business. Send them position papers on critical industry issues. Describe the effect these issues might have on the country. Educate yourself about the interests and needs of the reporters covering agri-business. For example, know their deadlines and what kind of stories they have typically written about agri-business. Monitor their concerns, attitudes and opinions.
- Write and send out one news release every month or two. Don't expect your release to be published unless you make personal contact with the editor or reporter.
- Make certain you return all phone calls. Prepare yourself for the possibility that you will be interviewed by the reporter. If asked for an interview: a) find out the topic of the interview and agree to call back in 30 to 60 minutes; b) consider your own objectives from the interview; c) prepare your response; and d) return the call.
- Invite the media to special events to create awareness that your association is getting results and making an impact.⁷

Newsletters

Newsletters can be a very effective communication tool. Many associations send newsletters to their members on a regular basis. These newsletters can be one page in length, short but multiple pages with simple layout, or a full-color production with text, pictures and graphs. They do not have to be fancy, glossy, or expensive.

Newsletters keep members informed about what is going on – upcoming meetings, interesting issues, progress on advocacy issues or other association goals, changes in staff, election of officers, and other activities or achievements of the organization.

⁷ *Essential Skills in Public Affairs*, A TRG Training Program provided to the Cable Television Industry in the United States, 1992-1998.

It is important to remember that people are busy and do not have time to read everything they might want. The newsletter must catch their attention and be interesting and easy to read. Members like to read about themselves or other members in the newsletter. It is a good idea to place articles and pictures of what the members are doing. It is a good place to recognize and appreciate the activities and accomplishments of volunteers.

Working with Government

The previous chapter on creating and implementing an advocacy program speaks of the importance of establishing and maintaining good relationships with government officials. Certainly, a part of your communication plan must include how you will work with government. Following are suggestions:

- Develop a list of government officials that are connected to your industry.
- Get to know what issues are critically important to them, as well as what issues are of mutual importance to their constituents and your members.
- Take the initiative to introduce yourself to critical government officials. Set up a meeting to introduce yourself. Provide an information packet on your association.
- Have a regular and routine approach to communicating with key government officials. Schedule time to meet with them to brief them on key issues of concern to your members. Routinely distribute written reports on new information or policy positions developed by the association. Compile and send copies of favorable news articles that mention your association.
- Take personal responsibility for calls and contacts from important government officials. Respond to them promptly.
- Attend appropriate meetings and forums. Educate yourself on procedures and how items get put on the agenda. Know key officials by sight and help them remember you.
- Invite government officials to special meetings and events. It will help build their awareness of your association as a very player in regulatory and policy reform areas.⁸

⁸ Ibid.

Working Groups, Stakeholder Workshops, and Policy Roundtables

One of the most effective means of communicating a message is through face-to-face discussions in technical or policy working groups, stakeholder workshops, and policy roundtables. Associations that communicate effectively know how to make meetings, workshops and roundtables an effective communication tool.

The following are suggestions for making these kinds of events effective:

- Consider carefully who should attend and the ideal size of the group for the planned event. This choice is often made by first determining the hoped-for outcomes of the event.
- Send out early notices of the event – 7 to 10 days in advance is ideal for most events. Major workshops involving large numbers may require more days advance notice. Then follow up with a phone call as a reminder. Work hard to make certain you get the right attendance you want.
- Make certain that people know the purpose of the event. Provide with the invitation an overview of the agenda topics, where the event will be held, starting and ending times, and the types of participants who are being invited, e.g., private sector producers and processors, government policy-makers from MOA and MOT, donor representatives, etc.
- Pay close attention to the room arrangements. The room should be large enough to accommodate the group, including, for larger events, the capacity for break-out working group discussions (i.e., concurrent small group discussions slotted in between plenary sessions). Tables large enough for six-seven chairs are ideal, either round or rectangular. If too large or long, however, it will be difficult for the table group to hold a “collective” discussion; rather, the table discussion will break down.
- Participants will appreciate it if you can offer coffee, tea, soft drinks and snacks.
- Start and end on time.
- Make certain that the meeting begins with introductions of participants. Then share meeting goals or purpose and the agenda. Make certain that someone is assigned to facilitate the meeting. They should concentrate on making sure that everyone is participating, that discussions are moving at the appropriate speed, and that conclusions or agreements are recorded.
- The meeting should end by summarizing conclusions and agreements, identifying next steps, and thanking everyone for their contribution.

- Make sure the meetings are enjoyable – lively, positive, with appropriate humor. People will love to come to your events if they see them as useful and enjoyable.

Developing a Communications Plan

Undoubtedly your association's communication needs will be greater than the resources you have to devote to it. Therefore, you will want to be purposeful about what you do and what you are unable to do, and what resources available to implement such a plan. Above all, the plan should be feasible.

New associations don't need to have a long, difficult to implement plan. Association leaders and members should agree on what they feel can be done and then plan how they will do that.

The following items describe steps for creating a communication plan for associations:

- Many associations prefer to establish a communication committee to be responsible for developing the plan.

Steps to Develop a Communications Plan

1. Review the mission statement
2. Review the strategic plan
3. List the major opportunities and problems confronting the association
4. Determine which activities are the most important to promote
5. Identify key target audiences the association needs to influence
6. Develop major messages for each audience
7. Decide which communication tools are most appropriate for us
8. List the steps necessary to use these communication tools
9. Write up the plan
10. Get approval
11. Agree on how and when to monitor and revise if needed

- Review the association's mission statement to make certain all communication efforts reflect the organization's philosophy.
- Review the strategic plan to make certain all areas of the organization are receiving attention and that the communication plan is coordinated with other organizational strategies (especially with advocacy strategies).
- List the major opportunities and problems confronting the association.

- Set priorities to determine which are the most important activities or programs to promote.
- Identify the key target audiences that the association needs to influence.
- Develop major messages for each target audience.
- Consider the most appropriate communication tools to use, taking into account available resources.
- List the steps that are necessary to implement the plan, including who is responsible.
- Write up the plan.
- Get required approval of the plan (Board of Directors or the association Executive Director).
- Review and revise the plan periodically.
- Survey occasionally to see how your messages are being received.

8. OTHER CRITICAL PRIORITIES FOR NEW ASSOCIATIONS

Recruiting and Maintaining a Membership Base

For associations to be successful, the leadership must concentrate on how they will recruit new members and how they will retain members. Attracting new members and keeping them can be time consuming, but attention must be focused on these activities in order to ensure building a solid future.

It will be important that associations think through the following as they develop their recruitment/retention practices:

- What will people perceive as the value they receive from being a member of our association and how will we get this information?
- Membership Committee – how would this work and do we want to do this?
- What are the qualifications and entry requirements for members?
- How should we do membership solicitation?
- Membership turnover is very costly, how do we avoid this?

Building a Strong Financial Base

Associations that are newly forming must use good financial planning to make certain they are realistically projecting both revenue and operating costs.

Revenue projections based on realistic funding, either from donor sources, member dues, and paid services are essential. Based on expected revenue, the association can then build its operating agenda knowing what it can afford to do and what it cannot.

If donor funds are a part of this financial base, then the association should begin at once to plan how it will be able to operate once donor funds are no longer available.

Associations must also do a thorough and accurate reporting of the organization's assets and liabilities. Funds must be accounted for in a legal and transparent manner.

Determining good financial management practices requires thinking through how the organization will:

- Generate revenue in both the short and longer term.
-
- Build an operating plan that is linked to strategic plans and action items.
- Build an annual budget for the operating plan based on revenue available and anticipated operating costs.
-
- Create financial reserves.
-
- Generate required financial statements.
-
- Comply with appropriate laws.
-

Using Effective Techniques for Building Consensus and Resolving Conflicts

Associations operate on the basis of participation of its members. Members are both customers and consumers of the organization's products and services, and owners of the association. Members elect the Board of Directors, members serve on committees and members help make critical financial and programmatic decisions - active, interested, and enthusiastic members are essential.

Consensus is the very heart of an association. If this consensus or the trust in the consensus process is lost, the association will begin to decline.

Consensus within an association can be lost for any number of reasons. Among the more common are differences on a major issue facing the industry, dues structures, program development, and the style and perceived competence and honesty of the leadership.

Broken consensus can be very damaging to an issues-driven association where members look to it for representation in legislative and regulatory reform. The credibility of issues-driven associations is measured in proportion to the percentage of the industry they claim to represent. Once questions arise as to whether an association can truly speak on behalf of a sector, access to decision makers can suffer.

Association leadership must work to build consensus, moving quickly to resolve any conflicts that arise. It will be important to:

- Purposefully formulate overall strategies for building and maintaining consensus.
- Consistently plan and facilitate working groups, stakeholder workshops and roundtables that encourage member input into key industry and organizational issues.

- Organize and facilitate debate and dialogue around difficult issues
- Communicate about issues so that members have sufficient information to be and stay involved.
- Confront conflict quickly and constructively, using techniques that allow for all sides of the issue to be heard
- Use techniques that encourage compromise

Appendix A

Strategic Plan for the Egyptian Seed Association

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EGYPTIAN SEED ASSOCIATION⁹

The Egyptian Seed Association (ESAS) has a strategic plan characterized as a 3-year vision that consists of six main goals or objectives and a number of sub-objectives. The following is a partial representation of that strategic plan which can be used as an example of how a strategic plan might be formulated. All six goals/objectives are listed; however, the sub objectives and actions are listed only for the first goal. You will note the terminology they use is slightly different from goals/objectives/actions. They use objectives, accomplishment, and tasks for the next 12 months. The point is the three levels are important, not what each is called.

Objective 1: To improve the legal, regulatory, and competitive environment in the seed sub-sector.

Objective 2: To adopt new technologies and arrangements in seed production, processing, trade, and quality control to expand farmer adoption of high-quality seed of high-yielding crop and horticulture varieties.]

Objective 3: To establish an effective partnership with Government of Egypt decision-making bodies affecting the seed sub-sector.

Objective 4: To establish an industry code of ethics and ensure member compliance.

Objective 5: To expand ESAS's membership base to cover all seed-related activities.

Objective 6: To expand financial resources to carry out ESAS activities.

⁹ Delouch, James C. and Way, Anthony. "Egyptian Seed Association Mission, Agenda and Services" Report No. 49. Agriculture Policy Reform Project. Cairo Egypt. 1998

Objective 1: To improve the legal, regulatory, and competitive environment in the seed sub-sector.

Achievements (Sub Objectives) 1: Implement decree limiting the government's role to the production of breeder seeds and their maintenance programs.

Tasks for the next 12 months:

- Prepare study of the role of GOE in seed production and distribution and propose policy changes.
- Initiate dialogue with GOE in coordination with APRP

Achievement (Sub Objective) 2: An announced government policy for seed production that encourages the private sector to perform the governmental role in seed production to fully cover all crops with a definite time schedule.

Tasks for the next 12 months

- Prepare study of the private sector capabilities in full coverage of seed production and distribution for all crops.

Achievement (Sub Objective) 3: MALR offers all breeder seeds for all new varieties to registered private sector companies via a competitive process, with safeguards to prevent any dominant company from winning most of the varieties.

Tasks for the next 12 months

- Participatory workshops with GOE personnel
- Prepare and publicize a position paper as part of an advocacy campaign
- Initiate dialogue with GOE in coordination with APRP

Achievement (Sub Objective) 4: The extension service concentrates on its role in the promotion of awareness about high quality seeds and provides technical information on all registered varieties.

Tasks for the next 12 months

- Prepare a study on the roles of the extension service and other government agencies in seed promotion and distribution.
- Initiate dialogue with GOE in coordination with APRP
- Conduct participatory workshop with GOE representatives

Achievement (Sub Objective) 5: Transparent seed policies and regulations

Tasks for the next 12 months

- Assess transparency of seed policies and regulations
- Monitor new issues
- Initiate dialogue with government in coordination with APRP

Achievement (Sub Objective) 6: Propose needed changes to existing and proposed seed laws, ministerial decrees, policies and regulations to improve the legal, regulatory and competitive environment

Tasks for the next 12 months

- Monitor and analyze proposed legislation
- Propose legislative changes through analytical processes leading to the design of new legislation for submission to GOE
- Initiate dialogue with government in coordination with APRP

Achievement (Sub Objective) 7: Achieve uniform application of rules and regulations governing the seed sector

Tasks for the next 12 months

- Identify key measures for uniform application, determine key GOE decision-makers, and provide suggestions to GOE on implementation.
- Collect and disseminate all laws, decrees and regulations governing the seed sub-sector.
- Initiate dialog with government in coordination with APRP

Appendix B

Advocacy Agenda for the Egyptian Seed Association (ESAS)

**EGYPTIAN SEED ASSOCIATION (ESAS)
DRAFT AGENDA FOR LEGAL AND REGULATORY REFORM
ADVOCACY RECOMMENDATIONS**

***Note:** This is an excerpt that is intended to demonstrate how an advocacy plan or agenda might look. The actual ESAS document continues for several pages.*

Introduction

These activities are general guidelines for ESAS to follow. Each issue will need further examination and more specific steps developed as it is taken up for advocacy. It should be remembered that, as well as trying to cause legislative change in these activities, ESAS is developing a corporate identity and recognition for itself as an organization.

Newsletter

An advocacy and communications tool that ESAS will find useful for a number of these issues is a newsletter. This could take the form of a simple, black and white photocopied document that does the following:

- Always states that ESAS wants to represent the entire seed sector in Egypt, and welcomes new members with suitable qualifications
- Outlines the major issues ESAS is currently advocating for and the position the association holds on each
- Considers other potential legislative and policy issues that the government or ESAS are considering for the future, to try to get debate underway within the association early
- Ensures that members are informed of advocacy successes (and failures), and outlines the next steps involved in ensuring that change happens.

Step-by-Step Advocacy Recommendations for ESAS Agenda List

Seed Law Revision

- ESAS to identify individuals or bodies responsible for Assembly time tabling and submission of legislation (sponsoring department, MALR, Chairman of Agriculture and Irrigation Committee)
- Ensure through the ESAS Board that all members support the measures included in the Seed Law Revision
- Prepare letter from ESAS listing member company names and signed by the Board expressing the association's support for these measures and its importance to the development of Egyptian agriculture and the private sector.

- Seek meetings with the Committee Chairman and Minister to present the letter
- Monitor developments through the Committee Chairman to check progress
- Repeat meetings if necessary to continue to maintain pressure
- When passed, prepare a newsletter edition to inform members and main non-members of the exact changes and ESAS's part so the private sector has the same information. (This demonstrates that ESAS is working on behalf of its members, and ensures that there is clarity about how the law now stands.)

ESAS Representation on GOE/MALR Councils

- ESAS to review existing involvement with councils, and identify others on which ESAS is yet to be represented
- For both existing and new councils, ESAS working group to examine councils' Terms of References and discuss/establish ESAS agenda (what ESAS wants to get out of each council) and opportunities for influencing
- Identify suitable ESAS members to represent the association and ensure that they fully understand and comply with ESAS' agenda. Councils should not be used to further individual ends of the representative
- Agree and undertake elections of individuals to represent ESAS.
- Board to undertake application to "new" councils for membership
- Each individual to request an opportunity to outline ESAS' activities and how it can assist the council concerned. This reinforces the point that it is ESAS being represented, not an individual company.

Privatization of Seed Production and Supply

Seed production and supply privatization is clearly one of the most critical issues facing the Egyptian private sector. The media should be used carefully by ESAS to help promote and support this liberalization – it forms an additional push to the Seed Privatization Committee's work. Exact media involvement would require additional consideration, but general recommendations are:

- Select and brief a small number of responsible journalists representing printed media, radio and TV on the background to and expectations of a privatized seed sector
- Inform the journalists of general ESAS activities to support the government's privatization efforts.
- After meetings with the Seed Privatization Committee and obtaining the results of submission of Ministerial petitions to reaffirm the government's privatization policy, brief the media again in order to obtain extensive coverage. This informs all members and non-

- members of the reaffirmation and ESAS's involvement in this success, and it will help to ensure no "backsliding" by the government.
- As a related campaign, consider providing all ESAS members and main non-members with a draft letter text demonstrating support for ESAS' petition in this area. Ask all parties to send the letters, signed by themselves to arrive at the same time as the presentation of the petition to the Minister for maximum impact.

Seed Production and Supply for the Varieties of Self-Pollinated Field Crops

- ESAS to set up a working group to research members' intentions for operating in the self-pollinated field crops sector
- The ESAS member who is already a member of the Seed Privatization Committee should familiarize the working group with the deliberations to date of this Committee
- ESAS to develop a position paper on private sector intentions of operating in the sector covering: possible crops grown, research programs, estimates of total yields over a 3 year program, etc.
- Working group should request meeting with the Seed Privatization Committee to present the paper and obtain feedback
- Working group should also inform senior MALR advisors of activities in order to gain their views and support. ESAS is concerned with building strong, long term relationships with these individuals.
- ESAS to inform members of the presentation and recommendations through the newsletter.