NREA TOOLKIT
A Guide for National Renewable Energy Associations

Table of Content

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About the Toolkit

Authors

GOGLA

GOGLA is the global association for the off-grid solar energy industry. Established in 2012, GOGLA now represents over 180 members as a neutral, independent, not-for-profit industry association. Its mission is to help its members build sustainable markets, delivering quality, affordable products and services to as many households, businesses and communities as possible across the developing world.

www.gogla.org, contact info@gogla.org.

SolarPower Europe

SolarPower Europe is a member-led association that represents organisations active along the entire solar energy value chain. SolarPower Europe's aim is to ensure that more energy is generated by solar than any other energy source by 2030 and lead its 200+ members to make solar the core of a smart, sustainable, secure and inclusive energy system in order to reach carbon neutrality before 2050.

www.solarpowereurope.org, info@solarpowereurope.org.

GET.invest

GET.invest is a European programme which supports investments in decentralised renewable energy. The programme targets private sector business and project developers, financiers and regulators to build sustainable energy markets in developing countries. Services include market information, a funding database, matchmaking events and access-to-finance advisory. The programme is supported by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria, and works closely with initiatives and business associations in the energy sector.

www.get-invest.eu, info@get-invest.eu

TEA

The Transforming Energy Access for Households and Improved Livelihoods Programme (TEA) - TEA is a programme from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), designed to have a transformative impact on the deployment of renewable energy solutions in developing countries to support the progress of clean energy access. This programme is designed to identify regional issues and solutions relating to energy access in developing nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

https://tea.carbontrust.com, tea@carbontrust.com

Strategic partner

The Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) is an international business association with the aim to promote a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies. ARE enables improved energy access through business development support for more than 170 Members along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

https://www.ruralelec.org/
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About the Toolkit

Toolkit

This toolkit has been developed to provide guidance to existing national renewable energy associations (NREAs) with a comprehensive and practical resource to help strengthen their efforts in supporting the growth of the solar energy sector, and guidance to those considering establishing a new NREA.

The purpose of this toolkit is to support the NREAs in their activities. These include developing, improving and sustaining their services to their membership; investing in practicing high standards of management and good governance; and taking measures to assure their sustainability over the long term. It aims to support NREAs to continue to be strong advocates for the growth of the solar energy sector.

Information in this toolkit comes primarily from a literature review of business membership organization or industry association management. It is enriched with practical experiences from two industry associations, SolarPower Europe and GOGLA.

This toolkit may offer NREAs insights at different points in their development. Not all guidance is as relevant at each stage, and the long list of 'do's' and 'don'ts' shouldn't deter organizations from getting started in their journey. Some of the suggestions in this toolkit are things that NREAs should definitely look to adhere to, while others are suggestions when capacity and financial resources become available. Following this toolkit is not a guarantee of success – setting up a NREA and keeping it going is hard and requires many more leadership qualities and skills than can be learned from a guide only. However, it is hoped that this toolkit can act as just one of many pillars of support NREAs need along their development journey.

This toolkit covers topics that are key to NREAs performance, starting with an Organizational Self-Assessment. This is a step by step guide for self-evaluating both the internal and external environment influencing the NREAs effectiveness and suggestions for steps to build capacity to become effective. This assessment covers key issues in leadership and governance, strategy and planning, culture and values, management and operations capacity, financial management, human resources, infrastructure and information technology, engaging external stakeholders, program design and management, communications and membership management. Taking the organizational self-assessment enables the NREA to identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to its internal and external environment. It also provides further guidance on planning capacity building measures arising from this self-evaluation.

Following the organizational self-assessment, the toolkit provides an in-depth discussion of topics that are key for an NREAs success. These are: Membership Development; Communication; Effective Governance; Financial Management and Reporting; Resource Mobilization; Advocacy and Policy Dialogue; and Data Activities.

This toolkit is intended to support NREAs as they:
- Reflect on their internal and external environments and assess their readiness to contribute to the growing renewable energy sectors in their country.
- Design organizational capacity development plans to strengthen their ability to serve their members and the industry and grow institutional resilience and sustainability for the long term.
- Regularly review their performance across key topics that influence their performance as NREAs such as: membership development; communications; good governance; financial management and reporting; resource mobilization; advocacy and policy dialogue; and data activities.

Who should use this toolkit?

The primary audiences for this toolkit are the staff and leadership of an NREA. In addition, members of NREAs can also use it to deepen their understanding of their NREAs and gain ideas on how to support them to provide better services. Government officials and donors may also find this toolkit valuable in their support of NREAs.

Part 1 –
Getting Started:
Setting Up – a National
Renewable Energy
Association

Part 1 – Getting Started: Setting Up

Step 1 – Business plan

Setting up a new industry association is relatively easy – sustaining it is much harder. It helps to think through the fundamental aspects early on. This will help you to keep focus on achieving your primary goal and remaining flexible throughout the process if things didn't work out as you had hoped. It will help you better communicate your aims and objectives to stakeholders and mobilise them effectively to contribute to these aims.

Writing a business plan is an effective way to do this. An association is not a business, but the theory behind business plans can help you to cover a number of essential areas where you need to detail your aims and objectives thoroughly and strategically.

In the footnotes you will find reference to over 500 free sample business plan templates that will help you get started.[2]

Alternatively, if you are creating your own, these are some of the key considerations that you will need to cover:

1. **Executive Summary:** This is a short overview of your business plan. When writing yours, think of it as a short elevator pitch. It's the first thing that potential members and sponsors will read when deciding whether to support you.

2. **Justification:** Consider why you decided to form an association. What were your motivations? Typically, business associations form themselves because a group of companies feel that together they can address challenges better than each of them individually – often, but not always, around policy matters. Alternatively, business associations sometimes emerge from a service provider (e.g. NGO, media company or event organizer) who feel they can service certain industry needs better with a membership structure. It is important that you consider the need for this association and how this association can address that need. You'll need to write this down and communicate this clearly: as soon as you start to reach out to candidate members, partners, funders and other stakeholders, there will be a wide range of expectations of what this association can and should be, and if you follow them all you will have a fractured focus and it will be very difficult to achieve your goals.

3. **Products and Services:** Explain the value that your association will create. Alongside representation of the sector and its members, associations can offer access to sector-specific data, networking and match-making events, or enhanced access to policymakers through advocacy efforts.

4. **Market Analysis:** This is simply a snapshot of the renewable energy market in your region. You should include the number of businesses or individuals your organization could potentially serve and how much these businesses or individuals will spend on your membership and services. You should take into account competitors who are already serving your market and do a SWOT Analysis[3] (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) on why your organization will succeed.

5. **Marketing Plan:** This section outlines what activities you'll undertake to attract members to your association. Word of mouth alone may not be sufficient in order to attract the range and number of members you are seeking. It is necessary to develop a strong marketing plan that does three things:
   a. Explain who your organization will service
   b. Explain how you will find these stakeholders
   c. Explain how you will convince them to support you. You might consider promotional campaigns, events, networking, email marketing, digital marketing, etc.

| A Business Plan | → | Incorporate your Association | → | Set up your Office Space |

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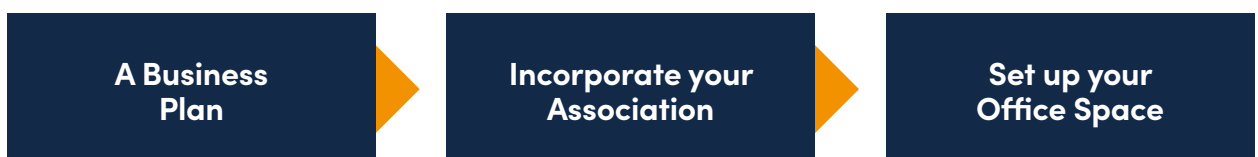
2   More than 500 free business plan templates: https://www.bplans.com/sample_business_plans.php
3   How to do a SWOT Analysis properly: https://strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/swot-analysis-how-to-do-it.html

Part 1 - Getting Started: Setting Up

6. **Operational Plan:** The operational plan will answer the questions such as:
   a. Where will your office be located?
   b. What supplies and equipment will you need?
   c. How will you deliver your services?
   d. What kind of staff and volunteers will you need?
7. **Organizational Structure:** Describe your governance structure and detail your plan to employ internal staff or hire expert consultants. Explain their roles and create a simple organizational chart. To get started, you will need to hire:
   a. An attorney to help you get incorporated, choose the best tax scheme and write and file your statutes; and
   b. An expert accountant, well versed on your country's general accounting practices and financial regulations.

   These two people will be very important in the beginning.
8. **Financial Plan:** This is the page any potential investor will skip to before deciding to support your association. It will be essential in applying for grants and loans. To create your financial plan, you will need some knowledge of basic accounting principles in order to project cash flow (where your revenue will come from- and to build a budget). The Wallace Foundation has some excellent resources and calculators to get you started.[4]

The section in this toolkit on Resource Mobilization will help you design your financial model and understand where your sources of revenue can be found.

Step 2 – Incorporate your association
Working with your attorney and accounting expert, you will need to follow these steps:

1. The first thing you will need to decide on is a **name for your association**. Association names are typically very straightforward so as to be easily identifiable. They commonly include the industry and location they serve.
2. Appoint a **Board of Directors** and create your association statutes and by-laws.

3. **File incorporation paperwork.** Your attorney and accounting expert will help you with the filing of your statutes and by-laws and understand your tax status. You may need help understanding and complying with your country's legal regulations for incorporating an association. You may also have to apply for licenses, permits and a tax status to comply with these regulations.
4. **Set-up a bank account.** Banks require that you have completed the filing of your statutes and by-laws in order to set-up a bank account under your association's name.

Step 3 – Set up your office space
When you first get started, you will need to decide where your office space will be located and incorporate a plan to take over a larger space when you reach a certain size. A small association may be able to operate entirely from a single desk in a shared office space or even out of a volunteer's home. And, while not as glamorous as large offices with cubicles, meeting rooms and reception areas, you can be resourceful by taking advantage of sharing space with an association that is already set up or renting from an inexpensive or free office space that caters to non-profits or organizations with environmentally sustainable missions.

Part 2 –
Membership Development

Part 2 – Membership Development

While it may be exciting to immediately begin contributing towards advocating an issue of general importance, it is advisable to first ensure that you focus on knowing your membership, understanding the most important services they want from their membership, and developing a strategy that best responds to and supports their membership needs over the long term. The following sections provide a step by step approach on how to best understand, build up, serve and retain your membership.

The table below provides a checklist of the mutual expectations associations and members may have.

Table 1 – The mutual expectations between associations and their membership

What Members expect from NREAs	What NREAs expect from Members
To receive direct benefits and desired services	To contribute to the effectiveness of the NREA
To advocate on behalf of the industry to financiers, policymakers, donors and other stakeholders	To actively participate in advocacy, as well as research and data collection efforts to help support the NREA building the evidence base to advocate for the sector
To stay informed on policy issues and industry related information	To share ideas on policy issues and make useful suggestions
Networking opportunities	Cooperation by active participation in NREA activities
To share ideas and opinions on policy issues	To contribute to development of the NREA sector/industry or region
Exchange experiences with co-members	Spread the good work of NREA to non-members to increase membership
To be acknowledged and recognized by fellow entrepreneurs	Help increase membership by introducing new members

SOURCE
Adapted from Brinda Balakrishnan, Self-Help Manual for Business Membership Organisations: Membership Management. SEQUA, 2014.

Part 2 - Membership Development

Guidance to conducting membership development

Step 1 – Developing membership criteria

Once your membership strategy and policy are established, the next step is to build your membership. You will need specific criteria to attract and retain members that match your strategy and policy. Make sure that the criteria are discussed and endorsed by your authorizing team—the board of directors, your current members or a staff meeting. Key considerations may include:[5]

- Identify **who qualifies** for membership, and where necessary, who doesn't. Is your association open only to vendors of off-grid solar equipment and not companies providing services in the off-grid solar industry? Make this clear. Another question to clarify is whether only businesses can become members or people also.
- If your association has a defined **geographical area** of operation, make sure that this is clearly defined.
- Consider the pros and cons of having **tiered membership** levels. Tiered membership (and dues) can help your association raise more money from larger members while maintaining broad membership. It may however cause conflict between the larger, better served members and the smaller firms.[6]
- Consider what **membership size** best supports your defined member services - such as advocacy or information services. Remember that having a coherent set of members with clear common objectives is just as important, or sometimes more important, than having many members.
- Determine the level of **membership diversity** included in your membership criteria and the impact on what services you are able to offer to each member—small or large, different sub-sectors within the renewable energy sector and different types of goods and services that your membership deals in.

Step 2 – Gather knowledge

Once you have clear membership criteria in place, the next step is to recruit your membership. The following are key steps to consider in this process.[7]

- **Know the current status of your membership.** This includes determining issues such as:
  - Your current membership numbers
  - Your share, in percentage terms, of the total number of firms in the renewable energy sector.
  - For each segment in the diversity scan you carried out above, what is your percentage share?
  - What services are your members expecting from your association?
  - What issues form your members' top priorities?
  - From other records you have, what other information can you ascertain about your members?

For coherence, the exercise above can be done as a SWOT analysis[8] or conducted as interviews or surveys among your membership.

- **Know the market** landscape and assess its potential for membership expansion.
  - What are the specific issues of common interest to prospective members within the industry and geographical area?
  - What are the common legal, regulatory and administrative issues that firms in the renewable energy sector are grappling with? These provide a good basis to pursue a common interest.

Step 3 – Membership Acquisition

Get going! You can use the following strategies to attract new members. Remember that your choice of method will be influenced by the amount of resources you have, the strength of the team you have, and the level of maturity of the industry in your area.

- **Join information exchange platforms** where industry members regularly meet to exchange

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5   See SEQUA, Attracting New Members/Membership Administration, Chapter 3 and Centre for International Private Enterprise (2016), Business Associations for the 21st Century.

6   See the section "membership fees" within this chapter for tips on how to select membership service options and considerations to have as you price these services. These tips may help you manage potential conflicts between members that have different needs.

7   See SEQUA, Attracting New Members/Membership Administration, Chapter 3 and Centre for International Private Enterprise (2016), Business Associations for the 21st Century.

8   SWOT analysis involves the collection and portrayal of information about internal and external factors which have, or may have, an impact on business. It allows managers to synthesize insights obtained from an internal analysis of the company's strengths (factors that give an edge for the company over its competitors) and weaknesses (factors that can be harmful if used against the firm by its competitors) with those from an analysis of external opportunities (favourable situations which can bring a competitive advantage) and threats (unfavourable situations which can negatively affect the business). For more information on how to do a SWOT analysis see: https://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/swot-analysis-how-to-do-it.html

Part 2 - Membership Development

ideas. Consider WhatsApp groups, LinkedIn groups, email groups, and regular in-person industry meetings. Be an active contributor to these forums and let prospective members know that you exist and have potential services they can benefit from by joining your renewable energy association.

- **Convene regular office events** to give prospective members a first-hand opportunity to see the activities and successes of your renewable energy association. These could be based around a theme e.g. an information session to share with members the implications of a proposed bill in parliament that affects renewable energy industry members, or even as a partnership with another organization (university, NGO, professional association) that may have an interesting analysis of a topical issues affecting the renewable energy sector.
- **Make regular presentations** at external events and meetings and always include mention of your association's benefits and successes.
- Make sure you strengthen communication

around key information about your renewable energy association and **prepare an information pack.** Include information such as: a brochure that highlights your objectives and activities;[9] latest copy of your newsletter; information on upcoming events; recent summaries of research; copies of press cuttings that show advocacy activity; and any other useful information. Make sure to provide your contact details on all materials including a link to your website if you have one.

- Don't forget that **industry members talk**. Some of your most effective recruiters are satisfied members, stakeholders, staff and other influential players who know of, and are happy with your organization and services. Always ask them to put in a good word. Make sure that you train staff and board members to make good pitches about your renewable energy association and provide practical information on how to join the association.
- **Optimize your membership negotiation strategies** (see the following box)

Negotiation strategies

1. **Consider the number and type of stakeholders involved**
   Typically, as a rule of thumb the number of stakeholders participating in the decision-making process would be higher when negotiating with businesses (B2B) than when negotiating with individuals (B2C). A typical B2B situation would involve multiple stakeholders with different roles and power within the organization. There are a lot of influencers and the final decision could be a mutual agreement between a few people.

Buying persona and roles in B2B membership decision making
A buying persona can be defined as a description of your ideal customer (member). It is very important to set the right criteria for your buying persona to understand better what kind of companies would be appropriate for the membership and what are your chances to convert them from a prospect to an actual member. Once the buying persona is defined, it is critical to identify the different stakeholders in the decision-making process. The roles that those stakeholders can play are outlined in the table below.

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9   See for example GOGLA's information brochure – https://www.gogla.org/sites/default/files/resource_docs/gogla_brochure_2019_0.pdf

Part 2 - Membership Development

Role	Description	What to do
Internal champion	The person who is your main contact and most in favour of the membership. He/she may not necessarily be the final decision maker (although in the best case he/she will be the decision maker), however this person will most likely play one of the most important roles in the membership evaluation process, tackling objections, securing budget and in general internal lobbying for the value of the membership.	It is critical to build a trusted relationship with the internal champion as early as possible and identify if the internal champion will be the final decision maker, the user and the gate keeper. If this is the case, then the decision-making process will be shorter and the chances to close a deal will be higher. If it is not the case, it should be your top priority to provide all the information that the champion would need to influence the final decision maker and the gate keeper.
Gate keeper	This is the person who will have the "key" for the budget. It could be someone from the finance department or a superior to your internal champion who oversees the allocation of resources.	You should be able to provide a very clear, justifiable value proposition either directly to the gate keeper or through your champion. If you plan to offer any discounts, this should also be shared with the gate keeper because his/her objective would be to minimize the cost and maximize that value they get.
Influencer	This is the person who can have a positive or negative impact in the decision-making process and although he/she would not be the final decision maker, some influencers can stop a deal from closing.	It is essential to identify early on how many influencers are involved in the process and what is their position. It is also very important to understand whether an influencer would also be an active user of the membership or his opinion is just brought in addition. When you have this information ideally you would like to convert an influencer into an internal champion by ensuring the value proposition matches the needs of the influencer. A good idea is to invite an expert from the association to provide additional information and knowledge on a topic of interest for the influencer.
User	This is the person who will be the most active user of the services. Very often he/she will be your internal champion and the person who will understand best the value proposition.	The user should have all the information for the services that he/she will use and ideally you would like to turn the user into a key influencer or the internal champion, if he/she is not already one. If you provide a test membership this is the person that you might want to start with. Spending time with the user on the phone might be critical to understand how he/she would take advantage of the membership. A good idea is to invite an expert from the association to provide additional information and knowledge on a topic of interest for the user together with the person who will be in charge of the onboarding procedure.
Final decision maker	The person who will take the find decision on whether the organization joins or not the association as a member. Often this could be a very high-level employee with a lot of influence and decision-making power.	You should involve the decision maker on a strategic level when discussing the membership. Considering that the decision maker is usually a high-level employee, you might want to provide an opportunity for personal profiling within the association. If the final decision maker is different from the internal champion, you should try to engage with him/her together with a high-level representative from the association. This will allow you to create a better foundation for the strategic conversation that would be required in this case.

Part 2 - Membership Development

2. **Optimise the length and complexity of the decision-making process**
Another big difference between B2C and B2B is the length of the decision-making process. In B2C decisions can be taken very quickly and this is almost impossible in B2B. The steps involved could be similar in both B2B and B2C (e.g. awareness about the product, interest, desire to take an action and taking an action), however in B2B and especially when it comes to a strategic / relationship purchase like membership it could take months and sometimes years before a final decision is taken to join an association. Therefore, the strategy and the expectations should be adjusted based on this lengthy decision-making process. The complexity often comes from the strategic long-term nature of the purchase and the number of influencers (see point 1) that could potentially even stop a discussion about membership. It is critical to understand in details what kind of stakeholders are involved and what is their role in the process so that you can have a tailor-made approach for each of them as their needs can vary (for more information check section on the buying persona and decision making roles).

3. **Consider stakeholders' knowledge about the product and the sector**
Thanks to the technologies that surrounds us customers have access to an abundance of information when it comes to products, services or a specific sector. This applies even more in B2B where often the sales are a lot more technical and it requires in depth knowledge. When it comes to membership, the people involved will most likely be experts in a certain field and it is important that you show the same level of understanding or at least have support from a team member who can steer a conversation and go into details about some technical questions that may be raised. This will have a very positive impact on the buyer's perception of the offered service.

4. **Consider the nature of the relationship(s)**
B2B type of relationship is often created by nurturing a professional relationship with certain people within the company that is identified as a potential member over a long period of time. As in B2B typically the number of customers is always lower than in B2C, losing a single client could have a serious impact on the bottom-line and financial health of the association. The relationships that are created with the different stakeholders within a potential member can be very different though. Some would be linked to administration purely (e.g. invoicing), others would be linked to strategic decisions (e.g. decision on level of influence within the association based on the membership category) and others could be linked to content (e.g. policy papers and report drafting).

Case study: SolarPower Europe doubling its membership in 5 years
SolarPower Europe grew its membership from less than 100 to over 200 members in 5 years and doubled the membership revenue. This positive result was preceded by the solar sector's consolidation in Europe between 2011-2013 that led to many companies to go out of business and go bankrupt which had a severe negative impact on the membership. And yet in just 5 years SolarPower Europe is experiencing financial health and stability in terms of membership.

Part 2 - Membership Development

To achieve this, in a first step, SolarPower Europe hired the right people with necessary skills such as empathy, negotiation, relationship management, strategy and sector knowledge.

Once the right team was in place, it was decided to run the associations as a business. It was then investigated how direct business value could be provided to members instead of focusing only on the big picture which is the case for many associations. Instead of having one unique selling proposition, a template membership offer was developed, which was then customised depending on the company needs, goals and strategy. The different elements of the package were presented in a tailor-made and attractive way, often highlighting different elements to various stakeholders involved in the decision-making process (see section on roles in the decision-making process above).

An important element was the amount of time spent on prospecting, qualification of the prospect, information sharing and closing. Usually it is typical for associations to go into lengthy conversations about policy and impact, however given the need for quick boost in terms of numbers and revenue that we experienced, SolarPower Europe's strategy was to close quick membership sales and bring on the table benefits that can impact the members' businesses now rather than in the future. In order to value the time of everyone who is considering membership, communication exercises (verbal or written) were kept short and precise. This way the success rates were increased.

SolarPower Europe also diversified the target groups (e.g. storage, mobility, financing, O&M) and only discussed relevant membership benefits and association activities with the prospect member. The potential member company appreciate being presented with specific topics that are of interest to them and can directly see the value.

Useful tips:
- Have a basic script that can be easily modified depending who is presenting and who is listening.
- Always agree and confirm the next steps on the phone, ideally in writing, and book a next call in the calendar of the person you approached.
- When you send an email the less words, the better and customize the message depending on the role of the person in the decision-making process.
- Face to face meeting is always better.

5. **Use an "expert witness"**
   It is useful to involve an "expert witness" in membership negotiations. An expert witness is essentially a technical or policy advisor of the association perceived as a neutral expert, who can advise to the prospect company on how they can benefit from the association's work. The expert witness's objective is rarely seen as closing the deal at any cost but rather providing a service and value from the first moment of the engagement. Therefore, we recommend a team approach to membership to different points of contact (see section on roles in the decision-making process).

Part 2 - Membership Development

6. **Persistence**

   Another success determinant is persistence. Having an email exchange and just one call or one meeting with the hope that the prospect will appreciate the offer is rarely leading to a conversion. It is recommended to follow up until you have a concrete answer and if the answer is negative, it is important to ask questions about the reasons behind it, which you should be collecting on a regular basis for further analysis. An ideal approach would be to start with an email, follow up with a call or a meeting and then agree on a follow up call or meeting with a concrete date and time.

   It is important to constantly aim to improve the offering but also the strategy. You should consider providing test periods, package deals including other products (e.g. sponsorship) and discounts depending on the timing of signing for membership. It is critical to evaluate your approach every year and adapt to the changes of the market. Flexibility is always preferred, especially if the market conditions are not the most favourable.

Step 4 – Onboarding Process

If you are successful in attracting members, it is an absolute necessity to have a smooth onboarding procedure and a team ready to deliver high-quality service. Another interesting approach is the **"buddy system"**. Essentially this is the process of assigning certain members to different experts from the team based on the topic that they are mostly knowledgeable about or based on their relationship, with the objective to be the main contact for the member. We recommend keeping in regular contact and at least once a year to have a feedback call with the member to better understand their level of satisfaction and ask for advice on improving services. Helping members understand the services available through the NREA is an ongoing process as member companies expand and key contacts change. Onboarding is a crucial part of the membership experience and can make a big difference in member retention.

Step 5 – Membership Retention

It is far more important to retain members than attract new ones. High retention rates will build the basis for recruitment. The one source of information that industry members are inclined to receive - particularly on matters of mutual interest - is information from other industry members.

A high retention rate will probably mean that your current membership is satisfied with your services. Such members are likely to refer your association to other industry members that may not have signed up as members of your association yet. Low retention signals poor service delivery, or poor value for money, to members and unhappy members who leave or keep their memberships while unhappy with your services will tell other industry members and this will undermine your acquisition efforts.[10]

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10 See https://bestassociation.com/should-our-association-focus-on-recruiting-members-or-retaining-them/

Part 2 – Membership Development

Few renewable energy associations employ a systematic retention program. Many that do, do not manage to provide sufficient opportunities for their members to learn, network, advocate for enabling policy and gain a sense of belonging by being part of the association. These are key benefits that make for a happy, satisfied member. Such members are easy to retain given that they see the association offering value for services they signed up to receive.

An effective retention program should:
- **Know why existing members leave.** Gain insights on specific details by conducting exit interviews. However, an existing member may not always be inclined to frankly discuss the reasons for leaving. For this reason, regular satisfaction surveys of members may reveal trends in declining satisfaction on service areas that are important to them.
- **Use the feedback** gained from exit surveys and the regular satisfaction surveys to review the focus of your services to the members and the quality of those services. This feedback loop will enable you detect declining quality of services quickly and allow you to take corrective action.
- **Communicate regularly with members**, explain the reasons for what may be perceived as declining services and engaging the members on the corrective steps you are taking, and the challenges you are facing delivering services to them. Encourage them to be part of solution finding as this may re-engage members and provide them with a collective sense of part of the solution. This encourages retention.

Tips to keep your membership numbers up and members satisfied with your services
- **Make your services accessible online** and create opportunities for digital information sharing and member interaction. Online communities reduce the burden for members and the association to deliver several services. Online services enable members to network, saving the costs and time burdens of events; regularly update their own information saving you or other staff time; advertise their business – particularly newer or smaller members; and learn through regular posting of industry information by the association.
- If your budget allows, **invest in membership management software** that will enable you keep track of your progress so far. Such software also helps you analyse information about your members and empowers you to customize services and communication to meet their individual needs better. By demonstrating that you are able to segment your membership and provide targeted support based on their needs, they are likely to feel you are responding to their most critical needs as a member and stay on, even talking about you to other prospective members.
- **Showcase your successes.** This creates a feel-good factor among your membership and encourages your staff to keep working hard. Get quantitative and communicate your successes using numbers and facts where possible.[11]
- **Increase your knowledge offerings.** A valuable service your renewable energy association can offer is regular industry insights that increase their competitiveness and alerts them to industry trends, legal and regulatory risks and opportunities, and insights offered by other players in the industry. Your members are likely very busy and immersed in running their companies, that they often fall behind on industry research. Knowing that they have a credible, regular source of industry analysis will make them loyal and active members and improve their own results for their stakeholders.
- **Consider offering some of your services to companies that are not yet prospective members but would benefit** from the industry information that you have. This service can be provided at a premium, providing you with additional financial resources. Such companies quickly see the financial gain in becoming members and accessing even more industry information, services and industry protection and for lower fees. They are likely to become your members with time.

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11   For more tips on how to communicate better—particularly through using numbers—read the Communications and Data Development and Management sections of this toolkit.

Part 2 – Membership Development

Declining membership? Here are some tips on how to reverse the trend

The key to stemming the trend of declining membership is adjusting the way you deliver your member services. You should make it easier for members to access your services - less money, less time for the same or better service - and cheaper for you to deliver the service. Remember you may be facing declining revenues, loss of clout and you will also need to put in more effort in acquiring new members.

Here are some approaches you may adopt:[12]

- **Don't hold too many events**. Events are usually costly and require a lot of staff and resources to plan and prepare. They can be unpredictable in terms of forecasting success. During times of declining membership and financial resources, make sure that events are necessary before investing in them. This does not mean cutting back on events that have demonstrated value. It means being careful not to risk resources on events that may not have a good return on investment. When you schedule events, plan them in a way that makes them cost effective. For example, replace a networking dinner with a standing-only networking tea/coffee earlier in the evening.
- **Showcase your successes.** During times of declining membership, you may be tempted to focus squarely on the trend in membership as a key performance indicator. Try shifting focus to how you're progressing towards achieving the goals that your association was set up for. Were your proposals for implementing a more realistic set of standards for off-grid solar equipment accepted and published? Did you appear before a parliamentary committee reviewing the finance bill and made proposals on taxation of solar equipment inputs which were accepted? Remind members and other stakeholders of your successes and avoid a narrative of your performance being simply about the numbers. This will help you regain the confidence of members who will re-consider leaving your association.

- **Innovate** to bring members back to the table. To do this you will need to discuss with your staff, board, opinion leaders in the sector, a few of your committed and trusted members, ideas that will provide your renewable energy association with a reinvigorated strategy. For inspiration, reach out to NREAs in your region to find out about the services or initiatives they provide for their members and discuss with them what helps in retaining their members.

Membership services

There are several services your renewable energy association can offer your membership. It is important to be aware your primary interest and deliverable to your membership is an environment where they can grow their businesses and be more profitable. The sections above describe the steps to take to understand the needs and priorities of your members.

For each of the emerging activities that you can implement, you would need to do an internal scan of your capacity to deliver on those activities. Some considerations may be: how long it will take to succeed if you embarked on a selected activity; financial costs; external threats that may work against your activities; the level of staff capacity you have to execute the activity; the probability that you may develop alliances with other organizations to wage a common approach towards solving an issue; the level of uniqueness your association gets by deciding to provide an important service that is rare in the market; and so on. This scan will provide you with a more refined set of services to offer to your membership.

Once you decide on the set of services to focus on, you need to draw up a simple plan for these activities that includes detailing the objective of the activity, projected impact, sub-activities, responsible parties, timelines and resources required.

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12 For a detailed discussion on this topic and additional tips, see https://www.yourmembership.com/blog/15-ideas-to-provide-more-value-for-your-chamber-of-commerce-members/

Part 2 – Membership Development

Your renewable energy association has a long list of services that it can potentially offer to members. This includes: networking; business cooperation; trainings; market intelligence; policy advocacy; events; trade missions; and consulting.

Shared below are some insights into some of the services which you are likely to consider for your renewable energy membership base.[13]

- **Conferences and exhibitions:** An annual conference could meet the association's regulatory requirements but can also provide opportunities for education and exhibition of member goods and services.
- **Networking Events:** These provide members with an opportunity to listen to an industry leader or other speaker while meeting with their peers in person for networking opportunities. For network events to gain popularity among members, it is important that you provide high quality content (knowledgeable speakers for example) that will attract members to attend.
- **Trade Missions:** Trade missions are events that allow your members to explore new opportunities and make contacts with potential business partners. They can also provide significant learning opportunities for new technologies and other innovative products of interest. A trade mission may be outward – such as your members visiting another country or location within the country, or inward – such as organizing a selection of companies to visit the association, or your members' premises.
- **Advocacy meetings:** These meetings are organized for your members to have audience with legislators, regulators and other administrators whose work have a bearing on the industry. These meetings are organized principally to facilitate a dialogue for the creation of a better business environment for industry.[14] One example of this is the Community of Champions initiative, spearheaded by GOGLA.[15]

- **Consulting and Advisory Services:** If you have the technical capacity and prior consultation with members, your association can provide consulting services on areas that your membership requires solutions for their business performance. This could range from energy efficiency solutions, financial management, marketing, tax administration, and so forth.
- **Market Research:** If you have invested in solid data collection, analysis and management capacity, your association could provide market research services to your members.[16]
- **Working Groups:** These meetings are organized for members to discuss topics that affect the industry. These meetings are organized principally to take industry positions for a better business environment for industry, and for sharing of information and strategies between members on specific challenges or opportunities.
- **Online information services:** such as a catalogue of opportunities for companies, or educational videos or tools.[17]

Membership fees: challenges and solutions

In return for membership fees, members expect quality services from the association. However, occasionally the expectations of the members and the secretariat are misaligned as regards the services they should expect for the money they have paid. It is therefore important for your renewable energy association to be clear on what membership fees buys and what services are premium and discretionary, that require separate pricing. This will ensure that members are more satisfied with the services they are offered, because they understand what they are buying.

The following table gives an overview of typical problems and possible solutions with regard to the membership fees:

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13 For in-depth information on selection of services for BMOs see Centre for International Private Enterprise (2016), Business Associations for the 21st Century. Chapter 4
14 More information available in the Advocacy and Public-Private Dialogue section of this toolkit.
15 https://www.gogla.org/policy-and-regulation/community-of-champions
16 See for example GOGLA's Investment Database or Semi-Annual Market Reports - https://www.gogla.org/global-off-grid-solar-market-report
17 See for example GOGLA Bridge - https://www.gogla.org/gogla-bridge and GOGLA Academy - https://www.gogla.org/off-grid-solar-energy-academy

Part 2 - Membership Development

Table 2: Typology of problems and solutions with regard to membership fees

Problem	Solution
Present membership fee is too low to finance free services.	Fast track: Reduce free services or raise membership fees. If necessary, subsidize free services from other income sources for a limited time. Long-term: increase membership fees annually, at least in line with inflation.
Is an admission / registration fee justified?	Yes, as registration of new member's costs staff time and causes other cost (e.g. membership card, etc.). A new member will be ready to pay these fee as he is willing to join the BMO.
Should membership and registration fees be the same for all?	Not advisable. Larger enterprises can afford higher membership fees. For fee structure, use easily available criteria such as number of employees. Consider a bonus/discount for long-staying members.
Membership fees are paid late. Reminder process too costly.	Provide discount or other incentives for early payment. Limit payment intervals (e.g. twice a year only). Make payment easy (standing order for bank transfer). Limit no. of reminders and period for reminding. Stop services for non-paying members. Eliminate non-paying members from member list and directory.
Is a one-off payment for membership fee advisable?	Some BMO allow one-time payment of membership fee (usually charging 10, 15 or 20 years of annual fees). This should only be considered if a large amount of funds is needed, e.g. for construction of own building. Advantage: large amount at one time, no reminders in future. Disadvantage: no more fees from this member for a long time (in which present fees would rise).
Should a BMO only charge service fees, but cancel any membership fees?	Not advisable. Some services are difficult to charge for: e.g. advocacy, low level info service, etc. Without membership fee, no feeling of togetherness and belonging will develop within the BMO.
Should many different types of membership be introduced?	No. This increases administrative costs. All members should have the same rights. However, members can be classified by BMOs according to industrial branch, size, etc. This facilitates communication, advocacy and service delivery. Members should be enterprises, not individuals.

SOURCE
SEQUA, Attracting New Members/Membership Administration, p. 48.

Structuring Membership Categories

Most associations, including those in the renewable energy sector, commonly offer different categories of membership, often with different service levels to meet the association revenue objectives. These may be: life or permanent members who pay a specified amount of dues on a single payment basis and enjoy membership in perpetuity; ordinary and associate members who pay annual membership fees; and honorary members who do not pay fees because this membership is conferred as a tribute to distinguished service to industry by the member.

The membership categories above draw different service levels and responsibilities. The association needs to balance between the revenue-raising objectives and its need to engage some members on a non-revenue basis, particularly if the member confers other non-revenue advantages to the association such as influence, respect and high marketability.

For example, **life members** are revenue-earning members, but pay up a specified lump sum subscription in exchange for enjoyment of services without additional billing. It is important that the association correctly assesses a viable fee that allows it to realistically offer services to a member for life without further income from that member.

One strategy is to assess whether the lifetime membership fee allows the association render services to the member from interest accruing from the lump sum. Also, given that companies enjoy perpetual succession, it is not advisable to use this revenue mechanism extensively for companies.

Ordinary members pay an annual subscription. Fees for ordinary members can categorized into different levels and charged based on a differentiation of services to be offered between ordinary members, or based on an assessment of the members' ability to pay. A rate structure can

Part 2 – Membership Development

be based on annual turnover, subscribed capital, equity (plus reserves), number of employees, taxable income, annual profits, or other similar indicators. In return they get a service level that includes voting and contesting for leadership positions within the renewable energy association. It is advisable that this category of membership be the primary target for membership fees given that it shows a more direct correlation between revenue raised and services offered. It also has a positive contribution to cash flow management given the regularity of receipts.

Associate members also pay annual membership fees. However, in practice they may pay less than ordinary members as they are not yet fully qualified to become ordinary members and they do not enjoy the full benefits of ordinary members, such as voting or participating in association leadership. They are however an important induction mechanism for future ordinary members and has potential to generate future earnings for the association.

Honorary membership is a non-revenue earning membership for the association. Given that it is awarded to distinguished contributors to the objectives of the association, it may confer non-revenue benefits to the association such as influence, respect and marketability. It is important to carefully assess who qualifies for this membership so that the organisation can gain maximum advantages through association with these members.

In summary, when choosing membership categories, fees and services connected to the categories, the key principles to observe are to charge members what they can reasonably bear and to revise this rate regularly to reflect the cost of offering services and the firms changing profiles.

Further Readings and useful material

SEQUA, Attracting New Members/Membership Administration	Explains the importance of a growing membership for BMOs and provides several ways on how to increase membership.
Checklist on p. 26 in ILO, The Effective Employers' Organisation, Guides 1–4	Provides practical guidance for member retention.
BMO Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (Section 2).	Assesses your membership strategy and policy, particularly in key areas such as membership recruitment and management, membership retention and other self-assessment questions.
SEQUA, Attracting New Members/Membership Administration, Chapter 3	Criteria for membership selection, recruitment and retention
Centre for International Private Enterprise (2016), Business Associations for the 21st Century.	Criteria for membership selection, recruitment and retention
SEQUA, Manual on Income Generating Services, p. 44–52,	What you need to consider when selecting a set of services for your membership
IFC, Building the Capacity of Business Member Organizations, p. 100–103.	What you need to consider when selecting a set of services for your membership
Centre for International Private Enterprise (2016), Business Associations for the 21st Century. Chapter 4	How to select business membership services, list of probable services that may interest members

Part 3 – Communication

Part 3 – Communication

Membership engagement

Engaged members are more satisfied, value their membership, and participate in more association activities. By consistently keeping members engaged, you will attract and retain more members, and promote your advocacy agenda and increase member participation and revenue.

But how do you create an experience that's truly meaningful to your members? How do you stay in touch with your members and ensure your work meets their needs?

An initial step to improving member engagement is creating an effective member engagement strategy; it's the basis on which you can understand your members while providing content that educates, informs, and inspires them. In order for it to be successful, it's important that:

- **You must identify your members' needs and ensure your communications meets those needs:** The value of an association to its members is in offering solutions to members' issues and challenges, otherwise, they will not have a reason to engage or maintain their membership. Identify and use engagement channels like online digital media to gather information on their problems, what they value, and how you can help them.
- **Have a consistent, reliable communication strategy for your members.** Member engagement is an ongoing initiative. To create ongoing value to your members, identify and use communication channels that you can easily maintain on an ongoing basis and that provide opportunities for members to continually engage.
- **You must be able to measure the effectiveness of your communications:** Define what member engagement looks like to you in measurable numbers. It could be member event attendance, volunteer participation, social media engagement, email response rates, membership renewal, online feedback and comments.

To be able to attain your goals, you must set incremental check-ins and measure your progress. Member engagement should be the same. You need a goal and steps to measure progress towards that goal. Make sure your member engagement goals are aligned with the goals of our renewable energy organization. Member engagement will benefit all aspects of your association – retention, event participation, member satisfaction, advocacy and revenue generation.

You can choose which engagement tactics to use in any way, as long as they are measurable and build upon one another to achieve your ultimate goal. The following are some easy ways to develop your member engagement strategy and measure its effectiveness.

Step 1: Define Member Engagement

As an association seeking to increase member engagement, you should begin by defining what member engagement looks like to you in measurable numbers (e.g., blog comments, event participation, inquiries, revenue etc.) and compare that to your current status.

Ask yourself:
- How would I like my relationship with my members to change through this plan? What will I measure to know if I've achieved your goal?
- What can I offer to solve my members' problems? What information, collaboration, or networking opportunities do they need?
- Which methods of delivery would be most convenient for your members?
- How will this strategy result in members staying engaged and continuing to get value from our organization in the long term? How is that going to be maintained and who will be responsible for maintaining it?

Part 3 - Communication

Case Study: Sectoral Member Engagement
In Kenya, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) under their structured consultative framework has divided their private sector membership into consultative sector dialogue groups known as sector boards.

The sector boards allow members of a given sector or sub-sector to have structured meetings among themselves, guided by a competent secretariat staff to engage in problem analysis and understand whether the problem is a policy driven one or a sector structural problem. The sector board discusses policy issues that affect their business negatively or positively.

The sector board may commission research to establish facts on how a proposed policy would negatively affect business or improve their businesses and thereafter give feedback to KEPSA management for next steps.

Step 2: Assess Member Engagement
Different members will participate or engage in different ways. This means some will read your content and enjoy it, but that's all they will contribute. Others will like your content, some may share it on social media and others will provide comments or feedback.

Create a system that defines, sorts and tracks different types and numbers of engaged members. Create a scoring system that gives points to members who perform the desired activities you've deemed necessary to be considered "engaged".[18]

Create lists and profiles of like-minded members to see what trends exist among different groups. Then, design targeted opportunities and messages that are relevant and engaging to them.

Once you know who is engaged you can apply your scoring to all members and determine your most and least engaged members. The least engaged members do not interact with your association in any way either actively or passively. You must understand why. Have they ever been engaged? Are they remaining steady, declining, or slowly increasing? These people are most likely to let their membership lapse in the future; you can make the decision to reach out to them specifically.

Step 3: Identify Channels and Tools
By tracking members' previous involvement, you will discover which channels and tools work best for your messaging. For instance, which events members have attended in the past, which volunteer opportunities they've skipped, which issues are of interest to them, and which communication methods they've responded well to. When you can tangibly measure the success of past efforts, you can make improvements to effective channels and better plan for future ones.

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18 For instance, you may award more points to guest bloggers versus content readers. The key here is to determine what types of participation and engagement that your organization values most, and to find ways to encourage those types of engagement.

Part 3 - Communication

Remember to:

- Select and use a consistent, repeatable approach to communicate with your members effectively.
- Stay social. Social media is one of the most convenient ways to stay connected to your members. Set up groups for members to interact with one another and encourage discussions that ask and answer questions or thank members for their involvement.
- Ask for feedback. Organize your constituents by preferences and interests; this will generate more targeted responses and feedback. Reach out to your members by creating surveys that asks their feedback on programs, initiatives, and opportunities.
- Get some face time. Use member events as opportunities to get to know your members one-on-one. Host programs that can facilitate community-building, and interaction with your leadership team.

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Part 3 - Communication

Examples of GOGLA's social media communication

GOGLA @GOGLAssociation · Sep 17

#Offgridsolar keeps the 'lights on' for millions of people, ensuring that the industry is able to play an important role in boosting #resilience for some of the world's poorest people. Our **Powering Opportunity** research shows you how: bit.ly/3ee8jCQ

GOGLA OFF-GRID SOLAR A POWER TOOL FOR CHANGE

Households living with off-grid solar across Africa and South Asia often generate additional income, thanks to their solar home system.

1 NO POVERTY

♡ 6   ♡ 12

GOGLA @GOGLAssociation · Jul 27

#Offgridsolar continues to power opportunity for people in East Africa and beyond, providing savings, income, and jobs, while improving their quality of life. Find out more on this power tool for change in our **Powering Opportunity** report series: bit.ly/2ZUKWGM

GOGLA OFF-GRID SOLAR A POWER TOOL FOR CHANGE

10 SDGs are addressed by off-grid solar.

♡ 6   ♡ 12

GOGLA @GOGLAssociation · Sep 30

We are so excited to welcome our **members** & partners today at our first virtual Annual Member Conference! It's going to be an afternoon full of networking opportunities & carefully planned sessions to help push the #offgridsolar sector forward & boost resilience post #COVID19.

♡ 4   ♡ 7

GOGLA @GOGLAssociation · Jul 24

While #COVID19 is reversing decades of progress on the #SDGs, the #energyaccess sector stands ready to contribute to a lasting recovery for communities and economies - highlighted the #EnergyAccessRelief Summit last week.

Read some of our key takeaways ➡ bit.ly/2CkDcs0

#EnergyAccessRelief

"We cannot just sit and celebrate past achievements, we need to look forward. COVID-19 is an opportunity for us to come out of the crisis with energy access at the top of our agendas, as a key enabler of development."

SILVIA ANNA AINIO
Policy Officer
European Commission

♡ 6   ♡ 7

Step 4: Set Your Timeframe

Knowing who is engaged, who is not, and what engagement changes have occurred recently allows you to know your engagement metrics. You can now begin your engagement strategy by setting a timeframe in which you will conduct your engagement efforts.

However, you need to note things that sway engagement outside of your strategy. This could include member-centric changes such as the lifecycle of membership or association-wide actions - this could even be things that seem unrelated like bringing in new management. Note them and track the changes in engagement over time.

Step 5: Execute Your Strategy

You've measured your starting engagement metrics, assessed your membership and what types of engagement you value the most. You've set a timeframe and created a reporting structure to track changes over time. The next step is to implement your strategy. This may be when you implement a **digital media campaign** (a digital marketing campaign is an online marketing effort put forward by an organization to drive engagement, conversions, traffic, or revenue) or launch a social media outreach campaign. Whatever your tactic to improve engagement, implement it and chart changes on a regular basis, noting anything outside of your efforts that could also alter engagement levels.

Part 3 – Communication

Step 6: Assess your Effectiveness

Are your member engagement strategies working?

The best way to assess your engagement strategy is to begin before the strategy is implemented by documenting current engagement levels (Step2). This is the baseline against which you will compare your results to in order to see if there was a change. Use your original scoring system that you used to assess initial engagement, noting what your engagement efforts did for your entire membership, specific member sectors and individual members. Analyse your efforts through a variety of parameters to optimize your findings and apply them to make improvements or repeat your member engagement tactics.

Identify what worked and what didn't; initiatives that build stronger relationships between members, their peers, and the association should be continued, while those that don't should be discontinued or revised.

Engagement is an ongoing effort. After you measure results, adjust how you communicate in accordance with the findings to improve your engagement efforts in the future.

Strategic communication

Strategic communication concerns the spread of information about your association's tasks and achievements. This all helps to gain and maintain a reputation, both internally within the membership and externally toward the public. A communication strategy should reflect your ultimate goals, creating trust, attracting new members, improving your public relations, and enhancing member value. It is important to consider the following components:
1. Communication Objectives
2. Target Audience
3. Messaging
4. Communication Channels and Tools
5. Measuring Communication Effectiveness

Step 1 – Communication Objectives

Your communications objectives should contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the association. Communications sent out should have at least one clear objective related to your association's strategic priorities, this way they will be recognized as contributing organization's overall mission.

Case Study: SolarPower Europe's campaigns: #Solar4Buildings, #SmallIsBeautiful, #GenerationSolar

SolarPower Europe runs several campaigns every year. The #Solar4Buildings campaign urges that all new and renovated buildings in the EU – residential, commercial, and industrial, should have solar installed. The campaign includes a petition to put solar on all new and renovated buildings in the EU. It also includes a 3D hashtag, which was brought to different COP events, short videos with different stakeholders, and a strong Twitter presence. The **Small is Beautiful** campaign supports small-scale renewable installations and cogeneration facilities in Europe. The aim of the campaign was to safeguard regulatory incentives such as priority dispatch, for small-scale installations. The **Small is Beautiful** campaign was led by 20 leading renewable cities and citizens associations, and included a photo series, advocacy work, a Twitter presence, and website material. The **Generation Solar** campaign involved real stories from across Europe showing how solar is powering our lives today. For the campaign we recorded videos with people across Europe including the then Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič, Member of the European Parliament Bendt Bendtsen (European People's Party), at schools, homes, and farms. The videos were shared on social media, with news stories, and a strong Twitter presence. All of these campaigns included press releases, interviews, newsletter stories, and a prominent place on the website.

Part 3 - Communication

You will need to develop communication campaigns to, for example, to attract and recruit new members, to encourage existing members to renew their membership, to deliver your advocacy campaigns, and engage and inform the public.

Example Objective: To help members learn from one another to make their businesses more efficient, effective, and competitive.

Organization objective	Communication objective
To Hold Quarterly Association member workshops	At every workshop, highlight at least 4 member companies and their successes. To launch this education series within six months.
To develop and launch a marketing campaign to highlight member companies' achievements	Showcase at least 5 association and member successes in the local media, website and industry forums every year.

Step 2 – Define Your Target Audience

The starting point for any communications campaign is to define **who you are trying to reach**. This is more than just distinguishing between "members" and "non-members." The more detailed your segmentation of your target audience, the better prepared you will be to craft an effective message. For example, if you are trying to reach the CEOs of your member companies, your message may be very different than if you're trying to reach middle managers or if you're trying to reach government representatives and legislators. Your target audience will also influence which communication channels you use. Developing and updating a database of contacts takes time and resources but it is a worthwhile investment. This is especially true of media contacts, who regularly change their contact details. Thus, it is essential to keep an up-to-date database of contacts.

Step 3 – Draft your messages

The format of your message will have a large impact on how effective it is and which channels are best to deliver it. For example, if you want to inform your members about a complicated piece of pending legislation, you might need to provide an in-depth report. On the other hand, promoting an upcoming event might take only a few paragraphs. As a rule, make your communications as short and concise as possible. A good practice is to first draft your message and then to edit it to remove any unnecessary content.

You may need to provide information in multiple languages. For example, you might communicate in English with international partners or sponsors and use the local language for your membership services and advocacy efforts. You will need to provide content in the language that is used by your target audience, to be as effective as possible.

Step 4 – Identify channels and tools

Communication efforts take various forms but are most commonly delivered by public relations activities, sponsoring, media events, advertising or meetings. For developing NREAs, newsletters, annual reports and websites are the most frequently used modes of communication with the public. The messages of the NREA should be delivered competently to stand out from the deluge of other messages released every day.[19]

Examples of messaging include direct mail, email, text messaging, social media, websites, newsletters, blogs, newspapers and magazines, radio and television. Each of these channels and tools has advantages and disadvantages, which will vary depending on your organization's needs, their cost, timeliness, and the resources needed to prepare your content.

Digital communication channels are particularly useful to associations. presence. There is an added importance of maintaining an online presence. This includes having an effective website, utilizing social media, running online campaigns, and identifying what resources you should have online and for web marketing.

- **Email:** This is one of the most efficient and effective ways of communicating with your target audiences. When using email, keep your messages as clear as possible. Use short, descriptive subject lines and do not try to communicate too many topics in one message. If you find that you have more than three or four messages to convey, it is probably better to include these in a newsletter where your members expect to see many topics presented.
- **Text Messaging:** Text messages can be an effective way to reach your target audiences, especially in some countries where text messaging is used more than other channels of communication. The advantages of text messaging are that it is inexpensive, immediate, and nearly everyone has a mobile phone. The

Part 3 – Communication

disadvantage is that you can only send a short message, so you will need to combine text messaging with links to your website or other media.

- **Social Media:** There are thousands of social media tools and applications but there are usually only a few that are used by the majority of people in your country. Some of the largest networks are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. Each social media platform has its own "culture" on how it is used. Social media platforms can be used for multiple purposes including member-to-member networking, member recruitment, and as a channel for sending communications to your audiences.
- **Website:** Your website is the base for all of your communications campaigns. Your website is where your members, prospective members, and other stakeholders will turn to first when they are looking for information about you.

It is where your members go for information and insight; where they can participate in your online community; where they can register for events; manage their membership profile and even renew their membership. It is therefore crucial that your website is kept up-to-date and accurate and that it is designed in a way that it is easy for members and prospective members to find what they are looking for, especially information on how to join your association and the benefits of membership. Fresh content should be updated when it becomes available and out of date information removed to keep your website uncluttered. At minimum, your website should contain pages dedicated to 'About Us', 'Membership', and 'Contact' information. Your website can also have a 'News' or 'Blog' section where you post short stories about the latest news in your sector or about member success.

© Micergy

Part 3 – Communication

Publications: Publications are an important tool for the NREA's communication with its members and other external audiences. Business associations produce various publications: newsletters and circulars (about business developments, new regulations.) member directories, NREA profile flyer, event and training calendar, business survey results, industry sector reports, manuals (how to file tax reports, how to calculate cash flow in your business, etc.).[20]

A good publication policy should be based on a strategic communication plan that helps to reach the target group to achieve outlined objectives. Providing a regular newsletter in either electronic or printed format can be an effective way to communicate with your members and prospective members. It is important that you include news and information that is of interest to your members and that the newsletter is published on a fixed schedule be it monthly, quarterly, or weekly. Combine print and digital versions to maximize your reach. Newsletter should be available for free to members and non-members.[21] GOGLA, for instance, publishes a weekly e-mail briefing for members only, and a monthly e-mail newsletter free to members and non-members.

Events and communication

A successful conference, meeting or event experience is a valuable asset to advance your association's goals. It is a great opportunity to create face-to-face interactions with your members, partners and other stakeholders which will inspire them and build trust and loyalty within your association. If well budgeted, events are also a great way to increase your association's income. In order to create a successful event and make it relevant for your association you need to identify the event's goals, the audience you want to reach and develop an effective communications plan to execute the event.

Logistics/timeline for organizing conferences

Conference toolkit

Step 1 – Before the Event
The following timelines are proposed as a guide and are based on a large conference of at least 300 people. Smaller events can be done at shorter notice but in all cases the longer the planning horizon the better.

- **Budget (1 year prior to the event)**
  One of the first thing you will need to do when organizing an event is budgeting. Analyse the financial resources that you have available and start estimating costs. Ask different suppliers for quotes to get an idea of the costs you will incur. You will need to estimate the revenues you could expect based on registration fees if you are planning to charge participants, and sponsorship.

- **Event timeline (1 year prior to the event)**
  Subsequently, you will need to produce an event timeline. This will include key milestones such as the opening of registration, agenda creation, book the venue, etc. You will need to keep track of the deadlines and make sure they are met on time. To do so you always need to plan for a buffer (extra time) to ensure you meet your internal deadlines.

- **Venue and suppliers (1 year to 9 months before the event)**
  Once you know your budget and timeline, you can select your venue based on what is most appropriate for the event, number of participants and the available budget. You will also need to select your important suppliers such as audio visual and entertainment.

- **Agenda (9 months before the event)**
  It is now time to create your agenda. You will need to define your format – will it include workshops, interviews, panel discussion, TED talk style presentation? Once this is done you can allocate timings and length of the session. You will then select a topic for each session and select speakers which match your content best.

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20 See for example GOGLA's publications including half-yearly market data reports, advocacy publications and annual reports here:
    https://www.gogla.org/publications
21 See SEQUA, BMO Tollbox for more in-depth discussion.

Part 3 – Communication

- **Invite speakers (9 months before the event)**
  Speaker invites should be centralized and recorded in an xl spreadsheet to track follow up
- **Create the event identity, website and app (9 months before the event)**
  The event identity (which includes the name, font, colours, graphics and photos) is crucial to the overall image of the event, especially since it will be used on all marketing material: website, banners, emails, posters etc.
- **Set up your registration platform (6 months before the event)**
  When your agenda is completed, you have invited your speaker, created your website, it is time to set-up your registration platform. You can use any tools available. We would recommend using https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/ as it is a very simple way to create your events. The registration fees should attract as many people as possible whilst still making a profit.
- **Book your suppliers (3 months before the event)**
  Catering, Photographer, Hostesses, etc
- **Check and order necessary supplies (3 months before the event)**
  Such as lanyard and badges.
- **Confirm Setup with AV Team (1 month before the event)**
- **Schedule speaker briefings and collect PowerPoint presentations (1 month before the event)**
- **Create a detailed onsite schedule (1 week before the event)**

Event Communication and Marketing

The event should provide opportunities to showcase your association and communicate to members and the public what makes you stand out. Create a bold statement and always think about what will leave a lasting impression, then identify the channels you can utilize to share that message while planning, during and after the event. Communicate key elements of the event, so everyone can be on the same page and have plenty of time to prepare.

Consider the following important details:

- **Event purpose/theme:** The first step in a communications plan for an event is identifying your association's goals or needs for the event. Also consider which messages have not yet been sufficiently recognized or communicated. You also need to think about the current trends within your industry. What do your members or potential participants want to learn more about?

- **Event venue, agenda and activities:** Members and attendees will need to know the event agenda ahead of time to plan their activities, which is especially important in a conference/event with multiple sessions.

- **Speakers'/hosts' names:** Speakers and hosts are a huge draw for attendees to your event, you'll want to start introducing speakers early on in your event communications. Their profiles should include their role in the event, titles, photos, and brief introductory bios.

- **Communication channels & necessary downloads:** Decide on the communication channels to update your attendees and engage with them from the moment you first announce the upcoming event. Consider attendees demographics, select effective ones and let attendees know how to access them.

Your website should ideally provide updates on your upcoming events, programs, and training sessions. It should distinguish member-only events and events open to non-members to showcase the value of membership.

Gather the emails of your past and current attendees as well as your supporters to build an invitee list. Make sure to build a strong campaign to introduce the event, speakers, headliners, venue changes, or event activities all while featuring your event's page on the official website to publicize the event. In this process, make sure to adhere to the national data privacy legislation of the country where your association is headquartered.

Social Media platforms are inexpensive, they are immediate, and they are great for word-of-mouth messaging where your internal event planning team, members and event participants share necessary details and experiences. It will be convenient if your attendees can connect and directly post their experiences on social media. It is important to communicate the website address and any # as clearly as consistently as possible.

Part 3 – Communication

- Draft and schedule the opening announcements and tweets through your event app.

- **Press release & Media engagement:** If appropriate or necessary for your event, you can draft a press release. This requires you to get clarity about the message you want to convey about your event. You can also anticipate the questions journalists will have as you cover key outcomes of the event and selected organizational key messages.

Step 2 – During the Event you should follow your onsite schedule as closely as possible and be ready for last minute changes and challenges. Share the event hashtag, along with promoting where to share and engage across your social media channels.
- Share what's going on with those who couldn't attend; post photos, videos and comments across social media, to engage a larger audience.
- Document all on goings of the event including challenges faced.

Case Study: Social media cards
An easy way to promote your event is to create speaker cards. Create social media cards with the picture, title, and company of your speakers and send it to them with a pre drafted social media post. You speakers can then copy paste on their social media platforms. Their network will be notified about the event and as they operate in the same sector, they could potentially be interested in attending your event. This technique also works with partners and sponsors, but the post must be made as easy as possible for them to use.

Part 3 - Communication

Step 3 – After the Event

Post-event communication is probably the most neglected element of events. It is very important to engage attendees within a day or two after the event, particularly if you want to gather feedback on your event.

Send a thank you email combined with an invitation to take part in an event feedback survey. You should include photos, videos, PowerPoint presentations and a post-event brief in the email.

Don't forget to thank your speakers for contributing to the success of your event. Send out newsletters about this event and the next event through your website, partner websites and social media platforms. Keep the conversation going for those who weren't present as well.

Webinars

Webinars allow organizers to provide customers and prospects with insightful information. Hosting a webinar online is a cost-efficient method as there are no venue, catering, travel or accommodation costs.

As it is not necessary to travel in order to participate in a webinar, this is an ideal way to attract high-level speakers from around the world and a large audience.

A webinar offers an opportunity to engage with prospective customers in a non-sales environment, position your organization as an expert in a certain topic and increase your brand awareness.

Steps for successfully organizing a webinar:

- Start by planning the webinar content, sending invitations for speakers and writing the concept note.
- Send a doodle poll to all the speakers so that they can choose what date and time suits best for them.
- Set up the webinar on your preferred webinar platform. For this, you will need a confirmed date and time and a description. After having successfully completed this step, you will get a registration link that you can use to promote the webinar.
- Upload the webinar to your own website and other free webinars listings. Create a Facebook event or posting on your Social Media posts, especially LinkedIn, might also attract some delegates.
- Send an email to speakers with login details and instructions. Advise speakers to use a quiet room, log in 1 hour before, make sure to have good internet connection and microphone and send their slides at least 1 day before.
- Send the speakers the link for attendees and a social media card that they can use for promoting the session through their channels.
- Create presentation template. The best PowerPoint format for webinars is 16:9.
- Collect slides from speakers and add them to the presentation template.
- 1 hour before the webinar begins, it is highly recommended to run a test session in order to test the sound and connection of the speakers and give them a brief training on how the webinar platform works.

Part 3 – Communication

- During the webinar, the organizer is in charge of controlling the mouse and sound permissions of the participants, moderate the questions from the audience.
- At the beginning of the webinar, please make sure the webinar is being recorded.
- After the webinar finishes, it is time to download the recording and upload it to your YouTube channel or the members' area of your website. You can also include it, together with a pdf version of the presentation, in an automated follow-up email to all attendees.
- Send a thank you email to speakers including the presentation and YouTube link to the recording.

Media and press releases

Press releases are an effective way to get your message out to journalists. It is important to identify which media regularly picks up your information and how they cover your issues or events and establish clear lines of communication with them. Build a database of media houses, including journalists and publishers, well in advance so that when you do have announcements to make, you know who to send them to.

When you have a new initiative, event or advocacy position to announce, you can make use of a press release. A press release is an important tool to communicate your message to key audiences, including media (print, radio, television, and online), government representatives, legislators, association members, partners, and the general public.

A press release should be distributed as widely as possible including by email, your website, and social media channels.

Effective press release statements should:
- **Be clear** — should include the date, the name of your organization, your logo, and the name of your representative or official contact person, and their email and phone number should be clearly indicated. Your press release should include a clear, brief, and catchy title that summarizes you message.
- Briefly present key facts and information — it is important that your press release only contain the most important facts and key issues about:
  - Who you are and what the issue or event is about
  - Your key message
  - The essence of the issue or event that happened or is happening
  - Why is this issue or event important
  - When and where it happened.
- Provide a short description of your organization — your press release should provide a brief description of your association. This is intended to convey why your organization and your press release are important.

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Part 3 – Communication

Example press release from SolarPower Europe

SolarPower Europe and GET.invest announce partnership to mobilise joint European and emerging market solar development

Brussels, 29 October 2019 – SolarPower Europe and the European programme GET.invest have announced a new partnership to contribute to broad and sustained market development of renewable energy in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) region. The partnership comes under the umbrella of support from the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria for GET.invest to promote private sector action for building sustainable energy markets in partner countries.

SolarPower Europe, a member-led association representing over 200 organisations active along the entire value chain, will use its network to mobilise European and ACP solar energy companies for joint business development; this includes capacity building and support of industry associations in ACP renewable energy markets, as well as increasing visibility of related projects.

For this endeavour, SolarPower Europe will draw on the knowledge of GET.invest, a programme supported by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria. GET.invest offers several services to renewable energy project developers and businesses. To date, GET.invest has supported over 100 transactions in the market throughout sub-Saharan Africa with a total projected investment volume of over 1 Billion USD.

Only with the support of the private sector can the race against climate change be won and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG7, reached. The EU supports companies investing in sustainable energy through its External Investment Plan. The partnership between SolarPower Europe and GET.invest aims to better inform the private sector and connect companies and investors in partner countries.

Building on SolarPower Europe's previous collaboration with GET.invest's predecessor, the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP), the new partnership includes activities such as information events, capacity building for national associations, partner exchanges, outreach and mobilisation, as well as general private sector capacity building.

Walburga Hemetsberger, CEO of SolarPower Europe, said: "We are delighted to embark on this partnership with GET.invest to help facilitate business development between European and ACP solar energy companies, which can contribute towards meeting the UN's SDGs and the EU's climate objectives. We look forward to working closely together on a diverse range of activities, contributing to GET.invest's overarching goal of mobilising the private sector and building a pipeline of viable investment projects."

Michael Franz, GET.invest Team Leader, said: "The European Union and its member states offer support to companies that help build sustainable energy markets in partner countries all over the world. SolarPower Europe's network allows us to stay in touch with the needs of European solar companies, inform them about opportunities, and connect them to partners in developing markets."

Part 3 – Communication

Measuring communication success (kpis)

Are Your Communication Strategies Working?[22] It is essential to identify the right parameters to measure first and then how you will measure them. This is the process of identifying relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will provide meaningful feedback for your association.

A KPI is something measurable that indicates the progress an organization is making toward its objectives. The KPI helps the organization understand how well they are progressing toward the goal.

There are a few basic communication KPIs that your association could measure:

- **Open/Click rates:** the number of people who open an email message once it is delivered.
- **Member Engagement:** See Step 6: Assess your Effectiveness under Member Engagement
- **Event Participation:** i.e. how many people are registering and showing up for events? How many are members and non-members?
- **Responses and Feedback:** Number of questions have you answered. Number of comments and responses have you received from your messages/online content postings or surveys.
- **Member attraction/retention:** How many members have been recruited trough communication campaigns or events? How many have renewed their registration as a result of your communication (e.g. through email reminders).
- **Public interest:** How many enquiries are you receiving from media, prospective members, government, donors and other stakeholders?
- **Media outreach:** How many press releases you are sending out? How much coverage do they generate?

Communication is an ongoing effort. After you measure your results, make adjustments on how you can improve your communication efforts in the future.

Resources

- CIPE Business Associations for the 21st Century, 2016 – Strategic Communication, Messaging, Media & Press Releases, Measuring Success,

- World Bank Group, Building the Capacity of Business Membership Organizations – Communication Channels

- SEQUA BMO Toolbox – Communication Channels, Publications

- https://higherlogic.com – Elements of a winning Member Engagement Strategy

- https://www.membernova.com – Your communication strategy matters - How to engage your members

- International Journal of Business Communication 2015, Vol. 52 – Strategic Communication

- Strategic Communication in PRSP

- https://associationsnow.com – Strategic Communications

Part 4 –
Good Governance

Part 4 – Good Governance

Organizational governance refers to the system of policies, mechanisms and practices by which an organization is directed and controlled. It relates to the structure and processes for decision making, accountability, control and behaviour within an organization. The way an organization is governed will strongly influence how an association's objectives are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and addressed and how performance is optimized. A robust and transparent governance will also often be a requirement for potential funders.

Good governance is essential to creating business associations that are independent and mission-driven, can grow a broad membership base, can be responsible financial stewards, provide membership services, and effectively represent their member interests in the public policy process.[23]

Key reasons why associations should be concerned about having a good governance structure are:
- Good governance preserves and strengthens membership and stakeholder confidence
- Good governance provides the foundation for a high-performing NREA
- Good governance ensures an association remains dynamic and relevant for its members

Three essential elements of good organizational governance for an association include:
- Democratic mechanisms for leadership selection
- Ensuring transparent and responsible decision-making procedures, and
- Separating governance and management functions within associations.

Effective leadership is critical to ensuring effective governance. Leaders should be representative of an organization's membership, act in the best interests of the organization and be able to guide an organization towards achieving their objectives.

Ensuring good governance within an organization is an ongoing process. In order to measure progress towards organizational objectives, regular checks and balances on the way an organization is governed are required. An organization's governance should evolve as the institution evolves, which requires leadership and commitment from all stakeholders.

Governance structure and roles

This section outlines the key considerations when developing, or reviewing, an NREA's governance structure. This includes the consideration of the membership base, the rules that govern the association and its operations, the secretariat, and the board.

The Membership

The Membership General Assembly (MGA) should normally represent the core and highest authority within a NREA. It is the central body for decision-making and the election of Board members as per the constitution or the established by-laws. The Membership General Assembly usually convenes in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year or bi-annually.

Member's rules and responsibilities should be clearly outlined in the governance framework and apply to all members.

The Governance Framework and By-laws

Different governance frameworks can be applied to business associations, yet the distinct nature of business associations warrants a special approach. Business associations are membership-based organizations whose responsibility is to their dues-paying members, who also comprise the governing structures of associations.

The following are some guiding principles that provide you with a starting point for developing and/or improving your governance framework.[24]

23 CIPE, Governance Principles for Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce: https://www.cipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/governancePrinciples_EN.pdf
24 CIPE, Governance Principles for Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce: https://www.cipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/governancePrinciples_EN.pdf

Part 4 - Good Governance

First and foremost, NREAs should look to developing a robust constitution, or statutes, in order to set the overall governance structure. Constitutions or statutes are critical in the sense that they lay the foundation for the way the association is set up, and they will be difficult to change at a later date so it is worthwhile spending time and resources on them in the first instance to ensure that they fully meet the needs of the association. For GOGLA, we found that a good notary is well worth the investment as they can explain what is legally possible, what is common practice, and what are the areas where you should make your own choice (and what will be the implications of that).[25] It is good practice to publish your constitution or statutes on your website for full transparency.

1. **Creating independent, mission- and member-driven associations**
   The governance framework should create independent, effective, mission-driven business associations that represent their members' interests, create value, and fulfil their broader role in society.
   - Focus on creating transparent processes for selecting board members, their activities and decision-making. It should treat all members fairly, be transparent in its decisions and activities, and espouse equal access to information.
   - Decision-makers should be free from undue influence of individual members in carrying out their responsibilities.
   - The association should be independent from external influence in governance or key management functions; the framework should ensure the association remains non-partisan.
   - Decision-makers should be impartial in their actions, avoid conflict of interest, and always act in the best interest of the association.
   - The association's mission should reflect member interests and should be developed by members in a democratic manner.
   - Any funding, projects and activities taken on should be consistent with the association's mission.
   - The association governance framework should establish guidance on when and how members are allowed to use the association's name in their activities.

2. **Member governance - rights and responsibilities**
   The association governance framework should recognize that members are the reason the association exists and enable them to act as informed and active owners.
   - Member rights should be clearly defined in the by-laws and be accessible to all members. I.e. Members have the right to participate in decision making, vote and access association information.
   - Member responsibilities should be clearly defined in the by-laws and be accessible to all members. I.e. Members have a responsibility to pay dues on time, be active members and abide by association by-laws.
   - The governance framework should ensure fair and equitable treatment of all members.

3. **The role, structure, and responsibilities of the board**
   - The association governance framework should create a board that ensures strategic direction, develops policy, and monitors implementation.
   - The board should ensure compliance with organizational and national laws, regulations, and relevant ethical standards; ensures proper management by professional staff; and ensures accountability and openness.
   - The framework should establish clear separation of board and management roles within the association.
   - The governance framework should provide clear and consistent guidelines on term limits for board members.
   - The governance framework should clearly define the board's responsibilities when it comes to selecting, compensating, evaluating, and replacing board members and key association executives.

4. **Relationship with stakeholders**
   - The association governance framework should ensure that relationships with key stakeholders are properly disclosed and are initiated in the best interest of all members of the association.
   - Any and all relationships with external stakeholders, must be made known to the board of directors, including terms and conditions of the agreement, communication channels, and timelines where appropriate.

Part 4 – Good Governance

- An association governance framework should establish a classification of key stakeholders and proper designations or channels of communication with them.
- The framework should define communication channels with government officials, especially in the context of advocacy, should be open and transparent.
- In working with national or international donor organizations, associations should ensure that any of the programs they implement are consistent to their members' interests.

An association should develop its own by-laws – a unique set of rules, regulations or laws established by a membership group to regulate itself, its leadership and its operations. There are a few things to keep in mind when writing association by-laws:[26]

- Keep the by-laws clear and brief.
- Keep by-laws general so that they do not need to be frequently changed, but specific enough to help the board navigate likely or potential situations.
- Lay out the basic structure of the board and board members' roles and responsibilities.
- Lay out procedures and authorities for amendment of by-laws.

- Consult a local lawyer to ensure that the document is compliant with local laws and regulations.

The Board

The board as so established, governs the NREA. It is constituted of individuals elected by the general assembly (and/or appointed by the board) to represent the interests of the general assembly, to act on its behalf, and articulate the association's direction by establishing its vision, mission, strategy, and guiding principles.[27] The duties of the board and how they govern are defined in the by-laws and governance framework of a NREA. GOGLA's Board for example is made up of members who are elected by the general assembly, and members appoint an individual who represents that member as part of the Board.

The Board's Structure, Role and Responsibilities

Association good governance starts with the board of directors. The board's role and obligation are to oversee and enable good management of the organization and ensure that the organization fulfils its mission. The board generally has decision-making powers regarding matters of policy, direction, strategy, and governance of the organization.

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26 Effective Governance: A Toolkit for Microfinance Association Boards: https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/1_EffectiveGovernance_web_en.pdf
27 Effective Governance: A Toolkit for Microfinance Association Boards: https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/1_EffectiveGovernance_web_en.pdf

Part 4 – Good Governance

Basic responsibilities of the board the board of a well-governed business association include, but are not limited to:
- Formulating key corporate policies, strategic goals
- Authorizing major transactions or other actions.
- Hiring, Supporting, and evaluating an Executive Director
- Strategic and operational planning
- Financial oversight and fundraising
- Monitoring, evaluation, and program strengthening
- Risk management and ethical and legal compliance
- Leadership in external relations
- Mentoring senior management, provide resources and guidance to help facilitate operations.

Boards can have different structures depending on the association's size, complexity and needs; larger associations can establish board committees as an effective way to distribute the work between the board members and allow more detailed consideration and concentration on specific matters. The number of board committees, size and mix, do vary from one NREA to another depending on its size, complexity and the challenges it faces. Some examples are human resources and remuneration committee, board finance committee, governance committee and board audit and risk committee.

All boards, board committees and board members are required to discharge their duties in accordance with the following basic fiduciary duties:
- **Duty of care:** Act in good faith, with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances;
- **Duty of loyalty:** Act in good faith in a manner the director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the organization; and
- **Duty of obedience:** Act within the organization's purposes and ensure that the mission is pursued.

Building the Board

While there is no formula for creating a model board, a number of key elements should be considered when putting together a diverse group of leaders tasked with governing a business association.

- **Board Composition and Size:** To determine the optimal size of a board, consider the needs of the association, the board's lifecycle, its mission, its fundraising role, and any legal requirements in your region/country.

  A smaller board is often easier to assemble and can make decisions more quickly and allows more time for each member to participate. A larger board offers more perspectives and ideas, can delegate tasks to committees, but may make it more difficult to organize meetings and make decisions efficiently. The size of the board should be secondary to its ability to function effectively.

- **Board Qualifications:** Member qualifications should be in line with the needs of the association. For boards where the existing board or management selects the individuals to serve, it is ideal to have a diversity of financial, legal, and managerial skills should be considered when planning the incorporation of new members into the board to enable it to provide guidance to management. For boards where members are elected by the general assembly, this is not always possible to achieve.

Key Areas of Skills and Experience to Look for in Board Members:
- Knowledge of the operating environment, and of the most relevant social, economic and strategic issues faced by the association.
- Experience serving on other boards.
- Knowledge of non-profit associations, and energy business associations in particular.
- Knowledge of the regulatory environments in which renewable energy businesses operate.

Part 4 – Good Governance

- Connections to people in different key services, such as legal services, auditing, or accounting.
- Connections to potential donors and funding sources.
- Belief in the association's mission and commitment to its goals.

- **Recruitment:** Recruitment may take place for both elected board members, those ultimately decided by the general assembly, and appointed board members. Election of board members usually takes place at the annual general assembly of the association; the process of electing board members should be clearly outlined in the governance framework and by-laws.

  NREAs may find it useful to create a nominating committee composed of people with different perspectives, members of the board, and staff, to lead recruitment efforts and ensure that the best candidates are considered. The committee must be familiar with the association's recruitment policies and the needs of the board.

  Steps in the Board Recruitment Process:
  - Establish a board development or nominating committee.
  - Conduct a board needs assessment.
  - Identify potential candidates.
  - Cultivate relationships with potential board candidates.
  - Recruit individuals to appointed board positions or nominate individuals for vote by general assembly.
  - Orient new members.

- **Terms and Term Limits and Removal:** Both should be clearly outlined in the board's by-laws. Establish the term duration for board members in line with your local laws and regulations. Stagger the terms of board members to ensure smooth, gradual turnover on the board and that valuable historical knowledge of the association is not lost after each board election.

Term limits restrict the number of times that an individual can be re-elected to the board e.g. elected members can serve no more than two consecutive terms. The procedure of removing a board member should also be outlined in the by-laws.

Operating the Board
Some business association boards choose to keep board operations simple, with only basic rules and tasks carried out on an as-needed basis. Other boards, particularly those with a larger membership base, need to delegate work among board members and specific board committees and to adopt a more formal set of rules to guide board interactions. The board's operational structure will depend on the association's size, complexity and needs.

Boards usually conduct scheduled and ad-hoc meetings to interact as a group, reflect together, and exercise their governance role. Below are some tips for effective board meetings.
- Fix board meetings well in advance to ensure all board members are present.
- The association's executive officer should send the board an agenda package at least five working days before the meeting.
- Set a clear meeting agenda.
- The chair should encourage maximum member participation, candid discussions and allow them to air their views.
- The chair should assist the group to reach a consensus on issues requiring a decision.

Board Performance Evaluation
Your NREA should establish a process of evaluating the board as part of its governance framework. A regular process of evaluation to obtain feedback on the collective performance of the board, improve understanding of the current skill set and review the contribution of individual board members is necessary for effective board function, ongoing development and improvement. Consider the following seven-step framework

Part 4 – Good Governance

to planning your board evaluation. While these questions must be asked for all board evaluations, the combined answers can be quite different and the subsequent review processes can range in scope, complexity and cost.[28]

- **What are our objectives?** The first (and, in our opinion, most important) aspect of any evaluation is establishing why the board is doing it. The primary motivation can be characterized as "conformance" or "value adding".
- **Who will be evaluated?** Comprehensive governance evaluations can entail reviewing the performance of a wide range of individuals, the entire board or specific committees.
- **What will be evaluated?** Decide the criteria for the evaluation process. This is necessary whether the board is seeking general or specific performance improvements and will suit boards seeking to improve areas as diverse as board processes, director skills, competencies and motivation, or even boardroom relationships.

- **Who will be asked?** The vast majority of Board members evaluations concentrate exclusively on the board as the sole sources of information for the evaluation process. Membership, management and other relevant stakeholders, like donors, may provide valuable data for the review. Similarly, in some situations, key stakeholders such as government departments or agencies, major clients and suppliers that the NREA interacts with may be in a position to provide useful information on its performance.
- **What techniques will be used?** Depending on the degree of formality, the objectives of the evaluation and the resources available, the NREA's Boards may choose between a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data can be used to answer questions of "how much" or "how many". Qualitative techniques can include questionnaires and surveys to gather information.

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28 Board Performance Evaluations that add value: https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2018/05/18/board-performance-evaluations-that-add-value/

Part 4 – Good Governance

- **Who will do the evaluation?** Who conducts the evaluation process will depend on whether the review is to be conducted internally or externally and what methodology is chosen. Internal reviews are conducted within the organization, either by one or more directors designated by the board for the function or the association's management. External reviews are conducted by external parties, most often either specialist consulting firms in corporate governance or law firms.
- **What will we do with the results?** The evaluation's objectives should be the determining factor when deciding to whom the results will be released. Most often, the board's central objective will be to agree on a series of actions that it can take to improve governance. Since the effectiveness of the governance system relies on people within the organization, communicating the results to all directors and key governance personnel is critical for Boards seeking performance improvement. Where the objective of the Board evaluation is to assess the quality of Board—management relationships, a summary of the evaluation may also be shared with the senior management team.[29]

Committees & Working Groups

Your NREA should have relatively few standing committees. To remain responsive to rapidly changing needs and requirements as the association conducts its works, time-limited project groups to handle particular issues should be considered. Such working groups are given a specific task and are expected to cease to exist when that task is finished. They may have delegated authority to settle an issue and they may report back to the board.

Basic rules for the operation of committees
Standing committees and project/working groups should all follow some basic rules to ensure good governance. Most of these rules should be summarized on one page to act as a permanent source of reference for the committee, secretariat and for the board.

- Any committee or project group must have clear terms of reference; ideally these should be brief as the longer they are, the more room there is for confusion. The terms of reference should be set by reference to the policy priorities of the association and laid down by the committee to which the relevant committee or project group reports.
- There must be a clear reporting relationship that should include the extent to which the committee or group has delegated authority.
- The chairperson and membership of the committee should be stipulated or approved by the board, unless they act on behalf of the member general assembly, in which case they need to be approved by the member general assembly. GOGLA, for instance, has a Financial Committee that reviews the Annual Report and Annual Accounts and reports back to members during the AGM.
- The chairperson needs to command the confidence of the members and to have the necessary chairperson's skills. It is particularly important to prevent the chairperson from promoting the interests of his or her own company.
- The members must be carefully chosen to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the required task, but also bearing in mind the need to satisfy all groups and types of member that their interests are being adequately taken into account.

Part 4 – Good Governance

- A member of the secretariat should be appointed to be secretary to each committee and project group. The secretary's role is not simply to take the minutes but rather to act as the link between the permanent secretariat and the committee. The secretary should prevent the committee going outside its terms of reference or doing anything that conflicts with stated association policy and practice.

As part of the annual review of governance the existence of every committee and project group should be considered. This review could include a review of the committee membership to ensure that it structured to continue to meet its objectives.

The Secretariat/Management
While the board plays the role of organizational oversight, management principles and the execution of functions is actually the responsibility of the secretariat, popularly known as 'management'. The secretariat is the operative arm of a typical business association. It is made up of staff employed to implement the association's strategic plan. Led by an executive director, is tasked with managing the association's operations and assets on a day-to-day basis.

Below are essential management functions that NREA's secretariat must undertake to hold a well-functioning and efficient organization.

Strategic Planning and Execution
This is a basic management function involving formulation of one or more detailed plans to achieve optimum balance of needs or demands with the available resources. Management should define both your association's long-term and short-term objectives and determine what steps you will take to accomplish these objectives. During the planning process:
- Identify the goals or objectives to be achieved.
- Formulate strategies to achieve them.
- Arrange or create the means/resources required.
- Implement, direct, and monitors all steps in their proper sequence.

After planning, management gathers the necessary information and resources to execute the particular plan, executes the plan, documents and monitors performance against objectives.

Activity and Service Delivery
Central to the existence of an industry association is the delivery of services to its membership. The secretariat conducts the operations of the association and delivers the associations services to its members. This includes:
- Industry Representation in External Relations and other activities.
- Scheduling and staffing of various working groups and committees of the association.
- Organizing and executing member events, programs and other activities.
- Communication.
- Member Services.

Human Resource Development
Human resource development is the framework for helping employees develops their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. It includes such opportunities as employee training, employee career development, performance management and development, coaching, mentoring, succession planning, key employee identification, tuition assistance, and organization development.

Your NREAs performance is determined by the abilities of both, your board and staff to perform their tasks, invest in improving their knowledge and motivation.

There are different ways to make progress in Human Resource Development for NREAs:[30]
- **Exchange with other NREAs:** Elected NREA boards may often have meetings with other NREAs in their home country and abroad. They can then provide and adapt examples of how other NREAs function. The board (best together with the Secretariat) can easily prepare a list of 'want-to-know issues' which the travellers can take along and respond to upon return, in writing or verbally (e.g. during the next board/

staff meeting). Staff exchange with other NREAs is also a valuable tool that can be arranged with other NREAs at home or abroad.

- **Introduction for new Bboard members:** New board members may have no previous experience of NREA work. In order to speed up the learning curve, NREAs should develop induction folders for newcomers containing e.g. NREA statutes, vision/mission statements, work plans, budgets, introduction papers to the Secretariat, etc. A half-day (or longer) induction workshop (possibly linked with a suitable teambuilding event) is another method of getting new Board members ready for work. A Board manual/toolbox may be also developed.

- **Training workshops for staff and Board members:** Donors conduct a number of chamber management workshops, which NREAs should look out for both in- country and abroad. They are open for board members, CEOs or secretariat staff. NREAs should use these workshops as an opportunity to generate ideas for improvement and change. However, this will only work in instances where participants get the opportunity to share their new knowledge and ideas with the NREA.

- **Job descriptions and incentives:** Job descriptions are important instruments for staff development, particularly when they include quality requirements. They should be reviewed and regularly adjusted to the actual work of the NREA. Job descriptions also serve as a basis for assessing performance and deciding on incentives. Generally, NREAs have to become more innovative in creating incentives as they increase loyalty and productivity. Staff incentives can be: promotions, salary increase, and bonus for good work in cash or kind (e.g. to accompany a trade delegation to a foreign country), best staff nomination and even training courses. Management should establish a clear, evolving organizational chart that defines roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.

- **Staff Evaluation/Assessment:** Normally, direct supervisors should conduct performance evaluations. The assessment should include work

performance and general qualities and use a numerical grading system to arrive at objective results. It is often the case that employees rate themselves better than their superiors do; assessments therefore have to be conducted tactfully and in a participatory manner. A negative assessment should be accompanied by specific advice on how to improve performance.

Performance Management

Performance management is one of the major functions of the human resource department and a key area of reporting. Performance Management can focus on the performance of an organization, a department, an employee, or the processes in place to manage particular tasks.

Performance Management is an ongoing process, which includes communication between a supervisor and an employee that occurs throughout the year, in support of accomplishing strategic and operational objectives. The process includes:[31]

- Identifying and setting goals.
- Discussing expectations and performance standards.
- Evaluating results and providing feedback.
- Assisting with individual's development planning.

Guiding Principles of Performance Management that NREAs should follow

- Ratings should be given based solely on performance.
- An employee's position should not dictate whether they have more or less access to the highest level of ratings; supervisors should articulate to employees at all levels what it takes to achieve excellence, to accomplish major goals, and to make unique contributions worthy of the highest level ratings.
- Goals and expectations can be modified during the evaluation period as long as they are communicated to, and discussed with, the employee in advance of the annual assessment; changes should be made in writing.

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31 Performance Management Toolkit: https://my0x63lw5hc106chu1hwhnrw-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Performance-Management-Toolkit.pdf

Part 4 – Good Governance

Performance expectations should include all job outcomes, such as:

- Impact of employee interactions on clients.
- Services and products delivered by the employee.
- Processes used and policies followed.
- Organizational values demonstrated on-the-job.

Relationship between the board and management

A productive and harmonious relationship between the board and management is critical for good governance and organizational effectiveness. The board and management want an effective and successful NREA, so a relationship based on trust and respect is critical. Central to this relationship is a clear mutual understanding of roles, delegations and boundaries which allows each party to respect the other's responsibilities, contributions and expectations. The relationship depends on the open flow of relevant and timely information in both directions.

Expectations of the Board

The board expects management to accept that the board's role is to monitor and question, probe issues, seek clarification, offer insight and share its knowledge and experience. With management much more deeply involved in the detail and operations of the organization, board members rely on management to share in a timely manner all material information needed for decision making to allow them to effectively fulfil their obligations as directors. The board also expects management to ask advice and make use of the directors' wealth of experience as and when appropriate.

Expectations of the Secretariat

The secretariat primarily expects that the board will trust them to implement strategy and deliver outcomes without undue interference. The CEO specifically expects from the board clearly stated performance objectives and defined boundaries of authority. Without this direction, the CEO is left to speculate on what the board wants him/her to achieve. The CEO should also expect regular and honest performance feedback. Recognition for achievement, honesty and openness, wisdom and advice, and the ability to use directors as a sounding board are also desirable.

Relationship between the Board Chair and CEO

The relationship between the chair and CEO is critical. Primarily it should be an engaged business relationship where professional and personal trust and respect are paramount in an environment of construction challenge.

This is a vital relationship as the primary source of communication between the board and management between board meetings is through the chair and the CEO.

The relationship should primarily be a "business relationship" where professional and personal trust and respect is paramount and where the chair can act as a mentor/sounding board to the CEO. At the same time, it should be a relationship of frankness and candour behind the scenes, and unity and mutual support in public.

It is to be expected that the chair and CEO meet from time to time between board meetings to help set board agendas, to debrief following board meetings and to exchange updates and give guidance on material issues impacting the organization

Relationship between individual board members and executive management

Individual board members have no inherent authority or executive power beyond those provided for within the NREAs Articles of Incorporation or Constitution. Enquiries by board members of management and by management of individual board members should primarily be channelled via the chair and CEO.

Where there is any direct material contract between individual board members and executive management, the chair and CEO should be kept informed by way of courtesy. Where there is strength of mutual respect and confidence that the chair's and CEO's authority will not be undermined, communications between executive management and board members may be freer.

There should also be expectations of freer communication between the chairs of the audit and risk committees and any other committees or working committees duly established by the NREA with the approval of the board and the relevant executives responsible for those functions, on matters within the scope of those functions.

Part 4 – Good Governance

Resources and References

- SEQUA, BMO toolbox

- Performance Management Toolkit: https://my0x63lw5hc106chu1hwhnrw-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Performance-Management-Toolkit.pdf

- CIPE, Governance Principles for Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce: https://www.cipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/governancePrinciples_EN.pdf

- Evaluating Boards and Directors: https://docplayer.net/35487934-Evaluating-boards-and-directors.html

- Board Performance Evaluations that add value: https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2018/05/18/board-performance-evaluations-that-add-value/

- Effective Governance: A Toolkit for Microfinance Association Boards: https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/1_EffectiveGovernance_web_en.pdf

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Part 5 –
Financial management & reporting

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

This section provides an introduction for the non-financial manager or leader on managing and controlling the finances of the association in such a way that it is financially viable and accountable. It concerns the basics of good financial management, namely: developing a financial strategy, financial documentation and reporting, budgeting, income generation, internal controls, and financial policies. This is geared towards enabling NREAs manage their finances in an informed and competent way.

The importance of sound financial management

Financial management is one of the most important and sensitive duties of the association. Although profitability is not the core purpose of a business association, it is necessary to ensure that the association is sustainable, properly funded and accountable. NREAs need to ensure they have adequate cash flow to support their operations and contribute to achieving their goals while demonstrating prudent management of their funds.

Financial management is more than simply keeping accounting records. It is an essential part of organizational management which involves planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring financial resources in order to achieve organizational objectives and involves a range of financial tactics. It is a vital practice that will help you to stay on track with your organizational strategy. The budget should reflect your priorities and can help you avoid distractions and unplanned, or unauthorized, activities.[32]

Sound financial management is also important in order to provide transparent communications on how the association has used money they received from members, donors and fundraising activities.

Financial Planning & Financial Strategy

- Current position
- Targeted future position
- How will you get there

Tools to build Sound Financial Strategies

- Financial reporting
- Budgeting
- Reserve Fund

Income Generation

- Creating financial sustainability
- Stabilizing your funding base
- Diversifying your funding resources

Financial Controls & Accountability

- Internal Controls for financial risk management
- Financial policies & procedures

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32 See CIPE, Business Associations for the 21st Century https://www.cipe.org/resources/business-associations-for-the-21st-century/   49

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

A sound association financial management system should be able to help the organization optimize scarce resources in order to achieve its goals. This should contain the following key financial aspects to ensure that good financial management is in place:

1. Financial Planning/Strategy
2. Tools to build Sound Financial Strategies
   a. Financial Reporting
      i. General Ledger
      ii. Balance Sheet
      iii. Income Statement / Profit & Loss Statement
      iv. Cash Flow Forecast
3. Budgeting
   a. A Reserve Fund
4. Income Generation
5. Financial Controls and Accountability
   a. Internal Controls for financial risk management
   b. Financial policies and procedures

Financial Strategy

If you have not devised a financial strategy, your association will be managing its finances without clear visibility. It is essential to a plan how you will finance your association and its activities, how much revenue you will need, how you will generate it and how you will manage and account for these funds. Your strategy should consider and describe your current financial position, your targeted future position and tactics to use to attain your financial goals.[33] These three questions will help you to build a clear strategy using the financial tools in this section:

– Where are we now?
– What are our plans for the future?
– How will we get there?

Tools to build sound financial strategies
Financial Reporting

Good financial management begins with proper record-keeping. By providing a written summary of the financial activities for a given period, financial statements record the association's performance and allow management, members and donors to assess its strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly important for NREAs because it enables them to demonstrate the viability of the services provided, hence encouraging further member, government and donor support.

There are four key financial statements provide visibility on your organisation's finances:

1. **General Ledger:** This is a record of all transactions, income, and expenses. The general ledger is possibly the most important financial document you need to maintain because it is used to develop other reports. It is also used for auditing and to determine if your financial transactions have been properly recorded.
2. **Balance sheet:** The balance sheet provides a picture of the financial health of an organization at a given moment. It lists, in detail, the various assets of the organization, its liabilities and the value of the organization's equity – or the net worth of the organization.
3. **Income Statement / Profit and Loss Statement:** The profit and loss statement summarizes an organization's income and expenses over a specific period of time. It is prepared at regular intervals (usually monthly and at financial year end) to show the results of operations for a given period.
   This statement is important for NREAs, as it shows how income has been allocated against expenses and provides useful information to all stakeholders. Business associations receive most of their income from membership fees, grants and donations. Expenses can include items such as wages and salaries, rent, fundraising expenses and activities.
4. **Cash Flow Forecast:** The forecast for cash flow is a summary of money coming into and going out of the organization. It uses historical tendencies and forecasted activities to forecast cash flow fluctuations which may be coming up. It is prepared at regular intervals, usually monthly and at financial year end, to show the fluctuations of revenues over a given period. For NREAs, this statement will set out the amount of cash you have on hand at the beginning of the period, forecast future movements of cash for receipts and expenses and when they are expected to occur.

Learn how to prepare and read these financial statements and use the information to improve your association's activities as well as improve financial management.[34]

33 Financial Management Manual http://www.orgwise.ca/sites/osi.ocasi.org.stage/files/resources/Financial%20Management%20Manual%20V.%20FINAL.pdf
34 Financial Management for non-profit organizations https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/~/media/corporate/allfiles/document/professional-resources/notforprofit/financial-management-nfp-organisations.pdf?la=en

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

You will need to forecast your upcoming cash receipts and expenses and can base this on the past, while including information about income and activities that you know are coming up. You can then create a graph that illustrates your cash flow position. It will help you to foresee and prepare for any cash flow fluctuations, especially cash flow slowdowns. An example of a cash flow graph may look something like this:

Cash flow forecast – Scenario A

Total cash receipts   Total cash paid out   Cash on hand (end of month)
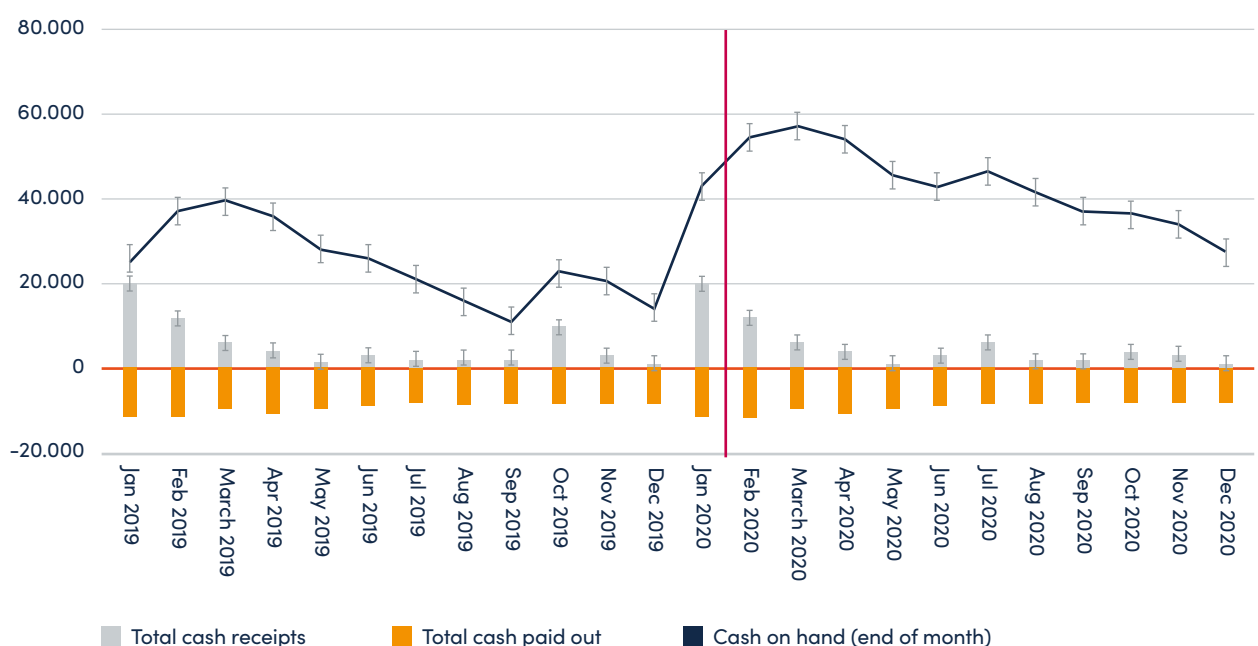
Budgeting

This is the process of planning finances over a specific period of time and forecasting what you expect your actual outcomes to be against budgeted activities and anticipating changes. This will provide the financial information needed to enable the association to decide if its strategic plans are financially viable.

Good budgeting and forecasting require the following:
- Preparation against strategic goals which are then approved by the management and the Board.
- Budgeted timelines aligned to the preparation of financial statements.
- Regular comparison of budgets against actual financial results as disclosed in the financial statements.

Your budget reflects your strategic plan, but it also allows you to amend activities and targets with forecasts based on actual results.

Your budget should detail all sources of expected income and identify all activities/expenditures approved for the year ahead. It should be a reflection of your association's overall strategic goals and serve as your controlling document to help you avoid unplanned, even unauthorized, activities.

The budget should be reviewed and updated on a monthly basis with the actual results compared against the budgeted amounts, so that you can easily see if you are on target or not.

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

The sample budget below provides a recommended format that – though it is not meant to be exhaustive, demonstrates how a budget might be constructed.[35]

Sample Business Association Budget (In Europe)

	Member rate	Year		
Income		**#Units**	**Amount (€)**	**Total**
Membership Dues		300	150,00	45.000,00
Training Events	Member	200	50,00	10.000,00
	Non-Member	200	100,00	20.000,00
Webinars	Member	200	25,00	5.000,00
	Non-Member	200	50,00	10.000,00
Corporate Sponsors		5	3.000,00	15.000,00
Advertising		40	750,00	30.000,00
Annual Meeting Registration	Member	125	175,00	21.875,00
	Non-Member	35	250,00	8.750,00
Annual Meeting Exhibitors		20	2.000,00	40.000,00
Publications		300	55,00	16.500,00
Grants and Donations				100.000,00
Income Sub-total				322.125,00
Expenses		**Units**	**Amount (€)**	**Total**
Facilities and Administration				
Rent		12	1.000,00	12.000,00
Telephone and Internet		12	125,00	1.500,00
Equipment				3.000,00
Chief Staff Officer				85.000,00
Membership Manager				35.000,00
Government Relations				15.000,00
Event Manager				40.000,00
Marketing and Promotion				14.000,00
Meetings Management				10.000,00
IT Services (website)				12.000,00
Legal Administration				13.500,00
Activities: Programmes and Events				
Annual Meeting Costs		180	150,00	24.000,00
Speaker Expenses		10	500,00	5.000,00
Printed Materials				3.000,00
Trade Promotion Programme				6.000,00
Webinar Hosting Platform		12	100,00	1.200,00
Training Program Event		400	85,00	28.000,00
Expenses Sub-total				**306.200,00**
Net Profit / Loss (–)				**15.925,00**

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

A Reserve Fund

A Reserve fund is an important element of a sound Financial strategy designed for sustainability. This fund supports and NREA's approach to build and maintain an adequate level of unrestricted net assets to support the organization's day-to-day operations in the event of unforeseen shortfalls. This would include:

1. Enabling the organization to sustain operations through delays in payments of committed membership fees, sponsorship or grant funding, and to accept reimbursable contracts and grants without jeopardizing ongoing operations.
2. Promoting member and sponsor confidence in the long-term sustainability of the organization by preventing chronic cash flow crises that can diminish its reputation and force its leaders to make expensive short-term, crisis-based decisions.
3. If the reserve fund is included with the cash in the bank, it will allow you to create your own internal line of credit to manage cash flow and maintain financial flexibility.

The reserve also ensures that the NREA can recover one-time, nonrecurring expenses that will build long-term capacity, such as staff development, scoping and project development. Operating reserves are not intended to replace a permanent loss of funds or eliminate an ongoing budget gap and they should be replenished, if used, within a reasonable period of time.

How much should you keep in your reserve fund? Association best practices advise that the fund should represent at least 3 months of recurring operating costs. Your NREA may want to have a higher level of 6 months of recurring operation costs depending on the risks that the association faces.

Income Generation

Generating income is more than just fundraising. It is about achieving financial sustainability by stabilizing your funding base and in some cases increasing and diversifying your funding sources so that you are not dependent on one source.[36]

The fundamental question becomes how to generate income in a sustainable way for your business association. Your income generation plan must ensure that:

- You are raising sufficient levels of income to enable you to deliver your organization's purpose. Does it cover all costs incurred/projected?
- You have taken into account any restrictions imposed by funders on how your organization can apply the funds received.
- You have a sufficiently diverse source of income to avoid the high level of risk associated with dependency on one source.

Begin by using your financial information to assemble and analyse relevant data on your current income sources and where you spend the money generated.[37]

Consider the following:

- Where your subscription revenues come from.
- The services you provide.
- Whether any charges levied cover the costs of service supply.
- The annual costs of running your organization.

If your association does not have the figures to hand, it is even more important to undertake the analysis and include this exercise as part of your financial planning process.

36 Guide Four Revenue Building: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_595734.pdf
37 ILO A series of "hand-on" guides to building and managing effective employers' organizations: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_595734.pdf

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

For most associations, income from membership fees is their main source of revenues. Here are some key best practices for membership fees:

- The fee structure should be realistic so as not to deter membership which would in turn compromise the association's representative ability.
- The figures should be audited – membership fees should clearly appear in the association's financial reports and accounts.
- The fees structure should be transparent – members should be clear about exactly what they get for their membership fee.
- Making a payment should be easy – offering automatic renewal credit card payment for small associations might be a solution.

Other than membership dues and service provision, there are other sources of income for business associations. These are more inconsistent by nature and cannot normally be relied upon as core funding sources, but they can be significant. Examples include sponsorships and endorsement fees, registrations for key events and workshops, advertising in magazines and publications, donations from retired members, fundraising events and external grants for projects from donors.

Financial Controls and Accountability

Good financial management must be supported by internal controls, policies and procedures that ensure financial prudence with complete and accurate financial information for good decision making.

Financial management is a core component of the association's governance framework. It is the process by which an association's finances are controlled and held to account. It is concerned with the overall financial structures and processes for decision making, accountability, control and behaviour and should be directed by the board or management committee.

In this section we focus on the two key areas for financial management governance: Internal controls for financial risk management and Financial policies and procedures.

Internal Controls as a Financial Risk Management Tool
Financial Risk Management

Every association is faced with a multitude of risks – loss of information, insurance, cyber security, reduction of members, loss of funding or loss of a major donor. A critical assessment to be performed by the NREA's Board is to document all possible risks, as well as how you are currently aiming to mitigate those risks. In looking at financial risk, loss of a particular type of revenue is often considered, but equally important is to consider longevity of revenue sources and how expenditure is appropriated.

A core role of the board is to assess, monitor and mitigate risk. In this section, we consider financial risk. Risk mitigation can be likened to warming up before a race; it may not stop injury, but it is certainly a great preventative measure.

It is important to implement comprehensive financial controls that will:

- **Ensure the reliability of financial records.** Managers depend on accurate financial information to make programmatic and financial decisions. Program planning is influenced by the financial performance of the program and demonstrated in the financial statements.
- **Safeguard the organization's assets.** Money and physical assets of an organization can be stolen, misused, or accidentally destroyed unless they are protected by adequate controls.
- **Promote operational efficiency.** Controls within an organization reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and guard against misallocation of resources.
- **Encourage adherence to management policies and funder requirements.** Management establishes certain procedures and rules to encourage the pursuit of the organization's goals and funder requirements. Proper controls ensure that staff adheres to such policies.

The elements of an effective internal control system include:

- **Segregation of duties** — Responsibilities should be divided among different employees to

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

reduce opportunity for committing fraud or unintentional errors. Controls can often be difficult to implement in operations with limited opportunity to segregate duties. However, by asking a series of questions around where risk exists in a process, the steps that can be taken to reduce any exposure become clearer. Where there exists an opportunity for loss or error, you should be looking to put in controls to minimize the exposure.

- **Board and staff accountability** — Clear definitions of responsibility and clear lines of authority.
- **Record keeping and information systems** — Maintenance of accurate financial and program data, with appropriate supporting documentation and authorizations.
- **Audit trail** — A means by which a transaction can be followed from either end, i.e., from the original source document to the final record or from the final record to the original source document.
- **Policies and procedures** — Written operating policies and procedures such as personnel policies, and accounting policies and procedures. These policies and procedures should be updated at least annually.
- **Evaluation mechanisms** — The internal controls system should be evaluated and updated periodically to be effective.

Depending on the size, number, and nature of transactions in your NREA, controls may be variously distributed. In a small organization, some overlap of duties will be necessary. A key principle is the segregation of duties. For example, one staff person should not handle a single financial transaction from beginning to end.

A minimal set of controls might include the following:

1. An accounting procedures manual (APM) that describes the administrative tasks of the organization and who is responsible for each. The APM does not need to be a formal document, but rather a simple description of how functions such as check issuance or transfers are authorized and handled. Writing or revising the APM is a good opportunity to see whether adequate controls are in place.
2. In many cases, two signatures should be required on all payments. In all-volunteer organizations, this policy discourages

embezzlement and encourages and atmosphere of accountability.
3. Special attention should be paid to cash receipts, such as special event ticket sales. The same person should not receive the cash and do the recording of the income. Preferably pre-numbered tickets should be used, and tickets issued and sold should be accounted for.
4. The board of directors should approve the annual budget, and the board or the board's finance committee should regularly review the financial statements and compare actual results against the approved budget.
5. A person other than the bookkeeper should review the bank statements and sign off on its reconciliation. As a part of this task, attention should be given to alternations, unauthorized signatures, endorsements and questionable payments to unknown vendors and/or employees.
6. The board should approve all leases, loan agreements, affiliations, grant proposals, and other major commitments of the organization. Normally, such approval would precede and accompany such documents.

A system of internal controls also should provide an audit trail for monitoring staff adherence to the prescribed policies and procedures. An audit trail means that a transaction can be followed from one end of the accounting system to the other, for example, from the original ordering of items to final recording in the accounting system, or visa-versa.

Internal controls do not guarantee that funds will not be stolen or misused. Like a locked door, internal controls keep honest people honest.

Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation
The purpose of a risk assessment is to facilitate the decision-making process of the leadership and the board of governors in mitigating risks. It is meant to help anticipate, analyse and estimate not only the financial, but also the operational risks, that may affect the planning for the coming year. It allows focus on the resilience and adaptability of the NREA and helps to plan the implementation of preventive and control measures. The following is a short example of a Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation table. Such a table should attempt to exhaust both financial and operational risks for the NREA.

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

Potential Risks	Probability /Impact Ratio			Significance/Controls/Risk Mitigation	
	P	I	PxL	H = High risk M = Medium risk L = Low risk (or likelihood)	
1. As an association which represents the entire chain of supply of the solar PV industry, NREAs rely on economic factors that support the industry's growth. As we saw during the recession in 2008, the industry was negatively impacted. This, in turn, negatively impacted the Association.	3	5	15	M	We are keeping a close watch on information related to economic factors in order to foresee any negative turns. In addition, we have built up sufficient reserves to cover operational costs over a 6-month period
2. Our NREA risks to lose significant income if two or more of its members resign.	4	5	20	H	This becomes more of a risk if members in the high range of membership fees resign. We are working diligently to nurture and maintain our relationships with our valuable members in order not to lose them. In addition, we are looking for ways to diversify our income in order to mitigate the effect that a resignation would have on our income.

To assess your risk tolerance, ask yourself questions which range from the overall finances and operations of the NREA to very detailed processes:

- Have you adequately managed to diversify your income so that it does not rely too heavily on one source?
- What is the capacity of your financial reserves? Having sufficient reserves will help to you to ensure operations for a certain amount of time in order to recover from a negative financial impact.
- Do your financial information systems have sufficient controls around access such as passwords and dual authentication?
- Do your financial information systems have features built-in that ensure accuracy of transactions?
- Where do you physically store assets that could be misappropriated?
- How do you handle cash?
- How often do you reconcile your bank statements?
- Are you able to segregate duties? – How are expenses approved?
- How do you ensure grants are being spent in accordance with grant requirements?
- Are variances to budget investigated and reviewed?
- Do you have dual signatories on transactions?

There are also many questions around controls that can be asked about specific financial functions like revenue, receivables, expenses, payables, and employee benefits. If the board is unsure about the responses to any of these questions, they should investigate further and consider building a control to address the risk. Here are some examples of revenue and expense specific questions which are by no means exhaustive:

Revenue and receivables control questions:
- Are all sales/memberships/fees recorded, and at the right rate?
- Is grant/ project revenue correctly recorded?
- Is grant income recognized in accordance with grant terms?
- Do invoices reflect the correct pricing and discounts?
- What steps are in place to ensure any unpaid membership monies are recoverable?

Expenditure and payables control questions:
- Do you have dual authorization for all payments?
- Are the banking approvers appropriate for your NREA?
- How are purchases approved?
- What steps are in place to ensure purchases are recorded in the right period?
- Are payables representative of all amounts owing to suppliers?

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

Establishing an Effective Internal Control System

Internal controls and financial risk management will not safeguard your NREA in entirety. They create an environment of process and procedure, and ideally minimize any exposure. Many NREAs will have limited resources to have all the checks and balances in place but you can prioritize where to begin by asking yourself:

- What can we least afford to lose?
- Who can approve transactions?
- How do we protect access to our systems?

Internal control is a process effected by a NREA's oversight Board, management, and other personnel that provides reasonable assurance that the objectives of the NREA will be achieved. These objectives and related risks can be broadly classified into one or more of the following three categories:[38]

- Operations – effectiveness and efficiency of operations.
- Reporting – Reliability of reporting for internal and external use.
- Compliance – Compliance with applicable local national laws and regulations and, if applicable donor compliance*

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*   Compliant bookkeeping and accounting of business associations will depend on the regulations of the relevant country and for the relevant type of association (e.g. different for a larger NREA than for a small association). The prevailing regulations in each country will prescribe the books and records that are necessary and will provide rules for tax-acceptable vouchers and receipts, for inventory as well as for profit and loss account statements, balance sheets and audit procedures.[39]

Your internal controls should comprise plans, methods, policies, and procedures used to fulfil the mission, strategic plan, goals, and objectives of the NREA. They are a series of actions that occur across the NREA and are an integral part of the operational processes. People implement them and management is responsible for an effective internal control system and its monitoring.

Financial Policies for Controls

A financial policy is an agreed-upon set of rules that express a fair and sensible way of dealing with financial issues and guidelines. Financial policies are intended to provide guidance on how your organization goes about its work.

Financial policies should also clearly define the roles, responsibilities and authority for essential financial management staff. Once the policy has been approved by the Board or management, it is consistently implemented and enforced, and is aligned with the organization's strategic goals.

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38   https://www.grantthornton.com/~/media/content-page-files/public-sector/pdfs/articles/GAO-Standards-For-Internal-Controls.ashx
39   SEQUA BMO Toolbox: Tools and Materials for Enhancing Business Membership Organizations

Part 5 – Financial management & reporting

A good financial policy:[40]
- Is compliant with legal and regulatory requirements;
- Is comprehensive, taking into account all likely situations;
- Is realistic and can be enforced.
- Enables an organization to decentralize decision-making. For example, if the policy outlines that no-one can borrow money from petty cash, the administrator who runs the petty cash system can refuse anyone, even the CEO, when asked for a loan.
- Makes decision-making easier - It gives someone like the bookkeeper clear guidelines to follow, such as only book economy class tickets for travel.
- Helps an organization to be consistent in the way it operates.
- Helps to keep an organization transparent and accountable.
- Helps to set organizational practice.

Why should NREAs have Financial Policies?
Policies describe and document how the board or management wants financial management activities to be carried out. Keep your policies simple, but comprehensive, by having the rules and procedures needed to ensure your NREA runs in a smooth and accountable way.

Certain financial policies are standard to most organizations and your auditor should be able to help you develop these. Other financial policies will emerge from particular experiences in your association or changing conditions in the environment in which your organization is functioning.

Consider some essential policies that every financial policy framework should include:
- Accounting policy and procedures: this will define responsibilities, set out invoice workflow, identify authorized persons for approvals, bookkeeping, payments, record keeping and set timings for payments.
- Procurement procedures: Align your procurement procedures with those of a significant donor, for example. It would include

an assignment of authority to enter into contracts and what procedures are required for certain procurement amounts. This will ensure that you've following the correct procedures for procurement for grants.
- An travel and expense policy will outline what is and is not acceptable and how it is to be allocated to specific projects or the operation budgets (e.g. amounts, payments, requisitions, non-budgeted expenditure, car hire, class of airfare or hotel, per diems).
- Define a policy statement on conflicts of interest or insider transactions.
- A revenue policy would set out rules for accepting grants, donations or other revenue (e.g. receipts, deposits, grant & project funds)
- A budgeting policy will set out the rules for the creation of budgets
- Auditing policy and petty cash policy
- Assets policies (purchasing, utilization, inventory procedures, maintenance and disposal)
- Salary policy
- Cash policy (opening and operating a bank account, petty cash policy, expense advances for travel, rules for reconciliation)
- A policy for the reserve fund should include its purpose, what it can be used for and how it would be replenished should some of the funds be spent.

How to develop Financial Policies
Your staff, leadership and board members should be involved in developing your financial policies. Here are some helpful steps you can take to make the policy as helpful as possible. You may even want to begin by developing a Policy on how to write policies. This would include a clear process which includes the following:
1. Discuss your policy needs with your treasurer and finance committee or executive committee;
2. Decide who should be involved in drawing up the policy and the time frame for developing the policy;
3. Conduct an informal risk assessment. Clarify the existing situation. Write a short paragraph/sentence that does this, (e.g. this has always been decided on a case-by-case basis before);

40 CIVICUS Financial Controls and Accountability: https://www.civicus.org/documents/toolkits/Financial%20Control%20and%20Accountabili-ty.pdf

Part 5 - Financial management & reporting

4. Draft the policy;
   - Clarify the purpose of the policy. What do you want the situation to be as a result of having the policy? Write this down.
   - Clarify organizational principles that underpin the policy, (e.g. transparency, consistency). Note these in writing.
   - Define any terms you are using to ensure clarity, (e.g. "Per diem" means daily allowance).
   - Clarify who the policy will apply to. For example, 'all staff travelling out of town overnight on project business'.
5. Review and discuss the draft with staff and leadership, making necessary amendments.
6. Present to the board or management for adoption.
7. Inform and train staff on the policy, ensuring awareness and compliance.
8. Review at least bi-annually and make necessary amendments.

Resources and References

- CIPE, Business Associations for the 21st Century https://www.cipe.org/resources/business-associations-for-the-21st-century/

- SEQUA, BMO Toolbox

- OCASI, Financial Management Manual: http://dev.orgwise.ca/sites/osi.ocasi.org.stage/files/resources/Financial%20Management%20Manual%20V.%20FINAL.pdf

- CPA Australia, Financial management of not-for-profit organisations: https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/~/media/corporate/allfiles/document/professional-resources/notforprofit/financial-management-nfp-organisations.pdf?la=en

- CIVICUS, Financial Controls and Accountability https://www.civicus.org/documents/toolkits/Financial%20Control%20and%20Accountability.pdf

- Business Association Development Guidebook https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnaeb607.pdf

- CIVICUS, Financial Control and Accountability https://www.civicus.org/documents/toolkits/Financial%20Control%20and%20Accountability.pdf

- Managing Business Membership Organisations https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2013-en-trainer-manual-bmo-management.pdf

Part 6 –
Resource mobilization

Part 6 - Resource mobilization

What is resource mobilization

Every organization needs enough resources to survive: it has to engage its members, meet its planned project costs and develop future programmes, remain relevant and up to date, pay staff salaries and administrative overheads and keep equipment in a good state of repair. The list is endless.

Resources are the financial and non-financial supplies that are mobilized and used to meet an association's objectives. They include money, human resources, material goods and services.[41]

Financial resources: These may come from a wide variety of sources:
- National Government's budget.
- Grants and project income from international and national development agencies and foundations.
- Civil society organizations and NGOs.
- Private sector.

Human resources: These are the people needed to plan, implement and follow up activities and projects.
- They will need to cover a range of appropriate skills and know-how to carry out the diverse specific tasks required.
- They may be paid or voluntary.
- They may be part-time or full-time, on secondment from Ministries and other Government bodies, recruited by international agencies, or employed by national or international NGOs, or the private sector, etc.

Goods and services: These include a wide range of tangible and intangible resources e.g.:
- Office space, vehicles and computer equipment.
- Advertising time or space.
- Design and print facilities.
- Technical assistance.
- Training services.
- Meeting facilities and event venues.

Resource mobilization encompasses more than fundraising, it is the process of identifying, obtaining and managing resources necessary for the association to be able to exercise its mandate and work on its mission as it strides towards a shared vision with it resource partners and stakeholders. It is essential for your association's survival, its expansion and development, reducing dependency, building a constituency and generally creating a viable and sustainable organization.

It is also important to note that strategy, good financial management and controls, good governance, having a clear value proposition and maintaining a track record for superior services are important pillars for resource mobilization.

Guidance to resource mobilization

Discussions with young business member associations reveal that their resource mobilization efforts are often inconsistent and are often done when resource stress is felt. They sometimes deviate from the association's core strategies and are often driven by funders' interests. An NREA should have a resource mobilization action plan that is closely tied to the association's strategic plan. A lack of a clear and systematic resource mobilization plan disorients the association's focus on its strategic goals and creates an unhealthy dependency on few sources of resources.

Planning for your resource mobilization efforts will help your association to:
- Mobilize adequate resources and support for the achievement of your mission and goals.
- Ensure the continuation of your association's service provision to members.
- Identify and analyse the resources available to your envisioned programs and key intervention areas.
- Improve and scale-up of services the association currently provides.
- Position your resource mobilization strategies within existing, regional, national and international energy industry plans and strategies.
- Understand the current donor funding landscape, resource availability and support commitment hence helping you seize the existing opportunities.

41 SHAFOCS Resource Mobilization Manual: http://thestewardsjourney.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SHAFOCS-Resource-Mobiliza-tion-Manual.pdf

Part 6 - Resource mobilization

Step 1: Organizational Situation Analysis

Resource mobilization efforts are most effective when they align to the association's overall strategic goals and when implementing teams have a clear understanding the purpose and value of linking resource mobilization activities with strategic priorities.

Review or develop your resource mobilization initiatives in alignment with your communication and financial strategies. Your communication plan should include tools and approaches to communicate with existing and potential resource partners. A communication plan therefore supports your resource mobilization efforts.

If an organization is financially well-managed, it will build confidence in resource partners and be more successful in raising resources, and this, in turn, will contribute its continued growth. Hence your financial management tactics must support your resource mobilization plans.

Ask yourself:
- Do you have a team in place to carry out envisioned resource mobilization tasks?
- Are the team-members clear about their individual roles in resource mobilization?
- Do your resource mobilization initiatives align with your vision, mission, and goals?
- What are your strengths to help you mobilize resources? E.g. good governance; good reputation; wide network contacts; good existing relationships with stakeholders and donors.
- What are your weaknesses that may be in need of strengthening in order for you to carry out resource mobilization successfully? E.g. unclear roles of team members; lack of skills, experience, and/or training; small existing network of contacts, lack of financing to carry out these activities, etc.

Step 2: Assess Resource environment and map potential sources

The external resource environment is constantly changing as donors, resource partners and other development actors adapt their policies and approaches either to a shift development goals or emergency situations. It is important to assess of the external resource environment, as well as the renewable energy global, regional and country level context, to determine what resource mobilization opportunities exist and how best to approach the sources or resource partners.

You can easily and inexpensively conduct a web search to identify international donors in your country or region, their funding priorities and opportunities and to see if their funding goals in line with yours.

National government agencies and ministries are likely to have special offices and programmes for renewable energy that you can look into for resources.

Identify the key **private foundations and philanthropic organizations** in your own country and local community that support renewable energy initiatives and explore what resources they might offer.

Private Companies that are actively engaged in environmental corporate social responsibility may also be good potential partners or contributors.

Develop a list of Individuals – **community/business leaders/past members**- who can offer money and time as well as care and concern for your cause. They would be great allies, spokespersons or champions, which are a valuable resource.

Civic organizations and **other associations** that are concerned with promoting sustainable, renewable energy or with whom you share the same goals and could be potential partners for joint programmes.

Ask yourself:
- Is there a general awareness and support for NREAs in your country from government or private sector? If so, in what specific sectors or issues?
- Are there renewable energy initiatives or networks in your country that you could link up with to support your efforts?
- Is there a growing demand for the services you are offering?
- Are the economic, political, and social environments conducive for your activities?
- Who are the active donors in the renewable energy in your country? What are their current and future initiatives?

Part 6 - Resource mobilization

- Are donors still enthusiastic in supporting your area of work? And if not, what are their new interests in renewable energy that they are willing to fund?
- Do you face competition for donor or private sector funding in your environment? If so, what is your niche or competitive advantage?

Step 3: Identify Resource Needs
Before approaching donors or contributors you need to have some clear targets in mind of what you are raising funds for, how much you would need to raise, when, and from which types of sources.[42]

Step 4: Engage Potential Contributors/ Donors
Once you have clarity on your funding needs, you need to determine the right prospects to approach, and match the appropriate resource mobilization strategy to the prospect.

This involves building valuable contacts and networks, and garnering the interest, support and contributions of people important to your organization. Building relationships is as important as raising funds; people don't just give money to causes; they give to people with causes. People give to organizations to which they have personal affiliation, in some shape or form or, have a shared vision for growth and development.

Be prepared to effectively communicate key elements of your resource mobilization cause to potential sources. In promoting your association and its causes, clearly communicate: the strengths and track record of your organization; the projects to be undertaken on receipt of the resources mobilized; estimated cost and timeframe of the projects; benefits of the project to those donating resources, and the beneficiaries.

Ask yourself:

- **What is the need?** Try to make this need manageable and quantifiable so that potential contributors/donors feel they can make a difference. E.g. Capacity build the renewable energy business association on how to engage in evidence-based advocacy and public private dialogue for a better business environment
- **Why (with evidence) is this cause important?** Include results of surveys or statements of organizations or people in authority to emphasize why it is important to address this need.
- **Why and how the association is uniquely qualified to address this need?** You need to show the potential contributor/donor what is special about your organization or approach. Why should they fund you and not others?
- **What will be the tangible results of your cause?** For example, the association will identify 10 priority policy reform areas, develop five

Program/ Activity	Resources		Resource gap funding needs	Resource Providers	Timeline	Notes and Remarks
	Required (2a)	**Available (2b)**				
List the programme or activities you are implementing at present or are intending to pursue over the next three years	Indicate the total amounts of funding and resource needs of your activities/ programmes based on your budgets for these activities.	Indicate the amounts of funds or in-kind resources that already exist within your organization to carry out the activities you have listed. It is advisable for you to consult your finance or accounting colleagues to help you with realistic figures. Remember, resource mobilization involves the whole organization	This column will show you the variance between Columns 2a and 2b. This column, together with the resource timeline, will help you determine how much you will need to mobilize resources, for whom, and when	Match your funding needs with the names of potential resource providers from your donor's map to help you plan your resource mobilization efforts.	Plot your funding needs according to your time schedule, to show you what amounts of funding is required when.	Take note of how some of the funds are to be classified and expended; for example, some donors may restrict certain funds to be tied for certain activities only.

42 SHAFOCS Resource Mobilization Manual: http://thestewardsjourney.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SHAFOCS-Resource-Mobiliza-tion-Manual.pdf

evidence-based case studies, engage in seven public private dialogues and realize at least three policy reforms. Consequently, learning how to conduct policy advocacy and improving the business environment for members.

- **What are the negative impacts if you fail to address the need?** Sometimes the consequences of inaction may be the strongest motivation for the potential donor/contributor. For instance, failure to reform the tax regime on importation of solar panels will result in at least 75% of businesses shutting down in the next two years.

Approaching Donors:

Once you have decided that your goals and needs fit those of the donor, you need to know what the donor wants in terms of packaging. You will need to find out the following information:[43]

- **Contact information:** Name, address, telephone and e-mail address and title of the person you should make contact with. This is the preliminary information which you can get from the donor's web page, from a directory, or from your colleagues in other organizations.
- **Funding priorities:** The goals, mission and concern of the donor, including its areas of interest, the themes it funds, whether it funds in particular geographical areas only, what its general funding criteria are and what else it funds. You can get this kind of information from a web page, from a brochure or annual report, as well as from your colleagues in other organizations as well as other individuals who are familiar with fundraising.
- **Funding/Grant history:** What size of grant the donor usually gives, and to what type of organizations over a certain period of time.
- **Decision-making process:** What the donor's decision-making process is and how long it is likely to take for a decision to be made once you submit a written proposal.
- **Submission Formats:** Whether the donor has a special proposal format you should use, or guidelines you should follow, or whether you can use your own process. Some donors may want a short concept paper or letter of interest before asking you to complete a full proposal. This enables them to make an initial judgment about whether or not they want to get involved in more

detailed negotiations with you. That may also have guidance on how to prepare a budget and require certain appendices such as reference letters, to support your request.

- **Timelines:** The dates when proposals are considered, the dates/ deadlines for submission of proposals for consideration, and any rules regarding delivery of the proposal. Some prefer email only; others prefer a printed copy. Make sure that your plan allows for sufficient internal feedback and review before the deadline.

All this information is best obtained from the appropriate desk officer or project officer. You will need a name of a person you can speak directly to, either by telephone or in a preliminary meeting. This initial contact is very important. It can set the tone for the whole relationship.

Be prepared to represent your project if asked. You should be prepared to "sell" your idea or organization - by drawing from your track record of successes and past project impact - from the very first encounter with a donor, so know yourself and your funding needs (Step 3) before asking for donor funding.

Approaching other potential contributors

Remember the source mapping exercise (step 2) and the different types of potential funding sources: National governments, private foundations and philanthropic organizations, private companies and individuals. The type of potential contributors determines the approach you will take to engage them.

Have you worked with the potential contributor before? You might be targeting to bring in first-time contributors by raising awareness about your organization and cause through inviting them to events, direct email or face to face meetings. Do you have an existing relationship? You might be nurturing a contributor to maintain or upgrade their existing contributions or to contribute to new causes. You should aim to strengthen your partnerships by keeping these contributors informed of and engaged in your activities and plans while exploring new ways to secure their long-term interest in contributing to your causes.

Part 6 – Resource mobilization

Events Partnerships:
Partnerships can bring a lot of low or no cost credibility and allow event organizers to promote their events to a much larger audience with little or no cost.

Partnerships are agreements between an event organiser and other non-profit or media organisations (supporters). The partner contributes to the promotion of the event through its social media accounts, website, newsletter, publications or other channels in exchange for visibility in the event's marketing materials, free tickets or discounts for its members.

Choosing your event partners
One of the easiest ways to find the most appropriate partners is to ask your colleagues and members to name the most relevant media and associations in your sector.

You can also search on the Internet for associations or media related to the key topics of the conference or have a look into the partners of other events. Before sending a partnership proposal, check thoroughly the supporter's website and social media channels to make sure they are an appropriate partner for the event and have a relevant audience.

Implementing the partnership
Once you have completed a list of potential partners, you can follow these steps to ensure the partnership is effective:
- Contact the person in charge of marketing or communications and explain briefly what the event is about, the benefits of becoming a partner and what do you expect from them.
- Get a partnership agreement signed and start the cooperation.

- Send the partner all the relevant information and materials to promote the event. It is highly recommendable to create a media kit on your website where they can easily download all the materials. See an example here: http://resource-event.eu/media-and-press/downloads/
- Keep partners informed of any news, press releases, marketing materials.
- Create an Excel sheet to track all the activities that your partners are carrying out to promote the event. This could help you decide which partners would you like to cooperate with in future editions. If you provide discounts to the partners, or their members, then you can issue codes for them to use and track the success rate.

Sponsorships
An event provides an ideal platform and opportunity to attract sponsors. Many companies will be interested in associating themselves with your event and using it as a platform to expose themselves and communicate their key messages to a targeted audience. Some companies will just want basic marketing visibility such as their logo on a lanyard. Others may want to have speakers in the program, a product launch or a seated dinner with policy makers.

It is important to develop a range of diverse options and always be ready to create new opportunities or customize existing ones to suit the sponsor.

In order to sell the sponsorship, you should develop a detailed value proposition for each option of sponsorship and price them according to the perceived value of the event and the return it may bring.

Part 6 – Resource mobilization

Here is an example of a list of sponsorship opportunities and the benefits that each one brings:

Sponsorship packages 2020

Benefits	Strategic Partner (Slide S)	Gold Sponsor	Dinner and Solar Party Sponsor	Network Sponsors
Guaranteed speaking slot during the event	x	x		
Corporate logo on all mailings/invitations connected to the event	x	x	x	x
Corporate logo and website link of the sponsor on the event web page (Visible at all times)	x	x	x	x
Corporate logo on event slides	x	x	x	x
Influence on the content of the event programme	x			
Corporate logo on the event agenda	x	x	x	x
Free access for Sponsor company staff to event and dinner	3x	2x	3x	2x
Insertion of digital marketing material supplied by the sponsor on event USB Stick (max 1)	x	x	x	
1 roll up banner in the networking area during the event	x	x	x	
Distribution of company goodies (e.g. notepad or pens) / optional	x			
Promotional package: 1 x advertorial in SolarPower Europe newsletter 1 x social media post on Twitter and Linkedin (content provided by sponsors, subject to review) 1 x Article on the News Section on the events webpage (content needs to be approved by SolarPower Europe)	x			
1 x Speaking slot at a webinar	x			
VIP guest invitations to event and dinner	3x	1x	3x	
1 roll up banner in the networking area during the dinner and solar party	x	x	x	
Coffee or Drinks tag: provided by _name of the sponsor				x
Corporate logo printed on the event USB stick (to be distributed to all of the attendeed)				
Corporate logo on badges				

Part 6 – Resource mobilization

Step 5: Communicating Results

Acknowledging the resource partner's contribution, managing, monitoring and reporting on the use of resources is essential for maintaining good relations with your resource partners, establishing your association's reputation and credibility with resource partners and forms the basis for ongoing and future resource mobilization efforts.[44] Communicating a partnership's success is the best way to encourage resource partners/donors to contribute additional resources or request for collaboration again.

Tools such as website posts, blog articles, videos, press releases, speeches, and social media help communicate key messages about the organization's work, as well as services it can provide to partners and stakeholders. They need not be expensive to successfully convey comparative advantages and convince potential resource partners/donors to commit resources.[45] In your communication, include details of the funded activities and the difference the interventions will make or have made to businesses and people's lives. This brings us back Step 4 – What will be the tangible results of your cause?

Step 6: Monitoring & Evaluation

It is essential that that any funded activity is well managed, effectively delivered, well documented and results reported in a timely and compliant manner according to the funding agreement or the donor's requirements.

It is important to evaluate your resource mobilization efforts. Having a monitoring and evaluation framework within your Resource Mobilization Plan will alert you to early signs of any problems such as overspending or under-budgeting for resource mobilization efforts, or pursuing an activity that is not giving you any returns.

To monitor and evaluate your resource mobilization efforts:[46]

- Determine what you wish to monitor: Link performance indicators to your goals, so that you will see clearly if you are reaching your goals. E.g. if your goal is to raise X dollars for a specific programme/activity, your indicator would be an assessment of whether you achieved the financial target you set.
- Determine when you will monitor: This will depend on the timing set for the indicator and the duration you set to achieve the goal or complete the process.
- Determine how you will monitor and who will do it: Make sure there are people allocated early in the process to do the monitoring and evaluation reporting so that they can begin their observation and monitoring from the beginning of the process, not at the end of it. Also consider what your sources of information will be and how to get them (e.g. through surveys, interviews, financial reports).

The monitoring exercise will provide insights on what is working, what is not and how to improve your future resource mobilization efforts. It is also important to share the monitoring results with your staff and stakeholders so they will understand and participate in the process.

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44 A Guide to Resource Mobilization http://www.fao.org/3/i2699e/i2699e00.pdf
45 How to Approach Resource Mobilization http://developmentconnectltd.com/786/approach-resource-mobilization-key-steps/
46 SHAFOCS Resource Mobilization Manual: http://thestewardsjourney.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SHAFOCS-Resource-Mobiliza-tion-Manual.pdf

Part 6 - Resource mobilization

Resources

- SHAFOCS Resource Mobilization Manual: http://thestewardsjourney.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SHAFOCS-Resource-Mobilization-Manual.pdf

- A Practical Handbook on TECHNIQUES FOR RESOURCE MOBILISATION: http://awdf.org/wp-content/uploads/AWDF-Capacity-Building-%E2%80%93-A-Practical-Handbook-on-Techniques-for-Resource-Mobilisation.pdf

- A Guide to Resource Mobilization: http://www.fao.org/3/i2699e/i2699e00.pdf

- Development Connect Ltd. - How to Approach Resource Mobilization: http://developmentconnectltd.com/786/approach-resource-mobilization-key-steps/

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Part 7 –
Advocacy & policy
dialogue

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

Defining advocacy

What is advocacy?

In simple terms, advocacy means actively supporting or expressing clear recommendations for a particular cause idea, action, or person, and attempting to persuade others to support the same cause. In the context of this handbook, advocacy refers to a deliberate effort from an industry association to influence or change particular public policies, in line with the direct interest of the association's members.

A primary purpose of an industry association is to advocate on behalf of its members, usually companies or private individuals, and their interests to government stakeholders such as policy makers, regulators, or competition and legal authorities. The industry association's aim is to shape regional, national or sub-national policy frameworks such as markets, regulation, and administrative processes, in order to improve the business environment for the companies it represents to thrive. Examples of issues where industry associations may wish to advocate on behalf of their members include:

V Development of national or regional taxation legislation for solar products.
V Development of national legislation minimum quality assurance standards for solar products.
V Streamlining importation legislation.

Advocacy is not undertaken in order to:

x solve problems concerning members' day-to-day business activities (unless daily obstacles are indicative of a larger problem plaguing the business community at large).
x obtain preferential treatment for one company, or individual.
x provide members with daily problem-solving services related to conducting routine business transactions.
x settle disputes between members and the government.[47]

In order to effectively undertake advocacy on behalf of members, industry associations should develop an advocacy strategy, which includes:

V Identifying a staff member within your NREA who is responsible for advocacy related work.

V Forming a committee, working group or other mechanism through which associations can communicate with members on advocacy related issues.
V Identifying and prioritising key topics with members.
V Developing advocacy positions on key topics, including defining potential policy solutions
V Mapping of relevant audiences and stakeholders.
V Establishing and maintaining relationships with key policy makers and other stakeholders.
V Monitoring and evaluating advocacy efforts to review priorities, positions and methods, as well as to learn from advocacy outcomes.

Why engage in advocacy?

The supply and provision of renewable energy is strongly affected by public policies and legislation which determine rules around, for example, the importation of electricity generation equipment, public subsidization of the construction of renewable energy projects or power line infrastructure, or around minimum quality standards for lighting equipment and appliances. By engaging in the policy making process, industry associations provide the private sector with an opportunity to shape a public policy environment conducive to entrepreneurship, business development and industry growth.

Advocacy is one of the primary reasons why members join associations. In fact, advocacy is the key to an association's success and survival and should be viewed as a core activity.

To demonstrate its value, NREAs must show its members that it can achieve more collectively through the association than what each member can hope to achieve individually. The key added values of advocacy through an industry association compared to individual company initiatives are:

V **Facilitated outreach and access to policymakers**. Companies and private actors may struggle to have direct access to policy makers because they represent specific, private interests. An industry association is usually viewed as a more legitimate interlocutor, representing collective interests, because it

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47 How to Advocate Effectively: A Guidebook for Business Associations: https://www.cipe.org/legacy/publication-docs/advocacyguidebook_english.pdf

advocates in support of positions that are common to a wide range of companies active in the same sector. This usually results in better access to a wider network of policy makers and other public stakeholders than individuals or companies could achieve on their own. In addition, associations may have greater capacity to develop and maintain relationships with policy makers compared to small or medium sized member companies if associations are liaising with policy makers on a regular basis, which improves the likely outcomes of the advocacy work.

V **Building collective thinking.** By facilitating free and confidential exchange of views through platforms such as committees or working groups, industry associations enable companies to help shape the sector-wide position on

advocacy related issues. In addition, industry associations can establish industry-wide benchmarks and disseminate best practices based on the experiences of the membership across various countries or regions. This can help companies strengthen their case to policymakers by showcasing other examples of companies encountering similar issues or providing concrete regulatory solutions, based on experience or case law from another country or region.

V **Increasing visibility.** Industry associations have the means and/or the influence to organize events and have regular interactions with the press. This enables members to use these platforms to deliver specific advocacy messages which may not have attracted attention from the press or other audiences if delivered outside of these larger forums.

The ethics of engaging in advocacy

The aim of advocacy is to shape local, regional or national policy frameworks such as markets, regulation, administrative processes in order to improve the business environment for its companies to strive, however it is important that consideration is given to ethical issues that may arise in the pursuit of this aim. Adhering to ethical principles such as those outlined below will ensure that associations maintain the trust of members, policy makers and other stakeholders such as investors. Misuse of, for example, relationships built with policymakers to favour one member over another for instance will not only diminish trust in the association and potentially the wider sector by other members, but also policy makers, investors and even the general public.

NREAs must follow strict internal principles in order to ensure that the industry association preserves the trust of the public authority, represents the common interest of members, and avoids conflicts of interest.

To comply with these requirements, the following elements are essential:

- **Openness and transparency** in the policy positions developed by the industry association. Position statements should be easily accessible by all members.
- **Consensus and bottom-up approach** when gathering the feedback of members to develop the positions of the industry association provides more legitimacy for the association when liaising with policy makers and civil society, and guarantees that the cause reflects a common endeavour which is worth addressing by policy makers or public authorities.
- **Compliance with law** in all actions carried-out is vital. The independence of public authorities should be respected, and they should be free to make independent decisions in all circumstances.

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

Preparing to undertake advocacy

Dedicating staff resources

NREAs need to establish which individuals within the association will be responsible for taking the lead on advocacy related issues, including facilitating conversations with members to develop and shape policy positions, liaising with stakeholders to garner support, and developing and maintaining relationships with policymakers in order to influence the policymaking process.

Engaging on public policies and regulation as well taking the lead in advocacy actions requires a **specific profile**. The person or persons responsible for advocacy within the association should:

- Understand national policy-making actors and dynamics, including an understanding of the practical role and functioning of the political institutions, the main political parties' positions and representatives, and the balances of power between different political parties or stakeholders. Good working relationships with policymakers, are especially beneficial in helping the industry association be given consideration by political authorities.
- Know public policies and regulation related to renewable energy, without necessarily being a specialist in renewable energy law. The person should ideally be able to understand the main structure of public policies and the impact on the business but is not necessarily a regulation specialist.
- Demonstrate curiosity for or knowledge of renewable energy technology. Renewable energy policies deal with a lot of technicalities issues, and it is therefore an asset if the person in charge of advocacy has a basic knowledge of renewable energy or the wider energy system.
- Have good facilitation, convening, networking and communication skills. Advocacy is about fostering compromise internally, communicating persuasively and influencing the positions of stakeholders. "Soft" communication skills are therefore key to support a strong advocacy action.

Engaging in advocacy requires dedicated **time and resources**. It is beneficial for cohesiveness and communication with external stakeholders if this scope of activities is clearly allocated to staff members, or if this is not possible, a representative from a member company. If resources allow, an industry association may choose to recruit a specialist on a short term or ongoing basis to conduct advocacy activities. If this is not possible, training can be provided to the dedicated advocacy representative and there are a variety of free online resources that can be used as a starting point (see 'Resources' below). Specifically, knowledge of current public policies and legislation may be acquired through consulting specialists in energy law, whereas soft skills related to advocacy (convening, public speaking, writing, strategy development) may be acquired through online or in person training, or through liaising with other national industry associations or other national renewable energy industry association advocacy officers.

Top tip
In the communication material presenting the NREA (brochure or website), clearly indicate the person in charge of advocacy and point of contact for policymakers, members or other stakeholders.

Establish a permanent advocacy committee or working group

A successful advocacy programme requires regular engagement with association members in order to exchange insights, identify key policy issues and to develop strategies to address these issues. Most industry associations rely on an advocacy/policy committee or working group composed of representatives of member companies. These groups help identify key regulatory and policy challenges, as well as potential solutions based on their experience on the ground.

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Case study: SolarPower Europe job ad for a position of Policy Advisor

Person description
- You have a Master's Degree in a relevant discipline and a proven track record of 3-5+ years of experience in European public affairs or the renewable industry
- You are fluent in English (native is a plus) and at least one other EU language

Profile
- You have a passion for the energy transition, you are hardworking, result-oriented and able to provide creative and simple solutions to complex issues
- You have strong analytical skills and deliver evidence-based and high-quality content, as well as strategic insights
- You have a perfect understanding of EU decision-making processes and dynamics, and deep knowledge of the energy sector.
- You are a good communicator and are able to express ideas in a clear and concise manner, in both written and oral forms
- You are a good public speaker, able to represent the association in public conference and external meetings
- You have excellent networking skills, can establish new contacts easily and create alliances of stakeholders to further your cause.
- You are a team player and can work under time pressure

Our ideal candidate would have previous work experience in the digitalization of energy and strong knowledge in renewable corporate sourcing and corporate Power Purchase Agreements. Previous work experience in sustainable finance is highly desirable.

It is important to **identify the right representatives** of member companies for the policy and advocacy committee, such as representatives that are trained or aware of policy or regulatory issues affecting their operations. Large companies usually have dedicated employees within their own structure, to monitor the evolution of the legal and policy framework, and to maintain relationships with policy makers from various countries and regions. Such employees may have titles such as public affairs representatives, lobbyists, Governmental affairs, policy advisors, etc. In small or medium-sized companies, these positions rarely exist. However, it is important to make sure that the committee includes individuals from a diverse range of member companies to ensure the committee is representative of all member company needs and concerns. For smaller or medium-sized companies, there may be an even greater desire to work within the policy/advocacy committee in order to combine forces with other companies and have a larger impact than the company could individually. For transparency, all member companies should have an opportunity to participate in the committee.

To be as effective as possible, once established, the policy/advocacy committee should meet regularly in order to exchange information on the development of public policies or legislation affecting the renewable energy sector, identify and discuss new or ongoing issues for the industry, build new advocacy strategies, including the development of policy position papers, and to take stock on the progress and efficiency of ongoing advocacy activities.

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

NREA staff members responsible for advocacy should play a large part in providing the secretariat services for the committee, although it may be useful to appoint a chairperson for the committee who is an individual from a member company to ensure that the committee maintains relevancy for members. Having a chairperson from a company closely engaged with your NREA's advocacy work is useful when it comes to engaging with policymakers and other stakeholders, who often wish to hear from companies operating in their jurisdictions first hand, in addition to the voices of the industry association.

Top tip
Regularity is key. Set up regular meetings (monthly or quarterly) to maintain interest and the sense of community.

Identify and prioritise key issues

One of the first steps of the policy/advocacy committee is to identify policy-related problems that hamper the business environment of the industry association's members. It is important to understand:

- What obstacles are they facing?
- What are the principal threats to their business development?
- What could help their business grow?
- Can these issues be addressed through policy reforms?

The most efficient way is to ask your members what issues are of concern to them through the dissemination of a questionnaire or survey to the membership and through facilitating conversations with the policy/advocacy committee. The NREA staff member responsible for advocacy may also wish to maintain regular bilateral meetings with member companies to help understanding what issues they face, especially if they are unable to be involved with the committee for whatever reason. As mentioned earlier, it is important that

the contact details for your NREA staff member responsible for advocacy work be communicated to members to make them accessible to members when pressing issues arise.

Top tip
Consulting other relevant stakeholders (other industry associations in similar sectors, development agencies, such as resource partners, development partners or other relevant energy (or other) associations can be very useful. Leveraging global networks of affiliated industry associations allows a national association to leverage the experiences from other markets, and to tackle challenges that arise at a regional level (for example EAC, ECOWAS or SADC). It allows associations to identify trends and emerging challenges which are currently or will in the future impact the industry and business members.

When all issues have been identified by members, it is critical to establish a priority ranking, in order to make best use of human and financial resources to positively impact the highest priority issues, and those issues where your NREA and its members are in the best position to achieve a positive outcome. Concentrating available resources to high-priority objectives improves the chances of success and greater satisfaction for your membership base.

The industry association's policy/advocacy committee is the most relevant forum in which to undertake this prioritization exercise and to ensure that the membership understands and agrees with the prioritisation of issues. It may be useful to confirm these priorities with other members through the use of a survey or consultative exercise, or at a minimum, communicate these priorities to members through newsletters or at member meetings.

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Case studies

Policy Issue Example 1

Establish quality control systems for the purpose of protecting the market from counterfeits and sub-standard products. National minimum standards are required for all solar products to increase end user awareness regarding health and performance efficiency as well as quality issues, such as durability and safety.

Policy Issue Example 2

Introduce off-grid electricity policy and regulations targeting mini- and micro-grids. The policy should ensure that small energy service companies and household solar electricity generators benefit from the net metering programme. The current 500 kW minimum cap for Feed-in Tariffs is high and excludes small scale producers, such as rooftop installations, which are representative of the poor and most needy segment of the Kenyan solar PV market

Policy Issue Example 3

Tanzania Renewable Energy Association (TAREA) conducts advocacy to create an enabling environment (policies, regulations, finance schemes) for the implementation of activities that facilitate scaling up access to renewable energy technologies. In 2015, it argued successfully that the Government of Tanzania should maintain VAT exemptions on solar products and DC lights. In the same year, TAREA also succeeded in advocating to the Tanzania Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) to establish a renewable energy curriculum. The next step for the association is to advocate for the creation of a scheme to certify renewable energy installers who have been trained informally.

Policy Issue Example 4: dividing the work

The European solar industry has been working at establishing a good regulatory framework for the development of small-scale, rooftop PV systems. This required working on several front, including allowing support mechanisms to make the business case of rooftop PV systems as well as facilitating the development of a high-quality industry for installation service, by developing the necessary trainings and certification systems. The solar industry association SolarPower Europe has partnered with the installers industry association EuropeOn to develop rooftop PV installation, by dividing the work, respectively on support mechanisms for SolarPower Europe and installers training and certification for EuropeOn.

To facilitate decision making, NREAs may define a standard set of criteria that can be applied to different policy-related options. Examples of key criteria include:

- Is the issue relevant to the NREA's mission and a significant number of members?
- Will success result in creating a better business environment and industry growth?
- Is there a high probability of success (support/little opposition from policy makers, regulators and the public, other associations engaged on this issue)?

- How soon can success be realized? (prioritize issues that can be resolved in the short term)
- Is the issue clearly related to flaws in specific policies, laws or regulations?
- Are you likely to be publicly backed by all/most association members and are there potential advocacy alliances?
- Will advocacy cause any damage to your association's image or reputation?

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Top tip
You may meet with partnering associations (ex: various renewable energy sources, energy communities, NGOs) and agree jointly on a list of "priority topics" of which the work on each topic can be led by a different partner depending on the core focus of each. This is a win-win approach where each industry association focuses on what is most relevant to its membership, and yet coordinates with other partners to ensure that all relevant issues are being dealt with.

Developing advocacy positions on key topics
Advocacy actions always have an objective. This is usually solving an issue with a solution that is acceptable to the stakeholders being advocated for, in this case, NREA members. The clear identification and communication of the issue and possible solutions to all stakeholders, and especially those with decision making power, is critical to the success of the advocacy programme of your NREA.

Once the priority issues have been identified and agreed upon by members, your association needs to ascertain how it will advocate for and communicate to stakeholders the potential policy solutions members would like to see implemented. An efficient advocacy strategy requires concrete asks and proposals which can be taken into consideration by public or regulatory authorities and implemented in a defined timeframe.

NREAs may use different sources to **identify regulatory solution options**, such as:
- Regulatory best practices in other countries or jurisdictions. NREAs may get in touch with international partners or other industry associations to understand how a specific issue has been solved in another country, or use the documentation on best practices produced by organisations such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (www.irena.org).

- Best practices in other industries encountering similar problems (e.g. industries dealing with issues in the import of products, or industries being driven by public procurement).
- New ideas for regulatory solutions, produced by think tanks or researchers.

The regulatory solution option must also **consider the national regulatory environment**. Being able not only to put forward a regulatory solution (e.g. National minimum standards on renewable energy products must be established to protect customers from counterfeit goods) but also to suggest an implementation in the regulatory environment (e.g. National minimum standards may be introduced by including solar panels in Law X on electronic product standards) can only strengthen the advocacy of the NREA by providing to policy makers a robust regulatory solution. The NREA must therefore identify:
- Which part of the legislation impacts the issue? Is there a legislation already in place?
- If yes, does this legislation impact positively or negatively the issue? Is the legislation being reviewed or will it soon be reviewed?
- If not, should legislation be created to solve the issue?

Based on these elements, the industry association must then **discuss and agree on a preferred regulatory solution with the membership**. Such a decision may be taken within the policy/advocacy committee.

Once the issue and the regulatory solution is identified, the NREA must be able to express them clearly and persuasively. This will be facilitated by the development of a detailed, written position document on each issue. The position document must clearly state the association's stance (what do you advocate for?) and rational with supporting evidence for the proposed solutions (why is it important and how can this be addressed?). It is critical that these messages are tailored to their target audience, and as such, the drafting of position statements and development or collection of supporting evidence should occur simultaneously with the mapping of stakeholders for a particular issue (covered in the next section).

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

A well-prepared policy position document should include:

- A brief introduction to your industry association, including information on how many and what type of members you represent;
- An overview of the issue;
- The impact the issue is having on the private sector, government, and society (i.e. why it is important);
- The industry association's policy recommendation(s), supported by quantitative or qualitative evidence, or where this does not exist in the country in question relevant experiences from other countries or regions may also be used;
- Pre-emptive rebuttals to obvious opposing arguments;[48] and
- Clear contact details for whom the recipient can contact with regards to this specific issue.

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. Consider, for example... "Amendment of the East African Community Customs Management Act 2019 to include "Solar Parts and Accessories" under duty exemption to specialized equipment for development and generation of solar, wind and renewable energy".

Data and research are critical, as they provide objective facts to the public, the media and policymakers about the problem and the efficacy of the proposed solution. Moreover, it helps to gather data demonstrating the impact of various issues identified on your businesses and economical sector, as well as for society. In other words, evidence-based advocacy can help make the case for policy change and is important in influencing and convincing policymakers on the need for change.[49] This data can be gathered internally or the industry association can use external contractors such as consulting companies and agencies. More information on this topic, including existing evidence to support common advocacy issues faced by NREAs is outlined in Part 8 below.

Co-branding: Consider aligning messages with supportive associations or stakeholders to co-brand your position paper to maximise impact when using it to engage with policy makers. This approach is not always suitable if stakeholders' positions do not align with the position of NREA members, but where it is possible, it can improve the chances of being listened to by policymakers, see for example 'An open letter to stakeholders. Off-Grid Solar: An Essential Service in the Fight against COVID-19' below.

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48 How to Advocate Effectively: A Guidebook for Business Associations: https://www.cipe.org/legacy/publication-docs/advocacyguidebook_english.pdf
49 https://prosperitynow.org/putting-prosperity-within-reach-how-do-i-advocate-for-policy-change

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

An open letter to stakeholders

Off-Grid Solar: An Essential Service in the Fight against COVID-19

The off-grid solar sector has a vital role to play in the COVID-19 response. Just 41% of low- and middle-income country health care facilities currently have reliable electricity[i], whilst 789 million people lack access to electricity in their homes[ii]. As communities respond to the pandemic, they can use off-grid solar products and services to:

- **Provide rural health facilities with electricity access:** Larger off-grid solar systems can be used to power medical equipment in hospitals, primary health clinics, temporary emergency facilities, and laboratories. In addition, solar home systems can provide lighting, and power information technologies for central health agencies and smaller, rural health facilities, which will soon be on the frontline of the pandemic. A key benefit of these systems is how quickly they can be installed and be operational.

- **Provide household electricity access, helping to ensure people have the information they need to stay safe:** Continuing to provide access to electricity throughout periods of lockdown will improve access to health information from governments via phones, radios, and TVs for millions of people, enhancing awareness of vital preventative measures such as hand-washing and social distancing.

- **Promote good hygiene through access to clean water:** Solar water pumping can provide access to clean water for basic hygiene, helping to stop the spread of the virus.

- **Facilitate the distribution of health and sanitation products:** The use of solar refrigeration products will be crucial in establishing a cold chain for distribution once vaccines become available. Furthermore, through its existing logistics and distribution networks, the off-grid sector has the capability to facilitate the distribution of millions of health and sanitation products such as food, soap, or face masks to households and health facilities. Off-grid companies can partner with governments looking to distribute goods quickly and efficiently to rural and remote locations.

- **Communicate directly with off-grid households via phone and SMS:** The sector's extensive customer databases and call centres could be utilised to support government and health agencies to communicate vital health information messages about how customers can protect themselves and their communities via calls and SMS. Company call centres are increasingly able to operate remotely via cloud-based software platforms.

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

The off-grid solar sector also positively impacts people's lives, already providing 171 million[iii] people with improved access to energy across the globe. The off-grid solar sector can:

- **Enable households to maintain a minimum quality of life:** Energy access, powered by the off-grid sector, is vital for survival. Energy access is essential for maintaining a continuous supply of essential services and, ultimately, a minimum quality of life.

- **Enable people to work remotely:** Many businesses cannot continue to operate if employees cannot work remotely. Larger off-grid systems can help to power the computers and internet connections needed to continue working from home, helping to protect jobs and incomes, whilst limiting macro-economic impacts.

- **Enable children to continue their educations:** The use of radios, televisions and tablets have enabled children who are unable to attend school continued access to education, while lighting allows students to study safely during the evenings. In Kenya, for example, off-grid solar powered satellite televisions are enabling access to lessons from the Ministry of Education[iv].

- **Help people stay in touch:** Providing electricity to households, along with mobile phones, radios, and TVs enables people to stay in touch with loved ones while practicing physical distancing.

Governments are encouraged to classify the off-grid solar sector as an essential service. The off-grid solar sector's customers have lower incomes, live in more remote, rural off-grid areas, and often have limited access to health services, compared to those with access to grid electricity, and are therefore particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. As lockdown measures continue, the sector is working hard to ensure ongoing technical and customer support to off-grid customers, while adhering to national guidance in order to assist in halting the spread of the virus. Designating the off-grid sector as an essential service will facilitate the continued electricity access to millions of off-grid customers.

To continue to play a role in delivering access to energy to 171 million people, the off-grid solar sector needs funding. Companies are doing everything they can to ensure continued electricity access for customers and to support the health sector, but with revenues declining, the sector needs a range of financial support, including grants and low interest loans that meet the full spectrum of needs from a diverse range of companies in the sector, particularly those of smaller businesses. With the right support the sector can keep customers connected and informed, and help to electrify health facilities, making an important contribution to the COVID-19 response.

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

About the Authors: The note has been developed by Lighting Global, Power Africa, ESMAP, GOGLA, Africa Clean Energy, AMDA and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL). These organisations are seeking to partner with governments to electrify health facilities and deliver medical appliances, as well as to provide relief funding to the off-grid solar sector.

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[i] *Environmental conditions in health care facilities in low- and middle-income countries: coverage and inequalities*, Cronk & Bartram, 2018. Cited in *Lasting Impact: Sustainable Off-Grid Solar Delivery Models to Power Health and Education*.
[ii] *Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2020*
[iii] The Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2020 estimates that 171 million people have access to electricity thanks to off-grid solutions, including mini-grids, see *Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2020*
[iv] *Azuri helping off-grid children across Kenya to continue education while schools closed.*

Top tip

Structure your argument coherently by adhering to these guidelines:

- One paragraph should deliver one single specific message. Consider using bullet points, numbering or the like to structure your argument clearly and be sure to highlight the key element of your position early in the paper or letter, using bold or other visual signs to draw maximum attention to it.
- Use subtitles to explicitly state what will be your message.
- Keep your message concise – additional supporting information can be added in an annex if necessary.
- Reference reputable sources for supporting evidence where possible.

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

SolarPower Europe

Dear Energy Ministers,

The coronavirus pandemic is impacting all European citizens, businesses and local authorities, including the thousands of workers and SMEs in the solar industry. While the priority must be addressing the immediate health consequences of the population, it is also essential to take strong political action, and make significant investments in order to restart Europe's economies.

As requested by the Joint Statement of the Members of the European Council from 26 March, the European recovery package should support the European green and digital transition, putting the continent back on track for green and prosperous growth. The solar industry stands ready to contribute to a green economic recovery.

Solar is set to become the dominant source of electricity generation in a climate-neutral Europe, with the potential to power over 60% of electricity generated in Europe by 2050.[1] Solar energy in Europe has entered an unprecedented era of growth, with 16,7 GW of new installed capacity in 2019, corresponding to an increase of more than 100% compared to 2018. Between 2019 and 2023, nearly 100 GW new solar capacity could be installed in Europe. Such important market prospects also generate a new momentum for manufacturing projects in the solar segment, sustained by the EU leadership in cutting-edge technologies such as heterojunction cells, perovskite tandem cells, and inverters.

The solar value chain could create 1.5 million jobs across Europe by 2030, including in regions undergoing economic restructuring, where workers can be easily up skilled to ensure the installation, operation, and maintenance of solar projects.

The current coronavirus pandemic jeopardises these promising solar developments in the short- to medium-term.

As of today, solar PV projects are significantly delayed due to supply chain disruptions, restrictions on the movement of workers, and impeded administrative procedures. The development of new projects, or closing of ongoing project proposals, is hampered by the fact that financing is currently more difficult to access.

In the medium term, the economic crisis could negatively impact the small-scale solar market – affecting local SMEs active in project development, installation, O&M, home battery storage, and manufacturing. The announcements of delays and cancellations of national renewable tenders might also slow down the deployment of new installations, with a drop of around 8 GW in 2020 compared to earlier forecasts, according to the most pessimistic scenarios.

Finally, despite major decreases in cost of solar technology – which has resulted in it already being the lowest-cost power generation source today in many European regions – the competitiveness of solar in Europe might be put at risk by lower fossil fuel prices, lower EU carbon prices, and higher financing costs, which can represent more than 50% of the solar electricity cost.

SolarPower Europe is confident that with the right measures in place, the recovery of the solar industry, and installation rates for both small-scale and larger segments, could be reached by 2021, supporting the timely achievement of the EU 2030 climate and energy targets, contributing to the European economic recovery.

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[1] SolarPower Europe (2020). 100% Renewable Europe. How to make Europe's energy system climate-neutral before 2050
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Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

SolarPower Europe

The immediate priority is to support the European solar sector through the crisis. To this end, we urge European Member States to consider the following recommendations:

1. Ensuring the continuity of solar projects, from engineering to construction and final delivery, by adapting construction project deadlines, and developing compensation schemes for project developers and equipment suppliers affected by the crisis.

2. Supporting access to finance for ongoing and new solar projects in the crisis period, by creating direct repayable loans or loan guarantees to secure financing deals, or providing new financing sources, possibly through the EIB.

3. Enabling a smooth and safe return to normal for solar workers. A fast return to normal for workers active in the project construction and installation sectors should be enabled with clear guidance on the sanitary practices that should be put in place. A smooth reestablishment of the Single Market is critical to ensure the internal circulation of solar PV equipment and workers.

A sound European green recovery plan must channel investments towards future-proof and high-growth potential activities, such as:

4. Launch a pan-European solar rooftop program to boost the demand for small-scale PV and unlock its job creation potential.[2] This rooftop program should be integrated with the upcoming Renovation Wave and include:
- Mandatory installation rates on existing EU buildings, supported by adapted incentives such as tax exemptions for small-scale PV owners;
- Grants / loans / fiscal incentives for SMEs, commercial and industrial sectors, cities and public authorities to invest into solar energy sourcing (solar rooftops or PPAs), as part of upcoming recovery funds and through the EIB.

5. Boost the deployment of large-scale solar projects, which will be paramount to delivering the volume of energy needed in a climate-neutral economy:
- Additional funding (5-10bn) for Connection Europe Facility to boost investments in electricity infrastructure, interconnections, digitalisation, and smart grids;
- Smoother administrative procedures through the delivery of robust National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) and the establishment of a Clean Energy Package Implementation Body;
- An initiative to solve current permitting bottlenecks for large projects would also be extremely beneficial to the sector.

6. Ensure an agile EU State Aid framework, to enable a smooth and quick adoption of green recovery measures.

7. Put forward a solar industrial strategy for cutting-edge solar and equipment manufacturing facilities, pursuant to the publication of the New Industrial Strategy.
- Provide financing support (grants, loans) in order to scale up cutting-edge solar and equipment manufacturing facilities in Europe;
- Support the implementation of a "lighthouse European project" for the manufacturing of European solar technologies.

8. Develop an EU-wide training and reskilling programme to ensure a favourable ecosystem for PV projects. The EU should set up a platform to facilitate matchmaking between social partners, training institutes, and the industry's needs for skills, dedicating funding to develop training or reskilling programmes.

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[2] According to a study by SolarPower Europe and E&Y, rooftop solar installations create three times more jobs per generation unit than larger ones.

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Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

GOGLA's Open Letter to Governments in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

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The Voice of the Off-Grid Solar Energy Industry

30 March 2020

An Open Letter from GOGLA to Governments in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

GOGLA is the global association for the off-grid solar energy industry representing 180 members operating in over 40 countries. Its mission is to help its members build sustainable markets, delivering quality, affordable products and services to as many households, businesses and communities as possible across the developing world.

Our members provide essential services to households and businesses who have no, or only limited grid electricity access, particularly in rural and remote communities. Globally, the sector supports 420 million users with access to necessary and affordable energy services.

I write to you on behalf of our members and staff, to stand with you during this challenging time, as you look to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As an industry, we are exploring how we can support your efforts to keep our communities and households safe and resilient through the necessary response measures that we all must support and undertake. In this regard, we note the following:

1) Our members operate through extensive networks, and as such, it is vital that they act responsibly in assisting to halt the spread of the virus. **GOGLA has developed** guidance for our members on best-practice operations and **recommending members to adhere to the guidelines** provided by the relevant ministry, as well as from the World Health Organization. This guidance can be found here.

2) Official, accurate and timely information to citizens is essential to tackling this crisis. In many communities, especially those in remote areas, **off-grid solar products enable access to reliable information**, through powering radios, televisions and mobile phones. We are therefore encouraging our members to consider their services as a critical component of the national response and to endeavor to keep their services running in compliance with the government measures. As lock-down scenarios are explored, we are **encouraging members to coordinate with governments as to ensure ongoing, technical and customer support to off-grid customers. We also appeal to governments to consider this provision of ongoing technical and customer support for off-grid products as an essential service.**

3) There could be opportunities **to collaborate with our members in sharing both information and essential health supplies to isolated and remote areas.** Many of our members have established reliable supply chains to transport goods from cities to various remote communities, as well as networks to share information, technical support,

Global Off Grid Lighting Association / Association (Vereniging) incorporated in the Netherlands / Chamber of Commerce KvK number 62066064. Address: GOGLA (Global Off-Grid Lighting Association), Arthur van Schendelstraat 500, 3511 MH Utrecht, The Netherlands

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

The Voice of the **Off-Grid Solar Energy** Industry

satellite TV content and so on. We are encouraging our members to think practically about how we as an industry can positively contribute to national health efforts.

As the current crisis stabilizes in the intermediate to longer term, we encourage governments to continue to engage with GOGLA, its members and the industry as a whole to expand our collaboration in striving to achieve SDG7, sustainable energy for all. We are confident that the importance of ensuring universal access to affordable, quality modern energy products and services particularly for all off-grid communities will only become increasingly important through this crisis and into the future.

Please do not hesitate to reach me and my team should you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Koen Peters

GOGLA, Executive Director

k.peters@gogla.org

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Case studies

Relying on evidence-based advocacy: Example 1
Pico-Solar Opportunities and Challenges in Kenya
Kenya Industrial Research and Development institute (KIRDI) with assistance from the Low Emission and Climate Resilient Project undertook a study on pico-solar market in Kenya. The main objective was to undertake a baseline study addressing technical and socioeconomic aspects of pico solar PV systems in Kenya. As part of a larger project on climate change interventions, it was expected to provide information to be used for production of a prototype for a Kenya manufactured solar lantern. This would later be distributed to Kenyan households to reduce use of kerosene and so reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The study covered six countries namely Bungoma, Embu, Kirinyaga, Kitui, Migori and Samburu and interviewed 460 people of which 61 per cent were female and 39 per cent were male. The study identified the following key areas that require urgent action: Manufacturing, Standards and Labels; Fiscal policies, Marketing and Private Public partnerships; Pico solar energy Policy; Consumer policy, Awareness and Waste, Environment and Climate Change. These issues were then subjected to a further discussion at a three -day key stakeholders' workshop held in Nakuru from 28th to 30th June 2016. In the following sections, key recommendations from the workshop are presented.

Reference: Kenya Industrial Development Research Institute (KIDRI) – Policy Brief

Relying on evidence-based advocacy: Example 2
Solar PV for Enhancing Electricity Access in Kenya: What Policies are Required?
Despite the recent advancement of solar market in Kenya, which has seen the country being rated as having one of the highest solar home system installations per capita in the world, there are a number of policy issues that need to be addressed to create a sustainable solar market. This policy brief is a summary of recommendation based on the study conducted by ACTS–TERI and adopted during the stakeholders' workshop in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Study methodology used primarily involved desk studies and consultation with stakeholders. Consultation was done with stakeholders including but not limited to governments, NGOs, private sector, entrepreneurs, and academicians. The policies reviewed included energy related policies and other national policies with direct or indirect impact to solar energy development. Constraints and challenges were identified, and the outcomes used to come up with a report. The report then was presented to the stakeholders' workshop, organized on June 2, 2015 in Nairobi, to deliberate and come up with precise policy recommendations to be taken up with policymakers at both the country and national levels. Experts representing industry, policy researchers, academics, NGOs, financing institutes, etc., attended the stakeholders' workshop so as to take care for all interest groups.

Reference: The Energy Resources Institute – Policy Brief

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Another good example is Africa Clean Energy – Technical Assistance Facility's (ACE-TAF) blog post on 'The case for responsible taxation to ensure affordable access to energy' in Kenya.[50]

Identifying key stakeholders
Correctly mapping the target audience and the stakeholder environment is critical in ensuring that the advocacy efforts are focused on the audience who actually has the gravitas or authority to influence or make the changes that you propose, as well as to anticipate resistance to your advocacy efforts.

Depending on the issue in question, the target audiences for advocacy messages will differ, however in general, they will likely be one of:
- V National or where relevant, sub-national Ministries of Energy and associated agencies such as the Rural Electrification Agency (REA).
- V National or where relevant, sub-national Ministries of Finance and Treasury for taxation related, or funding of electrification or renewable energy policy issues.
- V National, or where relevant, sub-national Ministries of Industry or Development.
- V Regional governmental bodies governing taxation, standards or other such issues, including associated bodies such as EACREEE and ECREEE.
- V Donors and NGOs.
- V Ministries of Health or Rural Development where applicable.

Where the target audience is policy makers, it is important to target policy makers with direct authority and, most importantly, the decision-making power to institute or influence new policies or make policy changes. For example, advocacy efforts to amend parts of the East African Community Customs Management Act 2019 should be targeted to the appropriate national revenue authority (e.g. Uganda Revenue Authority), the East African Community (EAC) Sectoral Committee on Customs, Ministry of Energy officials as well as public administrators, civil servants, government advisors, and local/regional government representatives.

It is important to determine which authority or policy maker holds the real power to take a decision or make a change, beyond their formal function or their job title. For instance, policies on renewable energies may not fully be shaped by the Renewable Energy Department of the Energy Ministry, but the Economics or Industry Ministry may have a larger influence on these policies.

In addition to this primary target audience, the wider stakeholder environment includes individuals or groups that will be most likely affected by the proposed solutions and/or have influence over the policy makers. For example, advocacy efforts to include "Solar Parts and Accessories" under duty exemption should be targeted to development partners with clean/renewable energy initiatives, other regional and national energy associations and advocacy groups, corporations involved in solar parts, investors in the solar energy industry, relevant civil organizations and NGOs and energy/climate universities/academics and targeted influential media outlets.

The same principles apply to advocating to shape donor electrification programmes. It is important to understand the dynamics between the donor and the recipient government agency in order to understand to whom you should target your advocacy messages and with what evidence.

It is important that the development of messaging of key policy positions is completed with a view to aligning messages to the target audience. Difference audiences will respond to different messages and communication of policy positions is far more effective if they are tailored. The following table outlines a few examples of messages and supporting evidence that specific audiences may respond to.[51]

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50 https://www.ace-taf.org/the-case-for-responsible-taxation-to-ensure-affordable-access-to-energy/
51 See Data Availability chapter for more research/evidence to support your key advocacy messages.

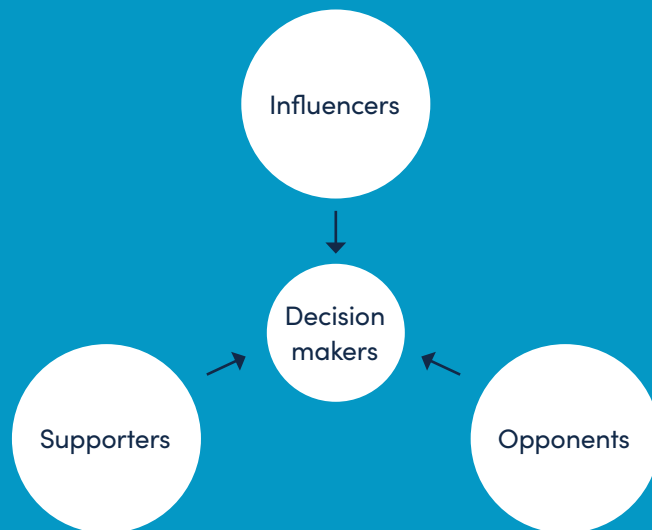# Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Target audience	Message	Supporting evidence
Ministry of Energy / REA	Off-grid solar is recognized as one of the lowest-cost technology and quickest paths available to reaching universal energy access (SDG7) and national electrification goals.	Globally, 1.2 billion people will need to gain access to electricity by 2030, and of these, 25% are best served by off-grid solar solutions - IEA World Energy Outlook (2018) – Sustainable Development Scenario
Ministry of Finance / Treasury	The off-grid solar sector has spurred a range of new employment opportunities across the solar value chain and especially in market countries. Rapid growth in product sales has generated employment across a global value chain. As the off-grid solar market matures, the scale and nature of these jobs will continue to evolve. The off-grid solar value chain will create a range of opportunities, including for high-skilled, high value-add labour. In particular, the off-grid market creates jobs in over-the-counter cash sales, and for systems bought on credit under the PAYGo business model. Particularly for PAYGo, this involves skilled positions for sales and after-sale services, and for technicians and engineers for installation and maintenance of the products over their lifetime. For companies selling products via cash or PAYGo, management and finance roles are also created.	Altai & GOGLA (2020) - Powering Opportunity GIZ/Vivid (2019) – Off-Grid Solar. A Growth Engine for Jobs SE4ALL (2017) – Why Wait? Aevarsdottir et al. (2017) - Impacts of Rural Electrification IRENA (2016) - Renewable Energy and Jobs WRI (2017) – Can Renewable Energy Jobs Help Reduce Poverty in India?
Ministry of Health	(See Open Letter to Stakeholders Letter above)	(See Open Letter to Stakeholders Letter above)
Donors / NGOs	Public financing is best directed to activities which support the scale-up of a competitive off-grid solar market. To increase the reach of the off-grid sector, governments and industry need to cooperate to achieve a sustainable off-grid market. To enable this, the guiding principle for deployment of public finance should be to help attract more private investment into the off-grid sector. Public funding can be used to accelerate the expansion of the market to new geographical areas and low-income segments. Examples include reducing upstream risks and costs for businesses or public awareness raising campaigns to promote off-grid solar as an affordable alternative.	GOGLA (2018) - Guidance for Governments UOMA (2018) - An assessment of the tax and subsidy options to accelerate solar home systems in Uganda The Danger of Subsidized Solar: How Government and Donors Unwittingly Hobbled Our Business (2018) Rehman et al (2017) - Accelerating access to energy services: Way forward

Once all relevant stakeholders are identified, NREAs should map these stakeholders, and establish which ones are most likely to be supportive or opponents of the positions of your industry association. This includes listing and describing the degree to which players in these two groups of target audiences: 1) agrees with the association's policy position and 2) is willing to actively support or oppose the association's advocacy.[52]

This mapping exercise is critical to calibrate the advocacy efforts to the environment, for instance shape coalition strategies (amongst various political parties or organizations), which will increase the chances of success, or anticipate and counter your opponents' arguments and strategies.

52 Understanding the Target Audience: http://docshare.tips/step-4-understanding-the-target audience_5762403ab6d87f5fb68b48ef.html

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Case study: Power map

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                    Influencers

                         |
                         v

    Supporters  →   Decision   ←   Opponents
                     makers
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Building a network of policy makers and influencers

A successful advocacy program must create and maintain strong links with policy makers. The key to building such a network is to establish regular interactions, including at times when the industry association is not dealing with a policy issue, between the industry association and relevant policy makers. Establishing such strong relations may be useful in the medium term when another policy issue arises. The relationship with policymakers can rely on both meetings in person (preferable) and via email or other communication channels.

It's also important to add value to the relationship from the perspective of the industry. Why should a busy and under-resourced policy maker spend time speaking with an industry association? NREAs should be able to highlight the added value of the industry for the policy makers objective, such as the achievement of energy access targets, the creation of jobs by the renewable energy industry, contribution to SDGs etc.

One way to engage with policy makers successfully is through a policy dialogue approach (see box story below for more information).

Top tip

The relationship with policymakers is an opportunity to provide information about the sector and to offer to raise his/her knowledge about the renewable energy industry. Organising a presentation of the renewable energy technologies, a visit to a renewable energy project or presenting the key findings of a report about the sector may be good basis to develop interactions with policymakers.

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Creating a policy dialogue

The Policy Dialogue, is an advocacy tool, by which business associations and policy makers/government officials interact to discuss and reach resolutions with regard to the development of the business environment and specific issues, e.g. taxation, business regulations, etc. Policy dialogues can be initiated by organizing policy roundtables to bring together key decision-makers, government representatives, and your members together to engage in public-private dialogue (PPD).[53] This can help eliminate misunderstandings, get your message across policy makers more effectively and is critical to increase chances of success.

The potential benefits of PPDs include:
- Facilitating business climate reforms by supporting champions for reform, creating momentum, and accelerating the reform process.
- Promoting better diagnosis of business and investment climate problems and design of policy reforms. Governments that listen to the constraints of the private sector are more likely to develop sensible prioritization plans and policies.
- Making policy reforms easier to implement. When entrepreneurs understand what a government is trying to achieve with a reform package, they are more likely to accept and work with the reforms in practice.
- Promoting transparency, good governance, the taking of a broader view by setting an example of openness and rigorous cost-benefit analysis, and by creating pressure of public scrutiny.
- Improving understanding between the private and public sectors – the private sector can understand the intention behind policies and work to improve their success if they also believe in the intention, and the public sector can better understand business challenges and how to address them.
- Building an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding between public and private sectors, improving social cohesion and civil society.[54]

A good quality dialogue should be:
- **Legitimate** - Transparent dialogue inhibits collusion, reinforces accountability, and empowers all constituencies to make informed contributions; Inclusive dialogue promotes a broad range of interests and the public good instead of narrow, sectoral, or partisan interests; freedom of association and freedom of speech ensure open dialogue.
- **Focused** - Effective dialogue addresses important issues, has clear objectives, and examines concrete options.
- **Flexible** - The substance of dialogue takes precedence over protocol, and the process accommodates evolving issue agendas.
- **Rooted as industry representatives** – Private sector participants are representative and qualified to speak for their organizations or constituencies.
- **Regular** – Public - private dialogues shouldn't be a one-off thing and have to be repeated over time to develop relationships/build trust and relay industry needs or concerns.
- **Policy-oriented** – Constructive dialogue builds a policy framework that supports long-term growth and rule of law.[55]

53 See for example Community of Champions initiative, of which GOGLA is a partner: https://www.gogla.org/policy-and-regulation/community-of-champions
54 The PPD Handbook A Toolkit For Business Environment Reformers: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEXPCOMNET/Resources/PPD_Handbook.pdf
55 How to Advocate Effectively: A Guidebook for Business Associations: https://www.cipe.org/legacy/publication-docs/advocacyguidebook_english.pdf

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Preparing for Public-Private Dialogue

Preparation for serious dialogue can take months, during which you will be assessing policy challenges, mobilizing stakeholders, and formulating positions.

In planning dialogue, your association must consider and plan for the following four components:

- **Issues:** a focused dialogue begins with the selection of issues for the agenda. Since the person who sets the agenda enjoys considerable power, the NREA should not leave the agenda entirely in the hands of government. It should bring business priorities to the policy table and share the lead in framing problems. The NREA must have a process for determining and agreeing on its priorities in advance of dialogue. Preparation is essential for three reasons.
  - First, in any negotiation, one must know what one wants in order to articulate a position and bargain for meaningful gains.
  - Second, a unified business message possesses greater credibility and keeps dialogue on track.
  - Third, identifying issues ahead of time allows business to develop preferred solutions to the problems that it raises.

- **Participants:** Who speaks for who?
  Select **industry representatives** who engage in dialogue, influence the interests that are advocated as well as represent your association and its memberships credibly. Businesses vary in their size, sector, relationship to government, connection to the global economy, and so on. Thus, it matters who gets to speak for business and associations need to be mindful of representing all members, not just the more active or larger ones. It can be useful to select various industry participants based on their specificity to ensure that all cases are being represented.

  On the other hand, make sure that **policy maker representatives** are the right people to speak to, i.e. they should be a position to influence your issue. It is also important to try and consistently get the same influential government stakeholders: this will allow to ensure a constructive dialogue, building on past contacts, addressing issues and progressing towards a solution, instead of wasting time in revisiting old conversations.

- Messages: What does the private sector say? The NREA must bring well-prepared, succinct and organized messages to the table. Preparation involves:
  - determining the themes of dialogue,
  - determining the positions that business community will take,
  - Identifying points of receptivity in the public sector, and
  - determining the desired outcomes.
  Prioritizing themes helps to guide discussion. By articulating high-level themes such as: reducing barriers to business; increasing transparency or improving infrastructure. Themes will attract a wider range of stakeholders to the discussion table as opposed to specific technical questions.

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

- **Specific Recommendations:** To convert policy objectives into actions, you must present specific recommendations that have been developed in consultation with members and agreed upon. Recommendations should demonstrate willingness to work with the public sector and assist policymakers to take positive steps towards further policy or policy reform. It is also advisable that matters on which there is currently no industry consensus should be deferred or handle with due care.

- **Channels:** Where does dialogue occur? Dialogue can occur through multiple channels. For example:
  - Business may have representation on existing commissions, task forces, regulatory boards, or at public hearings.
  - The government may create special initiatives for consultation or dialogue.
  - NREAs may take initiative by proposing dialogue or inviting public sector representatives to participate in its events or to take part in its policy committee.
  - The NREAs can pursue dialogue and advocacy in parallel activities for multiple stakeholders, including government officials, business members, media, and civil society's organizations involved in trade and consumer rights.
  - A development partner/donor, an alliance or interested parties may mediate dialogue. This can help start conversations and build trust among stakeholders representing varying interests however, NREAs must take control and build capacity and take control of ownership.

To effectively prepare for a successful PPD, consider the elements of the "Charter of Good Practice in using Public Private Dialogue for Private Sector Development". The principles of the Charter summarize 12 essential elements to consider when designing and implementing a public–private dialogue project:[56]

Community of Champions Kigali 2018

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56 The PPD Handbook; A Toolkit For Business Environment Reformers: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEXPCOMNET/Resources/PPD_Handbook.pdf

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Implementing an advocacy campaign

The success of an advocacy campaign depends on the quality of its implementation. This section presents a number of recommendations on the implementation of an advocacy campaign as well as some tools NREAs can mobilise during a campaign.

Step 1 – Define key policy messages

The message is the overarching theme that holds an entire advocacy campaign together. It can be compared with a "slogan" and will help maximize the outreach of your campaign towards your target audience.

Policy makers have a number of different responsibilities including liaising with multiple stakeholders on many issues at any one time. In order to be effective in attracting their attention and support, it is critical that your messages are clear, concrete, short, and simple. It is not easy to reduce all complex issues facing the energy industry into a simple statement, but it needs to

be done, because complex and overly technical messages are usually not understood by non-expert audiences and therefore receive minimal attention. Once the attention of their target audience has been caught, NREAs will be able to explain the issue in greater detail. See for example the table above with suggestions of key messages and evidence points to support advocacy with various different target audiences.

Top tip

Successful advocacy campaigns can be largely inspired on advertising campaigns. You can develop slogans which are easy to remember, by using "fun messages" or parodies of previous campaigns which have benefited from a large audience. Examples of simple policy messages: Small is Beautiful, Make Power Clean, Its Electric.

Case study: Example of SolarPower Europe's simple policy messages

Small is Beautiful is a campaign started by SolarPower Europe to advocate for the protection of small-scale PV installations, such as consumer-driven, rooftop PV installation. The objective was to unlock enabling measures in two regulation – one concerning electricity market requirements, the other concerning the access to financing programmes

Make Power Clean was a campaign initiated by SolarPower Europe. The objective was to ensure that a specific regulation, the Electricity Market Design Regulation, did not allow any more public money in the EU to be accessible to a certain class of polluting assets, such as coal generators.

Solar4Building is the name of a campaign initiated by SolarPower Europe to raise awareness on the potential of rooftops in the EU to install solar panels and incentivize policy makers to take measures to unlock investment into rooftop PV installations (through obligations to building owners, creation of specific financing tools, etc.).

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Step 2 – Structure the argument
It is key to be able to communicate clearly and concisely the aim of your advocacy is critical to generate and hold interest in the advocacy efforts, and to gain support for the regulatory or other solution proposed by the NREA. The argument must be clear, well-structured, targeted and concise.

One should ideally be able to summarize and present the advocacy message in four to five sharp sentences including:
- **The statement** is the central idea in the message, or the analysis/cause of the problem. It outlines why the change is important.
- **The evidence**, which the analysis is based on, supports the statement with (easily understood) facts and figures, using tailored language for clear communication.
- **An example** will add a human face when communicating that message. This could a case study, impact study or policy brief with evidence of effects of the particular policy on a particular business or community. It could also be a story: an issue a company has faced, a situation that has happened in a third country, or a successful project that has implemented what you advocate for.
- **The goal** highlights what we want to achieve. It is the result of the action desired and the impact it will have on businesses or the community.
- **The action** desired is what you want to do in support of reaching your defined goal. It is the path to solving the problem. This forms the core of an advocacy message and distinguishes it from many other types of communication. This part of the message is often tailored to the specific needs of the target audience.[57]

Step 3 – Tailor your policy messages to the target audience
The supporting evidence for your message, and the format through which you deliver it depends on who you are speaking to, what you want to say, your purpose and your resources.

To achieve success, advocacy materials must be targeted to the audience you are advocating towards and delivered in a timely manner. In some cases, you'll want to present a short, straightforward account of the issue (for example, for busy decision makers such as parliamentary members or ministers), while in other situations, you'll need a more in-depth analysis of the issue in order to be persuasive, for example when reaching out to technical advisors.

In each situation you should ask yourself the following questions:
- What is important to them and how do we tailor our message to best attract their attention? (Example: preserving local jobs, fighting climate change, boosting innovation and investment))
- What information and evidence do they need from us to be interested enough to engage with us, or to make a decision? (Example: Overarching messages and general information or data and analytics)

Reaching out to Policy Makers:
As previously mentioned, **legislators** are usually busy and heavily solicited by many different stakeholders. Yet, it is critical to raise policy makers' interest and convince them to act on an issue. For this reason, the NREA should always favour high-level messages conveyed in simple and easily accessible formats, for example a formal, concise and personalised letter with one or two overarching messages. It is also important to understand what the interest of the policy maker is, for example improving the electrification rates of, or job opportunities for their constituents, and to highlight how can the industry can reasonably contribute to this goal, for example through increasing energy access with energy that is not harmful to health.

Policy makers have **supporting teams (technical advisors)** tasked with processing the large amount of information and identify the important issues which needs to be conveyed to their superiors. These advisors are usually more easily accessible for meetings, and more acquainted to the technicalities of the issue. You can provide them with more in-depth content such as data and studies, but you should always include a short deliverable summarizing your asks.

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, establishing good working relationships with policymakers and their teams is of paramount importance.

Keep your network of key policy makers informed of your policy initiatives through meeting relevant officials and sharing fact sheets, policy briefings,

evidence-based studies and reform memoranda to present your case.

Reaching out to the media:
The media is your gateway to shaping public opinion in favour of your association's stance on an issue before and while you are meeting with government representatives and policy makers. Media coverage can take the form of unsolicited articles, op-ed pieces, and 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).

Make use of your existing social media and online presence already embedded in your overall communications strategy to convey your advocacy messages and gather feedback from the general public. Use social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to educate the public and lawmakers about your issue. Don't forget to tag them and include relevant hashtags.

> **Advocacy Communication Channel Example**
> Tanzania Renewable Energy Association (TAREA) publishes a quarterly renewable energy magazine, called SunENERGY. The magazine presents projects/programs/activities of renewable for awareness raising. The information is presented in a simple language that everyone can understand the core message. No scientific content is printed in SunENERGY as the main target group cannot understand. The magazine is bilingual, English and Swahili. The magazine is currently being distributed to all TAREA members as well as key stakeholders in most regions.[58]

Step 4 – Leveraging your network
Remember, NREAs can be an effective advocate on their own, but if members of your networks and coalitions can sound a unified voice, the chances of success of your NREA will multiply. By

building relationships with stakeholders aligned to the advocacy efforts and identifying the ways in which partnerships can be mutually beneficial, the NREA will be able to bring partners to the table that can reinforce its message and influence the policymaking process.[59]

Reaching out to your members:
Members need clarity on what their association is advocating for and why. Members and their contacts can be an important source of evidence and support for the advocacy efforts of the NREA.

V   Provide the members with a brief of each advocacy priority (as discussed and developed as part of the advocacy working group) and inform members about the advocacy actions. This can be included in emails, newsletters or periodic reports and relayed at member events.

V   Direct the members to any other materials that are available, such as a fact sheet or position paper. Having advocacy materials on the NREA's website is a great way to disseminate them quickly and inexpensively.

V   Involve the members in the advocacy actions. NREAs may invite a member company to a meeting to testify on an issue or present a product or project. They may also ask member companies to amplify the outreach of the advocacy actions by disseminating the position documents or communication documents to their contact or on their networks.

> **Examples:**
> - Policy Roadmap - 100% Renewable Energy and Poverty Eradication in Tanzania[60]
> - Off-grid solar country briefing, Tanzania – Accelerating access to electricity in Africa with off-grid solar[61]
> - Opportunities and Barriers- The Use of Renewable Energy in Uganda[62]
> - GOGLA's GOGLA open letter to governments in response to the COVID-19 crisis[63]
> - GOGLA Guidance for Governments[64]

58 https://www.tarea-tz.org/storage/app/uploads/public/571/e80/702/571e80702a3ea000399772.pdf
59 Prosperity Now: Advocating for equitable policies: https://prosperitynow.org/files/PDFs/Putting_Prosperity_Within_Reach.pdf
60 https://seors.unfccc.int/applications/seors/attachments/get_attachment?code=D2RPXGA1M0GFMKNDEAAJQUV9IXVAMDSH
61 https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10256.pdf
62 https://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/renewable_energies_final_report_opportunities_and_barriers.pdf
63 https://www.gogla.org/sites/default/files/documenten/gogla_open_letter_-_covid-19_online_version.pdf
64 https://www.gogla.org/resources/providing-energy-access-through-off-grid-solar-guidance-for-governments

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Reaching out to your network of supporting stakeholders:

Advocacy materials may be used to raise awareness of and garner support for the key advocacy issues among network of supporting stakeholders. Uniting with other stakeholders and gaining their support or sharing the effort of advocacy can be critical for the success of an advocacy campaign, in particular for NREAs with limited resources or access to the target audience.

Mobilization of network of stakeholders can be done informally through telephone calls or emails or more formally by scheduling face-to-face meetings or inviting them to attend briefings or events hosted by the advocacy committee. In each case, NREAs should establish very clearly for the audience/invitees: why the issue is important to them; what position the association takes on the issue; and what they can do to support the cause.

The mobilization of the network can translate into formal coalitions. Coalitions usually gather different stakeholders that unite under a formal policy claim and position document, and that agree to conduct joint advocacy actions (meetings, communication campaign, etc.).[65] Unlike the industry association however, the core interest of stakeholders is different and the coalition is usually limited in time and topic.

Top tip

Building coalitions requires a lot of coordination effort. It is critical to be well prepared and have a clear view of the shared interest of the different coalition partners and where conflicts of interest may lie. Once the coalition is established, it is important to coordinate the actions to optimise the efforts of the members, but the coordination must also make sure that each member of the coalition has a role in the advocacy action. This will allow to meet stakeholders' interest for visibility and ensure that the strengths of all partners are utilized.

Monitoring & Evaluating Advocacy Efforts

Since advocacy is often a long-term effort involving many actors, it requires a monitoring and evaluation approach that recognizes the unique, collaborative nature of advocacy work. Monitoring and evaluating of advocacy efforts is needed in order to review priorities, positions, methods and outcomes in order to opportunities for improvement in your overall advocacy work.

Planning for evaluation should occur at the start of an advocacy effort, ideally while the strategy is being developed or soon after. This is based on the proven premise that evaluation can be a key resource when integrated into advocacy efforts because it supports and informs the work as it evolves. Among elements that distinguish Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for advocacy:

- **Time frames can be unpredictable and much longer than many members envisage.** Achieving an advocacy effort's goals, particularly for policy advocacy, often takes many years. M&E data are often required before goals are achieved.
- **Strategies and milestones shift.** Advocacy strategy evolves over time, and activities and desired outcomes can shift quickly. For M&E it means making adjustments, so it is more relevant and realistic within an advocacy context.
- **Demonstration of contribution is expected, not attribution.** When the purpose of evaluating advocacy is to determine impact, attribution is not always possible. Therefore, evaluations that examine the link between advocacy efforts and their results have adopted a standard of contribution over attribution.
- **Assessing progress is important, not just impact.** Advocacy M&E typically focuses on the advocacy journey rather than just the destination. This approach demonstrates progress and reduces the risk that the evaluation will conclude that the whole advocacy effort was a failure if advocacy goals are not achieved within the evaluation's time frame.
- **Context should always be considered.** Context matters when choosing advocacy strategies. It also matters when choosing M&E approaches and interpreting evaluation data.[66]

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65 See for example the Energy for Access Coalition - http://efficiencyforaccess.org/
66 UNICEF, Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit_Companion.pdf

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

The NREA should make sure that the member companies are aware of these elements and do not expect more than what can be achieved in the very specific policy context. Members companies sometimes do not realise what and how successes can be achieved in advocacy. It is therefore critical to inform members about the specificities of advocacy and manage expectations in order to minimize frustration.

Monitoring and evaluation should also be conducted throughout the full advocacy programme process, and not only after the end of the advocacy efforts. Being able to critically assess how the political context has changed and affected the advocacy strategy, assessing the progress or absence of progress as well as understanding its reasons, is critical to reorient the advocacy strategy along the way and make sure that advocacy efforts are well spent.

When it comes to PPDs, outcomes of dialogue can take many forms. For instance, business may receive new recognition as a legitimate stakeholder in policymaking; the private and public sectors may reach agreement on important principles or develop joint action plans; they may negotiate new policy standards and costs. Sometimes, the best result business can achieve is mitigating or blocking a harmful proposal. Each of these outcomes has value to business and may provide avenues for future advocacy.[67]

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67 How to Advocate Effectively: A Guidebook for Business Associations: https://www.cipe.org/legacy/publication-docs/advocacyguidebook_english.pdf

Part 7 – Advocacy & policy dialogue

Key questions to shape the Monitoring and Evaluation process

Ask yourself some essential questions for all monitoring and evaluation planning:

- **Who are the monitoring and evaluation users?**
  NREA's Board and Management: M&E can help all members of the board and management learn, adapt and remain nimble in the midst of the constantly changing policy environment in which we work. M&E can also help NREAs demonstrate the value of their advocacy work.
  Association Members: This will ensure that you have a shared understanding of what your advocacy strategy is trying to achieve. It will also ensure that you communicate value for membership to members and get feedback from them on policy issues they face and how to formulate policy recommendations
  External donors: Like advocates, donors may want feedback on progress as advocacy efforts unfold so that they can know how and where advocates are making progress or having an impact.
  Stakeholders: e.g., government bodies, international organizations, the media, civil society organizations and communities. They may also want feedback on progress. In fact, such data may serve as a motivator and help keep them engaged over time.

- **How will monitoring and evaluation be used?**
  Advocacy monitoring and evaluation within NREAs is generally conducted to establish accountability, inform decision-making or encourage national and global learning. These purposes should be consistent with the existing NREAs Good Governance Procedures and Policies.

- **What evaluation design should be used?**
  An evaluation's design is the overall methodological plan for how information will be gathered. It defines how the evaluation will respond to the questions users want answered. Determine the format and data collection tools that you will use to gather the desired info consistently. For NREAs, the users will also be the key contributors to the M&E process. Asking members, the Board, donors, government and other stakeholders for their regular input into the M&E process is critical to ascertain whether or not your association's advocacy approach is heading in the right direction.

- **What should be measured?**
  Key aspects of advocacy that should be measured include activities, costs, interim outcomes, objectives/goals and successes (e.g. policy reforms).

Part 7 - Advocacy & policy dialogue

Resources

- Policy Brief – Pico-Solar Opportunities and Challenges in Kenya: https://sunconnectnews.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/Policy_Brief_Solar_PV_for_enhancing_electricity_access_in_Kenya_July_2015.pdf

- Policy Brief – Accelerating Pico-Solar Photovoltaic Lighting Market in Kenya: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/kenya/docs/energy_and_environment/2018/Policy%20Brief%20_Final.pdf

- TAREA – Sun Energy Magazine: https://www.tarea-tz.org/storage/app/uploads/public/571/e80/702/571e80702a3ea000399772.pdf

- Policy Roadmap – 100% Renewable Energy and Poverty Eradication in Tanzania: https://seors.unfccc.int/applications/seors/attachments/get_attachment?code=D2RPXGA1M0GFMKNDEAAJQUV9IXVAMDSH

- Off-grid solar country briefing, Tanzania – Accelerating access to electricity in Africa with off-grid solar: https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10256.pdf

- Opportunities And Barriers – The Use of Renewable Energy in Uganda: https://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/renewable_energies_final_report_opportunities_and_barriers.pdf

- GOGLA Country Briefs: https://www.gogla.org/policy-and-regulation/country-briefs

- Powering Opportunity: https://www.gogla.org/powering-opportunity

- GOGLA Investment Data: https://www.gogla.org/access-to-finance/investment-data

- GOGLA Semi-Annual Market Report: https://www.gogla.org/global-off-grid-solar-market-report

- Power Africa Off-Grid Fact Sheets: https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/beyondthegrid

- How to Advocate Effectively: A Guidebook for Business Associations: https://www.cipe.org/legacy/publication-docs/advocacyguidebook_english.pdf

- Understanding the Target Audience: http://docshare.tips/step-4-understanding-the-target-audience_5762403ab6d87f5fb68b48ef.html

- Prosperity Now: Advocating for equitable policies: https://prosperitynow.org/files/PDFs/Putting_Prosperity_Within_Reach.pdf

- UNICEF Advocacy Toolkit: https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf

- SEQUA, BMO Toolbox

- The PPD Handbook; A TOOLKIT FOR BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT REFORMERS: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEXPCOMNET/Resources/PPD_Handbook.pdf

- UNICEF, Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit_Companion.pdf

Part 8 –
Data Activities

Part 8 – Data Activities

Purpose and use

Both qualitative and quantitative data is rapidly becoming the lifeblood of many organizations both in the public and private sector. NREAs are no exception, **as data serves as a basis for advocacy, it demonstrates the impact of its members and it helps understanding the organization's performance against its targets**. Moreover, data activities can become a key service to attract members if they are tailored to their needs.

However, engaging in data activities is no easy task, especially for institutions not originally established with such a mandate. Depending on the activity, different resources and skillsets may be required. This section provides six-steps to consider when undertaking a data activity. It offers an overview of different data activities you may want to engage in, highlighting their complexity and key purpose, and includes relevant evidence sources.

Please note that these steps may vary depending on the situation and the data need you want to address, and the information in this chapter is not meant to be exhaustive. We strongly encourage you to adapt your approach based on the specific data need at hand.

Implementing data activities

Step 1 – Identify the data need

A data activity begins with the articulation of a need – particularly, for a NREA, the needs of its members. These needs may be satisfied directly by offering a data service to the members, or indirectly by increasing the efficiency of the NREA since this in turn benefits members.

The data need analysis should result in a short document detailing the need, the ideal outcome and the stakeholder who raised it (e.g. government, industry member, donor, development partner etc.). This will help framing and guiding the data activity by increasing transparency and clarity. **From the onset, it is important to be clear about the scope of the data activity and the benefits it has to offer;** otherwise the effectiveness of the resulting dataset may be greatly reduced.

Step 2 – Assess available sources

A second important step is to research whether there is already data available to fill such need through a review of secondary sources. This helps ensuring cost efficiency and avoiding duplication of efforts, as well as minimizing the amount of surveys the NREA members may receive.

If a secondary source is found, one should assess whether the data provided is "good" enough and how it is collected. "Good" data sources need to be comprehensive, timely and granular enough for the scope in hand. If your assessment is that the source is "not good", it can be helpful to find out why the author may have struggled – there is always a reason such as lack of resources or the difficulty of the subject.

Remember that data may be available but not always accessible. Do a review to ensure that the data you are seeking is not only available but that there also are no restrictions in accessing it.

Step 3 – Decide activity type and plan

In case it is necessary to collect new, primary data, make sure to plan for it properly. Good planning can help you capture richer and more accurate data while saving time and resources. The following considerations are important to bear in mind as you plan your data collection:

- **Start with the result in mind.** Knowing the type of information and the data you need will enable you to decide which specific data activity you need to undertake.
- **Keep it simple.** This is especially important if you are undertaking data activity for the first time.
- **Assess whether you need qualitative or quantitative data (or both).** Not all the needs of your members may be solved with quantitative data – it could be that a particular audience is more susceptible to stories rather than numbers in which case it might be helpful to conduct qualitative interviews.
- **Only collect the data that you need.** Every additional survey question or data point adds to the cost of the data collection. It is strongly advised to only collect data that you will actually use.

Part 8 - Data Activities

- **Decide whether you will measure a sample or the whole population.** Consider practicalities around time and budget to collect data from the entire research population. If this is not feasible, you can decide to collect a sample. If you proceed with collecting a sample, make sure that your sampling method and sample size provide you with data that is statistically significant.
- **Consider technology-enabled data collection.** This is usually faster, more accurate and creates greater uniformity. However, it may require that you liaise with a software expert.
- **Assess time constraints.** There are data activities that have a short turnaround period. For example, a crucial public-private stakeholder meeting may be scheduled just two weeks after a controversial bill is published which affects your members. In such a scenario, you will need to undertake a data activity that yields results quickly.

Types of Data Activities

Generally, there are five different types of data activities: opinion pieces, policy notes, KYM (know-your-members) surveys, annual evaluations, and primary data collections (see the table below).

Each type of activity results in different outputs and requires different data sources, which strongly influences the complexity of the activity and the required skillset.

Type	Output	Complexity	Confidentiality	Based on	Purpose	Skillsets needed
Opinion Pieces	Blog, articles, interviews etc.	Very low (2-3 weeks)	No	Review of secondary sources	· Raise profile of association · Engage audiences	· Research · Communication
Policy Notes	Short documents	Low (1-2 months)	No	Review of secondary sources	· Raise profile of association · Support advocacy	· Research · Communication
KYM (Know-Your-Members) surveys	Internal report	Medium (2-3 months)	Maybe (depending on the questions)	Based on a single member survey	· Get to know members' needs and profile	· Survey design · Communication · Member engagement · Data analysis
Annual Evaluations	Public report	High (4-6 months)	Yes	Based on several surveys to members and other stakeholders	· Evaluate if needs are met · Raise profile of association · Respond to funders request	· KPIs and survey design · Communication · Member engagement · Data analysis and visualization
Primary Data Collections	Public report, company reports and visualizations	Very high (10-12 months)	Yes	Based on several surveys to members and/or to members' customers	· Provide benchmarks to members · Raise profile of association · Engage audiences · Support advocacy	· Survey design · Communication · Member engagement · Data analysis and visualization · Digital platform development (optional) · Legal for data sharing agreements

Part 8 - Data Activities

Step 4 – Build partnerships and develop data sharing agreements

Even if the data need is well articulated, it may not be feasible or preferable to engage in the activity alone. Usually partnerships are an effective way to get around the hurdle of having all the resources needed – there are many stakeholders who may be willing to support and engage in the data activity with you. Please note that the perception stakeholders have of your partners' reputations and technical capacities may influence the credibility of your message.

Potential partners are detailed in the table below. It is important to consider the mutual gains that derive from each partnership as well as the potential issues or conflicts that may arise. One typical challenge is around the terminology used – the lack of mutual understanding of the meaning of a term or its incorrect usage may create several problems. Particularly, it is important to find a funder that understands and is keen to support a credible data collection process. Make sure that the funder is not only neutral towards possible outcomes but is equally viewed by other stakeholders as being a credible and honest partner.

Data Governance

When establishing a partnership, it is essential to discuss the right to access the data and manage expectations on the outcomes. The set of processes that ensure the integrity and security of the data is called Data Governance.

A key component of Data Governance are data sharing agreements (DSAs), legal documents to be established between the owner of the data and all the partners who have access to it. Recognizing that data has value, economic or otherwise, the DSA commonly includes provisions for:

- Background information – Why is data gathered in the first place?
- Definitions – Is there mutual understanding on the key terms and concepts?
- Data ownership – Who owns the data?
- Confidentiality – Which data points are confidential, and which are not?
- Analysis and aggregation – How do you ensure that the results cannot be traced back to a single respondent (e.g. aggregation rules)?
- Privacy – What personal data is being stored and what are the privacy restrictions?
- Time – For how long is the data being stored?
- Data protection and security – What constitutes a data breach and how will this be avoided?

Data Development Partnership	Potential Gains	Potential Conflicts/Issues with NREA	Mitigation
Service providers (e.g. data analyst specialists, web developers etc.)	Building expertise on data collection processes from bottom up instead of working only with Big Data	Communication issue and timeline enforcement, management of expectation	Commitments towards deliverables, shared vocabulary
Members	Getting back valuable benchmarks and/or data points, having an empowered NREA	Unwillingness to share data	Confidentiality rules, data sharing agreements
Funders (e.g. donors, development partners etc.)	Having important data points to guide discussions, having their logo recognized on publications	Expectation on secure outcomes (while from a data collection it is never sure what data one will get)	Expectation management, neutrality towards outcomes
Government	Having important data points to guide discussions, understand better the companies and the sector	No understanding, overstepping to get confidential information, lack of trust on the NREA	Neutrality towards outcomes
Statistical institutions	Having/complementing data points	Use of jargon, difficult wording requiring data expertise, unwillingness to share data and / or collaborate	Shared vocabulary
Other NREAs	Build capacities and having important and aligned data points	Different priorities, communication issues	Shared vocabulary, commitments towards deliverables

Part 8 – Data Activities

- Indemnities and liabilities – How will you manage a data breach?[68]
- Partners – Who are they and why are they involved?
- Conditions for data sharing – What data is being shared between partners?
- Licensing of data – What can partners do with the data they receive?
- List of people within partner organizations having access to confidential information – Which persons in each partner organization have access to confidential data?

Data sharing agreements are essential to convince companies to share data, so that they know exactly who has access to the data, for how long, and how it will be stored, used and analysed. Please note that signing data sharing agreements is often a matter of building trust over time.

Step 5 – Create a communication plan
Once the data collection is completed it is helpful to create a communication plan on how to disseminate the results. There are several considerations to bear in mind as you make decisions about how to communicate your data and to whom. You will have different audiences, each with unique data and formatting needs. Make sure you keep those needs into account as you decide how to make your data available, in which format and when. For more information – see Section 3 on communication.

Step 6 – Data management
After investing time and resources in collecting data, it is important to have a good management strategy to ensure it supports your objectives throughout time. Data management is the practice of organizing, storing, and maintaining data processes. It must always be done in a coordinated way throughout the whole organization.
Ultimately, data should be stored securely, but nevertheless be easily available for analysis.

Data management includes:
- **Data storage** – In the case of quantitative data, store the data in its raw form. This allows flexibility in the way the data can be processed (e.g. filtered, aggregated, transformed), and ensures all calculations can be reproduced.
- **Data management processes** – Establish recurrent processes to minimize the costs of setting up partnerships and infrastructure, as well as to explore time series.[69]
- **Data accessibility** – Ensure the data is accessible for staff to use. In case the data is confidential, it is strongly advised to limit the number of people in the organization that have access to it.
- **Data security** – Store the data securely and minimize the risk for data breach.

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68 Data Breach means any event leading to (potential) accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorized disclosure of, or access to confidential data.
69 Time series are a set of measures of a single variable recorded over a period of time arranged in a chronological order (e.g. sales volumes of Solar Home Systems in Kenya 2015–2018).

Part 8 – Data Activities

Data resources

Please find an overview of recent and relevant secondary data resources below. For more resources, please see the GOGLA Research Matrix and the GOGLA Country Briefs.

Jobs
- IRENA (2020). Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2020.
- GOGLA & Vivid Economics (2019). Off-Grid Solar. A Growth Engine for Jobs.
- Power for All (2019). Powering Jobs Census 2019: The Energy Access Workforce.

Socio-economic Impact
- GOGLA (2020). Powering Opportunity. Energising Work, Enterprise and Quality of Life with Off-Grid Solar.
- 60Decibels (2020). Why Off-Grid Energy Matters.
- Efficiency for Access Coalition (2020). The Use and Impact of Solar TVs

SDG7 Tracking
- IRENA & ESMAP (2020). Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report.

Market Trends & Policy
- Lighting Global, GOGLA & ESMAP (2020). 2020 Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report.
- GOGLA (2020). Global Off-Grid Solar Market Report, in partnership with IFC Lighting Global and Efficiency for Access Coalition
- GOGLA (2019). Providing Energy Access through Off-Grid Solar: Guidance for Governments.
- IEA (2019). Africa Energy Outlook 2019.

Finance
- GOGLA (2020). Off-Grid Solar Investment Trends.
- SE4ALL (2019). Energizing Finance: Understanding the Landscape 2019.

Productive Use
- A2EI (2020). A2EI Productive Use Report and Methodology.
- Lighting Global (2019). The Market Opportunity for Productive Use Leveraging Solar Energy (PULSE) in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Efficiency for Access Coalition (2019). Status of the Off-Grid Appliances Market Report
- Efficiency for Access Coalition (2020). Off-Grid Appliance Market Survey 2020

Humanitarian Energy
- Shell, Dalberg & Vivid Economics (2020). Access to More: Creating Energy Choices for Refugees.