International Labour Organization

A practical guide to private sector consultation for employer and business membership organizations in the Pacific

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Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms

CICC	Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce
CRM	client relations management
EBMOs	employer and business membership organizations (chambers of commerce)
FCEF	Fiji Chamber and Employers Federation
KCCI	Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MSME	micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
SCCI	Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SICCI	Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VCCI	Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Purpose of this guide

Consultation with the private sector, both member and non-member enterprises, is a critical foundation for the success of employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) of every size and focus. Whether consultation is conducted to inform strategic planning, policy work, development of services or organizational evaluation, there is a need for consultations with the private sector to be professional, well planned and well executed.

Private sector consultation is a two-way process of communication with and between representatives of private industry, be they representatives of EBMOs or enterprises themselves. Though private sector consultation is conducted by a variety of actors, for different purposes and through various means.[1]

This guide has been developed for Pacific EBMOs to share insight into best practices and lessons learned by EBMOs globally while setting out practical step-by-step approaches that can be tailored and adapted to local contexts and needs.

The focus of the guide is private sector consultation organized and carried out by or with EBMOs. The target of such consultations are other EBMOs and/or individual enterprises, both as members and non-members.

1 A comprehensive list of consultation models is provided in Section 5.3.

1

The business case for professionalizing private sector consultation

EBMOs represent a key asset in any society: its enterprises.[2] Successful enterprises are at the heart of any strategy to create employment and improve living standards. EBMOs help to create the conditions for enterprise success by influencing the environment in which they do business and by providing services that improve their individual performance. It is therefore central to good policy outcomes that the private sector should be given opportunities to participate in decisions that have the potential to affect their industry or business. As membership-based organizations with a mandate from the private sector to represent the collective interests of business in labour market issues, trade and investment, EBMOs are the appropriate partner to engage policymakers and development agencies in private sector consultation. Moreover, EBMOs benefit from professionalizing their approach to consultation.

The benefits of professionalized consultation, which involves listening and actively responding to concerns and issues raised, cannot be overstated. It enables decision-makers to access new ideas and sources of information and make informed decisions. Consultations can address the good governance principles of transparency and accountability.

2 To learn more about the role and function of EBMOs, see A reference guide to the structure and governance of Employer and Business Membership Organizations.

As membership-based organizations, EBMOs must ensure systems and processes are in place that enable the organization to be viable, pursue its vision and mission effectively and meet its obligations under the law. Private sector consultations with both member and non-member associations and enterprises play a critical role in ensuring these systems and processes are appropriately designed and executed while ensuring that members have the opportunity to participate in or influence organizational decisions that have the potential to impact them. Professional consultation that is genuine and credible improves member engagement, builds their trust and confidence, improves the reputation of the EBMO and adds to the perceived value of membership.

However, ad hoc, informal and undocumented meetings with the private sector can have the opposite impact. ‘Awareness’ sessions (one-way communication) may be represented as consultations (two-way exchange). Processes may fail to give all relevant stakeholders the opportunity to participate, or they may create an environment where stakeholders with more power and influence dominate the proceedings. In some instances, participant feedback is not taken into account in final outcomes, and participants are given no justification for this.

Consultation processes that have no impact are a common frustration among members, which is a very relevant consideration for EBMOs in deciding when to consult and what actions or decisions can be made based on the outcomes.

An unprofessional consultation process may at first appear to achieve the immediate objective of consulting the private sector, but in fact it falls short of the objective, and the consequences of poor consultation processes can create new problems.

Given the importance of private sector consultation, the mandated role of EBMOs and inherent opportunities and risks, there is compelling reason for EBMOs to invest in professionalizing their approach to consultation.

1.1 Strengthening partnerships and collaborations

Identifying and creating opportunities for partnerships and collaborations in areas of common interest within and between the private sector, government, development partners and the wider community supports the work and objectives of EBMOs.

Partnerships and collaborations involving different types of EBMOs and enterprises can increase the influence of the private sector over public policy, as key advocacy points can be delivered consistently by a variety of business leaders, leaving less room for ambiguity. Consultations led by EBMOs support private sector partnerships and collaborations by allowing actors to exchange their views and perspectives, achieve consensus on key issues and manage different positions in a manner that does not undermine broader goals and objectives. The strengthening of private sector relationships that emerge from professional consultations can lead to further opportunities for partnerships and collaborations in other areas, such as membership services and capacity-building.

Partnerships with the Government: “We have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Government which established the Government-Private Sector Advisory Group that has quarterly meetings. During these meetings updates are provided on key policy issues affecting the private sector, policy proposals are presented and discussed, and information from members is shared by the Chamber. We’ve had some successful outcomes from this, for example, policy changes during the COVID-19 lockdown in relation to essential service categories and clarification on which businesses were allowed to operate during restrictions on movement. Through this, we were able to get private sector essential services exemptions to operate.”

Source: Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry

1.2 Gaining more influence and impact

Professional consultation processes create opportunities for EBMOs to gain more influence and impact, and they are an important means for pursing the organization's vision and mandate effectively. An effective means of pursuing consultation processes is in partnership or collaboration with private sector associations, enterprises and government, development partners and the wider community. Very few policymakers and development partners would not recognize the value and importance of private sector consultation, hence EBMOs are strategically well placed to organize, deliver and analyse the outcomes of private sector consultation in partnership or collaboration with these actors.

Establishing clear partnerships and collaborations with other actors who recognize the mandate, role and function of EBMOs provides a way to manage the demands from multiple stakeholders for private sector time and inputs while helping to avoiding duplication of efforts and information. The potential benefits of this to EBMOs and their members include greater alignment between the needs of business and the policies enacted and more effective services and support available to the private sector. For EBMOs, these partnerships offer new opportunities for revenue streams, team capacity-building and increased status, influence and impact.

EBMOs in the Pacific have seen positive outcomes and gained more influence and impact by building relationships, sharing information and collecting data through regular consultations and member engagement. For example, the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) built direct and trusted communication channels with the Prime Minister, and they regularly discuss issues impacting their members at high-level meetings. This has created opportunities for the SCCI, without delay, to influence the response of high-level decision-makers to urgent issues.

1.2.1 Pacific private sector and multilateralism

Pacific Islands Forum

Mandated by Pacific Islands Forum leaders through the Forum Compact, the Forum Secretariat convenes an annual platform for political dialogue with the private sector. The purpose of the dialogue is to foster the reforms required for private sector growth and employment generation, as political interventions could spur rapid private sector growth. In the main, private sector dialogue has the following purposes:

- serving as a high-level discussion forum on private sector views on reforms;
- fostering stronger partnerships between the private sector and Forum governments and development partners;
- building a stronger shared understanding of the economic, trade and regulatory policies that enable private sector growth.

The Forum Secretariat focuses its attention on areas of private sector development where it has a comparative advantage through its association with global partners, regional trade policy and agreements, national chambers of commerce and members of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), to facilitate, coordinate and deliver tailored solutions for governments and enterprises alike.

The Pacific Islands Forum recognizes the importance of strengthening engagement and dialogue with the private sector and deepening public sector understanding of private sector needs and experiences. The Pacific Islands Forum also recognizes the value of identifying investment opportunities.[3]

3 More information about the work of the Pacific Islands Forum is available at www.forumsec.org/private-sector/.

International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

Any ILO international labour standard, resolution, declaration, initiative, policy, programme and outcomes of the supervisory system, expert meetings and sectoral meetings, can have an indirect or direct impact on national and regional policy discussions and regulatory frameworks, day-to-day management decisions and future business projects. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance for companies to play a central role, through their representative organizations, in leading, guiding and influencing the policy and technical work of the ILO so that the needs and priorities of businesses of all sizes operating in different geographies, economic sectors and frameworks, are fully reflected in ILO technical and policy work.[4]

United Nations

The private sector is recognized as a key partner to achieve the universally adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is recognized as an important engine of economic growth and job creation in developing countries.

The United Nations (UN) has reformed how assistance is provided to countries, including on the SDGs. The new approach has changed the way national development policies are designed and implemented. UN Country Teams are now expected to work more directly with the private sector and representative EBMOs.

The UN development plan for each country offers an unprecedented opportunity for business organizations to inject a private sector perspective into national sustainable development targets, policies and programmes that shape the business environment.

Professional private sector consultation is an important element of the UN planning process and provides a means for ongoing dialogue between UN agencies while implementing their activities. EBMOs are encouraged to promote and proactively organize private sector consultations in support of the UN programming cycle and regularly engage with the UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams to convey the views of the private sector collected through these consultations.[5]

Government of Australia – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Government of Australia, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), recognizes the private sector as an essential partner in economic development and has a range of private sector programmes in the Pacific. Its current focus is on the COVID-19 response based on the Partnerships for Recovery policy, which pivots around existing private sector programmes to support economic recovery by working with businesses to create livelihood opportunities, support inclusive business practices, enhance gender equality and support countries to build back better and strengthen resilient economic recovery. Investments in the private sector seek to achieve three objectives:

- building better business and investment environments;
- supporting growth in specific markets;
- maximizing the development impact of businesses.

In addition to the Partnerships for Recovery policy, DFAT investments in private sector development are guided by the Operational Framework for private sector engagement in aid programmes and the Ministerial Statement on Engaging the Private Sector in Aid and Development.

4 To learn more about the role of employers in the ILO, see IOE guidance.

5 For more guidance, see The United Nations: Development System: What employers' and business membership organizations need to know and how they should engage.

New Zealand Aid Programme

The priorities of the New Zealand Aid Programme in the region are expressed in its Strategic Plan, which emphasises private-sector-led growth that supports sustainable development. It has significant funding dedicated to Pacific economic development, including a contestable fund open to non-government and private sector organizations. The Programme also recognizes that private-sector-led growth requires an enabling business environment and healthy, educated people, and investments in infrastructure and information and communications technology are required to improve health and education outcomes. The New Zealand Aid Programme, therefore, builds on these interrelationships to achieve a coherent, effective approach to development support.

1.3 Strengthening the quality of decisions

Data-driven, evidence-based decisions supported by the private sector and informed by private sector consultations with member and non-member enterprises should be considered the gold standard in terms of EBMO policy work. Such an approach gives legitimacy to EBMOs and ensures any decisions made are backed by a rigorous analysis and justification that can be defended to any audience.

Informing policy positions and advocacy: In 2021, the Minister for Internal Affairs of Vanuatu proposed amendments to the regulations restricting certain occupations to citizens. The initial proposal added 33 occupations to the existing list. A working group led by the **Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)** carried out extensive consultations with private sector members and other stakeholders. This led to a position paper on the proposed amendments, which contained evidence of significant negative impacts for local employment and skills shortages for existing businesses. The position paper provided the Ministry and the Department Labour with sufficient basis to amend the list. In the end, 10 occupations supported by both the Government and private sector were added to the regulation.

Source: Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Private sector consultation supports the quality of decision-making by allowing technical and strategic considerations to be explored and understood while enabling EBMOs to capture qualitative and quantitative data that can be used in analysis and future outputs. Encouraging member buy-in and a joint sense of ownership can have the added value of mobilizing a wider group of stakeholders to work collectively towards shared objectives.

1.4 Enhanced member engagement

Member engagement is the ongoing interaction between an EBMO and its member associations and enterprises. Its aim is to help members to feel connected to and invested in the success of the EBMO while also feeling that they are getting value for their membership. Achieving this should have a measurable impact on membership renewal and word of mouth recruitment of new members. Providing enterprises with opportunities to participate in private sector consultation on matters that have the potential to impact their business is an important form of member engagement.

1.5 Exercising good governance

Member engagement strategy embedded in consultation processes: The member engagement strategy of **Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI)** involves the dissemination of information through its website and social media, email outreach, in person visits, regular opportunities for members to participate in surveys and research, networking events and regular consultation meetings and workshops.

Source: Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Consultation processes providing for better representation of private sector to drive good policy initiatives: Before COVID-19 and under previous boards, **Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce (CICC)** had a more confrontational relationship with government and international agencies – consultation processes involved a lot of box-ticking, and the process lacked meaning. During the pandemic, this started to change. It developed white papers through consultations, some using ad hoc committees established for specific issues, to share the voice of the private sector. This moved towards having weekly dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, and this led to some policy initiatives that were supportive of private sector interests and had positive impacts for members. What the Ministry of Finance lacked was information from the private sector to give a consolidated view of the voices rather than just the voices of certain groups with more interest and capacity to engage in lobbying efforts.

Source: Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce

Good governance exists where an organization has appropriate systems and processes in place that will enable the organization to be viable, pursue its vision and mission effectively and meet its obligations under the law. Public trust, the confidence of members, and accountability are essential aspects of an EBMO's viability. They are necessary to achieve the social mission in a way that is respected by those whom the EBMO serves and by the society in which it is located. Among the key principles of good governance, private sector consultation can deliver transparency and accountability.[6] As a participatory process, private sector consultation supports EBMOs to identify, understand and form strategies to address risks (such as decision-making bias or conflicts of interest) while simultaneously building trust with members. When conducted professionally, private sector consultations also provide an opportunity to identify future leaders.

1.6 Risk mitigation and responding to crises

Consultation is an important strategy for EBMOs to manage and mitigate risks and respond to crises.[7] There are many recent examples from the Pacific where consultations have contributed to mitigating risks and responding to crises that have challenged EBMOs, such as poor policy development and implementation, political instability or risks to the wider economy, such as COVID-19 and natural disasters.

6 To learn more about the key principles of good governance in an EBMO and the systems and processes that can be put in place, see Onboarding handbook for board members of small employer and business membership organizations.

7 To learn more about the role EBMO can play in crisis situations arising from conflict and disaster see Managing Conflicts and Disasters: Exploring Collaboration between Employers' and Workers' Organizations.

Consultations with the private sector to create the Vanuatu Private Sector Economic Update 2021: Prior to consultations being carried out, there was very limited data available on the economic impact of COVID-19 or consistent economic data which the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and Government could draw upon to inform decisions around what support was needed by the private sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The private sector also had a number of questions and needed information in relation to the Government's response plans for their own business planning purposes, which were not well-communicated at the time. In response to this situation, VCCI led a private sector consultation exercise though surveys, key informant interviews and workshops to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A report capturing the main findings and recommendations for an economic stimulus package to support businesses was then produced and presented to Government. These recommendations were largely incorporated into the Economic Stimulus Package, Wage Subsidy Scheme and Small Business Grants rolled out in 2021 and 2022.

Source: Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry

For instance, consultations have worked to identify member needs and vulnerabilities in regard to pandemic or disaster preparedness which led to many EBMOs providing training workshops on developing business continuity plans and COVID-safe standard operating procedures and conducting risk and business impact assessments. Data collected through consultations also provided the data-driven, evidence-based approach needed for EBMOs to contribute to and/or influence government response plans for the private sector.

1.7 Supporting strategic alignment

Strategic alignment can improve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. It is achieved by ensuring a linkage between the overall goals of the EBMO and the individual goals of various departments and functions. Private sector consultation can be an enabler of strategic alignment. While a consultation may be pursued with specific objectives in mind, the consultation process also provides the opportunity to support other organizational objectives in line with overall goals. Each and every private sector consultation should be seen as an opportunity for the EBMO to simultaneously pursue its own membership, communication and research objectives.

Strategically supporting micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs): One of our strategic focuses during the COVID-19 lockdown was to support MSMEs. Business management training for MSMEs became an instrumental component of our support, and we added a governance and risk component to that training. Although the training in itself was not a stand-alone consultation process, we collected data on the results of the cohorts, which demonstrated an increase in the collective revenue of the businesses that engaged in the training, and gender disaggregated data on women's participation showed their subsequent success. The data supported our advocacy with the Government to underwrite loans for MSMEs to lower interest rates and provide better access to finance. In 2021, the Government increased these loans from $24 million to $200 million – it was a big success for MSMEs and the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation.

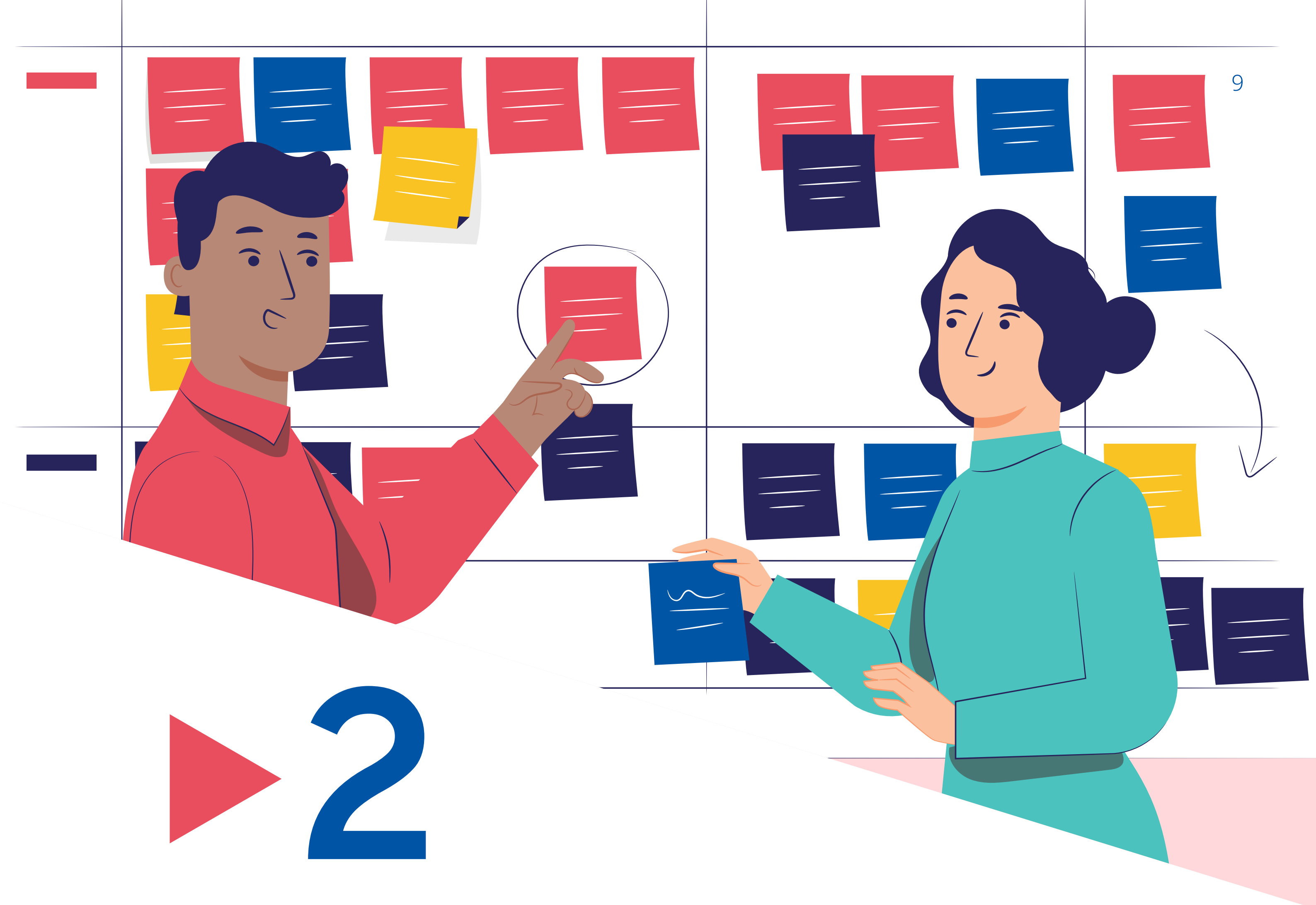
Source: Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation

1.8 Advocacy for private sector consultation done right

Mapping potential key stakeholders (such as government and development partners) and understanding their needs for engagement with the private sector presents an opportunity for EBMOs to proactively engage in advocacy for a professional approach to private sector consultation, ideally managed by or pursued in collaboration with representative EBMOs.

Proactive engagement with key stakeholders in this way can contribute to the reputation and perceived value-add of EBMOs; enhance their influence over policy and programming outcomes; generate new revenue streams through facilitation or management of consultations; improve access to key data; reduce duplication, overlap and inefficiencies in private sector consultation; reduce the burden on the private sector to contribute inputs and data; and result in a better return on investment for the private sector.

Section 5 provides some tools to support EBMO advocacy efforts with external stakeholders on improving the coordination of private sector consultations, including a template memorandum of understanding (MoU) for private sector consultations, which provides some ideas on how to approach partnerships specifically related to consultation requirements and strategically positioning EBMOs as the key stakeholder for private sector development. There is a template for a letter to request information from external stakeholders in the private sector on their requirements for consultation processes, and a basic calendar is provided so that EBMOs can map the consultation requirements of different stakeholders. It is intended to support consultation planning; identify possible areas of overlap, collaboration or cooperation, and serve as a quick reference tool.



2

Planning consultations

As in most things, doing the best possible job with limited resources requires key strengths in setting priorities and pursuing those priorities effectively. In short, the need for consultations will always exceed the available resources, and EBMOs must remain focused on the most important matters. They must develop and implement a strategy for professional consultations within which they pursue their broader objectives.

In planning a professional consultation, the EBMO will take steps to minimize the risk that participants would feel uncertain of the focus of the consultation or the contribution expected of them. EBMOs will want to ensure that no participant exits a consultation process feeling that nothing was accomplished or that their time was wasted. Good planning is the best way to mitigate these risks and deliver a professional consultation.

The focus of this section is on the planning and preparation of consultations. It provides an overview of different stages in the consultation process to consider during the planning stage and refers to tools and practical resources (see Section 5) with explanations on how they can be used. It may be helpful to review this section alongside the tools and resources included in Section 5.

2.1 Clarifying objectives and setting scope

Tip – When deciding whether to conduct consultations for issues that arise, consider the following questions:

- Is the identified issue within the mandate of your organization and consistent with its goals?
- Will the identified issue impact your members? Is the issue relevant to their business?
- How significant will the impacts be?
- Will your members be willing to give their time to participate?
- Is the issue significant enough to justify the resources needed to carry out the consultation?
- Are there ways your organization can influence how the issue is resolved?
- Will the information collected from your members or other stakeholders influence how the issue is resolved?

Once you have determined that consultation is needed, you can consider how to communicate its objectives to your team, members and other stakeholders involved.

Before conducting a consultation, it is important to be clear about its objectives. While the purpose of a consultation answers the question why a consultation is taking place, objectives describe what will be accomplished as a result of the consultation. These objectives should be easy to communicate in just a sentence or two.

This information provides clarity when drafting a consultation plan as well as during implementation, and it could be provided to members within the statement of intent (see Section 5.2).

Objectives should be specific, measurable and achievable within the consultation timeline. They should also be clear on what inputs will be expected of members and the role of the EBMO in achieving the objectives. When preparing an objectives statement, it is common to use sentences that begin with verbs. Below you will find some common starting clauses:

- collect feedback;
- brainstorm options;
- gather information;
- negotiate consensus;
- validate findings;
- seek endorsement.

It is very important to set a clear scope for the consultation to ensure the discussion remains on topics related to the direct objectives. This makes the most efficient and productive use of everyone’s time. The scope should be easy to communicate in a sentence or two. Its wording should emphasize the relevance of the issue and aim to persuade members and other invited stakeholders to participate in the consultation process.

Tip – The timeline may determine or limit the consultation methods and options. It is important for the EBMO to consider the timeline at the planning stage to determine what outcomes can be achieved and to avoid falling short of member expectations, particularly if members must invest considerable time or other resources (such as travel) to participate in the process.

2.2 Stakeholder identification, mapping and prioritization

When planning a consultation process, it is important to carry out stakeholder identification, mapping and prioritization to ensure the views of all interested stakeholders are included and that the data and outcomes of the consultation are relevant and representative.

Documenting the process of stakeholder identification can provide more transparency and accountability regarding who is consulted and for what, demonstrating that the stakeholders consulted are those that will be most directly impacted by the issue. Documentation also helps to identify solutions to complex problems, gain consensus and support to increase the impact of advocacy, negotiations and other objectives in consultations.

Many EBMOs in the Pacific have well-developed relationships with different stakeholders. Their relationships with and background knowledge of these stakeholders have been gained through many years of experience. In some consultation processes, background knowledge and experience with stakeholders may make the documentation of stakeholder identification, mapping and prioritization seem like an unnecessary step. However, without documentation, an EBMO is at risk of lacking relevant information that may be needed in the future. For example, an EBMO may need to respond to an audit, manage knowledge transfer following staff turnover, or incorporate historical data and business intelligence into the analysis.

Tip – The following questions may be useful to consider when identifying stakeholders:

- Who is responsible for the issue?
- Who might be affected by the issue (negatively or positively)?
- Who are the representatives of those likely to be affected?
- Who is likely to be in support for or in opposition to the issue?
- Who could possibly make a contribution or take action?
- Who are the voiceless for whom special efforts may have to be made?
- Whose absence from participation would detract from the final results?

A number of tools can support stakeholder mapping and analysis.[8] For example, a stakeholder mapping matrix can be used to organize stakeholders according to the purpose of the consultation, in terms of a stakeholder's support for the issue and influence, the impact of the issue on the stakeholder or the knowledge or other resources of the stakeholder.

Some EBMOs in the Pacific use client relationship management (CRM) databases to manage their membership and stakeholders. For example, the CRM software developed by the ILO International Training Centre has been provided to EBMOs around the region, and the ILO has provided support for local customization of the tool to meet organization needs. Typically, the CRM database will include data on members, potential members and key stakeholders, identifying the associated sector, relationships or affiliations, number of employees, membership status and other insights. CRM databases can be integrated with an EBMO website, social media, email client and data analytics software (such as Qualtrics) to support stakeholder identification and mapping for specific issues.

2.3 Selecting a consultation method

Once stakeholders are identified, mapped and prioritized, it becomes easier to make decisions around what consultation methods may be best suited to that stakeholder group. Different levels of engagement may be required for different stakeholders. The table below provides some ideas of consultation methods corresponding to different levels of engagement. It is important to note that informing or raising awareness of an issue does not amount to consultation given its one-way flow of information. However, the 'inform/awareness' methods shown below can be utilized as part of a consultation process that provides for two-way communication.

8 To learn more about stakeholder mapping and analysis for the purposes of advocacy, see The Effective Employers Guide to Advocacy.

Inform / awareness	Consult	Empower / collaborate
▶ News media ▶ Newsletters ▶ Social media ▶ Websites ▶ Briefings ▶ Public announcements ▶ Fact sheets ▶ Info kiosks	▶ Interviews ▶ Focus/sector groups ▶ Surveys ▶ Opinion polls ▶ Social media ▶ Meetings or workshops ▶ Submissions ▶ Questionnaires	▶ Consensus workshops ▶ Focus/sector groups ▶ Task force ▶ Think tanks ▶ Polling ▶ Votes or referenda ▶ Social media ▶ Advisory committees

A more comprehensive list of consultation methods is available in Section 5.3. It provides a range of different methods, some advantages and disadvantages EBMO have experienced with each and suggestions for their potential uses.

Tip – When choosing an appropriate consultation method or methods, in addition to matching the level of engagement of different stakeholder groups, you may also consider the following questions:

- What is the **purpose** of the consultation?
- What **kind of information** is required?
- What is the **complexity of the issue** and how much information needs to be given to stakeholders so they can provide considered input?
- What is the **urgency of decision-making** and how much time is available?
- What is the extent of **resources available** (personnel, time, venues, finances, etc)?
- Are there **special groups to be addressed** (such as culturally diverse people, people with disabilities, and rural or remotely located people)?

It is important to acknowledge that there is no one correct method that will suit every issue. Using more than one method may increase the likelihood of gaining a more representative response. An appropriate choice must be made in each situation. The choice of the method will be determined by the purpose of the consultation and who is being consulted. It may also be determined by the level of expertise and experience your team has in conducting consultations and the resources available (see Section 5.6).

2.4 Data collection methods and tools

In planning a consultation process, effective EBMO decision-making at the operational, management and strategic levels relies on data as sources of information, knowledge and insights. However, data tend to be the most powerful yet underutilized and poorly managed organizational asset EBMOs have today.[9]

In most EBMOs, data are fragmented across business functions and few EBMOs have explicit policies recognizing data as assets with systems and procedures in place to ensure appropriate stewardship.

Data can comprise raw facts and values recorded in a structured fashion, such as in databases or spreadsheets, but it can also include all unstructured informational resources used or created by EBMOs, such as written or spoken correspondence, documents, reports, or other sources of content, whether in physical or digital forms, and whether created intentionally or as the by-product of another activity.

9 To learn more about EBMO opportunities to leverage data as a strategic asset, see Towards using data as a strategic asset: A study of current data management practices, challenges, and opportunities for Employer and Business Membership Organizations.

With practical tools for business intelligence and data analytics now more accessible and affordable than ever, the strategic management and use of data have become realistic solutions to support EBMOs in their planning and implementation of private sector consultation.

Many of the software solutions available to EBMOs will have their own inbuilt data collection format that can be exported for further analysis and reporting.

Data can be qualitative or quantitative: A survey about the impacts of COVID-19 can provide quantitative data, such as the **number** of businesses that are affected economically and the extent of that impact, and a focus group discussion or key informant interviews can provide qualitative data that gives details of **how** COVID-19 is experienced and solutions enterprises propose.

2.5 Timing and resource allocation

While planning is critical to a professional consultation process, appropriate resource allocation will make the difference between successful implementation and failure. Careful assessment may be required in the areas of timing, individual and organizational capacity, and budgeting.

Timing

A well-defined schedule for activities should be planned with sufficient time allocated to each stage. It will be important to monitor progress so that adjustments to the schedule can be made as and when needed. Important considerations for timing of a consultation process include the following:

- What level of commitment is expected from stakeholders? For example, will it be a single interaction such as a survey or multiples interactions such as a working group, individual interviews and/or surveys over the process?
- Will participants have the availability to participate as proposed?
- Are opportunities to participate fixed or can flexibility be negotiated as needed?
- Are there important events or occasions taking place that might compete for participants' time and attention (such as end of financial year, public holidays, other projects requiring consultation)?
- Can sufficient time be provided for participants to prepare?

Individual and organizational capacity

Whereas individual capacity refers to the skill sets and capabilities that an EBMO can draw on through its staff and external experts contracted to support a consultation process, organizational capacity refers to the internal structures and processes in place to allow the organization and its representatives to prepare for and respond to needs that arise throughout the process of consultation. Consideration of both is an important step in planning for a professional consultation process.

An EBMO should make a realistic self-assessment of human resources available and those that will be needed for a given consultation process prior to making commitments to partners or publicly announcing the consultation.[10] Where there are gaps in existing capabilities, there may be an opportunity to support staff to upskill or recruit short term assistance.

10 To learn more about human resource development for EBMO, see Human Resource Management for Employer and Business Membership Organizations (forthcoming publication from ILO ACT/EMP).

Communication skills will be particularly important to any given consultation. This includes:

- **public speaking and presentation** – confidence in presenting information to large groups and different audiences;
- **effective writing** – using plain language and clear messaging in the relevant language/s;
- **active listening** – ensuring that feedback, the fundamental purpose of consultation, is received and understood and that participants feel listened to and know their feedback is valued;
- **interpersonal and intercultural skills** – relatability in face-to-face situations, skills to make the participants feel comfortable, creating an environment for open communication in contextually and culturally appropriate ways;
- **visual rhetoric** – making complex issues understandable to general audiences through the use of words combined with graphics or other visual cues.

Other useful skills include knowledge and understanding of:

- group dynamics and facilitations;
- evaluation and providing feedback;
- documentation and minute taking;
- consensus-building, negotiation and conflict resolution;
- local context, customs and language;
- government and development partner processes and activities.

Budgeting

Consultation need not be expensive – with resourcefulness consultations can be carried out with limited funds. Well planned and budgeted consultations can deliver beneficial results for relatively low cost.

Deciding whether to compensate participants

On occasion, it may be useful to provide a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) to consultation participants to reimburse them for certain costs and cover out-of-pocket expenses associated with participating. This may be important to ensure a representative group of stakeholders is present, particularly if targeting inclusion of MSMEs.

Some organizations provide payment for participation in consultations, however this has the potential to influence participants' inputs (that is, they may respond in ways that they think or believe are in the interests of the organization paying them). For this reason it is not a best practice to pay participants, and the organization must be very transparent about it if participants are paid.

The position an EBMO takes on whether to pay for participation or not should be something to be included in the internal policy or standard operating procedures.

Expenses that may need to be considered include the following:

- advertising costs
- consultant costs
- equipment
- parking, travel costs
- postal costs, delivery
- printing costs
- refreshments
- stationery
- travel reimbursements
- venue hire

3 Recommendations for effective consultation

This section provides suggestions on ways to improve the effectiveness and professionalism of the consultation process.

3.1 Making information accessible

A professional consultation process will ensure information that is relevant and appropriate to the objective is available to those invited to participate in the process. This information should be easy to obtain, it should be provided with sufficient time for participants to review it and it should be communicated in a clear and concise manner that leaves no room for ambiguity. Any data or evidence presented should first be carefully scrutinized to ensure objectivity before it is shared as part of the consultation process.

Tip – While the form of information and method of communication will necessarily vary depending on the type of consultation, its objective/s and local context, the following best practices have been identified as effective means to ensure information is accessible:

- adjust language, terminology and approach for different audiences;
- in advance of the consultation, develop and share clear information with all participants on the objectives, what is expected of participants and how data collected will be used;
- allow sufficient time for participants to review the information shared before the consultation process begins;
- designate a clear focal point in advance of the consultation as someone that participants can approached at any time for clarification and further information.

When a group is brought together through a consultation process, each participant has some knowledge about the issue, but few have a clear understanding of the overall matter. The EBMO should strive to create a situation where, to the extent possible, each participant is operating from the same set of facts. Making appropriate information accessible to participants prior to the consultation process is one key way to ensure time is not lost getting participants up to speed while preventing incorrect information from misdirecting or disrupting the consultation.

Statements of intent

A statement of intent (referred to in Section 2.1) is an information and communication document to be provided to stakeholders/members prior to and during a consultation. It can also be referred back to during the consultation reporting phase.

A statement of intent to consult could include the following information:

- intentions and purpose of consultation (focus);
- what is, and what is not open to consultation (scope of decisions, options and issues);
- the range of stakeholders involved and their level of involvement;
- roles and responsibilities of designated decision-maker/s;
- the EBMO commitment to the outcome;
- background information providing the rationale for holding the consultation, including information on previous consultations;
- information to assist consultees understand where the consultation fits within the overall aims of the EBMO;
- consultation ground rules outlining the process;
- description of the methods proposed for consultation, and evaluating and providing feedback;
- consultation schedule or timeline;
- contact details.

A template to adapt in developing a statement of intent can be found in Section 5.2.

3.2 Good documentation to ensure procedural integrity

The professionalism of a consultation can often be judged by the quality of documentation associated with the process. From the moment the decision is made to engage in private sector consultation, all aspects of the process should be documented. While playing an important role in evaluation and reflection, good documentation is also the basis for procedural integrity by providing credibility, accountability and transparency.

Many EBMOs have lean operations and are comfortable working without much formality. In some contexts, the local culture plays an important role in dictating the manner in which consultation is pursued and conducted. Nonetheless, a well-documented consultation process remains the most appropriate means to safeguard procedural integrity. This is recognized by a growing number of multinational organizations and development partners with an interest in collaboration with EBMOs on private sector consultation. For this reason, there is additional value in EBMOs having the competency to design and deliver a well-documented consultation process.

Tip – The following best practices have been identified as effective means to ensure appropriate documentation:

- clarify partner/donor requirements for documentation before committing to any collaboration;
- provide clear information to participants regarding use of data collected and seek participant consent, where appropriate;
- where consultation processes involve large in-person workshops or meetings, ensure an independent rapporteur/note taker is present;
- wherever possible, ensure communication is in writing so that a record exists for future reference.

Documentation can be created in many different ways – meeting minutes and notes, video recordings, photos of group and consultation attendance registration forms, or taking photos of flip charts from a workshop. Surveys with automatically generated results are an efficient form of documentation. All forms of documentation are useful in compiling the consultation report. It is important to assign staff members to take this important role to ensure data are not lost during the consultation process.

3.3 Objectivity and other ethical considerations

Consultations will only be effective and useful if the information collected is a true reflection of the views and opinions of those consulted and if it is presented in an unbiased and impartial way. Consultation processes must gather responses that accurately reflect the views of the participants. To do this, it is vital that members and other participants are provided with comprehensive and unbiased information on the issue under consideration.

The following factors can benefit this process:

- provision of unbiased information – all relevant the information should be shared (namely different views, positions, opinions, potential negative and positive impacts);
- participation of an independent, neutral and professional facilitator or researcher – this may be a useful tool if the consultation process involves sensitive issues and contrasting positions or interests between employers and employees, or government and private sector;
- use of expert witnesses – related to technical areas, government policy and trade agreements;
- use of appropriate data collection methods – qualitative and/or quantitative methods of data collection can produce unbiased results, and certain methods may be better suited to enabling equitable participation in the consultation;
- understanding of cultural, gender and social norms – efforts to secure the participation of certain groups may be more successful if they are sensitive to local norms (see Section 3.4);

Nonetheless, points of disagreement will remain for many issues that are the subject of private sector consultation, and it will not be possible to achieve a full consensus. EBMOs that experience such consultation outcomes must be cautious in how conclusions/recommendations/positions are documented and framed. Given their mandate, EBMOs must make important decisions regarding how widely such points of disagreement are made public, and they may ultimately make decisions to pursue conclusions/recommendations/positions despite a lack of consensus from the private sector consultation. Where points of difference on important issues are identified, EBMO are encouraged to conduct additional consultations with the private sector, perhaps supported by robust research and data. EBMO also need to recognize that the perspective of members will evolve and as a result, the policy priorities and positions may need to be regularly revisited and revised.

Where possible and appropriate, the end result, decisions and subsequent actions of the EBMO should aim to reflect the views of participants but also align to the EBMO mandate and business agenda. In this process it is important that the EBMO ensure there are coherent and strategic reasons for its decisions and actions and that those reasons are shared with participants, especially members, in a transparent manner.

3.4 Culture, diversity and inclusion

There is value in EBMOs giving consideration to how factors such as religion, culture or gender norms might affect private sector participation in consultation processes. The cost of exclusion and the benefits of inclusion in consultation processes have been demonstrated time and again.

A more inclusive approach can add value by ensuring a broader spectrum of experience is shared through a representative sample of enterprises. The approach ensures members have equal opportunities to have a voice and effectively participate in decision-making on issues that may impact them, thereby contributing to membership satisfaction. It recognizes that certain factors may make it more difficult for some groups within the private sector to participate in consultation processes, including people in or from more remote areas, sole traders, and women- and youth-owned enterprises. It is also true that Governments in the Pacific and their development partners are increasingly demanding greater consideration for gender, diversity and inclusion in consultation.

There are different ways to consider cultural, gender and social factors, but there is no one-size-fits-all approach – context is key. Some approaches that have been used across the Pacific are included below and may be useful to consider at the planning stage as well.

Although the terms equality, diversity and inclusion are often used together, they are in fact different yet closely related concepts, and each one impacts the others. In the context of the consultation processes, they can be understood and respected in the following ways.

Equality in a consultation process ensures every participant has equal opportunity to participate. That is, all participants, regardless of their personal characteristics can participate in and contribute according to their capacity without interference of discrimination or bias. Participants have different backgrounds and circumstances, and some participants or groups experience discrimination. The impact of this is that reaching equal outcomes for these participants may not be achieved by treating all participants the same way. Reaching equal outcomes require the allocation of resources and opportunities according to circumstance and need.

Diversity in a consultation process refers to the similarities and differences between people that can impact their employment and business opportunities but also their participation in the consultation process and its outcomes. Diversity refers not only to personal characteristics, such as age, disability, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation and HIV status, but also to values, workstyles, caring responsibilities, hierarchical levels and work roles. Each participant identifies with multiple groups, and some identities change over time and may influence how each consultation process is designed or implemented and its outcomes, even if it is carried out with the same participants.

Inclusion is relational. It refers to the experience people have in a consultation process and the extent to which they feel valued for who they are, the skills and experience they bring and the extent to which they have a strong sense of belonging with other participants and the issue at hand. A person’s feeling of inclusion is related to their personal characteristics, their own behaviour and that of others and the environment they are in. Creating an inclusive consultation process requires understanding of gender and cultural norms, diverse language needs and disability inclusion, as well as an environment that treats diverse and truly representative participants equally and enables them to engage and influence the consultation process.

Gender norms

Selecting well-trained facilitators of both genders to support in-person consultation or establishing separate consultation activities for men, women and youth are ways to accommodate culturally influenced gender roles and norms of the individuals and groups in each context. This recognizes that men, women and youth may have different preferences for sharing information and will communicate more freely if the appropriate setting is created.

Cultural norms

Consider the forum in which different issues are being discussed and with whom – formal consultation processes combining large groups or diverse stakeholders may limit the information and perspectives shared by participants. The Pacific way of talanoa, tokstorian and its other incarnations across the region, and in some countries the role of kava, may facilitate more open and honest discussions or compromise and have more impact in some instances. In some cultural contexts, the participation of certain groups such as youth and women may also be limited if persons of culturally recognized higher rank or status are present. Development partners may be unaware or may fail to recognize the role of such cultural practices in drawing out forthcoming and informative feedback from participants.

Diverse language needs

Translations of information take different language needs into consideration and may include written translations, in-person interpretation, different facilitators or languages for different language groups, or audio or video recordings of written information. Most countries in the Pacific have many distinct and diverse language groups – the national or official languages should be respected.

Disability considerations

Participation in a consultation process, whether physical or virtual, may present particular obstacles to people with a disabilities. A well-designed consultation process will consider and make accommodations where needed and possible. A representative of disabled persons organization may be engaged to advise the EBMO on what support may be needed to accommodate participants with disabilities. Considerations may include venue selection, transport to and from the venue, or information accessibility support for those with hearing or vision impairments. The comfort and confidence level of people with disabilities and the mix of sensitive individuals within consultation activities may also need to be considered.

3.5 Publicizing the consultation

In the interest of transparency and to attract an active, engaged and representative group of participants, it is advisable that the EBMO publicize the purpose and intent of the consultation and the process it will follow. While many EBMOs invest in raising awareness of their consultation processes, EBMOs in the Pacific have a range of experiences when it comes to publishing the key findings and, later, the results (specifically, the actions, changes and impacts) achieved as an outcome of the consultation.

Some of the methods of publicizing the consultation and its results include:

- media releases from the EBMO social media channels and/or website;
- advertisements in local media or articles in newsletters, magazines and newspapers and broadcasts (radio, television, online streaming);
- email using the CRM software or other bulk email software to reach members and non-members in the private sector;
- partnerships with industry associations, networks and other special interest groups;
- presentations on consultation findings/results;

- physical mailouts or advertising collateral in places such as local shops, marketplaces and community notice boards;
- inclusion of the consultation in relevant agenda items during annual general meetings, general meetings or other public forums or events;
- inclusion of the consultation in EBMO annual and/or quarterly reports, which could be provided to governments.

3.6 Encouraging a sense of ownership

Professional consultation processes can contribute to membership satisfaction through a sense of shared ownership of and commitment towards decision-making and other consultation outcomes. The shared ownership of the consultation process will create a sense of involvement and commitment to the end product.

Processes for participants to direct the objectives and outcomes: "Whether we are carrying out information sessions in person with our members, or facilitating consultation sessions between members and government, as part of the introduction the facilitators make it clear that the objective is to find answers from the participants and setting the objectives of the outcomes are clarified at the beginning of the consultation. At the planning stage, for workshops in particular, we first send surveys to our members to identify what their actual needs are and develop the objectives and outcomes from there."

Source: Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI)

Building a sense of ownership while building trust with members can be achieved through:

- involving stakeholders early in the process;
- ensuring roles and responsibilities are well-defined for all concerned;
- fostering open, timely and sincere communication;
- continually providing feedback on the progress of the consultation;
- ensuring effective follow up – turning responses into action, achieving results and outcomes;
- proper reporting, accountability and responsibility;
- monitoring and evaluation – learning and improving.

3.7 Being aware of potential problems

Consultation with the private sector does not come without risks and potential problems for an EBMO, its members, non-member participamts and other partners or stakeholders. Despite the demands for and advantages of consultation, there are concerns about its effectiveness and usefulness. Being aware of these issues can help EBMOs to effectively plan for and address problems as needed.

A potential problem for members is the risk of investing time in consultation processes that deliver few or no positive impacts for their business. Other risks could include disclosing positions or information that create tensions or conflicts with other stakeholders that become detrimental to their business interests; contributions may be misinterpreted and/or used for contrary purposes; or there may be insufficient time or resources to participate in the consultation process in a meaningful way.

Consultation fatigue is an issue for members and non-members alike, and different agencies may be collecting information through duplicate processes while reaching out to the same stakeholders to participate. EBMOs may have difficulty demonstrating the benefits of participation in consultations, and they should try to identify potential participants before carrying out the consultation process. When engaging with non-members, careful consideration should be given to which individuals or groups need to be consulted for what issues and which method to use to ensure the resources and time of both the non-members and EBMOs are used efficiently and effectively.

Partners and/or other key stakeholders may leaving a consultation thinking a clear outcome or consensus was reached, only to discover later that the consultation process was flawed. They may be perceived as having manipulated the consultation process to favour a specific outcome; a consultation may provoke conflict or break down before it concludes because of issues that were not considered in the planning; or the outcome of a consultation may contradict or go against its organizer's aspirations and plans, so that moving forward would be perceived as rejecting private sector views.

EBMOs should be prepared to address potential problems. The most common problems associated with consultations are:

- difficulties in gaining representative views;
- disagreements within or between the participants and different stakeholder groups involved;
- inability to reach an outcome acceptable to all;
- incompatibility between EBMO, government preferences and member views;
- lack of trust among stakeholders;
- poor participation;
- unrealistic expectations.

Effective consultation planning can help to identify some of these issues before they arise. Having contingency plans to address or mitigate these issues through the consultation planning process will contribute to better outcomes.

Disagreement in consultation findings between stakeholders: The Fiji Commerce and **Employers Federation (FCEF)** was involved in providing data and developing a private sector mapping report supported by the UN. When the report was released, government stakeholders disagreed with certain findings, claiming the FCEF was being one-sided and not listening to the FCEFs key supporting government ministry. Strategies used to address the disagreement included further meetings with government stakeholders outside of their offices to provide different environments for the discussions, and a neutral third party, a UN officer, attended the meetings to break down barriers between the parties. The result was acceptance between the parties that the findings of the report were reflective of government and private sector, without targeting specific government agencies.

Source: Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation

3.8 Internal policies and procedures

Reliability and consistency are important attributes of an EBMO that has a reputation for being able to organize and deliver professional consultations with the private sector. To deliver on this, there is a need for EBMOs to have standard operating procedures and accompanying internal policies to govern the design and implementation of consultations and action on the outcomes. Realistically, most EBMOs in the Pacific do not have formal policies in this area. EBMOs may review this guide and reflect on the needs and experiences as a a first step in this direction.

EBMOs interested in developing internal policies in this area may need to consider:

- existing policies and procedures – should existing internal policies or procedures relating to data management and confidentiality, conflict of interest, communication, member engagement or other functions be upheld in any new internal policy on consultation?
- external policies and procedures – should the policies of partners and other external stakeholders, such as government or development partners, be taken into consideration and how will alignment be achieved where differences may exist?

There are a few examples of internal EBMO policies on private sector consultation. Those interested in citing an example from an external stakeholder may wish to view Worksafe NZ: Consultation: Principles for Written Consultations (2018).

4 Working with outcomes

Regardless of the objective of the consultation, it is best practice for EBMOs to ensure that outcomes are documented in language that can explain key points simply and quickly to the target audience while providing sufficient depth to stand up to scrutiny.

Depending on the objective and form of the consultation, EBMOs have a number of different ways to document and share key outcomes with their stakeholders.[11]

4.1 Analysing data

When analysing data collected in consultations, it is helpful to first refer back to the original purpose and objectives to connect the analysis to the original intent – to make sure the analysis goals are clear. It is also helpful to have an idea of how the end results will be interpreted and visualized when presented, which may determine how those goals are measured.

How raw data are analysed depends on the method used to collect the data. The approaches used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data are different. This section provides general advice.

11 To learn more about targeted advocacy materials used by EBMO, see The Effective Employers Guide to Advocacy.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data are the easiest data to analyse in terms of producing statistics and graphs and then interpreting the results. Questionnaire responses in an electronic format can be analysed effectively and efficiently. To do this, the responses must be entered into a suitable format, such as Qualtrics, MS Excel, Access or SNAP software.

The level of expertise in analysing and interpreting statistical data varies depending on the complexity of the research. In designing a data collection exercise, researchers must be confident that they have, or have access to, the skills required to analyse and interpret the collected data. Presenting inaccurate data to stakeholders can undermine credibility.

Tip – Avoid open-ended questions in surveys wherever possible by using multiple choice questions that allow respondents to select from a list of options. In this way qualitative data can be quantified and a number of visualization tools can be used.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data describe qualities or characteristics and are non-numerical in nature. Such data provide a more complete picture by revealing participant perspectives and context. The analysis of qualitative data is more challenging than quantitative data, particularly when dealing with large amounts of data. While tools for quantitative data can create analyse and visualizations with ease, few can do much with qualitative data, and qualitative analysis remains a labour intensive exercise.

A quick way for EBMOs to analyse qualitative data is to develop a key for grading responses, such as the example below. This allows data to be grouped and for groups to be quantified and weighed.

Example key for analysing qualitative data

Descriptor	Meaning
"Strong"	Meaning that most, or all, participants raised this point
"Moderate"	Where a material proportion of participants raised this point
"Minor"	For observations by more than one participant, but few in number, or else strongly held by an informed participant
"Mixed"	Where there are comments supporting, and taking away, from the finding

Note: Some consultations may raise new issues or may appear not to answer the original questions – suggesting that further consultation is required or that the original question was not fully defined. Sometimes these new issues or information not directly relevant to the purpose of the consultation can still be valuable information for strategic purposes or identifying new opportunities. If so, they can be documented as 'additional findings' in the consultation report, or as an internal record for future reference.

Data confidentiality and protection

Any information that an EBMO stores must be properly protected, whether it be digital data or traditional hard copies. An increasing number of jurisdictions have data protection laws that aim to prevent third parties from misusing data, including everything from financial information and payment details to contact information of staff and members. Yet, there are compelling reasons for an EBMO to ensure high standards of data confidentiality and protection aside from legal liabilities and compliance.

Individual negligence, intentional misconduct or security breaches resulting from poor data security could damage trust or confidence in the EBMO or result in negative repercussions for individual staff or members. Given that data are a strategic asset, integral to innovation and the core value proposition of any EBMO, data protection is vital to retain competitive advantage.

Note: To learn more, see A guide to data confidentiality and protection. For an example of an EBMO policy on data confidentiality and protection, contact actemp-bkk@ilo.org.

4.2 Providing feedback

Feedback to participants and other relevant stakeholders should be provided throughout the consultation process to ensure their continued involvement and willingness to participate in future consultations.

Suggestions for providing feedback during consultations include:

- being unbiased in feedback to participants;
- validating participants perspectives;
- expressing appreciation when participants share an issue, idea or experience;
- providing periodic summaries of themes discussed;
- providing summaries of who has contributed and for who has not, and providing extra opportunities to do so;
- acknowledging the contribution of both facilitators and participants.

The way feedback is provided will depend on the method of data collection, whether through an online survey or in person in a consultation workshop. For example, in a face-to-face setting many kinds of feedback are provided verbally, while feedback to survey respondents may be in writing, such as a thank you card to acknowledge participation and share details on when the information will be release and by whom. An online survey may conclude with a thank you message that provides information about how the survey will be used and when results can be expected.

EBMOs should always follow up with participants at a future point in time to report back on the outcomes of the consultation and express further appreciation for the inputs they provided. Whenever appropriate, EBMOs should provide participants a written record of inputs received during the consultation, highlighting where there was consensus and dissent.

4.3 Taking action

Best practice consultation processes ensure that a response is provided to any view or recommendation put forward by participants and stakeholders. For example, was each recommendation accepted in whole or in part, or was it rejected? What were the reasons for the decision? How will the outcomes be implemented or otherwise actioned and who will be responsible for monitoring and review?

It is not enough for an EBMO to demonstrate how to plan to implement the recommendations and decisions. EBMOs must also follow through on the planned action and ensure it is visible to the participants and wider membership. This is needed to ensure that members and other participants see the value of participation and the impact of EBMO consultations so that they continue to engage in future consultation processes.

Consultation reporting is an important part in this, along with member awareness activities and publication of the actions taken by the EBMO as a result of the consultation outcomes.

A consultation report template can be found in Section 5.5.

Note: Participants' identities and right to privacy must be respected, so published documentation of consultation outcomes should not attribute recommendations to specific participants without their consent.

4.4 Reflection and continuous improvement

Evaluation involves a two-pronged approach to assess the practical outputs of the consultation while reviewing the process. An evaluation template is provided in Section 5.4.

The focus of this section is on the evaluation of the process. Monitoring should take place throughout the consultation process to ensure procedural integrity and ethical practice. This may include asking for feedback from participants regarding the planning, process and follow-up stages of the consultation. Ongoing monitoring enables the consultation team to review and modify the process in response to stakeholder or member concerns, however, EBMOs should consider whether this is necessary and how the value of this process will be demonstrated to members.

At the conclusion of the consultation a final evaluation should be made. The final evaluation should:

- improve understanding of stakeholders' perspectives;
- provide an assessment of the costs and benefits to stakeholders;
- provide conceptual learning to improve the understanding of how different consultation methods influence decision-making;
- provide insights into the shortfalls of the consultation process – discrepancies between consultation aims and those actually achieved;
- show accountability in costs and resource utilization;
- show the extent and quality of member participation, their level of satisfaction in the process and outcomes, and how it might influence future consultations;
- show the impact of consultation on outcomes and decision-making.

The monitoring and evaluation components of a consultation process will generally be included in the consultation report. A consultation report template is provided in Section 5.5.

5 Practical resources

Introduction

The following templates are deigned to guide and assist EBMO in planning and implementation of a private sector consultation. The templates present a comprehensive approach to consultation planning, it is intended that EBMO will delete or adapt those sections that are not relevant to a given consultation. The templates are designed to address the internal documentation needs of EBMO however EBMO may find ways to adapt them as tools to meet the reporting obligations of their different development partners.

For a copy of the template in MS Word format, contact actemp-bkk@ilo.org

Instructions

The templates have been colour coded to provide guidance to EBMOs on ways to adapt to their needs. The following key can be followed:

Instruction key:	
Black	Do not delete.
Blue	Delete after reading; these are instructions
Red	Delete after reading; these are examples of how to complete the cell
Green	Replace with relevant information for the consultation being planned

5.1 Template for planning a private sector consultation

Consultation plan

[Title of consultation project]

Issue	Provide a few sentences describing the issue and the need for a consultation with the private sector. This should be brief but also have enough information to clearly show consultation is needed. Following internal review, the Ministry of Labour has tabled new legislation to increase the minimum wage, following recent research findings on the rising cost of living. The minimum wage has been set to double its current amount. The private sector has raised concerns about the impacts on business and the lack of consultation to date.
Primary objectives	The objective is the main goal or aim of the consultation. Provide a brief sentence here or bullet points if required. This section is intended to outline the objective(s) of the engagement process and answer the following three questions: 1. What is the primary issue this consultation process is intending to address? 2. What is the goal of the consultation process? 3. Why is this consultation being conducted at this time? Consultations with private sector are needed to understand the potential impacts of the proposed increases to the minimum wage on members (businesses and employers). Feedback received during the consultation will inform the Chamber on whether to develop a position paper to support, oppose or amend the proposed changes and any related advocacy activities that may be needed. As the legislation is expected to be presented to parliament next month, the consultation will take place in the next few weeks as a matter of urgency. **Tip** – The following are examples of general consultation objectives that may apply: ▶ to offer an opportunity for members to provide input into proposed minimum wage increase; ▶ to determine whether there is consensus among members on opening international boarders; ▶ to inform members of a planned change in policy and provide an opportunity for input before a final decision is made; ▶ to seek information and input on a particular issue to inform the decision-making process.
Additional objectives	Secondary objectives may be useful to include if the primary objective is related to other membership objectives or issues and provides an opportunity for collecting data or feedback, for example those that support existing strategic objectives. Data collected throughout the consultation process will assist the Chamber in better understanding related labour issues, including worker productivity and the increasing cost of doing business
Outcome	A statement of the intended outcomes of the consultation process should be made here. It can include answers to the following questions: 1. Ideally how many members, businesses or employers from what sectors will participate and how? 2. How will the results of the consultations be used and what potential decisions or actions will result from the consultation? The results of the consultations will contribute to the Chambers advocacy strategy for addressing employee productivity issues at the Tripartite Labour Committee or the results will be used to identify areas for lobbying government to address the increasing costs of doing business and increases in minimum wage.

The table below can be used identify and plan engagement with stakeholders. If CRM software or a member or stakeholder database is used, keyword searches can be used to identify stakeholders.

Stakeholder mapping and communication plan					
Stakeholder	**Influence/ interest**	**Key interest and issues**	**Mode of communication**	**Frequency/ timing**	**Comments**
Construction	*High/high*	*Employers of brick layers*	*Phone, face to face*	*Twice*	

<table>
<tr><td>Consultation timeframe</td><td colspan="3">Include here the anticipated consultation timeframe from start to finish.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Participation</td><td colspan="3">Determine whether the consultation will be open to members only, all private sector, other stakeholders, and/or open to observers.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Methods</td><td colspan="3">Identify the most appropriate method/s (survey, symposium, consultation workshop, interviews, focus group discussions, poll). The table of consultation methods in Section 5.3 can be used to select most appropriate methods for the objective and information required from the consultation process.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Consultation planning and implementation</td><td colspan="3">Assign tasks to various personnel to ensure all tasks can be monitored.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Task</td><td>Completion date</td><td>Responsible</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stakeholder communication</td><td>By 22 August 2022</td><td>Member engagement officer</td></tr>
<tr><td>Facilitation/survey implementation</td><td>By 22 June 2022</td><td>Programme officer</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Tools for data collection and analysis</td><td colspan="3">Detail here what tools you plan to use to help you collect and analyse data (such as survey/ polling apps/software, spreadsheets, Qualtrics, Google forms, mailing lists).

Think about the thematic key you will use for qualitative data.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Policies and procedures</td><td colspan="3">List any relevant policies and procedure that will be used in the consultation process. You may want to add links to any relevant policies for reference.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Human resources</td><td colspan="3">Identify the skill sets, experience and qualifications needed in your team to plan, execute and take action on the consultation and its outcomes. This should include an estimate of working hours that will be needed from each team member in respect to the tasks they will need to perform. Where gaps in human resources exist (such as skills to manage the social media campaign), the EBMO may need to outsource the role/function or recruit short-term assistance. Refer to the Consultation planning and implementation table above when identifying human resources.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Budget and resources</td><td>You can use the table below or link to a budget worksheet. Delete below if not required
<table>
<tr><th>Item</th><th>Quantity</th><th>Unit</th><th>Unit cost</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>Venue</td><td>1</td><td>Day</td><td>30,000</td><td>30,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Survey app fee</td><td>1</td><td>Year subscription</td><td>20,000</td><td>20,000</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Information dissemination</td><td>Detail how information of the consultation process is proposed to be disseminated. Will you use a statement of intent? What languages should be used?
Statement of intent
Use of translator
Will it be publicized?
▶ media releases from the EBMO Facebook page, other social media channels and/or websites;
▶ placing advertisements or articles in newsletters, magazines and newspapers;
▶ emailing invitations and e-newsletters;
▶ through industry associations, networks and other special interest groups;
▶ hosting consultation findings/results presentations;
▶ flyers in places such as local shops and community notice boards;
▶ using radio and television;
▶ sending the consultation reports directly to members;
▶ announcements at annual general meetings, general meetings or other public forums or events;
▶ inclusion in EBMO annual and or quarterly reports which could also be provided to governments.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Documentation and procedural integrity</td><td>Include information about how the consultation will be documented and by whom. Consider if the nature of the consultations would benefit from any third-party observers.
▶ attendance / participant lists;
▶ minutes during meeting;
▶ video or audio recording;
▶ ILO representative in attendance.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ethical considerations</td><td>Record any ethical considerations here and steps to rectify. Think about need for an expert witness, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Data collection and privacy</td><td>List the steps required for ensuring participant privacy during data collection – especially if data is seen as sensitive. The considerations you take should be included here as well as any references to internal policies required to be followed.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Cultural, gender and inclusion considerations</td><td colspan="2">Record here any considerations required to accommodate needs of certain participants. Think about the context and what the relevant challenges and support may be. The points below provide some ideas:
▶ disability accessible venue;
▶ neutral venue for men and women to allow equal participation;
▶ larger print font for those with eyesight challenges;
▶ use of female and male facilitators;
▶ use of community translators and facilitators;
▶ needs identified in consultation with disabled peoples organizations;
▶ extra funds factored in for people with disabilities and their carers to participate;
▶ dietary requirements or preferences when providing catering;
▶ separate groups for youth and women to ensure participation;
▶ talanoa approach or other less structured opportunities for discussion.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Potential problems and risks</td><td colspan="2">Using the table below, name any potential problems or risks to be aware of and steps that can be taken to mitigate those risks.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Risk</td><td>Mitigation measure</td></tr>
<tr><td>Short timeframe</td><td>Group interviews carried out in place of individual interviews</td></tr>
<tr><td>Politically sensitive issues</td><td>Information shared with public reviewed by CEO, government stakeholder relationships managed throughout process</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

5.2 Statement of intent template

[Title of consultation project]

Statement of intent

Introduction: This section should clearly define the issue that is prompting the consultation and engagement process. The issue statement should be conveyed in one sentence without using technical language or jargon.

EXAMPLE: The Ministry of Labour has tabled changes to increase the national minimum wage to two times the current hourly rate.

Consultation purpose/focus: This section should define the purpose of the consultation process again this should be one sentence without using technical language or jargon.

EXAMPLE: Gain an understanding of the impacts of the proposed increase will have on members (businesses and employers) in order to develop a position paper to submit to the Tripartite Labour Committee and the Minister responsible for Labour and the Minister responsible for Economic Management in response to the proposal.

Scope of consultation: This section looks at what is, and what is not open to consultation (scope of decisions, options and issues).

EXAMPLE: The consultation seeks to collect information on the impacts to members and the wider private sector and will propose a position paper either supporting, opposing or recommending adjustments to the proposed changes to the regulations.

Stakeholders/target audience: This section should define the range of stakeholders involved and their level of involvement

EXAMPLE: Employers and Businesses are to be consulted in sector groupings across all sectors.

Roles and responsibilities of designated decision-maker/s: Add any details that show the position and contacts of the EBMO and members

EXAMPLE: Members are invited to participate in a Poll, survey and or consultation workshop. [EBMO Name] will use the data to submit a position paper to the Tripartite Labour Committee and the Ministers responsible for Labour and Economic Management for review of the proposed additions to the regulation. Members may be contacted via phone, email or formal invitation. If you are a member and you are interested, please email or call the XXXXXXXXX. The Government is intending to make the final decision in regards to the proposed legislation on [date].

[EBMO Name] commitment to the outcome: Background information providing the rationale for holding the consultation, including information on previous consultations

EXAMPLE: [EBMO] undertook a secondary data analysis and review of the current labour economy, skills shortages, cost of living and cost of doing business in relation to the proposed minimum wage increase. Initial findings indicate both positive and negative impacts on for businesses, employers and employees. These initial findings need to be supported by more current data and specific cases of possible closures that will result in mass redundancies for employees. [EBMO] will lobby the government and submit a position paper if there is adequate member support to do so.

For more information regarding the secondary data analysis and initial findings please contact us on XXXXX or go to the link: https//www.samplelink.com

Information to assist consultees understand where the consultation fits within the overall aims of the EBMO

EXAMPLE: The role of [EBMO Name] is to represent member and private sector needs. We intend to represent the views of members and advocate for members interests to be considered in relation to the proposed changes to the regulations.

Consultation ground rules and process: Write any rules about the process here, and potentially add the methods.

Consultation open to: Members of EBMO, other employers and other stakeholders with interests in economic management and development

Facilitators: Assistance provided by Vanuatu Statistics Office to oversee poll and survey and as a credible witness

Methods: Poll, survey, consultation workshop

Timeline:

21 May 2020 – 21 June 2020 poll / survey opening

1 July 2020 – Consultation workshop in Port Vila with Zoom link available

Results release: Facebook, newsletter, report presentation (invited members only)

Feedback from legislative decisions: Media release, newspaper, radio, television and Facebook

5.3 Consultation methods

	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages	Potential use
User/member comments and complaints Encourage feedback from users	▶ Make feedback forms accessible	▶ Provides input from those using the services ▶ Easy to set up ▶ Provides information about service's weaknesses and strengths	▶ Not representative ▶ Essentially reactive to existing systems	▶ Awareness of member needs, EBMO gaps and areas for improvement
Staff feedback and suggestions Encourage feedback and suggestions from frontline staff who deal with members	▶ Train staff to deal with comments and complaints ▶ Establish systems for obtaining feedback	▶ Shows you value staff and are open to suggestions ▶ Valuable source of information on service use and users	▶ Relies on staff effort ▶ Time consuming ▶ Does not necessarily provide representative views	▶ Quality improvement and improving member engagement through staff capacity-building
Online and written consultation Members or the wider private sector are invited to submit written comments on specific proposals	▶ Typically uses a specific consultation web page to introduce the policy, strategy, or project and the aim of the consultation ▶ Consultation structure varies ▶ To guide comments, EBMO can provide a draft document, broad topics or open-ended questions, or implement a survey with closed questions ▶ Comments allow discussion between stakeholders ▶ Social media can be used ▶ Online consultation enables open public consultation ▶ Written feedback posted or e-mailed is also common ▶ Provide full details of issue for which views are sought ▶ Publicize event ▶ Allow ample time to respond	▶ Provides detailed information on the issue for those interested ▶ Produces a considered view ▶ Allows for sensitive data to be received ▶ Elicits a considered view ▶ Use of information technologies are cost effective after initial outlay, they have a quick response rate and can incorporate large amount of data	▶ Resource intensive ▶ May have poor response rate ▶ Lengthy process ▶ Participants may need access to computers or mobile phones ▶ May be inaccessible for the most disadvantaged as it only reaches those who are literate and have Internet access	▶ Obtaining in-depth qualitative views on an issue

	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages	Potential use
Surveys and questionnaires A random sample population is surveyed to gain specific information for statistical validation	▶ Conduct surveys by post, online, phone or face to face. Ensure statistically valid results are needed before making investment ▶ Survey/questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias ▶ Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys	▶ Elicits views from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings ▶ Elicits views from cross-section of public and not just activists ▶ Statistically tested results are more persuasive with political bodies and the general public	▶ Response rate is generally low ▶ For statistically valid results, can be labour intensive and expensive ▶ Level of detail may be limited ▶ May be perceived as a public relations tool	▶ Rapidly collecting quantitative data on who is interested and why, indicating the weight of different views
Small stakeholder meetings Small meetings with individual or small groups of members, usually at their offices	▶ Issue relevant to individual members ▶ Make sure staff are very polite and appreciative ▶ May need to be aware of other stakeholder issues	▶ Relaxed setting is conducive to effective dialogue ▶ Maximizes two-way communication	▶ Requires a lot of labour to reach many people	▶ Regular industry sector or VIP member engagement, small sampling
Focus/ representative groups 8-10 people led by facilitator in 'one-off' discussion on particular topic Can be made up of people with particular interest in the issue. Or a diverse group of individuals	▶ Selection of group is of primary importance ▶ May need to have several groups to investigate views from different perspectives ▶ Value the input and commitment of group members ▶ Requires skilled facilitator ▶ Rewards/incentives may be offered ▶ Find relevant groups, what they do and who they represent ▶ Determine best contact method	▶ Allows for brainstorming of ideas ▶ Can include those who may usually be excluded (such as culturally and linguistically diverse groups) ▶ Allows in-depth discussion ▶ Semi-structured fits in with talanoa approach ▶ Access to body of research ▶ Consultation with knowledgeable group	▶ May be costly ▶ Lacks of confidentiality ▶ Qualitative information only ▶ Difficulty in prioritizing issues ▶ Does not lend itself easily to discussing sensitive issues ▶ Opportunity for individuals to capture discussion ▶ Not necessarily statistically representative ▶ Can be time consuming ▶ Large group format may be a barrier to some	▶ Industry sector or association consultations ▶ Can accommodate inclusivity issues
Workshop A group provides feedback in a structured format	The face-to-face format allows for brainstorming and testing ideas. Preferable to a single workshop, a series produces greater output. Try different workshop types (for example, open space, write shop and participatory methods). Facilitation is important, and a skilled neutral individual can help ensure group rules are clear, views are taken seriously, and no participant dominates	▶ Costs of venue, refreshments and materials could add up	▶ Participatory methods often work well in pacific islands due to level of teamwork and interaction	▶ Strategic planning, legislative review

	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages	Potential use
Open private sector and/or wider public meetings Formal meeting with scheduled agenda and or presentations	▶ Accessible and convenient public location ▶ Publicize event ▶ Clearly define the objective ▶ Define meeting structure ▶ Provide proper staffing and facilitation ▶ Try to use informal meetings immediately before to build knowledge base	▶ Provides opportunity for EBMO to share information and obtain feedback ▶ Demonstrates commitment to public/member consultation ▶ Builds relationships with local community /members ▶ Relatively inexpensive ▶ Provides opportunity for public/member to speak without rebuttal ▶ Meets most consultation legal requirements ▶ Puts comments on record	▶ Not representative ▶ Localized knowledge only ▶ Large group format may be a barrier to some ▶ Does not foster dialogue ▶ Creates 'us versus them' feeling ▶ Minority groups not easily included	▶ Raise visibility of the organization and priorities of members as part of a membership campaign
In-depth interview / key informant interview One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information on issues and perspectives Can be face to face, by phone or virtual meeting	▶ Can be structured questions, semi-structured or open conversational and unstructured talanoa style discussion to allow interviewees to introduce other topics of interest), ▶ Can be formal or informal depending on context. ▶ Structured interviews are likely to yield information that can be compared and generalized, while less structured ones can explore an issue in depth and permit related issues to be raised. Interviews with key informants possessing particular knowledge of an issue are especially useful. ▶ Where feasible, interviews should be conducted in person, ▶ Take advantage of opportunity for members to input on how they participate ▶ Use trained researchers	▶ Provides opportunities to understand concerns and issues ▶ Provides opportunity to learn how to best communicate with members ▶ Can be used to evaluate potential member committee members	▶ Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming and expensive ▶ Interviewers must engender trust or risk negative response to format ▶ Not necessarily representative ▶ Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming and expensive ▶ Interviewers must engender trust or risk negative response to format	▶ Gather stakeholder perspectives

	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages	Potential use
Community facilitators Use qualified individuals in to conduct community/project outreach	▶ Define roles, responsibilities and limitations up front ▶ Select and train facilitators carefully	▶ Promotes community-based involvement, potentially more MSMEs ▶ Capitalizes on existing networks ▶ Enhances project credibility	▶ Can be difficult to control information flow ▶ Can build false expectations ▶ Information capture can be difficult	▶ Organizational marketing or awareness initiatives for non-members and general public outside of commercial business hubs
Advisory committees A group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input to the planning process and specific issues over a period of time	▶ Define roles and responsibilities up front ▶ Be forthcoming with information ▶ Use a consistently credible process ▶ Interview potential committee members in person before selection ▶ Small size - no more than 12 ▶ Have clear objective and time frame	▶ Provides detailed analyses for project issues ▶ Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading toward compromise ▶ Useful sounding board ▶ Relatively quick feedback ▶ Continuing dialogue ▶ Can build credibility if all sides are represented	▶ General public may not embrace committee's recommendations ▶ Members may not achieve consensus ▶ Time and labour intensive ▶ Can polarize issues if not conceived and moderated well ▶ Often excludes minority groups	▶ Industry sector or other specific issues affective relatively defined groupings
Consensus conferences/ consensus-building exercises 10-16 panel members come together to research a complex issue and then question expert witnesses before reaching a consensus decision	▶ Requires high level of commitment from panel members ▶ Requires compilation of complex material for preparatory days ▶ Make available expert witnesses as determined by panel ▶ Requires skilled and independent moderator ▶ Requires experienced mediators. ▶ Typically used to bring stakeholders together to reach consensus over an issue Round tables are one approach where adversarial groups are brought together	▶ Panel determines questions to ask witnesses leading to greater impartiality ▶ Can be open to public – transparent ▶ Provides informed deliberation ▶ Helps people reach solutions they can all support ▶ Allows for different viewpoints to be expressed	▶ High level commitment from panel ▶ Resource intensive ▶ Costly ▶ Extensive preparatory work ▶ Not representative ▶ May be difficult to reach a consensus ▶ May entail high emotional commitment	▶ Tripartite dialogue and decision-making on issues with polarizing positions

	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages	Potential use
Opinion polls and voting Measures informed opinion on an issue Uses statistically significant sample Issue put to popular vote	▶ Does not expect or encourage participants to develop a shared view ▶ Requires skilled facilitator or may require come technology expertise of online facilitation	▶ Polling of an informed group ▶ Exposure to different backgrounds, arguments and views ▶ Incites discussion ▶ All voters have equal influence ▶ Results cannot be ignored	▶ Resource intensive ▶ Can be costly to set-up and pay expenses of those attending ▶ Not statistically representative ▶ Potential for undue influence by organizations with greater resources ▶ Limited use	▶ Keeping members engaged during annual general meetings
Open days Community exhibitions, informal events to inform businesses and employers about the EBMO and its role	▶ Locate suitable venue ▶ Publicize the event ▶ Provide information displays ▶ Timing is important	▶ Gives public flexibility to attend ▶ Allows contact with public and can provide ad-hoc feedback ▶ Publicize EBMO	▶ May not be representative ▶ Feedback may be limited ▶ Difficulty in recording responses	▶ Raise visibility of the organization and priorities of members as part of a membership campaign

5.4 Evaluation template

The lessons learned table below will assist you to evaluate your performance during the consultation process. Use dot points under each heading. This can be done individually or as a consultation team, and it can be sent by email or distributed in a mini lessons-learned meeting.

Objectives			
What worked	**What could be improved**	**What can be done differently?**	**Recommendations/ suggestions**
Stakeholder Identification, mapping and participation			
What worked	**What could be improved**	**What can be done differently?**	**Recommendations/ suggestions**
Method selection, use, application and data analysis			
What worked	**What could be improved**	**What can be done differently?**	**Recommendations/ suggestions**
Inclusivity considerations (venue, disability, language, cultural norms, and so on)			
What worked	**What could be improved**	**What can be done differently?**	**Recommendations/ suggestions**
Outcomes			
What worked	**What could be improved**	**What can be done differently?**	**Recommendations/ suggestions**

5.5 Consltation report template

The purpose of a consultation report is to provide a written document that details all the particulars that went into the consultation. The report can be used in multiple ways, including providing feedback to stakeholders of the consultation, creating a position statement for legislative adjustments, providing important information to donors regarding the consultation design, recording and documenting evidence that the consultation occurred, delivering outcomes of a consultation and supporting good practice and continued improvement for the EBMO in future consultations.

The instructions and guidance information should be deleted upon completion of the consultation report as well as any additional sections that were not used.

The table of contents is linked to the headings. When completing the report, select “update page numbers only”.

Consultation report

[Title of consultation project]

[EBMO NAME]

[Date/year]

Acknowledgments

Acknowledge here the participants, donors, consultants and any other contributors to the consultation or report.

Contents

Executive summary

The executive summary gives a very short introduction to the overall report.

Introduction statement (1-2 sentences at most)	
Consultation objectives (dot points)	
Stakeholders	May include members, non-members, private sector, industry sectors, associations, government reps, development partners, female/male
Consultation team	Names
Policies and procedures	List or delete
Methods	
Analysis tools	List or delete
Budget	Total
Consultation limitations	List any limitation, such as time frames, budget, other resources
Findings	Summarize themes
Ways forward	Summarize recommendations

1. Introduction/background

Provide a paragraph of background information to what the issue is and why the consultation is needed – you may provide links to news articles or a secondary data source as well in Section 12 on links/resources used.

2. Consultation objective/s

Write the overall aim/goal of the consultation and any additional/secondary objectives, if any? Provide details here.

What will the consultation results be used for? Detail here.

3. Stakeholders

3a. Stakeholder selection

Provide details about how stakeholders were selected and invited to participate in the consultation.

3b. Stakeholder participation

Provide a list of stakeholders that participated in the consultation in the table below – a participant registration form can also be photographed as evidence for this component. Note that some donors may require information about the numbers of males, females and people with disabilities who participated in the consultation process. This also ensures that there is relative demographic representation within the consultation. It would be good to mention the number of participants invited versus the number who attended and the reason for variation.

Stakeholder type	Name	Member/non-member (number)	Industry sector	Male/female	Contact information
Total:	Total:	Total member: Total non-member:	Total:	Total male: Total female:	

4. Consultation team

Provide an overview of the consultation team, their involvement and experience with the subject topic, location or context, target groups or the facilitation of consultations.

5. Policies and procedures

5a. Policies utilized

List and or provide links to the policies complied with during the consultation process, if any.

5b. Procedures followed

Detail the procedures followed during the consultation, including whether and how a statement of intent was provided to participants (by newspaper, email, online, in person) and a link to the statement of intent, if used.

6. Methods

Provide details about the methods used throughout the consultation – here you can also list the venue, dates and times, and reasoning for these being selected, if applicable, as part of the methodology. Specify whether quantitative, qualitative, participatory methodologies, or mixed methods have been used.

7. Analysis tools

List the tools used in data collection and analysis, including any thematic analysis keys used.

8. Budget and resources

Complete the resources and budget table below and adjust according to your needs – you can include a link to a more comprehensive internal budget or spreadsheet and provide a brief summary here.

Item/resources	Amount	Unit	Total
Example: Venue	FJD100	3	FJD300
Survey monkey fee			
		Grand total	

9. Consultation limitations

This section needs to be transparent in showing what questions the consultation cannot answer and whether there are any discrepancies due to range of stakeholders consulted and methods used.

10. Findings and analysis

This section is for the findings and analysis component of the consultation. Include photos of activities conducted, graphs and charts of findings, including statistics and also quotes from qualitative findings as well as presentation of qualitative themes using a strengths-based thematic analysis key.

This component can be completed under thematic headings with the assistance of the thematic key.

11. Ways forward

This section should lay out the decision made with the data, the communication plan or happenings for data and report sharing. Also listing the outcomes of the consultation.

12. Links/resources used

Here you can provide any links to resources or references used.

13. Consultation evaluation

This section should provide an evaluation of the consultation process. You may choose to simply insert the content from the evaluation template, if used.

5.6 Private sector consultation planning resources

This section contains a letter template and a calendar template for planning consultations and/or member engagement activities.

Stakeholder consultation requirements – Letter template

The letter template can be completed and sent to external stakeholders, particularly government bodies and development partners that either have projects or regularly require input from the private sector.

It is provided as a resource to consider how your organization can engage with external stakeholders to better position your organization (as the national EBMO representing the private sector) as the primary channel for coordinating private sector consultations, and plan/coordinate the collection of information from the private sector, namely your members.

Some of the opportunities and benefits to taking this approach include:

- **Profile and capacity-building** – building recognition and capacity as the key stakeholder in relation to private sector development with capacity to support or manage government and development partners consultation requirements increases the value of your organization to both external stakeholders and members.
- **New revenue streams** – increased capacity and expertise in this area creates more opportunities for revenue streams through facilitation or management of consultations or data centres.
- **Access to data** – coordination, facilitation or management of other stakeholder consultations provides more opportunities to collect data.
- **Improves efficiency** – having greater control or access to information over consultations taking place within the private sector can lead to more efficient processes for all if it reduces duplication of data collected, creates more robust data depositories, identifies opportunities for collaboration, better monitors which members or private sector businesses are providing information, how often data are collected and on what issues.
- **Stakeholder mapping** – can be improved through increased information flow between relevant stakeholders and their issues and activities.

To:

Date:

Request for private sector consultation requirements for [year]

Dear **[name]**,

We are in the process of mapping private sector consultation requirements for **[year]**.

As the national representative body for the private sector, we regularly consult and collect data from our members and the wider private sector to ensure our services and advocacy efforts represent their interests.

We also regularly receive requests from government and development partners for support with private sector consultations. If you are in the process of planning activities that require private sector engagement or impact on private sector interests and would like to explore opportunities for collaboration, coordination or support, we are interested in discussing this further with **[organization]**.

To improve our partnership/relationship and the information shared between us and ensure that our members participation and time invested in consultations is used efficiently, we are seeking information from **[you/organization]** on any project requirements or other activities planned for **[year]** that will require information collection or consultations with members of the private sector.

Any details available relating to the following would be most appreciated:

- activity or project;
- objective of consultation;
- information to be collected (and how if available);
- dates or months intended to be carried out.

This information will be used to help us plan our own consultation requirements and provide the private sector with information on upcoming opportunities for them to participate and for their own planning around this.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

[CEO/GM – Name]

[EBMO] and [stakeholder] consultation plan calendar

This table can be used as a calendar for planning consultations and/or member engagement activities.

It is intended as a quick reference tool – an overview of consultation requirements to better plan and coordinate consultations and information collection from members or the wider private sector. It may assist your team with setting expectations and consistent practices around participation and the organization’s role.

[Year]					
Month (or dates if available)	**Activity or project details**	**Information required**	**Method proposed**	**Organization responsible**	**Targeted stakeholders**
April	PACRES – Private Sector Workshop on Accessing Climate Finance and PPP	Awareness and feedback on challenges and opportunities	Workshop	SPREP with support from Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council	Government representatives, Chambers, MSG Secretariat, GCF and SMEs (names?)

5.7 Consulting the private sector – MoU for government and donor partners

Memorandum of understanding

Between

[EBMO NAME]

and

[External stakeholder: government or development partner name]

[This instruction paragraph and any other instructions in this template **should be deleted** before the agreement is sent to the external stakeholder, such as a government body or development partner, for consideration.]

This memorandum of understanding (MoU) is entered into by the **[EBMO NAME] (acronym of EBMO, if applicable)** and the **[national?]** employer and business membership organization, a **[not for profit organization/ statutory body]** established in **[country]** and located in **[city/town]**, and the **[name of external stakeholder]** (hereinafter the partner), located in **[location]**.

[EBMO] and the partner are hereinafter referred to individually as a "party" and jointly as the "parties";

WHEREAS, **[EBMO]** serves as the representative body of the private sector in **[country]** and works with partners to further its members interest, those members being businesses and private sector employers;

WHEREAS, **[EBMO]** is interested in better coordinating both its own organizational consultation requirements and activities in relation to the private sector, and better supporting government and development partners' consultation requirements and activities in relation to the private sector;

WHEREAS, **[add description of the partner]**;

WHEREAS, the partner is interested in **[describe the common area of work with EBMO, such as project details requiring consultation with private sector (if project specific)]**;

WHEREAS, the parties wish to cooperate in areas of mutual concern, generally to support and promote private sector development and social and economic development, and more specifically in relation to **[describe areas of cooperation in general terms, such as private sector projects and consultations, or specifics of project requiring consultation with private sector]**;

[DRAFTING NOTE: The "whereas" provisions are descriptive and are meant to provide a brief background of the relationship between the parties. They should address the questions: what is the origin of the relationship; what are the common areas of interest; and what is the context within each organization where the relationship fits in?

You can use this MoU strictly for guiding consultation processes with external stakeholders or adjust the language to accommodate broader objectives.

In addition, if this MoU replaces a previous MoU between the parties, add the following: "**WHEREAS**, the parties entered into an MoU on [date] regarding [xxxxxxx] (the "[year] MoU")]

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties wish to express their intention to cooperate as follows:

Article I

Purpose and scope

1.1 The purpose of this MoU is to provide a framework for the non-exclusive cooperation and facilitate and strengthen collaboration between the parties in the areas of cooperation identified in Article II below. More specifically, it aims to strengthen both parties' commitment towards collaborative and coordinated support for private sector development activities and projects.

Article II

Areas of cooperation

2.1 The parties have identified the following private sector consultation activities in which cooperation may be pursued:

2.1.1 [description of coordinated project and/or activities, such as analysing the state of the economy and private sector growth];

2.1.2 [description of coordinated activities, such as awareness events, joint communications, consultation workshops and surveys]; and

2.1.3 [description of coordinated activities, if there are more to add].

[DRAFTING NOTE: Article II should list any specific activities outlined within the overall scope of the MoU that will serve to accomplish the objectives stated under Article I. No commitments or obligations may be made, financial or otherwise. Areas of cooperation should be expressed as aspirations.]

Article III

Cooperation and exchange of Information

3.1 The parties agree that, to achieve the objectives of this MoU, they will act in close cooperation with each other and consult each other [regularly or on a weekly/monthly basis?] with respect to matters of common interest.

3.2 The parties commit to exchanging any relevant information, documentation, data and guidelines to serve this MoU. Both parties owe a duty of confidentiality to the other when expressly stated.

3.3 The parties will, at such intervals as deemed appropriate, convene meetings to review the progress of activities being carried out under the present MoU and to plan future activities.

3.4 Both parties agree that they will keep the other party informed of progress on the implementation activities whenever this is required for effective coordination and to avoid duplication of efforts.

3.5 The parties may invite each other to send observers to meetings or conferences convened by them or under their auspices in which, in the opinion of either party, the other may have an interest.

Article IV

Entry into force, amendment and termination

4.1 This MoU enters into force upon its signature by the authorized representatives of the parties. The following may be added if relevant: **[It replaces the MoU signed by the parties on [date]]**.

4.2 This MoU may be amended by written agreement of the parties. Such amendments will enter into force immediately upon their signature by the authorized representatives of the parties.

4.3 This MoU may be terminated by the mutual consent of the parties or by either party giving the other party two (2) months written notice to this effect. This period commences from the date of receipt of the notice of termination.

4.4 Upon receipt of a notice of termination in accordance with the above paragraph, the parties will take steps to terminate any joint activities under this MoU in a prompt and orderly manner so as to minimize any losses and further commitments. Any issues arising out of the termination of this MoU, including the right to transfer any materials and products in progress will be negotiated and agreed upon in writing by the parties.

Article V

Legal provisions relating to implementation

5.1 Notwithstanding anything in this MoU to the contrary: (a) this MoU is an expression of intent and does not constitute a legally binding document; (b) nothing in this MoU is to be construed as creating a legally binding commitment, financial or otherwise; (c) nothing in this MoU is to be construed as creating a joint venture and neither party will be an agent, representative or joint partner of the other party; and (d) each party is responsible for its acts and omissions and those of its employees, contractor and subcontractors, in connection with this MoU and its implementation.

5.2 To the extent that the parties wish to create legal or financial obligations with respect to or resulting from any activity contemplated in this MoU, a separate agreement will be concluded between the parties prior to such activity taking place.

5.3 The parties will recognize and acknowledge this partnership, as appropriate. To this end, the parties will consult with each other concerning the manner and form of such recognition and acknowledgement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the duly authorized representatives of the parties affix their signatures below.

FOR [EBMO]:

____
Name

____
Title

____
Date

FOR [Name of partner]:

____
Name

____
Title

____
Date

A practical guide to private sector consultation for employer and business membership organizations in the Pacific

Consultation with the private sector, both member and non-member enterprises, is a critical foundation for the success of employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) of every size and focus. Whether consultation is conducted to inform strategic planning, policy work, development of services or organizational evaluation, there is a need for consultations with the private sector to be professional, well planned and well executed. This guide has been developed for Pacific EBMOs to share insight into best practices and lessons learned by EBMOs globally while setting out practical step-by-step approaches that can be tailored and adapted to local contexts and needs.

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