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# **DETERMINING NEEDS AND PERSPECTIVES OF BUSINESS ASSOCIATION FOR JOINING THE FEDERATION OF INVESTMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

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# **DETERMINING NEEDS AND PERSPECTIVES OF BUSINESS ASSOCIATION FOR JOINING THE FEDERATION OF INVESTMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

SUSTAINABLE ACHIEVEMENT OF BUSINESS EXPANSION AND  
QUALITY (SABEQ)

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SERVICES

6.3.5. A.2.22.1 IDENTIFIED THE ADVOCACY SERVICES NEEDS  
OF BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS THAT CAN POTENTIALLY BE MET  
BY THE JORDAN FEDERATION OF INVESTMENT ASSOCIATIONS

## **DISCLAIMER:**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Federation of Investment Associations (JOFIA) was officially established in July 2006 as a voluntary and non-profit organization dedicated to representing the affairs of existing Jordanian Investment Associations, coordinating their views and efforts and acting as a “private sector reference group”, potentially representing approximately 32 investment associations and 30,000 investors in governmental consultation meetings and committees.

JOFIA currently represents 10 Jordanian Investment Associations of sectorial nature, with a total number of over 2,000 affiliated members. Current member associations represent the following sectors: information technology, pharmaceutical industries, private education, advertisement and promotion, the private hospitals, the medical stores, agriculture, and hotels and tourism.

The main objective of this assignment is to examine the concept of an umbrella entity that represents the affairs of existing Jordanian Business Associations, coordinate their views and efforts and act as a ‘private sector reference group’ to the government.

As such, the report will aim to assess JOFIA’s current and potential Business Associations members’ perspectives and acceptance of having a one umbrella agency through which associations can collectively advocate public policy and legislations issues of cross cutting nature.

A total of ten business associations were interviewed, of which six are currently members of JOFIA as illustrated in the table below.

## Interviewed Associations & Membership Status with JOFIA

Association	Membership Status	Opinion on JOFIA
1. Int@j	Members	Not optimistic
2. Jordan Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers	Members	Concept is timely, and will be sustainable
3. Private Hospitals Association	Members	Will be of no added value; already have the needed platforms for group advocacy
4. Jordan Exporters and Producers Association for Fruits and Vegetables (JEPA)	Members	Critical advocacy platform for inactive and weak organizations
5. Jordan Hotels Association	Members	Concept welcomed because of the need for a dialog and group advocacy platform. Reservations regarding potential of current structure to meet its objectives
6. Drug Owners Association	Members	An important group advocacy platform

## Interviewed Associations & Membership Status with JOFIA

Association	Membership Status	Opinion on JOFIA
7. Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA)	Non-members	Will only succeed as a national initiative, but not as a body with a formal structure.
8. AMCHAM	Non-members	Organizations can form grouping on their own depending on issue at stake. No need for another body to undertake this task
9. Jordan Federation for Business Professional Women's Associations	Non-members	Support the concept of an umbrella entity
10. Architecture/Engineering Business Council.	Non-members	Support the concept if common issues between members are identified. Members must all be active.

The interview was conducted in a discussion mode, but discussions were steered to answer the following questions:

1. Opinions on the concept of having an umbrella entity with the role of:
  - a. Coordinating views and positions of the various business associations in advocacy issues
  - b. Providing policy-relevant information and analyses to business associations
  - c. Acting as a private sector/business associations reference group for the government
  - d. Advocating public policy and legislation issues that are of a general cross cutting nature
2. Assessment of the current advocacy activities and mechanisms followed by associations
3. Strengths and weaknesses of the advocacy process as perceived by the association
4. What is needed to enhance the process (is it within the association or at the level of grouped associations). What advocacy services would be truly valued and sustainable?
5. Opinions about the influence on the government decision making processes (e.g. role in the decision support unit)
6. Business Associations perception of JOFIA

# MAIN FINDINGS

## DISCUSSION ISSUE I: OPINIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF HAVING AN UMBRELLA ENTITY

The concept of ‘grouping’ business organizations to work jointly on the broader needs of the private sector was welcomed and supported by all interviewees. There was clear consensus on the notion that joint effort yields stronger and more effective results, particularly when advocating for issues of cross-cutting nature. Moreover, the need for this grouping arises from the fact that the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Businessmen Association are not representing the needs of the private sector in an effective manner. More importantly, many sectors, such as agriculture and tourism are not represented by either one of these chambers. Furthermore, while both chambers are important institutions, they now seem to be operating as semi-governmental institutions.

*“JHA joined JOFIA because they needed another private sector platform. The Chambers of Commerce and Industry are no longer representatives of the private sector, including adopting advocacy activities that are needed for all private sector businesses.*

*These Chambers are concerned with their related sectors. There is no specific entity that is looking into the investment climate as a whole, and advocating on behalf of private businesses operating in all sectors of the economy. All investment sectors are facing hurdles and problems. The Businessmen Association is tackling part of these issues, but it is more of a personal relationship and more of a public relations entity with other similar grouping in other countries. It is not as an institution looking into advocacy issues. The tourism sector is not represented by any entity.”*

**JHA**

*“While there are many companies/institutions in Jordan that are affiliated with the Ministry of Industry and Trade (Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and the Jordan Businessmen Association, many investors continue to face common problems that could be more effectively addressed if raised collectively. Some of the common issues include: legislative, financial, or economic issues.*

*Fragmentation will not benefit any sector; consolidating efforts and conducting proper research on any common subject/concern will have wider reach and will yield tangible benefits. Consolidation will give sector representatives more weight when approaching decision makers.”*

**DOA**

While the concept of ‘grouping’ was welcomed, there was much reservation regarding this grouping being under a **formal structure** or **entity** for the following reasons:

### **1. Financial Sustainability**

Most business organizations are facing financial difficulties since membership in the overwhelming majority is voluntary. Even the most successful and active business organizations are also battling with funding issues. Therefore, in order for these organizations to pay a membership fee to join such grouping, it would have to be justified to the members and be of high relevance to their objectives and advocacy efforts.

*“In order for any organization to join JOFIA it would have to pay a membership fee. AMCHAM has a limited budget and will not spend an extra JD on something that will not generate direct benefits to its members”*

**AMCHAM**

### **2. Executive Management Capabilities**

In order for such an entity to meet its objectives – an entity that includes in its membership base a wide-spectrum of investment sectors – management must be able to identify clear objectives, tasks, mandates, and assess what can be realistically accomplished. More importantly, this team must be highly capable and dynamic, and this in itself will require financing.

*“I see a great added value for any civil society action in Jordan and that could be done under such an umbrella entity **if** adequately staffed and structured.”*

**INTAJ**

### **3. Identifying Clear Cross-Cutting Issues – finding common grounds**

There are a number of cross cutting issues including employment, taxes, investment laws, and labor among others. While most organizations agree that the latter issues are the broad concerns for all, many pointed to the fact that organizations may have differing views over specific issues.

*“There is some overlap between the Drug Store Owners Association, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association and the PHA especially with regards to marketing Jordanian medical services. But these commonalities are limited, and in many cases, the interests differ considerably. For instance: the pharmaceutical association might wish to pass legislation that would require Jordanian hospitals to only use locally produced medicine. This in turn will not be in the PHA’s best interest.*

*Even on taxes (issues of common concern) members could have diverging interests. For example: the new income tax law stipulates reducing the taxes on the banking sector from 30% to 20% and raising taxes on the hospitals sector from 15% to 20%.”*

**PHA**

*"It is difficult to gather different sectors that have nothing in common and advocate on their behalf. It would be a waste of time for us to advocate through an umbrella that includes in its membership organizations that have different goals. Sawtuna at the YEA is doing something similar. I feel that there is duplication here."*

**A/E Business Council**

Moreover, sector organizations are focused mostly on the specific needs of their sectors and not on the general macro issues. As such, they do not have macro-level thinking, and translating the macro into the micro, or the micro into the macro is a very difficult exercise.

*"JV2020 Phase One dealt with the general; government laws and regulations, reforms, etc. The government loved it, and the private sector thought it was a nice activity, but of no relevance to them. In Phase Two, the private sector recognized this because the government responded positively to that document but the private sector did not reform itself because they were not able to translate large slogans such as "educational reform", "export competitiveness", etc to the sectoral level.*

*Phase Two was a mix of both. That is why Phase Two had sector strategies. How do you go from the specifics (important to sector) to the general? This is very difficult."*

**YEA**

#### **4. Grouping Active and Inactive Organizations Together**

In order for a grouping to be an effective lobbying force, all members must work collectively on issues of common interest. The problem in Jordan is that most organizations are weak and inactive, and such coalition would not make them more effective.

*"The reason they are weak or inactive is purely the fault of the members and management of the organization. Reform must happen bottoms up. Such entities will not be more active or more effective if they join such a federation. They will remain inactive. If the board is not giving the organization the time needed to make it active and successful – this organization that represents **them** and lobbies for **their** needs – it should be dismantled. We should not keep supporting inactive organizations."*

**AMCHAM**

A number of active organizations already form coalitions on specific issues voluntarily. They do not need a formal body to group them. The grouping brings together organizations that are advocating a specific and cross-cutting issue. This grouping changes when the issues at stake change depending on who the stakeholders are. This is found to be a far more effective lobbying mechanism than forming a federation.



*"If one organization has a cross cutting issue with another one or two organizations, they usually collaborate together on those specific issues. No need for a formal body to gather organizations that might or might not have issues in common. The former mechanism is much more effective. Active organizations know one another, and work together. They cannot afford to be part of a group that has a small number of active members, while the majority does not want to work."*

**AMCHAM**

*"We are members of the Higher Health Committee and the Jordan Medical Committee. Both these associations and many others provide members with a platform for discussion and collaboration. Moreover, members of all these associations often meet with representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and hold discussions on a broad range of common issues."*

**PHA**

In conclusion, no one is opposed to the concept of 'grouping'. However, there are many reservations regarding the viability of a formal structure that requires office space, staff, and high running expenses. There are also a number of concerns regarding the ability of such an entity to fulfill its objectives given the financial and human resources constraints.

The alternative would be for the existing federation to adopt a national initiative, and for the members to be grouped into taskforces with specific mandates. Each taskforce would include two or three organizations that would actively work on a cross cutting issue that is of direct concern to each one of them. Of course, the grouped organizations must have a unified stand on the issue at stake. As such, the staff of these organizations would work jointly on preparing a position paper, or a strategy with clear programs and activities. The current board of the federation would meet three to four times a year to discuss developments, hear from the taskforces, and monitor the progress of their work.

*"JOFIA would have value in a national initiative only because no one wants to deal with another sustainability issue. Each association is already suffering from sustainability issues and cannot deal with another. JOFIA is basically what JV2020 was all about and that is basically people coming and talking about the specifics and then extracting the generals."*

*The idea of grouping the associations is important, but it has to be voluntary. Calling it a federation means creating a structure. All you need is an initiative, a secretariat and a spokesperson. Meetings can be held four times a year to discuss, select, prioritize and advocate for matters. It has to grow into a process that people develop faith in. There has to be a well defined governance structure if it is going to be a Federation."*

**YEA**

## **DISCUSSION ISSUE II: ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT ADOVACY ACTIVITIES AND MECHANISMS FOLLOWED BY ASSOCIATIONS**

All business organizations carry out advocacy activities, but in varying degrees of effort, scope and impact. Active and well-structured organizations, such as INTAJ and JHA naturally have better strategies and mechanisms for advocacy. The weaker organizations, such as JEPA and DOA, have minimal advocacy-related activities.

Mechanisms followed by the interviewed associations include the following:

- Drafting letters and meeting relevant government officials
- Writing position papers
- Forming public-private alliances / councils
- Forming advocacy committees
- Forming lobbying coalitions with other associations
- Conducting workshops

### **JEPA**

JEPA's activities are primarily focused on technical awareness and training for their members, in addition to participating in trade shows. The latter activities are easy to organize and more importantly easy to fund. Their advocacy agenda and activities in general are very limited in scope and are weak. Main advocacy activities include: meeting with government officials, drafting letters, and organizing exhibitions.

### **INTAJ**

In 2001, the ICTAC (Information and Communications Technology Advocacy Council) was formed. The Council is comprised of the following members: Minister of MoICT, Secretary General of MoICT, representative from the Royal Court, representatives from the Chambers of Industry and Trade, Chairman and CEO of INTAJ, heads of four committees: Education and Labor, Connectivity, R&D, Regulation and Investment Climate. All advocacy activities are done through ICTAC.

Moreover, INTAJ produces a report every three months on sectoral strategies and initiatives and presents it to a committee that includes a representative from the Royal Court. The report indicates progress of all concerned entities.

### **JHA**

JHA works very closely with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities on all matters pertaining to the sector. They lobbied in the past to ensure that no other governmental entity handles any of the sector issues apart from the Ministry of Tourism. The association gave the Ministry the push to be their forefront. Therefore, issues that JHA wants to raise with other governmental entities is done in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism.

## **The A/E Business Council**

The Council conducts all advocacy activities through the Public Sector Consultation Committee. This Committee has open channels with the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Public Works, and other related ones, in addition to the Chambers of Industry and Trade. The Committee meets once a month, and has a number of subcommittees each working on a different advocacy issue. The subcommittees prepare position papers and present them to the government. If there is a need, professional help is hired to assist with position papers. This committee has been very successful. An example of this success was the formation of a joint committee between the Council and the Ministry of Public Works. They discuss issues of common concern periodically. The Council is always engaged with government and the government is very responsive.

## **JAPM**

The association was successful in passing several laws that were crucial to the growth and development of the sector such as:

- Law for conducting drug trials with human subjects
- Formulating guidelines for monitoring and controlling the quality of raw materials used in finished product.

## **DOA**

The association became active eight years ago. The internal structure was revamped, the mandates were clearly identified, and the members became familiarized with the association's operations. Bringing together a group whose members were in direct competition with one another was not an easy task. Nonetheless, the members realized the value of this group because they shared many commonalities such as: registration and pricing procedures, conforming to the laws and legislation imposed by the FDA, and collecting the outstanding funds from the Ministry of Health. The Pharmaceutical Association's Secretary General is an active member of the association and usually has valuable input on what the pharmacies require from the store owners, and on how both associations can bridge the gaps between them and enhance cooperation and communication.

In general, the main advocacy mechanisms that DOA employs are:

- Prior to approaching any decision maker/ government official, the Managerial Committee identifies the common problems. These issues are usually pinpointed in the general committee meetings, conducted every three months, and followed up by the Secretary General.
- Holding workshops on issues that are of direct concern to their daily work
- Holding regular meetings with FDA and government officials to discuss different issues. The Minister of Health had most recently requested the members of the DOA to present him with a list of the main obstacles facing the sector.

## **PHA**

The PHA currently represents 34 members, up from 17 three years ago. Although membership is restricted to private hospitals, a number of public hospitals have showed interest in joining the association.

The PHA is a member of many different associations/committees and has a wide reach. It is a member of the Higher Health Committee, the Jordan Medical Committee, the Jordan Nursing Association, and the We Are all Jordan Committee. The PHA therefore has a visible presence in a number of policy-related and high-level meetings that take place throughout the country. Through these different meetings, the PHA relays the concerns and interests of its members. One successful advocacy activity was when the PHA put forward a proposal on hospital accreditation, and both the government and USAID were very receptive. This effort resulted in the establishment of the Jordanian Health Care Accreditation Commission. Another successful advocacy effort of the PHA was to allow those insured by the government to be hospitalized in private hospitals (1<sup>st</sup> degree insurance).

## **AMCHAM**

Their main advocacy mechanism is through coalition groups that are comprised of other organizations/stakeholders. Depending on the issue at stake, AMCHAM contacts stakeholders that would join forces in preparing position papers and presenting the issues to relevant government entities. This mechanism has proven to be both efficient and effective.

### **DISCUSSION ISSUE III: CHALLENGES OF THE ADVOCACY PROCESS AS PERCEIVED BY THE ASSOCIATION**

Advocacy activities of most business associations tend to operate in a reactive mode. Also a limited number of them work actively on leveraging support from the broader business community on issues of cross-cutting nature

In general, business associations face the following challenges in their advocacy process:

- Limited financial capabilities – weak ability to generate funding from source other than membership fees (*stronger organizations are able to generate additional funding from workshops, training courses, etc.*)
- Many lack a clear vision, clear understanding of their objectives and the specific needs of their sector;
- Lack of strategic planning – most do not have an annual work plan;
- Lack of monitoring and reporting mechanisms;
- Lack of ability to study and prioritize issues at stake (*organizations with effective advocacy activities use position papers to present their case to the concern governmental entity*);
- Weak ability to assess what can be realistically accomplished based on the availability of human and financing sources;
- Weak communications and media programs;
- Absence of qualified parliamentarians to lobby through for change;
- Shortage of qualified staff, and weak executive management (*active organizations have better financial standings and can thus afford to pay higher wages to more competent personnel*);
- Building consensus amongst members over a certain issue could be cumbersome;
- Weak and interrupted commitment of members to the success of the organization and the issues at stake – limited availability of active members (*active organizations have more committed members who are willing to work for the betterment of their sector*)

### **DISCUSSION ISSUE IV: WHAT IS NEEDED TO ENHANCE THE ADVOCACY PROCESS**

Enhancing the advocacy process is needed both at the individual association level, and at the grouped level. At the individual level, organizations need to establish clear objectives and devise actionable items that are measurable and time-bound. The organization also needs a dynamic management team and a number of active members who are willing to dedicate some time away from their daily businesses.

*“Advocacy is tackled at two fronts; the micro level, which is handled by the business association, and the macro level, which could be handled by an entity such as JOFIA. Working in parallel would strengthen the advocacy process.”*

At the micro level, the association would tackle laws related directly to its sector. However, laws governing the investment climate as a whole, such as taxes and customs, would be tackled by an umbrella entity such as JOFIA. That umbrella would not look into the specifics of the work, but would cover the broader sector. Even at the grouped level, it is imperative to build a coalition of members that have a common objective, devise a time-bound strategy, and create a dynamic monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism.

## **DISCUSSION ISSUE V: OPINIONS ABOUT THE INFLUENCE ON THE GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING PROCESSES**

Organizations with a proven track record of effecting change stated that the private sector can be quite influential on government decision making for two main reasons: Firstly, the private sector is a member of a number of committees / boards / councils at both the sectoral and national levels. It is therefore heavily engaged when drafting new laws and regulations.

*“There **is** influence on government decision making.”*

**(YEA)**

Secondly, with regards to laws/regulations that are currently enforced, but need to be reformed, the private sector, led by its sector associations can effect change if the issue at hand is carefully studied and presented well to the concerned government officials/entities.

*“**Anything** that you do a study on and present a proper report and fight at the government and parliamentary level can be successful in effecting change.”*

**JHA**

Organizations with weak advocacy activities argue that they are ‘weak’ from a legal standing. As entities registered with the Ministry of Interior, they are formed by bi-laws that are not legally binding; therefore such associations do not have tangible impact on decisions and policy formulation.

## **DISCUSSION ISSUE VI: BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS PERCEPTION OF JOFIA**

The main objectives of JOFIA are to represent the affairs of existing Jordanian investment associations, coordinate their views and efforts, and act as a private-sector reference group in governmental consultation meetings and committees. Although the concept was welcomed and viewed to be timely, there was a general consensus amongst all interviewees that the current structure of JOFIA will not enable it to meet those 'ambitious' objectives and ultimately achieve sustainability.

*"The only problem I see with JOFIA is that there is no institution. It is still a one man show".*

**JHA**

*"When INTAJ joined, they made it very clear that if action or tangible results are not achieved within one year, then it will not renew its membership. We joined even though we had great reservations regarding JOFIA's ability to deliver because we did not want to be viewed as the business association that did not join or support such a concept..."*

*...INTAJ has the proper staffing, financing, support of MoICT and the ear of His Majesty, but it is still facing serious challenges. Therefore JOFIA is up against a huge hill."*

**INTAJ**

*"There is already a clutter of associations in this country, and most of them are either bankrupt or inactive. In principle, no one would be against the concept of an advocacy group that would be at a national level, but most would oppose creating another inactive coalition. Unfortunately, the organizations themselves are more active than many coalitions that also include in their membership base inactive organizations. This is a waste of time and effort for organizations that are active. Moreover, most people working for these organizations are business people and their time is very valuable. If value is not generated from such a coalition, it would not be worth the time of most."*

**AMCHAM**

Perceptions of the interviewees were grouped as follows:

On *Major Role...*

- JOFIA would be well positioned to lobby for changes in laws and regulations governing the investment climate. As an entity speaking on behalf of main economic sectors, JOFIA would be the most credible entity to do so.
- JOFIA can resolve conflicts between business associations and the labor unions
- JOFIA should not replace the Chambers of Industry and Trade, but should complement them.
- Its strength will be determined by the size of its membership base, and most importantly by its advocacy agenda and the impact it resonates.
- JOFIA can play a critical role in advocating for issues that are of cross cutting nature. Instead of each business association working on its own, their voice as a group of

associations will be stronger. It also saves time and resources. The government will take them more seriously.

#### *On Drawing Parallels with JV2020...*

Lessons learned from JV2020:

- Need one owner of the initiative for implementation
- Clear action plan for implementation
- Effective and periodic monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism

*“Follow up in Jordan is lacking and there is no emphasis on the importance of working in groups; each member/sector is driven by their own ambitions and agendas. JV2020 created a common vision and a collective sense of direction but there was no effective follow up and each member was working separately.”*

**DOA**

*“No one felt obliged to follow up. It also does not require much financing to follow up on the initiative. Each sector can follow up on their progress. They were successful in identifying cross sectoral issues, but did not have any cross sectoral achievements.”*

**A/E Business Council**

#### *On Platform for Dialog...*

JOFIA needs to evolve into an effective vehicle and not only as a forum for ‘talk’. Dialogue is useful as a first step, but it must be documented and translated into a work plan or position paper to generate beneficial results for all.

#### *On Leadership...*

JOFIA needs young and vibrant leadership in order to realize its vision. Moreover, the board of JOFIA must include representatives from governmental bodies that deal directly with investment including the CEOs of JIB and JEDCO, in addition to a representative from the tax department. It needs the concentrated effort of many entities in order for it to have teeth and add value to its members.

*“Leadership must create a successful model to lure in others to join. Leadership must achieve a success story that is visible to all, and then others would want to join in. Must start by championing a cause, achieve success, broadcast it, then others will follow.”*

**AMCHAM**

Management is key; however, if the mandate of JOFIA, its tasks and objectives remain unclear, it would be very difficult to manage effectively. Therefore, it is imperative to have capable management, but what is more important is for management to know exactly what it will achieve.

#### *On Reporting Mechanism...*



In order for JOFIA to achieve credibility and sustainability, it has to have a periodic reporting mechanism on all concerned entities.

#### *On Advocacy Channels...*

It is hoped that JOFIA would work closely with the newly elected Parliament in order to re-visit all the laws that are related to investment. Many laws and regulations are not favorable to the private sector and its growth and need to be changed.

#### *On Strategizing...*

- Devise a clear and overarching investment strategy that integrates the investment strategy of the government with the investment priorities for each sector in order to come out with a clear action plan.
- Identify common issues for advocacy
- Devise a strategic plan that is comprised of 'dissected' actionable items and assigned responsibilities in order to ensure ownership and enable monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Actionable items must be assigned at the micro level, and business associations must be held accountable.
- Work in two parallel tracks; JOFIA must have: 1) its own strategy and action plan 2) must attend to the concerns and issues of its members. A clear action plan and a strong strategy are the foundations for long term success.
- Formulate a strategy for replacing and attracting new members to ensure broad membership. If the group (membership) is large, it becomes a strong lobbying force

#### *On Working with Government...*

Approach with the government should not be confrontational because criticism from the government would undermine efforts and work against the members. Instead, members must clearly outline their concerns, action plans, and stance on certain legislation, and agree with the government on how best to go forward, positively and cooperatively. It should be a joint effort.

#### *On Members...*

- The members need to be proactive. The current membership structure is promising, it includes a number of strong associations
- There are diverging interests and limited commonalities between JOFIA's members
- Must include in its membership organizations that have the same interests
- Need to identify parallel interests among members very clearly.

- The Federation should not include in its membership differing levels of development of associations. Some associations are on the fast track and do not want to be held back by new and slow associations.

*On Addressing Specifics...*

JOFIA needs to create small focus groups in order to address the specific issues effectively. Specific issues need small groups, and wide issues require wide groups. It is not viable to have a wide group with specific issues.

Cross cutting issues, such as taxes and labor, are a concern for all. However, member organizations would have different stands on such national issues. Therefore, it is more effective to address the specifics and gather a grouping to lobby for it, than to address the general and have a large group of conflicting views.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Three critical elements will determine JOFIA's success in the near term:

## **Success Story, Leadership, and Financing...**

A success story will build credibility and ensure that members will stay on board for a longer period of time. A dynamic, determined and innovative leadership will be critical in achieving successes. The importance of financing is of course self explanatory.

JOFIA is currently managed by the Chairman, Dr. Akram Karmoul, and overlooked by 10 board members. It does not have clearly defined objectives and has no strategy in place. The Federation is also money-strapped and can barely pay the salaries of its two staff members (secretary and accountant).

JOFIA can pursue two tracks:

- 1) *Build a structure that is fully staffed* to carry out the advocacy agendas that will be devised by a broad-based coalition;
- 2) *Become a national initiative* similar to the JV2020 concept, comprised of small groups, each mandated with a specific task.

A broad-based coalition adds strength and vigor to any effort because large coalitions pool resources, skills, experience, and solutions for predicaments. Officials become instantly aware of when a number of organizations representing a wide spectrum of businesses are unified behind an issue of national concern. Government would also have an added incentive to negotiate with a broad-based coalition because it would be addressing the needs of many sectors simultaneously. **This approach, as discussed earlier is favored by government.**

Broad-based coalitions however can be challenging to build and maintain. The decision-making process is also slowed down especially if members of the coalition have differing views over an issue.

The latter track is believed to be less costly and far more effective in addressing the specific needs of a small group of organizations that are facing a similar predicament. **This method is more favored by the private sector because it deals with the specifics.**

Both tracks need to have a strong monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

Whichever track JOFIA decides to pursue, it must carry out the following in order to meet its ambitious objectives, serve its members, and achieve financial sustainability:

## 1) Develop a 3-year Action Plan

The action plan needs to address the following questions:

- Why does JOFIA exist as an organization? its **mission statement**.
- How does JOFIA do what it does? core processes.
- Where is JOFIA now? **SWOT analysis**.
- Where does it want to be? **vision statement**.
- How can it get there? **Advocacy plans**.
- What would tell JOFIA if it arrived? **Monitoring and evaluation scheme**

### SABEQ Support:

Provide technical assistance in devising a three-year action plan. This should be carried out with the active support of the Board members in order to insure ownership.

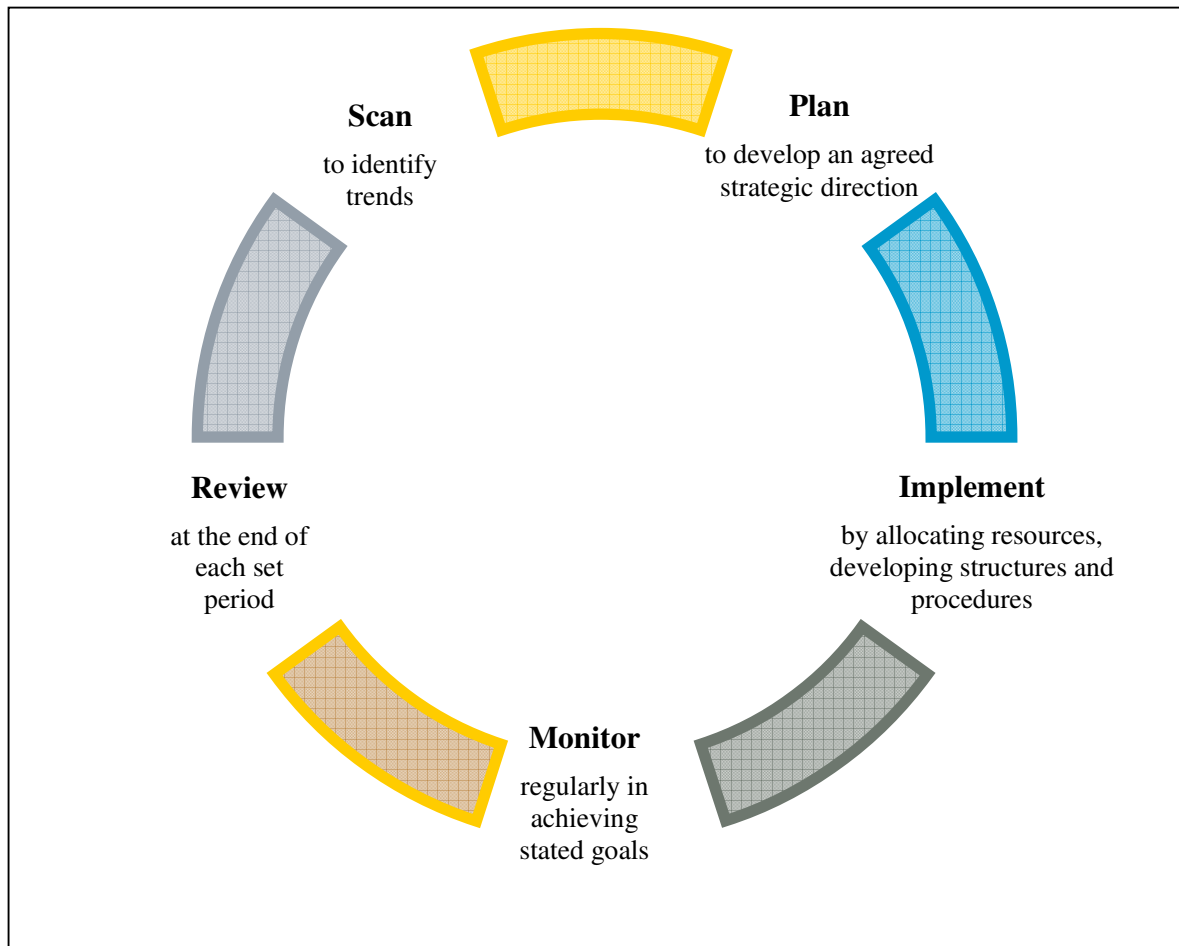
## 2) Develop a Dynamic Advocacy Strategy for each issue at stake

In order to have effective advocacy, JOFIA needs to have advocacy strategies that include a clear vision of where it is and where it wants to go, in addition to a reasonable plan of action to help get there. Key steps for advocacy strategy formulation include the following:

- Defining advocacy issues that grasp the interest of many stakeholders **(Scan)**
- Forming a coalition of stakeholders that have the same stand on the issue at stake in order to build a strategic direction **(plan)**
- Identifying objectives that are both compelling and small enough to achieve at least part of the set goals within a short period of time in order to keep people interested in the subject matter. Objectives must also be specific, measurable, attainable, result-oriented and time-bound. **(plan)**
- Identifying the key approaches that will be used in the advocacy process (involving leaders, building coalitions, using the media, etc.), and what techniques will be employed; **(Implement)**
- Developing an advocacy action plan (timelines, roles of stakeholders, resources allocated, etc.)
- Setting up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. **(monitor & review)**

In sum, a dynamic advocacy strategy begins with scanning, followed by planning, implementation, monitoring, review, and then back again to scanning, and so on.

## Dynamic Advocacy Strategy



### SABEQ Support:

- Capacity building on advocacy strategic planning.
- Identifying commonalities between current members and the potential new ones.

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