

Strategic Objectives

Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)

2007 – 2012

1. Profile

Develop & Raise the profile of the CLA at a national, regional and international level

2. Institutional Capacity

Improve and secure institutional capacity of the CLA

3. Projects

Initiate and undertake relevant projects

4. Membership

Increase individual membership to 1500 lawyers

Increase institutional membership to 150 institutions

Increase corporate membership to 100 organisations

5. Finances

Consolidate & increase financial resources available to CLA

Strategic Plan – Commonwealth Lawyers’ Association (CLA)

2007 - 2012

The Commonwealth benefits from a unique ‘family’ atmosphere and a wide range of shared values, practices and ideas and contains a multiplicity of interests. The Commonwealth Lawyers’ Association’s (CLA) work both responds to and reflects this diversity.

The strategy and activities outlined in this plan have been developed as part of an ongoing process to consolidate the CLA and secure our position as an important international association of lawyers. In utilising this plan over the next 5 years, the CLA will continue to improve the overall governance and capacity of the association, in addition to advancing good governance and the rule of law, preserving the independence of the legal profession and improving the service delivery to our members in accordance with our mandate.

Key Strategy - Profile

***To develop and raise the profile of the CLA at a national, regional and international level
To establish a ‘virtuous’ circle whereby CLA increases profile and is more widely respected and can secure additional resources to achieve and maintain this***

- *Enhance the CLA ‘brand’ and generate awareness*

Action: Improved communication with members;
Ensuring relevant publicity where the CLA is associated with an event or activity;
Improve linkages with Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth and other regional and international legal associations, institutional members, large firms and media;
Representation at local, regional and international meetings and conferences.

- *Improve communication*

The members are based throughout the Commonwealth and communication is key to ensuring that they feel that they are deriving benefits from their membership of the association.

Website -

Action: Improve interactivity of website (including podcasts; live news/web feed; discussion forum; blog; vacancies etc);
Increase traffic through website (as above and including online search engine for lawyers in different Commonwealth countries; online search engine for qualification requirements to practice in different Commonwealth jurisdictions; improved links to other website);
Monitor traffic to identify most popular pages to feedback into continued development of site;
Include Members Only section (password protected including notice board; discussion forum; Meeting papers to download; searchable directory);
Make copies of The Commonwealth Lawyer or individual articles available to purchase online;

Annual Report -

Action: Produce Annual Report on activities of CLA (including information on governance and accounts)
Disseminate Annual Report widely as part of publicity campaign (including members but also other organisations, firms etc that may be unaware of existence and activities of association).

The Commonwealth Lawyer -

Action: Maintain overall quality of content;
Increase frequency;
Increase distribution (including number of subscriptions, facilitating online sale of issues and/or individual articles).

The Clarion -

Action: Consolidate & build confidence in new format;
Encourage feedback and input from members and follow up on this;
Increase frequency;
Increase distribution.

Bulletin -

Action: Increase distribution to all members;
Encourage feedback and input from members and follow up on this.

Brochure -

Action: Redesign & Update general information brochure every 12 months in order to include more recent activities.

Other Publications -

Action: Increase number of publications to a minimum of 1 every 12 months (including the History of the CLA; Conference reports; Updated Guide to Common Law Qualification; Directory of law firms across the Commonwealth).

- *Organise regular events including new events and improving existing events*
These events are usually the only opportunity that members have to interact and participate directly in the activities of the CLA, in addition to meeting like-minded members from different jurisdictions, exchange information, build networks and make friends. CLA needs to operate on a pan – Commonwealth basis and develop an events and outreach programme.

Commonwealth Law Conference (CLC) -

Action: Continue to develop and enhance the reputation and quality of the conference;
Ensure continued participation of delegates from developing Commonwealth countries;
Improve financing of conference to ensure profitable and contribute to overall financial resources of CLA (including establishment of separate conference fund to underwrite conference related expenditure);
Improve overall organisation of conference (including appointment of long-term conference organiser to simplify, develop and increase effectiveness of organisation of marketing, sponsorship and programme for the conference);
Publication and dissemination of conference report;
Organisation of mini – CLC in ‘non-conference’ year in different regions of Commonwealth (priority for the location of these conferences being given to smaller jurisdictions that might not otherwise have the capacity and/or opportunity to host the CLC).

25th Anniversary Conference -

Action: Organise small 2-day conference to mark 25th Anniversary of the CLA in 2008.

Other Events:

- Action: Organise one other event within different region per year org in co-operation with local Council member(s);
Organise quarterly seminar series in London (including partnership with firms and other legal associations).
- *Linkages -*
Action: Improve existing linkages with various divisions of Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Legal Education Association, Commonwealth Magistrates & Judges Association, Commonwealth Association of Public Sector Lawyers, Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel, Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, British Institute of International & Comparative Law, East Africa Law Society, SADC Lawyers Association, LAWASIA, Interights and the International Bar Association, amongst others;
Establish new contacts/networks with print and electronic media (including development of database to do automatic mail out of press releases, publicity on recent activities etc);
Establish new contacts/networks with institutional members;
Establish new contacts/networks with bilateral and specialist law societies and bar associations;
Facilitate representation at regional and international meetings and conferences.
 - *Memorabilia -*
Action: Produce new memorabilia for sale to members *et al*;
Facilitate sale of memorabilia online via website.

<i>Key Strategy – Institutional Capacity</i>

To improve and secure the institutional capacity of the CLA

To establish a ‘virtuous’ circle whereby CLA increases profile and is more widely respected and can secure additional resources to achieve and maintain this

- *Governance -*
Action: Continue to ensure representative and diverse membership of Executive Committee and Council;
Continue regular monthly meetings of Executive Committee;
Continue annual meeting of Council and quarterly teleconference meetings;
Continue reference to Public Policy and adapt if/where necessary;
Ensure adequate succession planning for the secretariat, office holders, Executive Committee and Council;
Develop responsibility of members of Executive Committee and Council for particular aspects of CLA operations and activities;
Ensure that Executive Committee and Council are active, provide information on local and regional issues and events and provide input and guidance on issues of strategic importance;
Review and rationalise Constitution;
Review by Council on progress on Strategic Plan on an annual basis and revise Plan where necessary to ensure remains ‘evergreen’ and relevant;
Produce Annual Report on activities of CLA (including information on governance and accounts);
Resolve legal status of association through incorporation.
- *Staff -*

Action: Continue to improve working relationship between secretariat, Executive Committee and Council (including increased and regular communication);
Continue regular staff appraisal (including regular feedback from Executive Committee and Council);
Increase number of staff (including full or part-time membership officer, project officer and administrator);
Offer competitive package (including provision of professional development and training opportunities for staff eg website & accounting packages).

- *Premises-*

Action: Identify and secure most cost-effective office accommodation and facilities for secretariat (including preparation for increased staffing levels, new computer equipment etc);
Research and preparation of background paper on future expansion (including feasibility study on relocation of secretariat, establishment of regional offices [ie Africa], establishment of branches [ie youth] and related governance structures, responsibilities, costs etc).

Key Strategy – Projects

To initiate and undertake relevant projects

Action: Operate on a Commonwealth wide basis;
Develop overall projects programme;
Identify 3 key areas in accordance with mandate, institutional capacity and strategic partnerships;
Capitalise on comparative advantage and undertake investigative missions relating to threats to the independence of the profession and rule of law; make interventions and submissions in cases of strategic importance; and submit reports and reviews on legal issues of significance across the Commonwealth
Research appropriate funders/donor agencies and develop long-term relationship;
Of 3 target areas identify those suitable for one short, medium and long-term project and draft and submit appropriate funding applications (including input from Executive Committee and Council members and experts where appropriate/feasible);
Ensure funding application includes adequate funds for project administration;
Involve members in identification and execution of projects;
Create database members expertise/willingness act as consultants when asked to intervene, provide consultants etc.

Key Strategy – Membership

To increase individual membership to 1500 lawyers

To increase institutional membership to 150 institutions

To increase corporate membership to 100 organisations

To best serve the interests of members

- *All members -*

Action: Review substantive changes made in 2005 and evaluate (including consideration whether or not to introduce new categories ie developing country, student, non-practicing, retired, academic, 5 years, 10 years and life membership; also whether or not to increase membership fee);

Continue to improve communication with members (including circulation of Bulletin to all members);
 Encourage feedback from members and follow up on this;
 Survey members (including questions as to perceived and actual benefits of membership; potential project areas; improvements to be made; competition etc);
 Research and analyse reasons for non-take up of membership
 Increase benefits (including one event within region per year; online search engine for lawyers in different Commonwealth countries; online search engine for qualification requirements to practice in different Commonwealth jurisdictions; Establishment particular interest committees ie Human Rights; Commercial Law);
 Members Only section on website (password protected including notice board; discussion forum; Meeting papers to download; searchable directory);
 Ensure appropriate database capacity to manage 2000 members, including email shots & invoicing);
 Issue membership cards;
 Recruitment of part/full time membership officer to manage database, applications and renewals, in addition to developing long-term/working relationship with members;

- *Individual members -*

Action: Develop and initiate targeted campaign to increase number of young lawyers.

- *Institutional members -*

Action: Review and improve benefits existing members (including increased profile within CLA);
 Improve communication and develop long-term relationship (including identifying new members and providing discounted membership to their members; certificate of appreciation; regular issues of Bulletin etc)
 Undertake comprehensive review of general contact details and identification of specific individual within association as point person for CLA;
 Initiate targeted institutional membership campaign;
 Encourage greater participation and representation within activities of the CLA (including submission of news/articles for inclusion in publications and on website);
 Facilitate communication between institutional members in different regions.

- *Corporate members -*

Action: Review and improve benefits (including increased profile within CLA);
 Develop and initiate targeted corporate membership campaign.
 Encourage greater participation and representation within activities of the CLA (including pro bono support in submission of briefs, opinions and interventions; undertaking specific legal cases; sponsorship of meetings and events etc);

<p><i>Key Strategy – Finances</i></p>
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To consolidate and increase financial resources available to the CLA

- *Income* –
Action: Increase income into association (including increasing membership; ensuring CLC profit-making; sale of publications; sale of memorabilia; increasing advertising revenue in journal and on website).
- *Budget* -
Action: Continue to budget accurately on an annual basis (including provision for medium to long-term expenditure eg upgrading/additional computer equipment; future premises etc).
- *Accounts* -
Action: Continue to produce annual accounts in timely manner;
Publication of accounts in Annual Report.
- *Resolve legal status of association through incorporation.*
- *Establish separate capital fund and retain minimum capital assets on balance sheet.*
- *Projects* -
Action: Set aside specific fund for projects to provide start up funding and enable CLA to undertake projects of its choosing without tailoring to the needs of donors and enable CLA to go where donors ‘fear to tread’.
- *Journal* –
Action: Secure additional advertising/sponsorship to offset costs and make self sufficient

Secretary General
August 2007