Government Relations and Public Affairs in the GCC Training Course

21 - 25 Dec 2026

Lisbon

4500 € (Per Person)

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Course Introduction / Overview:

Navigating the intricate landscape of government relations and public affairs within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) requires a specialized skill set that goes beyond conventional corporate communication. This course is meticulously designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the unique political, economic, and social dynamics that shape policy and regulation in the region. Participants will delve into the core principles of effective stakeholder engagement, policy advocacy, and corporate diplomacy, tailored specifically to the GCC context. The curriculum explores the complex interplay between business objectives and national development agendas, such as Saudi Vision 2030 and UAE Centennial 2071. Drawing on insights from leading thinkers in the field, such as Dr. Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, whose work in "The Gulf States in International Political Economy" provides a foundational understanding of the region's economic statecraft, this program equips professionals with the strategic foresight needed to build and maintain constructive relationships with government bodies. BIG BEN Training Center has developed this course to transform participants into strategic advisors capable of aligning organizational goals with public interest, managing regulatory risks, and capitalizing on opportunities within the dynamic GCC market. It is an essential program for any professional seeking to master the art and science of public affairs in one of the world's most pivotal economic regions.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Government Relations Managers and Directors.
- Public Affairs and Policy Specialists.
- Corporate Communications and Public Relations Professionals.
- Legal Counsels and Compliance Officers.
- Business Development and Strategy Executives.
- Senior Managers and C-Suite Leaders.
- International Affairs and Trade Consultants.
- Risk Management Professionals.
- Entrepreneurs and Investors operating in the GCC.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Energy, Oil, and Gas.
- Banking, Finance, and Investment.
- Telecommunications and Information Technology.
- Construction, Infrastructure, and Real Estate.
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals.
- Aviation, Transportation, and Logistics.
- Defense and Security.
- Hospitality and Tourism.
- Governmental and quasi-governmental agencies.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Government and Public Affairs.
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance.
- Corporate Communications and Public Relations.
- Strategy and Business Development.
- Executive Leadership and the CEO's Office.
- Risk Management.
- International Relations.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Develop a robust government relations strategy tailored to the GCC political environment.
- Analyze complex policy issues and their potential impact on business operations.
- Master stakeholder mapping to identify and engage key government and non-government actors.
- Craft compelling advocacy messages that resonate with GCC policymakers.
- Navigate the legislative and regulatory processes across different GCC states.
- Implement effective crisis communication plans for politically sensitive issues.
- Align corporate objectives with the national development visions of GCC countries.
- Build and manage strategic coalitions to advance policy goals.
- Measure the return on investment (ROI) of public affairs activities.
- Uphold the highest ethical standards in government lobbying and engagement.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be immersive, interactive, and directly applicable to the professional challenges faced by participants. This course moves beyond traditional lecture-based learning by integrating a dynamic blend of practical exercises, real-world case studies, and collaborative problem-solving. We will analyze specific government relations campaigns and regulatory challenges from within the GCC, allowing participants to deconstruct successful strategies and learn from complex scenarios. Interactive sessions, including role-playing exercises simulating stakeholder negotiations and policy briefings, will build practical skills and confidence. Group discussions and workshops will encourage peer-to-peer learning, enabling participants to share diverse experiences and perspectives from various industries. The facilitator will provide continuous feedback and guide participants in developing a personalized action plan to apply their new skills immediately upon returning to their organizations. This hands-on, participant-centered approach ensures a deep and lasting understanding of strategic public affairs, transforming theoretical knowledge into tangible professional capabilities. The focus is on equipping attendees with the tools and strategic mindset to excel in the unique context of the GCC.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of Government Relations in the GCC

- Introduction to the political and economic structures of GCC states.
- The role of public affairs in corporate strategy.
- Understanding the key governmental and legislative bodies in the region.
- Cultural nuances and protocols in GCC government engagement.
- Legal and ethical frameworks for lobbying and advocacy.
- Comparative analysis of the political systems within the GCC.
- The impact of tribal, royal, and family structures on policymaking.

Unit Two: Strategic Public Affairs Planning

- Conducting a political and regulatory landscape analysis.
- Advanced stakeholder mapping and power-interest grid analysis.
- Setting clear objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) for government relations.
- Integrating public affairs with business development and corporate strategy.
- Developing a comprehensive issue management framework.
- Budgeting and resource allocation for public affairs campaigns.
- Aligning corporate goals with GCC National Visions (e.g., Vision 2030, 2035, 2040).

Unit Three: Tactics for Effective Engagement and Advocacy

- Crafting persuasive policy positions and white papers.
- Techniques for effective direct lobbying and meetings with officials.
- Building and managing strategic alliances and coalitions.
- The role of third-party advocates and industry associations.
- Grassroots advocacy and public mobilization strategies.
- Communicating complex data and research to policymakers.
- Protocol and etiquette for formal and informal government interactions.

Unit Four: Managing Media, Reputation, and Crises

- Integrating media relations with your government affairs strategy.
- Managing corporate reputation in a sensitive political environment.
- Developing a public affairs crisis communication plan.
- Engaging with traditional and digital media on policy issues.
- Monitoring legislative and regulatory developments effectively.
- Leveraging digital platforms for advocacy and stakeholder engagement.
- Responding to government inquiries and regulatory audits.

Unit Five: Advanced Public Affairs and Future Trends

- Corporate diplomacy and representing organizational interests abroad.
- The strategic role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the GCC.
- Measuring the impact and ROI of government relations.
- The rise of digital government and its impact on advocacy.
- Anticipating future policy trends and geopolitical shifts in the region.
- Developing a personal leadership style for public affairs excellence.
- Final project presentation: a government relations plan for a case study scenario.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How can organizations ethically balance their commercial interests with the long-term socio-economic development goals outlined in the GCC's national visions when formulating their public affairs strategies?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by moving beyond generic, Western-centric models of public affairs to offer a deeply contextualized curriculum specifically for the GCC region. While other programs may teach the universal principles of lobbying and stakeholder relations, this training provides granular insights into the unique socio-political nuances, cultural protocols, and intricate power structures that define policymaking in the Gulf. The content is built around real-world case studies drawn directly from the region's key industries, such as energy, finance, and technology, ensuring the lessons are relevant and immediately applicable. We emphasize the critical importance of aligning corporate strategies with the ambitious national visions that are reshaping the GCC's economic landscape. Participants will not just learn what to do, but why it works within this specific context, developing the strategic foresight needed to navigate both formal government channels and informal networks of influence. The program focuses on building contextual intelligence, enabling professionals to operate with sophistication and cultural fluency, a critical differentiator for success in government relations within the Gulf. It is an advanced learning experience designed for practitioners who need to deliver tangible results in a complex and dynamic environment.