

Advocacy Strategy/Campaign Strategy

At some point in your advocacy or campaign planning, you will need to write down your plans into a strategy document. This could be an organisational strategy for advocacy or campaigning, or the strategy for a single advocacy project or campaign.

This document will have many audiences and purposes:

- To solidify the plans, relating the activities to the aims
- To gain approval and the release of resources
- To communicate plans to other stakeholders and win their participation
- To be your road map for what to do and when to do it
- To be a reference point for future evaluation

To be effective in fulfilling all these functions, the strategy document needs to be clear, concise and easy to read. The following format is ideal¹:

1. Aim
2. Primary Objectives
3. Strategies (Audiences, Secondary Objectives)
4. Proposition (Key Message)
5. Actions & Timeline
6. Resources
7. Risks & Assumptions
8. Monitoring & Evaluation Process

The starting point is the **Aim** – in other words, why you are doing this advocacy and what it hopes to achieve. It is usually expressed in the form of how your beneficiaries will be affected if the advocacy is successful.

From the aim, there will be identified one or more **Primary Objectives**. These set out the specific changes you are trying to achieve that will have a direct impact on your aim. Primary Objectives in advocacy are usually policy and practice changes of particular institutions (such as governments or government departments, companies, civil society bodies, etc). Sometimes the Primary Objectives may be attitude and behaviour changes of particular individuals or groups of individuals. In all cases, Primary Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

For each Primary Objective, you will develop one or more **Strategies** for achieving that objective. Each Strategy specifies a target audience (an individual or group of similar individuals) whom you plan to engage in order to influence the achievement of your primary objectives. The Strategy should

¹ Some organisations will have their own preferred standard format for all plans so that they can be compared easily. They will be fine to use as long as they provide the same information as that in the suggested format given here. Log Frames can also be used although they will probably need an additional section to explain the strategies and the proposition.

also set SMART objectives (knowledge, skills, attitude & behaviour change) for your engagement with that target audience. These are sometimes called **Secondary Objectives**.

Linking the Strategies together, ensuring coherence and synergy, is your key message or **Proposition**.

For each Strategy, you will devise a number of **Actions** that you will take in order to engage with the target audience. Each Action is designed to produce a specific **Outcome** from that target audience, and that Outcome should be expressed as an **Activity Objective** or as a **Success Indicator**. The Actions can also be set out in the form of a **Timeline**.

Ideally, the **Resources** needed for each Activity should be specified and then added up to provide a figure for the total Resources required (mainly money and time, but also facilities and equipment). Often, however, you will only have a total budget figure allocated with no breakdown per activity.

In creating this strategy you need to have made a number of **Assumptions**. By spelling out these assumptions, their validity can be tested either before giving approval to the strategy or as the strategy is being implemented.

In addition, you need to identify the **Risks** that are involved in implementing this strategy. These could include safety and security risks to your beneficiaries or staff, as well as risks affecting the reputation of your organisation, its funding and its ability to operate in a particular location. If necessary, you need to set out a **Risk Management Plan**.

Finally, you need to set out your **Monitoring & Evaluation Process**. This should set out the monitoring indicators for each of the aim, primary objectives, secondary objectives and actions (often these will be in the form of SMART objectives), how you will be collecting and recording data against these indicators (including base-line data where appropriate), and how you will be evaluating your progress in the light of this monitoring data.

The full strategy might run to several pages, but should be kept to less than eight or ten. It can also be summarised and communicated using a **Strategy Map** and a **Strategy Summary Table** as shown below.

You may also want to give some supporting and background information, such as your research, the political context for the advocacy campaign, a summary of previous related work, a description of the consultation process you have used, and an explanation of your analysis. This can be included as appendices to your strategy paper, or written as a separate document with a short summary included as an introduction to your main strategy paper. It is important that this supporting information does not obscure the main points of your strategy – what you want to achieve and how you are going to do it.