# How to design a policy influence plan?

## Toolkit Nº4

## What we desire.
## Define influence objectives

*This toolkit is part of a series addressing the various components of a public policy influence plan.*

In this toolkit attention will be focused on the definition of the policy influence objectives.

After having performed a diagnostic to learn how the organization is positioned in order to create a policy influence plan (for example, by means of a SWOT[1] analysis), after having decided how to attach the organization´s proposal to one or to a set of public problems (for example, by the Problem Tree Analysis) and after building consensus about the opportunities and challenges[2], the organization will be able to move towards the second stage of the plan which consists in defining **the influence objective/s. This means that the members discuss and make concrete decisions about** what will be influenced specifically.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Diagnostic |
| 2 | Objectives |
| 3 | Actors and alliances |
| 4 | Proposal |
| 5 | Strategies and actions |
| 6 | Communication plan |
| 7 | Resources and timeline |
| 8 | Monitoring |
| 9 | Evaluation |

For this reason, the existence of different **types of objectives** should be taken into account.

**Policy influence Main Objectives**. It refers to the specific change that an organization wants to make or install in the public environment. It should be measurable, and further explain what

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1   Organizational analysis methodology based on the detection of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats in an organization.
2   For further information about Diagnostic, please refer to **Toolkit Nº 3: Where we are, and how far we can move forward. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges**. Available at: www.vippal.cippec.org

is going to be accomplished, where, when and with whom (Save the Children 2007).

> Example: In 2012, 50% of the children under 5 living in rural areas of the country will have access to a high quality health care service.

**Policy influence Secondary Objectives.** They are the results the organization wants to achieve although not as a priority. They accompany the main objective/s either as a desired or unexpected consequence. They may be internal as well as external objectives (McKinley and Baltazar, 2005).

Along the lines of the previous example, some secondary objectives may be:

> - Generate public debate about children´s access to quality health care systems in rural areas.
> - Raise awareness in officers that work in municipalities in rural areas about the importance of assuring children´s access to health care systems.
> - Generate alliances with other organizations working at a local as well as national level in the defense of children´s right.

## What kind of influence do we want to have?[3]

To help defining the **main objective**, it is useful to consider the following most frequent modalities of influence:

- Install a topic on the political agenda

> Install the need and importance of residue recycling on municipal agendas

- Increase the use of research and evidence in decision – making processes.

> To attain the measurement of the educational jurisdictional budgetary effort as criteria for the allocation of new resources.

- Enrich the analysis and debates about specific policies

> Draft and submit in legislative committees policy documents with recommendations about how to incorporate the genre perspective in a new labor Act.

- Increase participation of Civil Society and Citizenship Organizations in policy processes

> Implement the participative budget in a location.

- Promote a new policy

> Encourage the passing of a new act for public information access at a national level

- Include options and proposals in the drafting of a policy

> Incorporate a transparent mechanism for the appointment of the members of a public service regulation body

- Promote amendments in existing policies

> Modify the Judiciary Council to assure balance among public, academic and judicial powers, and improve the election and removal of judges, cases and sentences.

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3 Some of the examples belong to initiatives carried out by CIPPEC.

- Help in the implementation of policies

> **Build capacities in public officers of the Ministry of Environment to oversee the enforcement of a new waste act.**

- Monitor policies

> **Measure the degree of compliance with the Educational Financing Act.**

- Assess policies

> **Analyze the effects of the implementation of a regime of family allowances per child.**

The different types of objectives mentioned and their examples will contribute to defining the main objective. Likewise, they will invite the organization to think about the different strategies that will be carried out to achieve the objective, since they will depend on the objective nature (in effect, the actions that should be implemented to install a topic on the public agenda, such as an alliance with communication media, will be different from those carried out seeking to assess a public policy, such as an alliance with a prestigious university)[4].

The definition of the main objective will also depend on the problem and its aspects that have been previously identified and selected by means of the Problem Tree Analysis.

As aforementioned, there are also secondary objectives that may be internal as well as external (that is to say, with effects inside or outside the organization). They are independent from the success or failure of the main objective; they can be simultaneously met with it or during a second stage. Some of them are:

4   The various strategies and actions that an organization can carry forward to influence public policies will be addressed in **Toolkit Nº 7: How to carry out the proposal. Define strategies and actions**.

- Establishing new partnerships with relevant stakeholders, such as media
- Gaining experience in interacting with the state and international agencies
- Enriching the body of knowledge on how to operate a specific policy area or policy agent
- Increasing recognition of the value of the organization by policy makers
- Increasing the participation of traditionally excluded groups in the policy-making process (women, indigenous people, poor peasants, youth, etc.).
- Engaging new groups of citizens in policy debates.

## On what aspects will the change effort be focused?

Another valuable way of setting objectives is by taking into account the various types of potential impact. To this purpose, the following classification of the types of changes developed by ODI (Overseas Development Institute) is useful.

**Attitudinal changes.** They refer to changes in the way the political stakeholders think about a determined issue. For example, to ensure that social policy makers move from thinking in welfare models to think in a social protection model.

**Discursive change.** They refer to changes in the speeches or stories of political stakeholders. They reflect a new or improved understanding of a subject, even if it does not involve an actual change of the policy or practice. For example, ensuring that social policy decision makers discuss about conditioned transfer programs to mention the social plans.

**Procedural changes.** They refer to changes in the way in which certain process are carried out. For example, the incorporation of queries to other stakeholders including CSOs, in processes that have traditionally been more

"closed", such as the incorporation of public audiences for certain policy issues.

**Content or policy change.** They refer to changes in policy content, including strategy documents, laws and budgets. These are formal changes in the framework of a certain policy. For example, getting the education budget rise from 5% to 8% of the GDP.

**Behavioural and institutional change.** They refer to more lasting changes in the way political stakeholders behave as a result of formal and informal changes in speech, process and content. For example, incorporation into the Charter of a municipality of a Target Plan designed in conjunction with local CSOs for setting the priorities of new managements and, simultaneously, being a reference for CSOs to monitor the work.
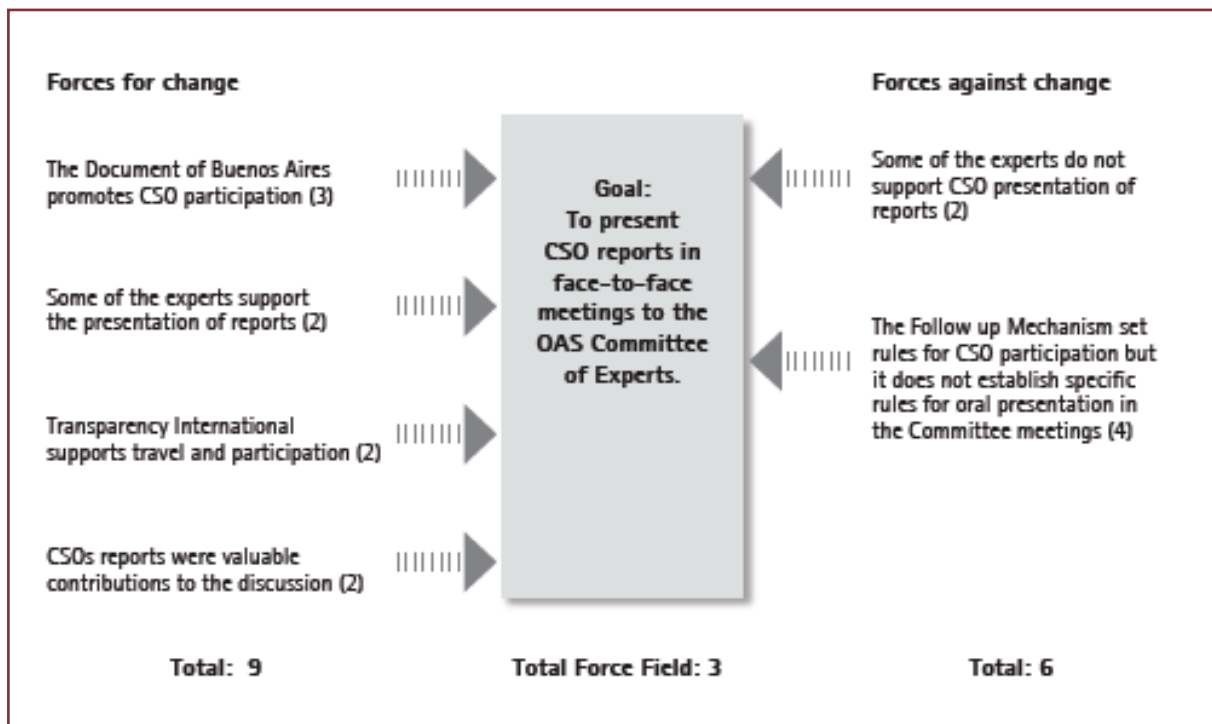
## Useful Tool

Once the organization reaches an agreement and defines the main objectives of political influence, it should evaluate the degree of feasibility of the proposed change. Following, we present a very useful tool for the setting of a reasonable and feasible objective of influence, a key point for the formulation of a fruitful plan (*Weaving Global Networks*, 2006).

| Force Field Analysis | |
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| The force-field analysis is a tool that allows the organization to **analyze whether the objective of policy influence set is viable.**<br><br>• It consists in evaluating the distance between the initial objectives and what can actually be achieved in the short run, according to the available internal resources to work in that content of forces. | |
| **Advantages** | • It allows making strategic decisions about how to make the most of the forces and mitigate forces against the proposed change.<br>• It may help the organization to reformulate the objectives (for example, to concentrate firstly on a discursive change) and therefore assure the adequate investment of resources.<br>• It is a good method to acquire a broad vision of the different forces acting in a possible policy issue, and to evaluate the own sources of power and strengths (Start and Hovland, 2004). |
| **To take into account** | The force-field analysis is a natural continuation of the Problem Tree analysis (addressed in Toolkit Nº 3 )[5], which allows to link one proposal to a problem to solve, identify its causes and consequences, and decide where the efforts will focus on. Resuming the analysis by means of the force field analysis will contribute to weighing the viability of the change that is to be achieved.<br><br>When talking about forces (in favor or against), this refers to the stakeholders (national and international), existing policies and legislations, cultural factors, etc, that may affect the objective that the organization proposes.<br><br>While forces change, this exercise should be repeated (more than once throughout the influence process on policies) to ensure that the necessary measures are taken timely and that opportunity windows may be effectively leveraged (Weaving global networks, 2006).<br><br>One of the purposes is to find ways to mitigate or reduce restrictive forces and capitalize steering ones. In effect, the analysis that is carried out should be a key input to choose the most appropriate strategies. For example, if it is determined, throughout the force field, that the little knowledge of citizenship or media about the issue on which the organization intends to influence acts as the force against the change that the latter needs to achieve, the organization may devote to an "education and awareness" strategy with the aim of generating and / or increasing awareness about that topic and therefore gain supporters for the proposal. |

| How is it implemented? | The first step is to agree upon what change area will be discussed. It can be described as a desired policy objective. Then, a list of all the forces in favor of the change is written on the left, while the forces working against the change are going to be listed in a column on the right. The steering and restrictive forces should be assessed and ordered according to their "magnitude", with a classification ranging from "one" (weak) and "five" (strong). In the end, the balance is likely to be imbalanced (Start and Hovland, in Weaving social networks, 2006), which is necessary to reformulate the objective. |
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## Example: CSOs and their reports before the Inter-American Commission against Corruption[6]



**Forces for change**

The Document of Buenos Aires promotes CSO participation (3)

Some of the experts support the presentation of reports (2)

Transparency International supports travel and participation (2)

CSOs reports were valuable contributions to the discussion (2)

**Goal: To present CSO reports in face–to–face meetings to the OAS Committee of Experts.**

**Forces against change**

Some of the experts do not support CSO presentation of reports (2)

The Follow up Mechanism set rules for CSO participation but it does not establish specific rules for oral presentation in the Committee meetings (4)

Total: 9        Total Force Field: 3        Total: 6

Source: Weaving global networks (2006)

5   See **Toolkit N°3: Where we are and how far we can move forward. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges**. The Problem Tree analysis is a tool which allows linking one proposal to a problem to be solved, identify its causes and consequences, and decide where efforts will focus on.

6   To consult the details of the example, see Weaving global networks (2006), page 72.

políticas públicas
*public policies*

## To continue searching!

### Reading recommendations by CIPPEC´s Civil Society Directorate to design an influence plan

- *Weaving global networks. Handbook for policy influence.* CIPPEC, 2006. Pages 70-72. Available at www.vippal.cippec.org.
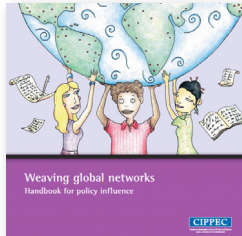
- *Advocacy Matters: Helping children change their world. An International Save the Children Alliance guide to advocacy,* Save the Children, 2007, pages 53-55. Available at www.savethechildren.org.uk.

- *Advocacy toolkit. A collection of tools to help plan, implement, monitor and evaluate advocacy;* Save the Children, 2007, page 23-25.
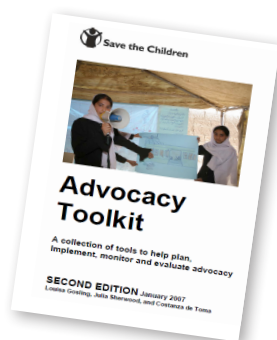
- *Types of policy objectives.* Overseas Development Institute. Available at www.ebpdn.org.

- *Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers,* Daniel Start and Ingie Hovland, Overseas Development Institute, 2004, pages 22-23. Available at www.odi.org.uk.

In Spanish:

- *Manual para la Facilitación de Procesos de Incidencia Política,* A. Mc- Kinley y P. Baltazar, *(Handbook for Policy Influence Processes)* Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) 2005, pages 79-94. Available at www.wola.org/es

## Next Toolkit:
### Who should we work with. Define actors and alliances

If you wish to quote this document: Weyrauch, Vanesa and Echt, Leandro (2012). Toolkit Nº4: What we desire. Define influence objectives, at *How to design a policy influence plan?* Buenos Aires: CIPPEC.

## How to design a policy influence plan?

**Toolkit Nº 1.**
What is an influence plan. Why should we plan.

**Toolkit Nº 2.**
The policy making process. Analyze the context for effective influence planning.

**Toolkit Nº 3.**
Where are we and how far can we go. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges.

**Toolkit Nº 4.**
What we desire. Define influence objectives.

**Toolkit Nº 5.**
Who should we work with. Define actors and alliances.

**Toolkit Nº 6.**
How to generate the desired impact. Define the proposal.

**Toolkit Nº 7.**
How to carry out the proposal. Define strategies and actions.

**Toolkit Nº 8.**
How to communicate. Define the strategy and key messages.

**Toolkit Nº 9.**
Who, how much and when. Define resources and timeline.

**Toolkit Nº 10.**
What have we learned? An approximation to monitoring and evaluation of policy influence.

Other series:

## How can we monitor and evaluate policy influence?

## Tools for policy influence

Available at www.vippal.cippec.org

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