



# A Guide for Effective Advocacy for Trade Associations of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises



# **A Guide for Effective Advocacy for Trade Associations of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises**

**Tropenbos International Ghana**

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

BATNA	Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
LAS	Legality Assurance System
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SMFEs	Small and Medium Forest Enterprises
TBI	Tropenbos International
TILCAP	Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project
TLAS	Timber Legality Assurance System
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

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## **PREFACE**

In the wake of on-going global deforestation and forest degradation and its attendant impact on climate change through global warming, all attempts are being made at local, national and international levels to step up effective forest governance as a major weapon for combating illegal timber harvesting and trade which has been identified as one of the major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

Spearheading this agenda is the European Union with its Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) under which the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) has been designed as a vehicle for timber exporting countries to voluntarily pledge their commitment to the enforcement of governance initiatives aimed at curbing illegal logging and trade in illegal timber.

A key aspect of the VPA is the Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS), which is a country-specific system designed to ensure the legality of a timber product from its origin to the point of sale or export.

For Ghana, the VPA covers all timber products, either for export or for the domestic market. Currently 84% of timber traded on the domestic market is illegally sourced (Marfo, 2010). This accounts for a loss of 187,625 tonnes of carbon per annum<sup>2</sup> whilst emitting 688,583 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere annually (FLFGT/VPA & REDD+ Synergy Workshop, Oct. 2014) thus aggravating global warming.

Ghana has therefore committed to reform the domestic market to ensure that it is VPA compliant. Most of the domestic (timber) market players are in the category of small to medium enterprises. For several reasons, they are not well positioned to understand and therefore comply with the TLAS, and are also not able to meaningfully engage with the policy process to ensure that their concerns/interests are adequately captured by the reforms.

With support from the EU, TBI Ghana is implementing a project with the title: “Supporting Intermediaries with Information and Guidance to Comply with the Legality Assurance System (LAS) and Engage in Policy Advocacy on the Domestic Market Reform”, otherwise known as the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP). This project seeks to equip intermediaries (i.e. NGOs and leaders of associations of SMFEs) with information and tools to enable them engage in advocacy in respect of the domestic market reforms.

It is for this reason that this manual has been developed as a simple handbook for people working with SMFEs, and more especially, leaders of associations of SMFEs who are mostly at the helm of affairs, to learn relevant advocacy skills to enable them to carry out the task demanded of them under the VPA as well as CSO’s working in the forestry sector who most often carry out advocacy on behalf of SMFEs.

It is hoped that this simple handbook would equip SMFEs with the necessary skills to engage in advocacy not only in relation to forest governance and the enactment of policies in the forestry sector but in all issues that concern them as well.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The management and staff of Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana wish to express their sincere gratitude to the European Commission for funding the project “Supporting Intermediaries with Information and Guidance to Comply with the Legality Assurance System (LAS) and Engage in Policy Advocacy on the Domestic Market Reform in Ghana”, otherwise known as the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP).

The publication of this manual forms an essential component of the project’s activities and is designed to serve as a guide for intermediaries in Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs), comprising Civil society Organisations (CSOs) working in the forestry sector and leaders of associations of SMFEs to effectively carry out policy advocacy in respect of on-going policy reforms in the forestry sector.

TBI Ghana also wishes to express its profound appreciation to the European Commission for partly funding the publication of this manual.

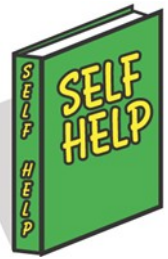
Furthermore, the management of TBI Ghana wishes to acknowledge the dedication of the project team, namely Boakye Twumasi-Ankra and Kwame Sekyere for diligently putting together the material for this manual.

# 1.0 DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS AND DEVELOPING THE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

## 1.1 What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of oneself and others. Thus, Advocacy is a process of support and enabling oneself or people to;

- express their views and concerns,
- access information and services,
- defend and promote their rights and responsibilities, and
- explore choices and options



## 1.2 Components of Sustainable Advocacy Strategy

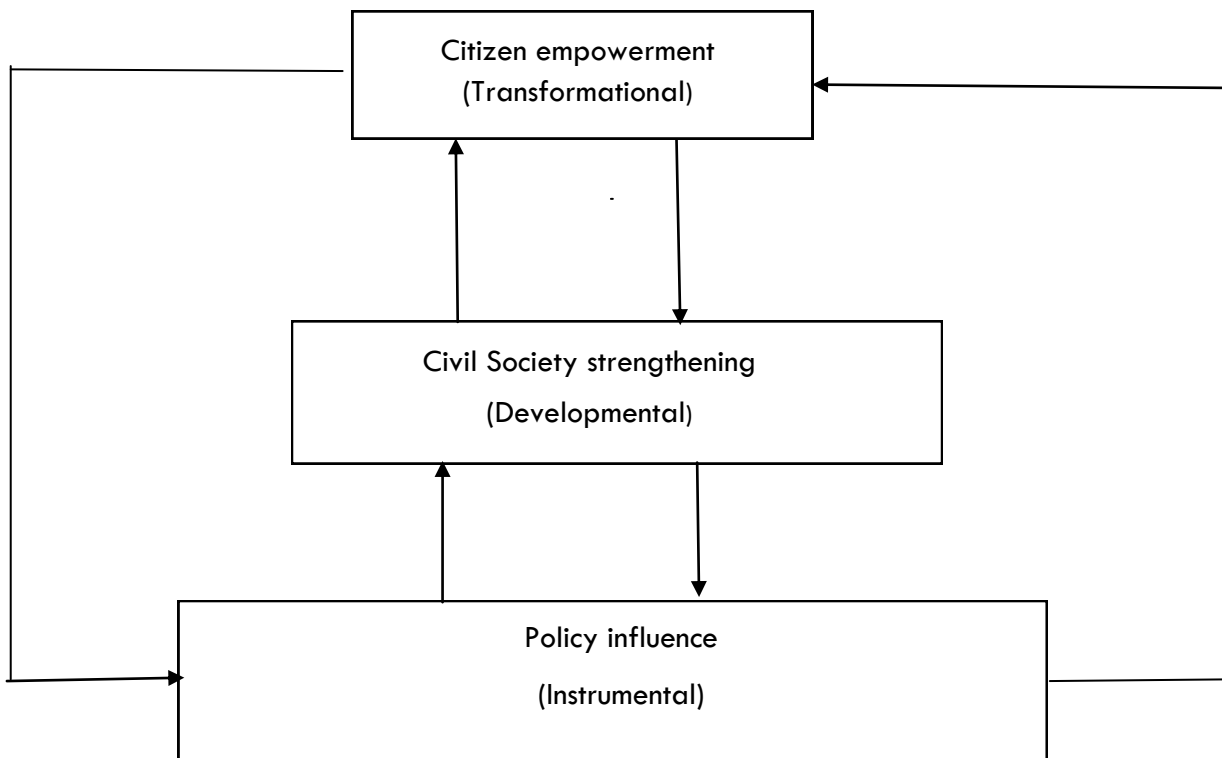


Figure 1 The Advocacy cycle



### 1.3 Advocacy as Citizenship Empowerment and Citizenship Building

#### *A Transformational Objective*

**Definition:** The ability of the marginalized or disadvantaged to challenge the status-quo by gaining a sense of their own power, including the capacity to define and prioritize their problems and then act to address and resolve them.

#### **Key Features**

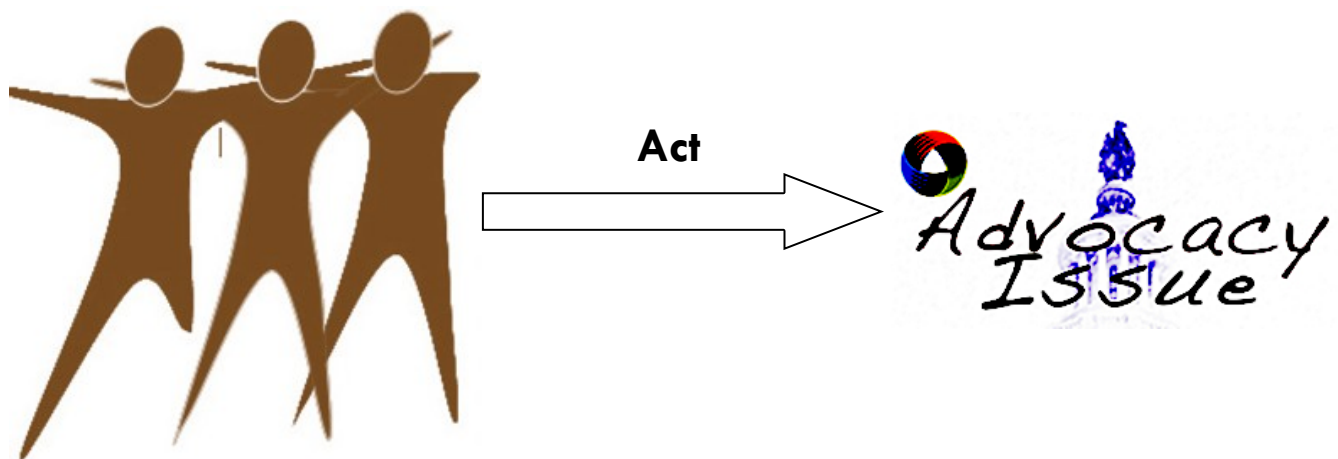
- Enlightened and active citizenry
- Citizenry exercise civic rights, duties and obligations
- Citizenry make informed decisions
- Citizenry pursue collective interest in the political arenas
- Long process of citizenry learning and education



### 1.4 Advocacy as Strengthening Civil Society and Building Social Capital

#### *A Developmental Objective*

**Definition:** The ability of citizens to organize themselves collectively to alter the existing relations of power by providing themselves with a lasting institutional capacity to identify, articulate and act on their concerns, interest and aspirations, including the ability to achieve specific and well-defined policy outcomes.



#### **Key Features**

- Strong and autonomous civil society
- Balancing power relations between state and the market on one hand and the citizenry on the other
- Provide the unorganized/powerless with collective voice and platform for action
- Strong intermediaries that access arenas of power and decision- making
- Building inter-sectorial linkages and learning to work together
- Specialized CSO's with strong competencies in capacity-building, research and policy formulation, developing and promoting sector-wide standard/codes of conduct, promoting the rights of the sector, and resource mobilization.

## 1.5 Advocacy as Influencing Key Policy Outcomes and Achieving a Reform Agenda

### *An Instrumentalist Objective*

**Definition:** The process in which a group(s) applies a set of skills and techniques for the purpose of influencing public decision-making; the ultimate result is to achieve a well- defined social, economic or political policy goal or reform.

### **Key Features**

- Main goal and desired policy outcome achieved
- May or may not advance democracy
- Special interest groups that have a set of skills, techniques and tactics, to influence decisions.



## 1.6 Key Environmental Factors to Consider in Designing an Advocacy Strategy

### CONTEXT

- Political environment: Legitimacy and power relationship of government vis-à-vis civil society, the private sector, transnational and international organizations and institutions.
- Levels of freedom and access to the public sector: Literacy, poverty and social relationship

### TIMING

- International economic trend
- Elections
- International conferences, etc.



### ORGANIZATION

- Comparative organizational strengths and weaknesses
- Alliances and networks
- Institutional history

### RISK

- Political tensions or polarization
- Power dynamics
- Cultural and religious beliefs



### TECHNOLOGY

- Wide public reach
- Target audience
- Efficiency/cost

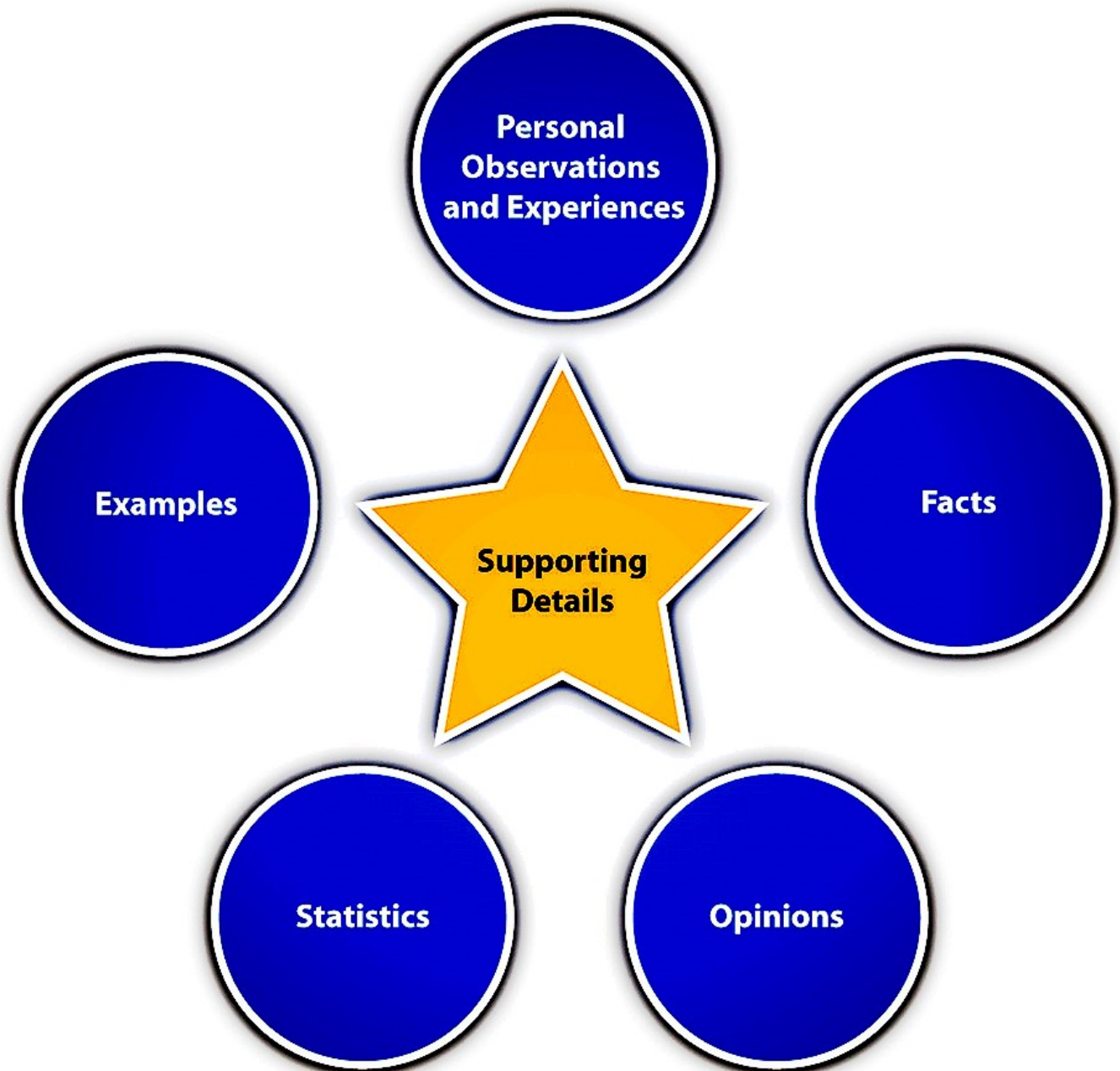
## 1.7 Developing the Advocacy Message

- Analyze the situation and prioritize the advocacy issues
- Build evidence through research



## 1.8 Characteristics of Solid Evidence for Advocacy

- Is the evidence grounded in solid research conducted in a professional and systematic way?
- Does the evidence highlight the cause of a problem?
- Does the evidence provide convincing solutions to the problem?
- Is the evidence supported with human interest stories or experiences?
- Is the evidence valid for a wider context and different environments?
- Is the evidence timely?



## 2.0 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS OF AN ADVOCACY ISSUE

### 2.1 Who is a stakeholder?

Any individual, group or organization with an interest, contributing to the implementation, or is affected by the domestic market reforms in the timber industry is a stakeholder in the process.

### 2.2 The Process of Analysis

#### *Identification of stakeholders (Individuals, groups and institutions)*

- Who is likely to gain from the proposed changes?
- Who might be adversely affected?
- Who has the power to make the changes happen, prevent or sabotage them?

#### *What is the interest of each stakeholder in the issue?*

- What are the stakeholders' expectations of the issue or the proposed change?
- What benefits can stakeholders gain from the change?
- What resources might the stakeholders be able and willing to mobilize?
- What is the conflicting interest of the stakeholder vis-à-vis the proposed change?

#### *How does each stakeholder support or oppose the issue?*

- Does the stakeholder publicly support the issue or oppose the issue?
- Does the stakeholder privately support or oppose the issue?
- Who are the allies of the stakeholder in supporting or opposing the issue?

#### *What is the extent of stakeholder influence?*

- What is the political, social and economic power and status of the stakeholder?
- How well is the stakeholder organized?
- What control does the stakeholder have over strategic resources?
- What level of informal influence does the stakeholder have?

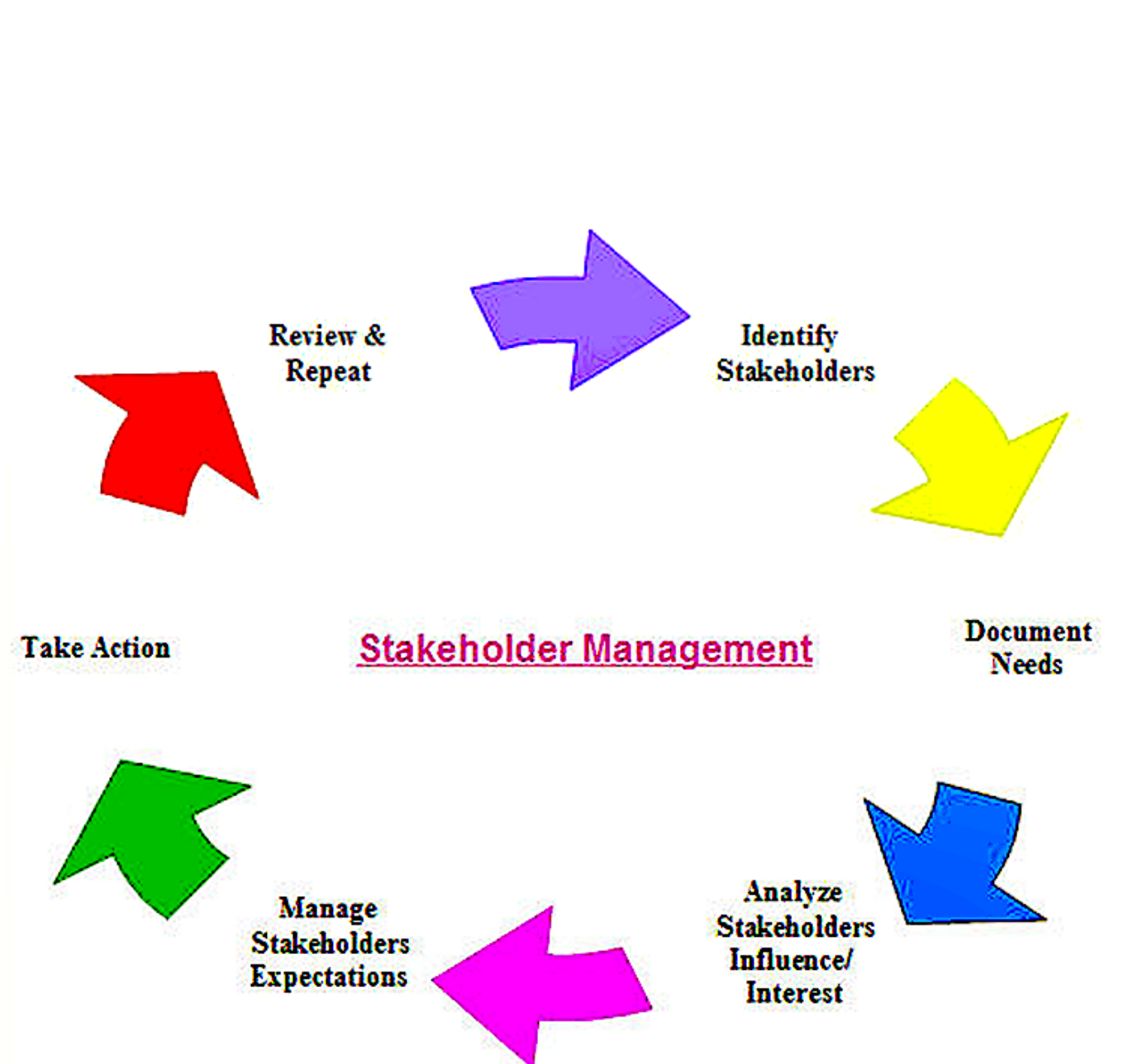


**What is the level of importance of the stakeholder to the issue?**

- Does the issue compromise the stakeholder's rights and does the stakeholder have a right to solutions for the issue?
- Will stakeholder engagement help address deeper underlying causes to the problem so that the solutions can be sustainable in the future?

**What is the desired end and strategic measures to achieve this end?**

What is the action desired from the stakeholder and what measures should be done to move the stakeholder towards this action.



**Figure 2 Stakeholder Management**

### 2.3 Sample Format for Stakeholder Analysis

STAKEHOLDER	INTEREST	SUPPORT OR OPPOSE  (Unknown, Ally, Strong Ally, Neutral, Opposi- tion, Strong Opposi- tion)	INFLUENCE  (Unknown, Low, Moderate, Strong, Highly Influen- tial)	IMPORTANCE  (Unknown, Least Important, Im- portant, Highly Important)	DESIRED ACTION AND STRATEGIC MEASURES



## 3.0 TOOLS FOR ADVOCACY

### 3.1 Lobbying

#### What is lobbying?

**Lobbying** is attempting to influence legislators to support or oppose a particular issue or piece of legislation and is allowed for non-profits within certain parameters.

**Direct lobbying** is defined as communication with a legislator, legislative staff or legislative body, or any covered executive branch or other government employee who may participate in the formulation of legislation. The communication refers to a specific piece of legislation and expresses a view on that legislation.

**Grassroots lobbying** is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation by encouraging the public to contact legislators about that legislation. A communication constitutes grassroots lobbying if it refers to specific legislation, reflects a view on that specific legislation and encourages the recipient of the communication to take lobbying action. This type of communication is known as a 'call to action'.

#### Guide to Lobbying

- Have clear agenda and priorities
- Be prepared for a conversation with clear talking points
- When the meeting is finished, be sure to leave brochures, fact sheets or other printed information for future reference
- After leaving, make notes and evaluate the visit with colleagues.

#### Key Steps for an Effective Lobbying

- Become familiar with corridors of power
- Classify the players
- Inform and build relationships
- Get attention and show your power

#### Reinforce Messages

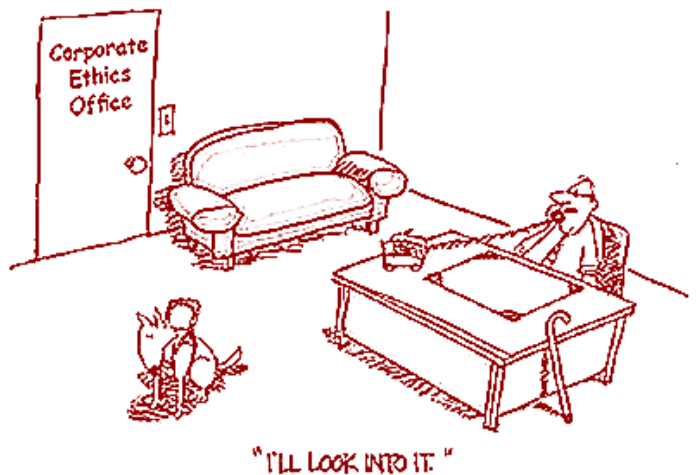
**i Respond to concerns immediately.**

- Funding
- Designing a Proposal
- Timing etc.

**ii Re-send the message**

**iii Follow up.**

For instance: One- page summary, letter of thanks, facts and figures, ally as a messenger and expert visit



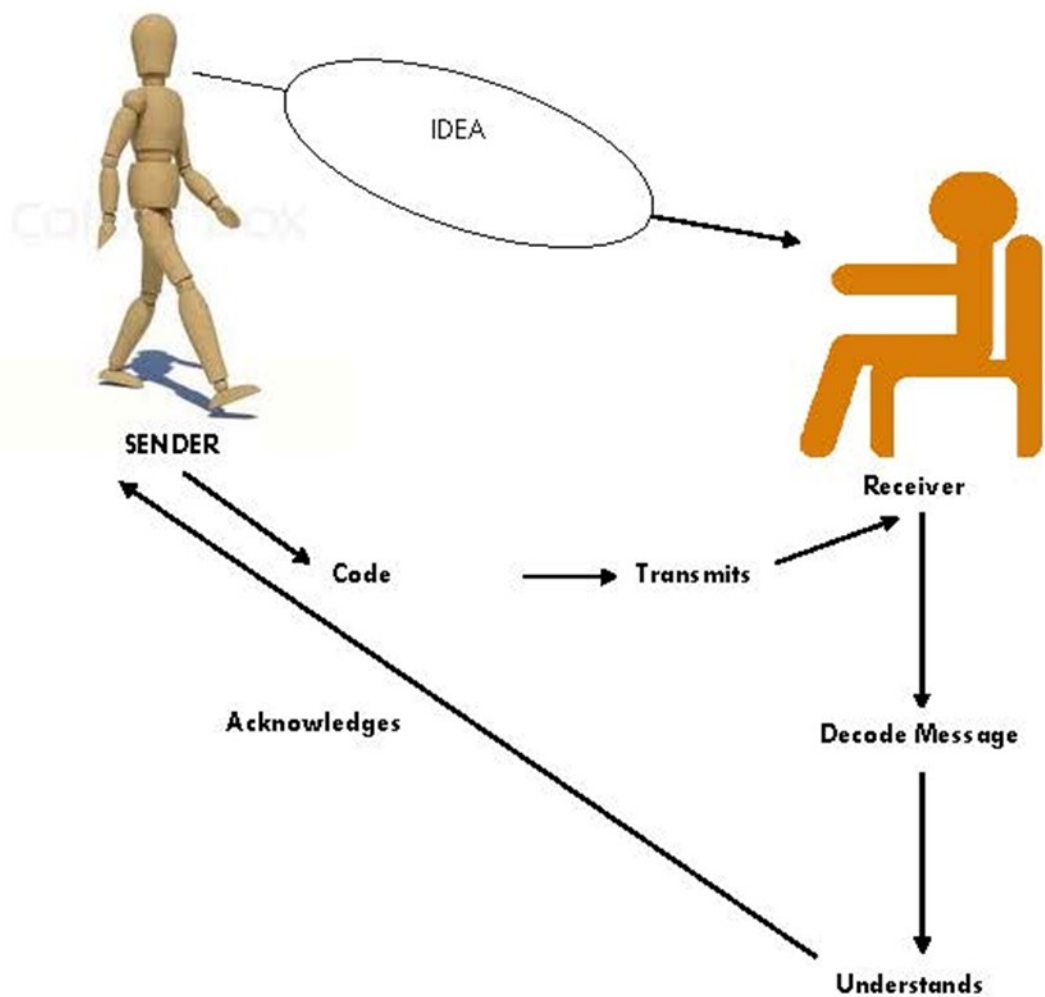


### 3.2 Effective Communication and Facilitation

Communication is

- *making oneself understood*
- *being able to know what another person is saying*

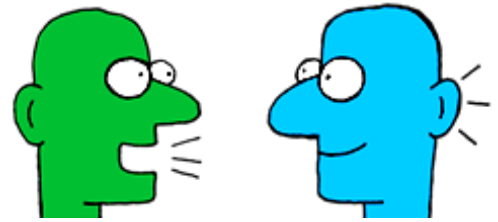
**Communication Process**



## Important Characteristics of Sender and Receiver in Communication

In order for people to communicate well with each other, they must be able to

- **Confront** their communication partner and the topic of discussion
- **Direct** their **Full Attention** to their communication partner
- Attach a specific **Intention** to the communication
- **Duplicate** the message received
- **Understand** the transmitted message
- **Acknowledge** the receipt and understanding of the message



In communication, a message should be seen as a “gift parcel” which once unwrapped reveals a bunch of aspects.

Content	Relationship
Self-Revelation	Appeal

A facilitator should be conscious of these aspects, if communication is to succeed. Each message should:

- Have a content or subject-matter.
- Contain a certain amount of self-revelation or information about the sender, whether intentional or non-intentional.
- Indicate the relationship between the sender and the receiver.
- Have an element of an appeal or attempt to influence the other person (receiver).

Example: Sender calls the receiver a villager, a term considered derogatory nowadays.

- Content- villager
- Self-revelation- sender is an urban person
- Relationship- sender is superior to the receiver
- Appeal- receiver should obey (submit to) the sender



### 3.3 Facilitator

#### Who is a Facilitator?

An Individual responsible for guiding a group through a process in order to accomplish a specific task or achieve a specific goal or outcome.

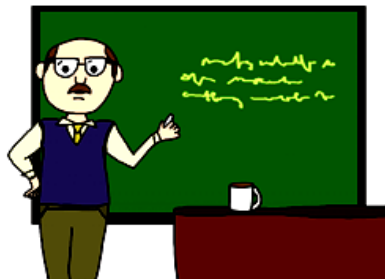
**NB:** The facilitator does not manage the content or task (what the group is meant to accomplish) but the *group process*.

#### Elements of the Group Process

- Group dynamics
- Interaction and relationships
- Group norms
- Climate (environment of discussion or interaction) and the methods
- Tools and structure that shape the process

#### The Facilitator's Basic Responsibilities Check List Includes;

- clarifying objectives,
- ensuring full participation,
- staying on track,
- staying on time,
- clarifying understanding,
- ensuring commitment of action and
- recap



#### Purposes for which a Facilitator asks Questions is to;

- integrate existing knowledge of participants,
- stimulate exchange of experiences,
- have a problem-situation described,
- have solutions elaborated,
- ask about opinions,
- check understanding and
- evaluate situation.



## Guided Dialogue

In situations where the facilitator is a participant in a discussion he/she should:

- Keep his or her contribution to the minimum .
- Fully exhaust the participants' knowledge of and opinions on the subject.
- Record and acknowledge every contribution.
- Collect contributory statements until no further contributions are made.
- Acknowledge each participants' contribution, then he/she points out relevant aspects and lets the group discuss them.
- Evaluate contributions together with the participants. He/ she must present his or her specialised knowledge in a convincing manner.
- Always follow-up with practical applications.

## What to do as a Facilitator

In a community forum or group discussion:

- Ensure that your message is well duplicated and understood by the receiver.
- Be clear in your intention.
- Always get feedback.
- Summarise at every interval.
- Repeat important points.
- Use a variety of languages, idioms, wise sayings, proverbs, jokes.
- Be calm and respond to issues appropriately.
- Message should be clear and simple.
- Know your community well (e.g. If the facilitator is among ethnic groups who are “playmates”, jokes may be thrown around, etc.).
- Let everybody see your face in your presentation and hear your voice.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Pay a closer attention to the participants than yourself.
- Be selective on the kind of self-information you give so the community will not feel uncomfortable.
- Consider everybody's contribution.



## What not to do as a Facilitator

In a community forum or group discussion:

- Do not judge a message/ do not jump into conclusions (clarify and investigate further).
- Do not assume you know more than everyone else.
- Do not stay rooted in one place, make movement from time to time to relate to the audience.
- Do not argue with a participant.

### 3.4 Negotiating

#### What is negotiation?

A focused discussion on needs and interest with the intention of finding a mutual acceptable agreement. It is a voluntary action, in which the negotiating parties structure the content of their meeting, determine the outcome of their agreement, and stipulate the methods of ensuring the implementation of their final agreements.

#### The Role of Trust in Negotiation

Trust is important in negotiations. Factors that build trust include;

- respect for one another,
- concern for another's welfare,
- preparedness for self-sacrifice,
- honesty,
- commitment,
- readiness to listen,
- knowledge and wisdom,
- consistency,
- Reliability and
- approachability/accommodation.



#### Factors that can Destroy Trust

1. Inconsistency/Non-reliability
2. Cheating
3. Dishonesty
4. Selfishness/Self-centeredness
5. Wickedness/Cruelty
6. Unfairness
7. Gossip
8. Hypocrisy/Pretence



## Five Key Principles of Effective Negotiation

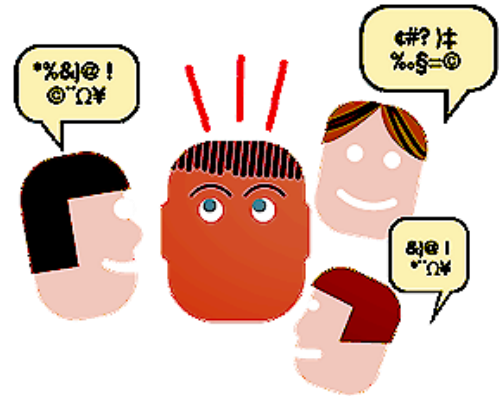
- PEOPLE- Separate people from the problem
- INTEREST- Focus on interest not positions
- OPTIONS- Invent options for mutual gain
- OBJECTIVE CRITERIA- Insist on using objective criteria as the basis for decisions
- YOUR BATNA- Any negotiated decision reached should be better than your BATNA

[BATNA- Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement]

## Stages of Negotiation

### 1. Information Exchange

- Hearing the others side
- Making your point
- Selling your positions
- Asking about their positions
- This stage needs good planning on each side

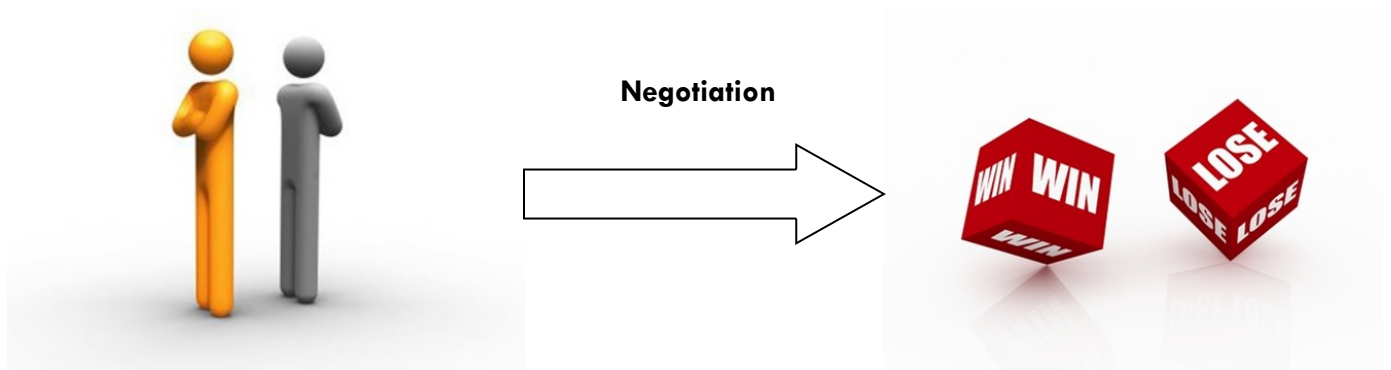


### 2. Bargaining

### 3. Agreement and Implementation

## Planning to Negotiate

- What are your objectives (short-term or long- term)?
- What issues are non- negotiable?
- What common ground can there be?
- What are the possible options?
- What kind of relationship you want to have with other party?
- What is your BATNA (Best Alternative Negotiated Agreement)
- What can be the other side's BATNA?
- Who does what for the other?



## Key Guidelines for Effective Negotiation

- Observe your choice of words. Avoid being judgmental.
- Taking an entrenched position does not help
- A third party/mediator helps
- Identify your strategy first. Plan!
- Assumption should be clarified (e.g. I thought...)
- There should be agreement on procedures
- Information should be provided clearly to all parties
- Use non- confrontational approaches
- Emphatic listening helps
- Ask questions that are non- threatening
- The more information exchange is done, the lesser time is needed for bargaining
- Adequate time for planning allows one to think things through



*The mediator sensed that the negotiations were in trouble.*

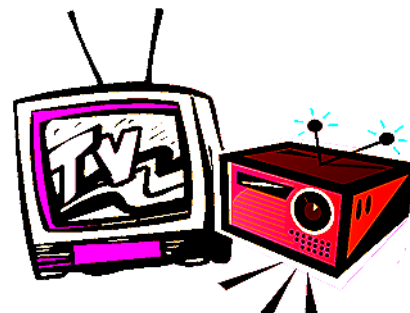


### 3.5 Working with the Media

#### Key Planning Concerns in using the Media for Advocacy

##### A. ENSURE MEDIA REACH THE TARGET AUDIENCE

- Make sure the chosen media organisation can reach the target audience



- Choose a story or issue that will appeal to both your target audience and decision-makers



##### B. FIND THE RIGHT MEDIA CONTACTS

- Someone who has covered your organisation, or the issue, before
- Identify a journalist with knowledge on the issue
- Identify local outlets who are covering your issue and others like them

##### C. TIMING SHOULD BE RIGHT

- Story should relate to other current issues or newsworthy
- Story or issue should offer something new?



##### D. CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE SPOKESPERSON

- Someone with experience in media relations
- Someone qualified and authorised to speak for the organisation/coalition
- Someone readily available to the media when needed



## E. AVOID NEGATIVE OR INACCURATE COVERAGE

- Have your facts straight (Don't be afraid to call back for the answer)
- Prepare for the worst thing that can happen
- Make sure that the media outlet observes fairness and accuracy
- Choose journalist that have a long-term relationship
- Prepare for what opponents might say
- Make sure others will back up your story

### Forms of Media Communication

#### News Advisory

Communications designed to alert the media to an upcoming event.

#### News Release

A written statement that alerts the press to a public announcement or an event.

This is issued at the time of an event, before or immediately afterward.

#### News Conference

Event in which many members of the media are invited to come to hear an important announcement.

#### Commentary or Position Statement

Used to make a clear stand on an issue of public importance.



### OTHERS

#### TV or Radio Interviews

#### Conferences, seminars and workshops

#### Newsletters

#### Websites

#### Blogs

#### Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)



### 3.6 Risk Management in Advocacy

#### Identifying Risk

Risk Assessment within the early stages of the research on the issue identifies short-term and long-term risks. For example:

- Forms of advocacy such as public debates and live forums can turn into heated events
- Relationships can be strained when criticisms are made in public
- Partnerships with political or corporate entities can affect an organisation's neutrality
- Alliances or coalitions may lead to loss of distinctive organisational identity and quality control

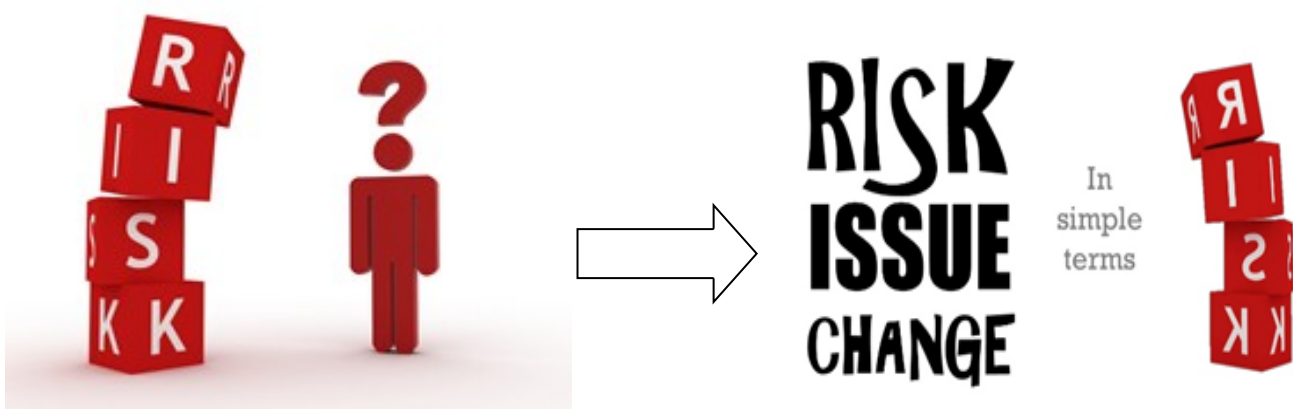
#### Analyzing Risks

- Identify possible risks arising from proposed action (or lack of action)
- Assess the potential benefit of the proposed action
- Identify who could be harmed
- Assess level of risk
- Consider measures you can take to mitigate the risks
- Assess the level of risks remaining after mitigating measures have been taken.
- Decide if the benefit outweighs the risk.



#### Managing Risks

- Reliable evidence is the foundation for the advocacy initiative, and it must stand up to scrutiny.
- When research highlights local social norms that go against human rights, using positive local norms, cultural traditions and practices will help advance advocacy work.
- Policy and power analysis can help provide a clearer picture of the political culture of the country, which can help in understanding and minimizing some of the risk associated with advocacy.
- Support from partners, colleagues and other sectors of the organisation can significantly help minimize risks
- Always be prepared for potential trouble
- Maintain strong communication within the organisation or advocacy team.



## 3.7 Building Partnerships

### Networks

This can be a platform of information and idea exchange which may employ modern and efficient means of communication such as the print and electronic media as well as telecommunication but with a potential for more concrete collaborative initiatives.

### Constituents

Constituency building implies engaging the supporters in participatory development of the advocacy position and the processes.

The organization is responsible for representing the interest of its constituents and is accountable to them with respect to how the advocacy is being managed as well as its outcomes.

### Alliances

Alliances form when there is a common issue of discussion and advocacy. They are non-permanent but can be more structured depending on the urgency and importance of the joint action to be pursued.

### Coalitions

Coalitions are a formal collaboration among organizations that have a common issue for advocacy. There is a definite organizational structure and decision-making system. Members serve as policy decision-makers while a more permanent staff manages the daily operations of the organization



### *Capacity Building of Sector-Based and Community Organizations*

Empowerment of groups and communities affected by the policy issue to manage their own advocacy

### Guide for the Formation of Partnership in Advocacy

- Be clear about the advocacy issue proposed as the focus of the coalition
- If the group is large, select a steering committee of five to seven people which represents the different interest of member organisations
- Establish a task force to plan and coordinate activities, such as advocacy priorities, specific agendas, publicity, outreach, lobbying, fundraising and procedures.
- Assess progress periodically and make whatever changes are necessary.
- Develop a code of conduct to ensure mutual respect and responsibility.
- State clearly what you have in common and what you don't.
- Let the membership and the issue suggest the coalition's structure and style.
- Choose interim objectives very strategically.
- Maintain strong ties from the top major organisations.
- Make fair, clear agreements and stick to them.



## 4. PLANNING

### 4.1 Advocacy Strategy: Example

Policy Issue	Logging conducted without following the prevailing laws and regulations
Primary Target Audience	Select committee of Land Natural Resources and Environment
Secondary Target Audience	Forestry Commission Management
Advocacy Goal	By January 2020, incidence of violation of timber regulation reduced to 10%
Advocacy Objective (Effect)	By January 2017, the Forestry Commission will have effective monitoring and control mechanisms for logging that actively involves organised fringe communities

### 4.2 Advocacy Plan

KEY AUDIENCE	KEY MESSAGE	KEY ACTIVITIES
Timber Merchants	Make them aware of the long-term benefit of protecting the forest resource base	<p>Identify key leaders</p> <p>Send letters asking for appointments to meet on the policy issue</p> <p>Invite leaders to awareness-raising workshops</p>

### 4.3 Research Plan Matrix

RESEARCH TOPIC	RESEARCH QUESTIONS		DATA NEEDED	SOURCE OF DATA	METHOD OF COLLECTION	WHEN & WHO WILL COLLECT
	MAJOR	SUB-TOPIC/ QUESTION				
Indiscriminate felling of trees	How do road construction works affect forest cover?	In what ways and what extent do road construction negatively affect forest cover	Major road construction project within forest areas  Area of forest reserve affected by road construction	Ministry of Roads and Transport  Forestry Commission  Private Contractors	Document review  Direct measurement/observation	
		To what extent are forest laws enforced when it comes to road construction?	Entities involved in approving road construction in forest areas and their mandates  Processes undertaken & timing in the approval & implementation of projects	Ministry of Roads and Transport  Forestry Commission  Private Contractors	Document review  One-on-one interviews  Community Focus Group Discussions  Case Studies	

## 5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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By making knowledge work for forests and people, Tropenbos International contributes to well-informed decision making for improved management and governance of tropical forests. Our longstanding local presence and ability to bring together local, national and international partners make us a trusted partner in sustainable development.

