Analyzing stakeholders and power to identify advocacy targets

To undertake effective advocacy it is important to identify those who are most likely to be your allies, including those who can be persuaded to become allies, or at least facilitators to help you. You will also need to identify those who stand in the way of you achieving your advocacy goals. This section will help you to identify exactly who you need to persuade and influence to build a culture of evaluation. These are your **advocacy targets**. Most importantly, you need to tailor your 'ask' according to what your targeted decision-maker is capable of delivering. Begin the process of identifying your target by taking note of all the stakeholders and actors involved in your particular issue.[1]

Stakeholder Analysis[2]

A stakeholder analysis highlights which institutions and individuals have a stake in an issue, as well as their interests, support or opposition, influence and importance. A stakeholder analysis involves four steps:

1. Identify the key stakeholders from the large array of groups and individuals that could potentially affect or be affected by the proposed intervention. For example, in building an enabling environment for evaluation, national stakeholders could include:[3]

National stakeholder	Possible role and responsibility
Senior government officials (e.g. office of the president, office of the Prime Minister)	• Overall 'champion' for the drive for results-based M&E in the public sector.
Central agency (e.g. ministry of finance or ministry of planning)	• Champion and facilitator for M&E development and implementation activities. • Central coordinator for the roll-out of M&E across ministries. • Government policy center for M&E – guidance and guidelines for performance measurement, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. • Establish a central M&E unit. • Facilitate or manage high-level evaluations or special studies. • Monitor progress of M&E implementation across the system. • Play oversight and quality control role for all M&E performance measurement and reporting. • Establish an M&E professional development strategy for the country. • Work with other partners in M&E capacity building initiatives: workshops, training, etc. • Lead in the development of a national performance framework. • Lead and coordinate preparation of any national performance report. • Advise senior government officials on all M&E matters. • Work with civil society and the private sector to promote feedback mechanisms as an input to M&E. • Facilitate development of a national M&E professional association.

[1] Adapted from WaterAid. (2007). The Advocacy Sourcebook.
[2] Adapted from UNEP-GPA, UNESCO-IHE, Train-Sea-Coast GPA. (2004). *Improving Municipal Wastewater Management in Coastal Cities, Training Manual (Version 1)*.
[3] UNEG Task Force on National Evaluation Capacity Development. (2012). *National Evaluation Capacity Development: Practical tips on how to strengthen National Evaluation Systems*.

Individual ministries	- Establish internal M&E units. - Establish senior-level M&E advisory committee for support and oversight of M&E initiatives. - Develop a performance framework linking ministry programmes with sector goals. - Develop a performance measurement strategy to clarify indicators and a cost-effective measurement strategy – working with the central agency and the national statistical agency on data development strategy. - Develop and implement ongoing monitoring systems for ministry programmes. - Plan for and conduct periodic evaluations or special studies of programmes or sets of programmes. - Annually report on programme results and sector performance - Input to budget and policy discussions.
Senior M&E committee	- Determine priorities for the conducting of high-level evaluation or special studies. - Provide a forum for review of findings and decisions for follow-up. - Possible oversight role over the pace of national evaluation capacity development.
National statistical agency	- Expertise on data capture and development. - National survey capability. - Central data storage. - Focal point for national data development strategy. - Assisting ministries with data development strategies.
National audit office (NAO)	Potential oversight role of M&E system (data audits on quality of data, quality of results-based performance reporting).
Training institutions	Potential partners – e.g. national or regional university or a public sector training institute – to help build M&E understanding through formal training.
Civil society	- Advocate for equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation systems - Provide technical assistance as appropriate. - Work with central agency and ministries to formalize ongoing or periodic feedback mechanisms.
Private sector	Work with central agency and ministries to formalize ongoing or periodic feedback mechanisms.
Other non-public agencies	Potential partners with central agency and/or individual ministries in M&E development (where specific M&E pockets of knowledge/expertise exist).

2. **Assess stakeholder interests** and the potential impact of advocacy on these interests. Questions that you should try to answer in order to assess the interests of different stakeholders include:
- What are the stakeholder's expectations in advocating for an enabling environment for evaluation?
- What benefits are likely to result for the stakeholders from this advocacy work?
- What resources might the stakeholders be able and willing to mobilize for it?
- What stakeholder interests conflict with the advocacy goals?

3. Assess the influence and importance of the identified stakeholders. Influence refers to the power that the stakeholders might have in creating an enabling environment for evaluation. This power may be in the form of stakeholders that have formal control over the decision-making process of it can be informal in the sense of hindering or facilitating the advocacy's implementation.

Importance relates to how important the active involvement of the stakeholder is for achievement of the advocacy goal. Stakeholders who are important are often stakeholders who are to benefit from the advocacy or whose objectives converge with the objectives of the advocacy. It is possible that some stakeholders who are very important might have very little influence and vice versa.

4. Outline a stakeholder participation strategy. This plan should state ways in which the different stakeholders will be involved in different stages of the advocacy planning and implementation. The involvement of stakeholders should be planned according to:
- Interests, importance, and influence of each stakeholder.
- Particular effort needed to involve important stakeholders who lack influence.
- Appropriate forms of participation throughout the advocacy cycle.

In principle, different methods can be employed to gather the information required for a stakeholder analysis. Although it is possible to do an entire analysis on the basis of a desk study, it is strongly recommended that other methods of gathering information be employed such as stakeholder workshops; local consultations 'on the ground'; surveys; consultations with collaborating organizations (such as NGOs, government departments, academic institutions etc.).

Benefits of stakeholder involvement in advocacy planning:[4]
- It can lead to informed decision-making, as stakeholders often possess a wealth of information, which can benefit advocacy towards building an enabling environment for evaluation.
- Consultation in the early stages of advocacy can alert to potential risks and can reduce the likelihood of conflicts, which can harm the implementation and success of advocacy.
- Stakeholder involvement contributes to transparency in undertaking advocacy as the different stakeholders that are involved can monitor it.
- The involvement of stakeholders can possibly lead to long-term collaborative relationships that can further evaluation advocacy agendas.

Power Analysis

A stakeholder analysis should lead to a power analysis. This analysis helps in identifying the key decision-makers (both institutional and individual) who hold power or influence over the issue. The task is to identify who makes the decisions and who can directly influence these decisions. These decision-makers can be allies or opponents.

As your advocacy progresses, opponents may shift to become allies (or vice versa). When developing an advocacy strategy, it is important to:
- Examine the capacities and abilities to influence the opponents to make them less opposed, passive opponents or even allies. Institutions and individuals that are neutral can also become allies through advocacy.
- Aim to increase the strength of allies without power.
- Persuade passive allies with power to provide levels of credible support and become active.
- Influence active opponents to become passive opponents.

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[4] Adapted from Organization of American States. (2001). *Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision-Making for the Sustainable Development*. Washington D.C.

Identifying target audiences and partners[5]

Using information from the stakeholder and power analysis, you can identify the target audiences and influentials for your advocacy. **The target audience includes decision-makers with the authority to affect the outcome for your advocacy directly.** These are the individuals who must actively approve the policy change. These decision-makers are the primary targets of an advocacy strategy.

The influentials (or the secondary target audience) are individuals and groups that can influence the decision-makers (or the target audience). Often, you may not be able to reach decision-makers themselves, however effective your advocacy planning. Instead, your advocacy may need to be targeted at those who do have access to decision-makers. These influentials may be your most important route to bringing about change through that relationship.

> **KEEP IN MIND**
> **It is important to recognize champions at two levels to build an enabling environment for evaluation – at a political level (for example, a minister of finance or planning) and at an operational level (for example, the central unit that may be leading the national efforts for evaluation capacity development).**

Influentials can be found in a variety of places, and not just among those officially part of a decision-maker's immediate circle. They may include the media, academia, donors, UN, other government departments, and CSOs, among others. Some members of a target audience can also be influentials if they can influence other decision-makers. For example, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Social Development might influence each other's opinions. Therefore, they are both a target audience and influentials.

In addition to being familiar with what any given audience knows and feels about your advocacy to build a culture of evaluation, it is also critical to learn about the internal norms, informal rules or codes of conduct that the group might have. The influentials may also contain oppositional forces to your advocacy. If so, it is critical to include these groups on your list, learn about them, and address them as part of your advocacy strategy.

The stakeholder and power analysis along with identification of target audience and influentials, can help point towards potential strategic partners in advocacy work. This goes further than analyzing who is your ally or opponent. You have to check how committed your allies are in joining you in political action: are they willing to spend time, money, energy and share information to bring about change in the use of evaluation. It is very important that this check of commitment is consciously executed by all organizations involved in advocacy.[6] *(For more information on strengthening partnerships in advocacy, see Section 5)*

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[5] Adapted from Sharma R. (2007). *An Introduction to Advocacy: Training guide*. SARA, HHRAA, USAID *and* WaterAid. (2007). The Advocacy Sourcebook.
[6] TASCO, SIPU International. (2011). *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change.*

Policy Analysis: Understanding how targets can make the change happen[7]

Policy analysis involves understanding:
(1) the political systems of the country, and
(2) the policy-making process.
This will help us to identify how the culture of evaluation can be built within that process. Once we have an understanding of how target audiences can make the change happen, we can identify the entry points where our advocacy can catalyze change.

Understanding political systems: Different political systems provide different entry points for advocacy. At the outset, it is important to examine your own political institutions and processes. At the national level, the key formal political structures can be targets for advocacy, which usually include the legislature (Congress/Parliament); the executive (President, Vice President, Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers); the Judiciary (the court); the bureaucracy; and, the political parties (especially during election time). These players and structures respond to other policy players, including the local and international private sector, donors, citizens and each other. How they operate depends in part on the type of political system in which they live (for example, a presidential or a parliamentary system). All these political structures form important entry points for exerting influence.
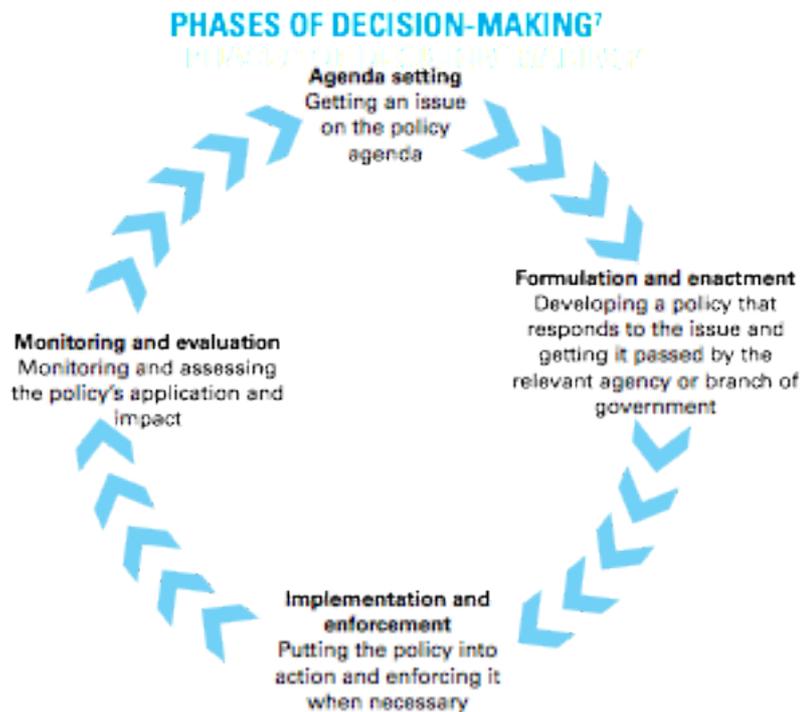
The policy-making process: Understanding the policy-making process (or processes leading up to laws, policies and other decisions) in your country and who is involved in it is yet another step in further refining the analysis of your context. This will also help you to gain new insights for your stakeholder analysis. At each stage of the policy-making process you can have influence. Understanding the policy-making process in combination with knowing where certain issues are dealt with, and questions related to timing, policy-making allows you to have a maximum impact on decisions. Knowing this in the planning of your intervention is crucial. It allows you to start setting out a strategy, and also helps to analyze whether evaluation, or important issues related to evaluation, are already being dealt with in policy-making.[8]

The policy-making process has four different overlapping phases: **agenda setting; formulation and enactment; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation.** Each phase is shaped by different power dynamics and involves different players, both inside and outside the formal political process

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[7] Adapted from VeneKlasen L., Miller V. (2002). *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*. Just Associates. Washington, DC.
[8] TASCO, SIPU International. (2011). *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change.*

PHASES OF DECISION-MAKING[7]

Agenda setting
Getting an issue
on the policy
agenda

Formulation and enactment
Developing a policy that
responds to the issue and
getting it passed by the
relevant agency or branch of
government

Implementation and
enforcement
Putting the policy into
action and enforcing it
when necessary

Monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring and assessing
the policy's application and
impact

Agenda setting: The political agenda is generally agreed by parliament at the national level or by councils or local governments at the local level. Power dynamics and political forces put an issue on the policy-making agenda. Getting evaluation on the agenda will often be the toughest part of advocacy work. Constituency building and mobilization use the power of numbers to attempt to get on the agenda.

Formulation and enactment: Once evaluation is on the agenda, policies and laws will be developed through research, discussion of alternatives, technical formulation and politics. Public authorities have well-established processes for policy drafting. Here CSOs, VOPEs and other stakeholders can be involved in areas such as identifying problems in national evaluation capacities, proposing solutions to build such capacity and supporting their preferred proposal.

After formulation, enactment can happen in different ways based on the national context and legislation. Common characteristics are the establishment of a government policy directive by a ministry, and legislation, such as passing a bill by parliamentary vote or public referendum. On a smaller scale, similar processes take place within the institutions of local governments. Government bills and motions, whether at national or local level, should be open to influence and participation of CSOs, VOPEs and other stakeholders. When enactment happens through a vote in legislature, opportunities for influence are optimum. But sometimes policies are passed quickly because negotiations happen behind the scenes before passage. Lobbying skills are important in this phase.

Implementation: This phase is especially important since there are no guarantees that the intended outcome will be realized. The agencies and individuals who are responsible for implementation vary from issue to issue, but will always be targets for advocacy and influence. Implementation may involve setting up regulations or enforcement mechanisms for evaluation of public policies; increasing government's capacity for undertaking evaluation; creating monitoring and evaluation structures; and, hiring new evaluation staff; for example. Budgets are therefore a critical ingredient. If polices focused on evaluation are approved, but there is no budget allocation, they are unlikely to have any real impact.

Monitoring and evaluation: This phase involves assessing a policy's impact on the problem it was intended to solve. Without public pressure this phase is often overlooked by governments because it involves resources and time. They may also avoid this phase because it shows where policies have been unsuccessful or reveals the corrupt diversion of resources. However, it is monitoring and evaluation that reveals to what extent government programmes and policies have achieved their objectives, thus providing the evidence needed to ensure strong accountability to parliament, civil society, donors, and citizens and to the various government bodies, all of which can provide incentives to improve performance. **This is a critical phase in the policy cycle that CSOs, VOPEs and stakeholders would want to strengthen through their advocacy.**

Timeframes related to decision-making: Timing in policy influencing is essential. You must know who is taking decisions, within what structure, but equally important is to know when a decision is to be taken. **Get familiar with the timetable of the actions and events, which influence policy development, and the timing of decision-making**. Factor in these significant dates or periods in your advocacy plan.[9]

Theories of Change[10]

At this stage in your planning, it is helpful to determine a Theory of Change. This approach will help you identify how change towards a culture of evaluation can occur. There are several ways in which this change may be facilitated. There are three theories, however, which stand out as particularly relevant for CSOs and VOPEs: coalition theory or an advocacy coalition framework;[11] policy windows or agenda setting[12]; and, messaging and frameworks or prospect theory.[13]

As identified by Stachowiak (2008),[14] with coalition theory or an advocacy coalition framework, "policy change happens through coordinated activity among a range of individuals with the same core policy beliefs." Policy windows or agenda setting theory might also be relevant. In this case, "Policy can be changed during a window of opportunity when advocates successfully connect two or more components of the policy process: the way a problem is defined, the policy solution to the problem or the political climate surrounding their issue." It might also be useful to draw from messaging and frameworks theory, which may be useful when "The issue needs to be redefined as part of a larger campaign or effort. A key focus of the work is on increasing awareness, agreement on problem definition, or on the issue's salience".

Once an analysis of the decision-making process and theory of change has been conducted, one can begin thinking about concrete actions that are required for a target audience.

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[9] TASCO, SIPU International. (2011). *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change.*

[10] EvalPartners. (2013). *Building an Enabling Environment for Evaluation: An EvalPartners Advocacy Strategy*

[11] Sabatier P. (1999). *Theories of the Policy Process*, Boulder, CO.

[12] Kingdon J. (1995). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Second Edition). Harper Collins College.

[13] Tversky A., Kahneman D. (1981). *The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice*. Science, 211(4481): 453-458.

[14] Stachowiak S. (2008). *Pathways for Change: Six theories about how policy change happens*. Organizational Research Services, Seattle, WA. For full references of other authors, see Stachowiak (2008)