

# Sustainable Energy for All - A Brief Guide to Advocacy Planning

Prepared by UNDP on behalf of Sustainable Energy for All

## The International Year of Sustainable Energy for All 2012

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All (IYSEFA) to increase awareness and promote action on today's pressing sustainable energy issues, including modern energy services for all, access to affordable energy, energy efficiency and the sustainability of energy sources and use.

IYSEFA will draw the international community into a dialogue about how to achieve universal access to sustainable energy. Supporters of the Year can be driving and pivotal forces in inspiring national commitments and actions towards this goal.

### Advocacy

***"Achieving sustainable energy for all is an ambitious but achievable goal."***

UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon

***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world."***

Margaret Mead

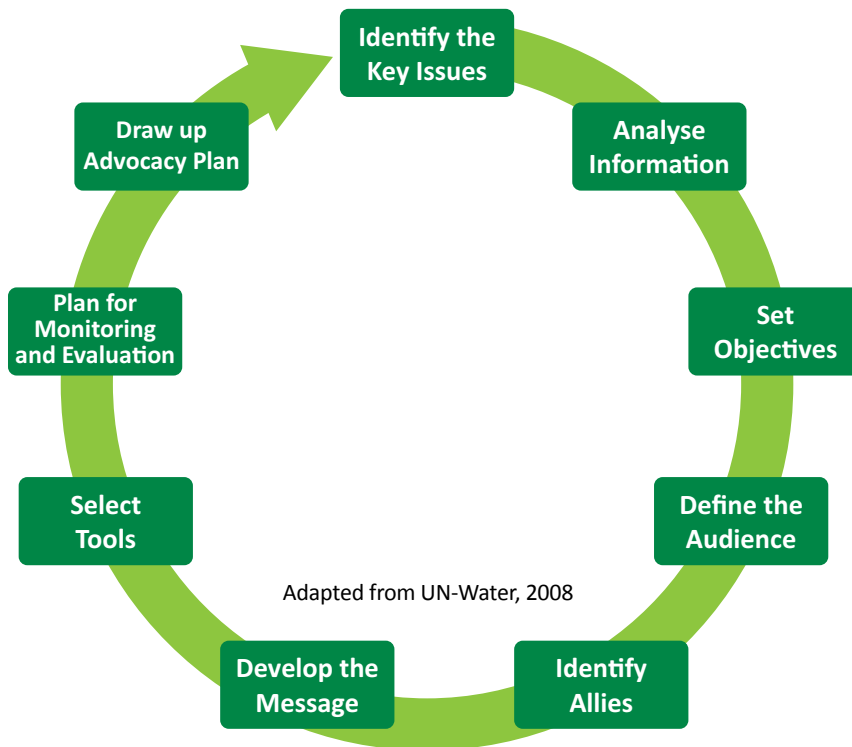
Effective advocacy strategies underpin the success of international years. IYSEFA is a unique opportunity and platform to raise national public awareness and influence policies, commitments and action for the sustainable energy for all goal.

Advocacy is considered the process of managing information and knowledge strategically to change or influence policies and practices that affect the lives of people – particularly the disadvantaged. Advocacy happens when individuals or groups speak up, draw attention to an important issue, take action and direct decision makers towards solutions. All partners in government, private sector and civil society have a role to play in the success of the Year, and can commit to concrete actions to change the status quo.

### Key steps and elements of an effective advocacy strategy and campaign

Effective advocacy strategies need good planning. Typically, information and education are needed to create support for change. Well-thought-out communication is key to educating, changing perceptions and mobilizing support of different audiences. The illustration below shows important steps in planning and implementing advocacy work. Paying attention to these steps helps to measure and assess the effectiveness and impact of advocacy and communication efforts.

### Advocacy Planning Cycle:



The key questions associated with the advocacy planning cycle are:

- Identifying the key issues: what do we want to change?
- Analyzing information: what do we already know about the issue and whom do we want to influence?
- Setting objective: what are our specific advocacy objectives?
- Defining audiences: whom do we want to influence and what is our call to action?
- Identifying allies: with whom can we work?
- Developing the messages and selecting the tools: how can we best reach our audiences?
- Monitoring and evaluating: how can we measure the impact of our efforts?

## Answering the key questions and planning your activities

### Identifying the issues: what do we want to change?

The International Year of Sustainable Energy for All focuses on improving global access to sustainable, affordable and environmentally sound energy services and resources. One in three persons in the world does not have reliable access or any access at all to electricity. Three billion people rely on traditional biomass and coal to cook and heat their homes, resulting in millions of deaths caused by smoke pollution every year. Fossil fuel-based energy also contributes significantly to climate change. The consequences of this lack of modern energy services, and of climate change, are predominantly borne by the world's poor.

Providing sustainable energy for all will improve equality, power sustainable economies, preserve the environment and reduce the risks of climate change. To this end, the UN Secretary General has set three objectives for the international community to achieve by 2030:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy services
- Double the rate of improvement of energy efficiency
- Double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

Achieving sustainable energy for all is both necessary and feasible – we know what needs to be done. As a start, the information in this advocacy kit can help you identify which issues are the most critical in your local and national context.

Analyzing information and data: what do we already know and what information can we use?

To begin, collect information and data on the identified issues and on the perspectives and interests of important stakeholders. To ensure credibility with your target audience, you need to be well informed and familiar with more than just the key facts. For regional activities, you will need specific information on your region including the special circumstantial problems people are facing. Local data will be most persuasive to local media and politicians. You can find recommended information resources on the [IYSEFA](#) website and approach your local UN office, civil society and private sector groups, and experts working on sustainable energy issues.

### Setting objectives: what exactly do you want to achieve?

To be effective, your objectives should be:

- Specific (what exactly do you want to achieve?)
- Measurable (how will you know when you have achieved them?)
- Achievable (how will they be accomplished given your resources and time?)
- Relevant (are they worth-while to all stakeholders and the real problem?)
- Time-bound (by when do you want them to happen?)

### Identifying the audiences: whom do we want to influence?

Whom are we addressing: community residents, municipal authorities, NGOs, local or national politicians, the private sector? Your analysis will have identified specific local characteristics, including the major stakeholders you intend to target, their attitudes and interests, and how changes take place in the arena in which they operate. The better you know and define your target audience, the better you will be able to select the most appropriate communication and advocacy tools to reach and influence them.

### Identifying allies: with whom can we work?

Start by gathering information on potential partners – who are persons and organizations interested in the same results; interested in influencing decision-makers; who are experts, activists, community leaders; what are their attributes? Remember to reach out to less conventional groups. Approach a wide range of partners with an outline of activities and events to discuss, and agree upon their involvement and support. Discuss their participation by focusing on their self-interest and by stressing the benefits of supporting a good cause, for example increased positive visibility in the community or with the general public.

### Developing the messages and selecting the tools: how can we best reach our audience?

Your message is the overall perception the audience has of your standpoint. A good message is simple, direct and results-oriented. Usually, a secondary message is needed to explain how the objective of your primary message will be met. It also acts to soothe fears, meet needs and build confidence in the audience. To develop clear messages, transform your data and information into points that your audiences can relate to. Here, sound bites, slogans, or short claims are often best: “sustainable energy for all” is an example. Turn dry facts and statistics into easy-to-remember, clear messages and lively stories. Be consistent and repeat the message, often.

Pay special attention to messages which are both action and solution-oriented: besides pointing out the many energy-related problems, stress as well how specifically improving sustainable energy access is achievable in your local or national context. For example, explain to local politicians that investments in sustainable energy access will yield considerable social and economic benefits – their support could help them at election time. The key messages available on the [Sustainable Energy for All](http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org) website can give you a starting point.

There are numerous tools that can be used for good advocacy work, such as lobbying, educational show-and-tell, petitions, posters, leaflets, newsletters, theatre, engaging artists and celebrities, working with the media – TV, radio and the press – and more. You will usually combine several tools, but you need to look at a large variety of options first to find the tools with the biggest potential impact on your target audiences. Several communication resource materials are available on the [Sustainable Energy for All](http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org) website.

### Monitoring & Evaluation: how can we measure the impact of our activities?

At the outset, your clearly defined objectives will serve as yardsticks against which to measure success; during the planning phase you also define your indicators for success and make some decisions on what information should be gathered to track progress and where this information can be found. For example, if your objective is to increase access to modern energy services in a certain area, your indicators could include increased use of efficient cook stoves and modern fuels with numeric targets and timelines, or increased spending by local or national government for local service delivery.

Indicators should be drawn up for all aspects of the work: **inputs** (time, resources); **outputs** (meetings, visits, reports); **outcomes**, which are the result of your outputs (e.g. press coverage, debates in parliament, changes in policy); and **impact** (e.g. the effect of policy change on the lives of poor communities). Outcomes and impacts are of course more difficult to measure, but are ultimately the most important to evaluate your advocacy work.

It is important to regularly build in a self-assessment exercise to shift focus if necessary. Ask yourself: Did our message(s) reach the key audiences? Did we use the data in a compelling way? What else can we do to reach our objective? Are we using our financial resources effectively?

If no “hard” quantitative data is available for measuring the outcomes and impact, record whatever evidence – such as media reporting and process documentation – is available as systematically as possible. Presenting a rational argument for the plausible impact, based on what has been achieved to date, is often all that can be done.