

How to start doing advocacy for integrity in the water sector

Creating an advocacy plan

Advocacy is a process of influencing the attitudes and behaviour of targeted people in order to change the policy and practice of governments and other institutions. It is an essential part of a healthy society, ensuring that policy making is informed by the views of civil society.



Achieving real change is not easy. Great forces resist change, whether they are political inertia, vested interests or corruption. If advocacy is to be effective, one must be focused on what needs to change and fully understand the processes by which that change can take place. Authoritative research is needed, professional techniques for influencing others must be used, and communications should be creative. Above all, a clear and well developed strategy is needed.

Without a good advocacy strategy, one may still be able to raise the profile of the issue of water sector corruption, but will be unlikely to influence lasting change. Effective advocacy is more than raising awareness, it helps to change government policy and practice as well as the attitudes and behaviour of individuals and groups in society.

There is a huge range of actions that one can take to make advocacy effective. These include: undertaking research; organising conferences and seminars; publishing materials, such as reports, brochures and posters; lobbying policy makers; engaging with the media; and so on. The actions one chooses to undertake are dependent upon the chosen influencing strategy, which is in turn determined by the context in which the advocacy work is being done. The end of this section lists examples of actual anti.-corruption work in the water sector, these may serve to inspire your own work.

Developing an advocacy strategy involves a number of linked and progressive stages:

1. Organising a management plan to deliver, coordinate and monitor advocacy;
2. Identifying targeted changes – aims and objectives;
3. Determining how best to influence change – influencing strategy, target audiences and tactics;
4. Devising activities to engage different target audiences – action plan;

5. Monitoring and evaluating activities, outcomes and the overall impact.

The following section goes through these five stages, providing guidance on the processes to undertake and providing suggestions for action. To ensure that an advocacy strategy reflects specificity of location and context, it should always be based on personal experience and reflect that of partners or allies.

Strategic thinking is important. A full strategy does not have to be long; it is, however, needed ensure that people are focussed on the problem and show the route that will be taken to address it. It helps to clarify goals, objectives and methods of measuring success, and to understand risks and assumptions.

An advocacy strategy additionally helps to allocate resources and responsibilities:

- Communities need to know the strategy that will be taken to ensure accountability;
- Allies and partners in advocacy work must know the strategy to ensure effective participation;
- Donors may ask for a strategic plan in order to approve funding.

Organising to deliver and coordinate advocacy

This is a simple matter of agreeing to how decisions will be made; who will responsible for each task; how progress will be reviewed and how plans will be updated when necessary. Each organisation has its own way of working, but it is likely that someone will be assigned project leader for advocacy on water sector corruption. That person will also need to be the main spokesperson for the advocacy campaign, although for some audiences it may be more appropriate for the most senior person in an organisation to speak.

One may also decide to set up a project team of members of the organisation, including some external experts who are sympathetic to its goals. This team can develop plans, organise activities and monitor progress.

Identifying what should change

If the advocacy campaign was successful, what is it that it should have achieved?

An organisation may already be working in the water sector and already be clear about what needs to be done. It may be concerned about one particular policy, or one set of affected people or region. But whatever it is, the organisation needs to be clear about its objectives.

In TI's *Global Corruption Report 2008* (GCR) and on the WIN website a number of issues in the water sector and recommendations for change are set out. This may provide ideas of the work that needs to be done and where the

focus should be. The regional highlights and key messages from the GCR may also provide inspiration as should the risk map and diagnostic checklist included in the earlier section. The GCR recommends to assess the situation in your country or state or municipality against the checklist as a first step to undertaking advocacy work. This will also require undertaking research and consulting with key stakeholders in the water sector.

Once this assessment is complete, it is necessary to develop recommendations for how to combat such water sector corruption. These recommendations should be specific to a country, to a water sub sector and the local political and legal context, and should consist of a list of detailed actions that different actors can take.

These recommendations can be set out in the form of a policy position – a short summary (no more than four sides of paper, ideally less) of the problems; the reasons for concern; and recommendations for remedying the situation. The policy position can subsequently form the basis for advocacy work. The three policy papers written by the policy and research department of the TI secretariat may serve not just for ideas but also as an example.

To make advocacy more effective, the focus should be limited to one or two of the most important recommendations. This will concentrate efforts so that advocacy resources have most impact. The more easily the issue can be communicated, the better the chance of winning the support and involvement of other stakeholders.

Next, set out the foundations of the advocacy plan – aims and objectives. The aim of advocacy in this area is simple – to reduce the level of corruption in a given country. The selected recommendations that are focused on in advocacy work are called advocacy objectives. Ideally they should be written so that they are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound.

Objectives should specify the outcome being sought, not the activity proposed. For example, an advocacy objective could be: “The government to establish by the end of the year an independent a commission to enforce fixed water meters in each household.”

Determining how to best influence change

Start by developing an influencing strategy – setting an approach to persuade policy-makers to adopt the recommendations set out in the advocacy objectives. Perhaps policy makers want to address the issue of water sector corruption and are just waiting for someone to advise them on how best to do it. If that is the case, the task is easy – just arrange, and then publicise to whatever level is needed, a meeting with the people responsible and explain advocacy recommendations.

However, that scenario is unlikely: policy makers may have other priorities; may not recognise that there is a problem; or even have a vested interest in maintaining the existing status quo. In this case, to identify what 'channels of influence' to use – in other words which target audiences to communicate with in order to put pressure on policy makers to take action.

To develop an influencing strategy, it is necessary to go through a number of distinct steps:

1. Understand the policy-making process

To influence a particular policy, it is essential to understand how that policy is developed and agreed upon. A useful exercise is to draw a flow chart setting out all the stages in the policy-making process and who is involved at every stage. Identify the 'decision maker' (the person responsible for the policy) and other key stakeholders who are involved in developing policy and approving the decisions. Some research may be needed to complete this exercise.

2. Understand the advocacy environment

Be clear about the operating context in order to help make strategic choices later in the planning process. One useful tool for doing this is the PESTLE analysis, which stands for Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental. Simply list all the relevant factors that may affect advocacy on water corruption in each of these six categories, and undertake further research to fill in any gaps in knowledge.

Identify any related advocacy campaigns and learn from their experiences. Identifying forthcoming events (local, national and international) that can provide opportunities for advocacy action should also be researched and listed.

3. Understand your advocacy capacity

Perform an honest assessment of the resources available to undertake the advocacy and make change happen. Resources can include funds and funding sources, organisational staff and their skills, and the reputation of an organisation and its representatives.

A suitable tool to use here is a SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. List all the relevant factors under each heading and rank them in order of importance. Consider how best to utilise strengths and counteract weaknesses. At a later stage, decide which opportunities to exploit and how to manage the threats.

4. Understand the various stakeholders

Analyse the positions of the different stakeholders involved. A simple stakeholder analysis can be done by:

- Brainstorming a list of stakeholders (the people or groups affected by the issue or who can influence the outcome);
- Assessing whether they will be for or against objectives, or whether they are neutral;
- Ranking your allies, opponents and ‘neutrals’ in order of how much influence they have over the decision maker.

Engage with some of the top-ranked allies, to persuade them to be more active on the issue and, if appropriate, to form an advocacy alliance. This is a vitally important step since forming such partnerships and coalitions give advocacy efforts a far greater reach. Some of the top-ranked neutrals can also be targeted to persuade them to agree with objectives. This may be simply done by showing overlapping interests and how the change advocated may be beneficial to them. Opponents on the other hand, need to be monitored so that their arguments can be understood and countered.

5. Making choices

It is necessary to make some hard choices to concentrate resources and tailor the approach and follow up contacts with sustained engagement. With a focus on a few target audiences, there is a greater chance of making a breakthrough. A more superficial and untargeted communication with a wider range of audiences is likely to have little impact.

Based on the stakeholder analysis, and informed by an understanding of the policy process, advocacy environment and your advocacy capacity, one can now choose what approach to take and which stakeholders will be the channels of influence and therefore target audiences.

6. Determining messages and tactics

At this stage, determine some tactical choices such as what ‘tone of voice’ to adopt in advocacy work (i.e. conciliatory or oppositional, authoritative or outraged, etc.). With this in mind, define the core message – a short sentence setting out the most important message to get across to your audiences. This will help ensure communication is focused and coherent across the campaign.

7. Devising activities to engage the target audiences

Develop an action plan for each of the selected target audiences, setting out what they should do; how to engage with them; what materials need to be produced; and what actions to organise or undertake.

Every communication activity or publication should be designed to achieve a specific purpose for a specific target audience, and get closer to the objectives. The most suitable method of communication will depend on the audience and the message to be conveyed.

- **Policy makers and opinion formers**

Policy makers and opinion formers (i.e. academics, politicians, community leaders, etc.) need detailed messages supported by rational arguments based on good evidence. Communications with this group should be personalised – letters, phone calls, meetings, etc.

- **Public audiences**

Communicate with public audiences using simple messages presented in an interesting and emotive way. There are advantages in being creative in designing these activities as they increase the chance of being noticed. Apart from using the media, there are many other ways of communicating with the public, including posters, brochures, open meetings, street theatre and other events.

- **The media**

Media coverage can be gained in a number of ways, depending on the type of media targeted. The aim should be to achieve more than a small article about a workshop or seminar – both high-profile and in-depth coverage that relates to the issue of corruption and the condition of the water infrastructure and governance are necessary.

High-profile coverage can come from organising stunts and other photo-opportunities. Newspapers and TV are more likely to cover the story if there are visual images they can use. The more creative the tactics, the greater chance of the story being covered.

In-depth coverage in newspaper and magazines can result from encouraging journalists to write articles examining water corruption. Help them by providing all the information and contacts that they will need, or persuade the editor to include an op-ed published under the organisations name.

In-depth coverage on radio and TV may come from persuading journalists to do investigations, but you can also obtain good results from live debates, interviews and phone-in shows. The best approach is to build direct and personal relationships with journalists, editors and producers. Not only will they be more responsive to people they know, they will be able to provide advice on the best approach to take. Don't just rely on a press release – get on the phone and talk to your contacts!

8. Conclusion

Whatever activities are undertaken, it is important to monitor outcomes and adjust plans accordingly. Share plans and experiences (both positive and negative) with others through the WIN website.

Anti-corruption work underway in the water sector

Citizens report cards in Bangalore

The Public Affairs Foundation of Bangalore, India, introduced Citizen Report Cards (CRCs) in 1994 due to the poor quality of service delivery and low levels of public accountability. Citizen report cards capture feedback from the poor and other marginalised groups about the quality of public service delivery. A seven-point rating scale was used to quantify levels of citizen satisfaction levels with regard to service delivery, dimensions of corruption, staff behaviour, etc.

The CRCs findings were widely publicised through the media. This focus allows personal stories about corruption to be scaled up into a powerful collective body of evidence. The CRCs empowered citizens and agencies with information and contributed to a significant increase in citizen satisfaction with the services and a visible decline in corruption.

Public officials were brought together for initiating discussions and addressing issues exposed through these findings through workshops and seminars, which saw active participation from civic groups. Increased public awareness on government inefficiencies and other related concerns triggered the formation of more than 100 civic groups in different parts of India, as well as the launch of many citizen state campaigns for transparent public management. The report card exercise was repeated in 1999, to provide a progress report in which a partial improvement in some areas was noted. Four out of eight public agencies surveyed had initiated steps to resolve customer dissatisfaction.

Integrity pacts for water and sewerage contracting in Pakistan

A no-bribes TI *Integrity Pact* agreement was signed between the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and Transparency International Pakistan in relation to the awarding of contracts for a major water project in the city. This resulted in a clean and open bidding process, monitored by Transparency International. The pact covered contracts for consultancy services and for all the physical works and supplies associated with the project. Transparency International Pakistan executed the first phase of the project in 2002 and the *Integrity Pact* was signed by all participating consultants and contractors involved in the Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme. The whole process resulted in total saving of over 15 percent.

Kecamatan development project

The World Bank-supported Kecamatan Development Project (KDP) in Indonesia is fighting corruption at the grassroots in the Kecamatan. The programme covers a scope of more than 34,000 villages across the country and has supported Indonesia's water sector by building 7,178 clean water supply units, 2,904 sanitation units and 7,326 irrigation systems.

Forms of corruption included bribing officials to get projects, cuts made by upper levels of government, illicit fees, and under-delivery of materials/services. As a result the KDP built anti-corruption measures into their projects, which emphasised transparency and information-sharing throughout the project cycle. One of the key principles was that decision-making and financial management should be open and shared with the community. Some strategies used in the project include: Reducing discretion by fixed grants instead of flexible funding in different places; reducing transactions by sending money directly to district accounts; promoting competition by allowing villages to buy infrastructure on the open market and using public signboards, readable and shorter documents, (maximum two page documents for all procedures) and simplifying government procedures.

Three lessons learnt from these projects were that a weak evidence base about corruption often hinders effective anti-corruption work, and that corruption is dynamic and changes form, thus action must account for different contexts. Finally, that monitoring and response are key to success.

The Kerala sanitation programme

Corruption problems contributed to poor sanitation and hygiene in highly populated regions of Kerala. These arose from complex planning, construction and provision process involves large sums of public money and many different actors on several levels providing numerous opportunities for diverting public funds. Jointly with the local communities, civil society organisations and the Kerala government, the Socio-Economic Units Foundation (SEUF) carried out a participatory and community-based household sanitation programme to support villagers building their own sanitary facilities. The programme has served more than 200 000 families in 200 communities and has become a model for other sanitation programmes.

Anti-corruption strategies used by SEUF included access to Information methods to ensure that programme rules were known by all and information was distributed to participants through a variety of channels and levels. The information related to technology, construction time and costs, and needed training classes to teach how to read financial data, develop construction checklists, and take part in socio-economic mapping. Additionally the names of households eligible for subsidies along with the introduction of complaint mechanisms were publicly posted.

This programme demonstrated the importance of including all stakeholders, especially those at the lowest level, for success.

Anti-corruption agreement in the pipe manufacturing industry in Colombia

In Colombia, the procurement of pipes for water supply and infrastructure has been vulnerable to corruption, fraud, collusion, over-pricing or substandard work quality. This resulted in the loss of large sums of public resources. Eventually, the sector's environment of mistrust and lack of credibility became unmanageable for the companies themselves.

As a result, the Colombian Sanitary and Environmental Engineering Association approached Transparencia por Colombia, Transparency International's national chapter in Colombia, to establish an anti-bribery agreement for the sector. In 2005, the agreement was signed by the pipe manufacturing companies (including all companies selling to the Colombian state). The agreement stipulates that each company introduces a general anti-corruption policy according to the guidelines as specified in the TI's *Business Principles to Counteract Bribery*.

These guidelines cover a variety of companies' operations including: Pricing and purchasing, distribution and sales schemes, implementation mechanisms, internal controls and audits, as well as the protection of whistle blowers. Moreover, each company was tasked to establish an Ethics Committee with had significant social and economic powers to take action against transgressors. The agreement has achieved sustained success, having reduced prices by 30 percent and serving as a model for other countries.

The 'Agua Transparente' programme in Colombia

Agua Transparente was initiated in early 2008 by the Colombian Ministry for Environment, Housing and Development. The programme aimed at enhancing the control over public funding and expenditure in the Colombian water sector by introducing mechanisms for transparency and accountability in pre-contractual negotiations and tendering processes. The programme marks a crucial step towards more effective national level legislative reform for preventing corruption in the Colombian water sector.

The programme includes making information about tendering processes and financial accounts, and union participation in project selection processes available to the public. A second strand of the policy is supporting officials involved in tendering processes and project selection. There is also a system of transparent hiring and transparent auditing that obliges contracting companies to publish all information relating to their hiring processes online. This information will be made available for the general public on the ministerial

website offering all stakeholders an equal opportunity to enquire about the status of a particular project.

The Agua Transparente programme seeks to identify and establish mechanisms of cooperation between different public actors involved in the tendering and / or project implementation processes. Inter-institutional cooperation is particularly important for jointly developing technical support in pre-contractual negotiations. The key principle of this tool is the creation of public awareness and involvement of the community in overseeing contractual projects in the water sector. Moreover, it introduces mechanisms for a periodic verification on the status of the project.

Public procurement rules in Pakistan

The department of Irrigation and Power, Government of Sindh in Pakistan, is working with Transparency International Pakistan for the application of Transparent Public Procurement Rules. Transparency International Pakistan pressed for the acceptance of the Public Procurement Rules, and developed a procurement manual for the Government of Sindh both to implement the rules and to train officials to make use of the manual. The manual includes standard bidding documents, and shows ways and means to be included in contract documents to eliminate or reduce delays to a bare minimum, making sure all time-based decisions had predictable milestones for processing and approvals. TI Pakistan plans to computerise the procurement system and provide services for preparing the website of the Ministry of Irrigation and Power, where the procurement manual and all contract awards and related reports will be made public.

El Cajón hydroelectric dam, Mexico

The use of TI's *Integrity Pact* encompassed the bidding process for various engineering works on the 1,228 GWh hydroelectricity plant, known as "El Cajón", billed as Mexico's most important infrastructure project of the decade. It was the first time the federal government, via the Federal Electricity Commission, (CFE) accepted independent monitoring by a civil society organisation of a bidding process in the energy sector.

Expectations surrounding the case were especially high, given the size of the project and the sector's reputation as being tainted by high levels of corruption. Some of the salient features of the project were the designation of a *Social Witness* (Testigo Social) as an independent and technically competent monitor, unilateral Integrity Declarations by the bidders; unilateral Integrity Declarations by public officials. TI Mexico met with each of the bidders and monitored the bid evaluation.

One success of the dam project is the CFE 's modified contracting outline and the reported increase in competition in the contracting process as well as budget savings. Following this first experience, the government invited TI Mexico to participate in four additional process, the most recent being another hydroelectric dam project named "La Yesca".