



EU-CORD's Agile Advocacy Framework

2022

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The purpose of this document is to present the framework for EU-CORD's 'agile advocacy approach' as anticipated in the Strategic Direction 2022+. This is based on the discussion outcomes of the December 2021 Advocacy Forum.

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Background

Where do we want to be as an Advocacy Hub?

We are known as a Hub that:

Advocates on critical issues that matter to our members through engaging with and lobbying major stakeholders.

We succeed when

As a collective, we have an impact on EU policy and the benefits of our engagement are identifiable, relevant and achieve our desired outcomes.

What do we mean by an agile approach?

At the strategic level, we do not have pre-identified advocacy themes. Neither is it the intention to pre-identify network themes at the level of the Advocacy Hub. Instead, this framework aims to encourage and support a stronger member-led approach where individual members, or coalitions of members and their national implementing partners are supported in their advocacy efforts – especially as it relates to EU level advocacy.

The framework, however, also recognises that there are some actions where the Secretariat takes the lead, especially where this relates to our engagement in other CSO networks such as CONCORD, VOICE, IDDC and PaRD.

Being Agile

- Identification of Advocacy initiatives are dependent on members being propositional in terms of topic and commitment
- Advocacy Coordinator has a good understanding of and can effectively communicate issues on the EU agenda of interest to EU-CORD members and their partners.
- We are not tied down to working on a specific topic on a multi-annual basis.
 - Advocacy initiative is completed
 - Advocacy initiative evaluated annual:
 - Is the minimum criteria to continue still being met?
 - Advocacy initiative is started, but minimum criteria is not sustained. For example,
 - Member commitment to the initiative is not sustained
- Evaluating and refining this approach!

Principles

Over-arching

- Need to have high levels of trust within the Advocacy Hub for groups to be able to work effectively, and, when necessary, quickly
- Increasing the voice of southern actors in our advocacy work
- Looking at new models for advocacy that decolonises current approaches
- Build response times and member confidence to respond to short deadlines and request for information
- Strong, well-informed but positive framing of messages: bridge-building advocacy, solution orientated and specific.

Advocacy Strategies

- Know each other well enough and a strong back-system that let EU-CORD member form coalitions quickly
- Work effectively and efficiently in order to find alignment. By the time we reach a perfect position, the advocacy opportunity might be missed.
- If it doesn't work, then just drop it – not being afraid to say no and succumbing to the sunk-cost fallacy

Setting selection criteria

At the 2021 Advocacy Forum it was agreed that there needs to be focus to the work. This is necessary to manage the workload for the secretariat and to ensure that topics proposed by members meet a level of criteria that will make the initiative relevant and feasible as a network-supported initiative.

Minimum selection criteria are proposed at three levels.

1. **Individual member advocacy initiative:** *where a single member would like to work on a topic with Advocacy Coordinator support.*
2. **Collaborative advocacy initiatives:** *where several members agree to work together on a specific topic.*
3. **EU-CORD Strategic Issues:** *where the Secretariat takes the lead in an advocacy initiative with broad support from the membership.*

The methodology to implement the selection criteria involves two stages:

1. The first stage which has the minimum criteria requires that all three of the questions are answered in the affirmative before moving to the second stage of scrutiny.
2. In respect of the selective criteria the proposal should be affirmative for two out of the three questions. For example, if the advocacy coordinator does not have the capacity to engage with the initiative, the proposal will be approved if a network member is available and willing to engage in the initiative on behalf of the network.

Questions

Questions that we need to live with as we work with and develop this approach.

- What does agile mean in a context where policy change takes a long time?
- How do we keep a long-term vision and not change all the time?
- If systemic change requires a long-term approach, what does this mean for an agile approach

Expectations

Members	Advocacy Coordinator
<p>Propositional in terms of approaching the Advocacy Coordinator with their advocacy request.</p> <p>Read and reflect on information shared by the Advocacy Coordinator with regards to potential advocacy or lobby opportunities.</p> <p>If committed to an advocacy action, to participate and be responsive.</p>	<p>Has excellent oversight and shares information in a timely and useful way to help members understand potential advocacy and lobby opportunities.</p> <p>When approach by members, works with them to develop and implement appropriate advocacy approaches.</p> <p>Advocates on behalf of the network on issues that contribute to our broader mandate, priorities and engagement with other CSO networks and platforms.</p>

EU-CORD's scope

EU-CORD's scope covers thematic issues that are concerned with the broad areas of international partnership and development cooperation in the fields of:

- Humanitarian action
- Development
- Peacebuilding
- Human Rights

Advocacy Selection Criteria

Individual Member Initiated Advocacy Initiatives

Minimum Criteria		
1	Does the topic have a European Union link?	Yes / No
2	Is this initiative in line with EU-CORD's current strategy and mandate	Yes / No
3	Does the member have capacity to develop messages and evidence base?	Yes / No
Selective Criteria		Yes / No
1	Does the advocacy coordinator have capacity to help interact with advocacy targets on behalf of the member?	Yes / No
2	Does the advocacy coordinator have capacity to help support the member to develop advocacy messages/lobby strategies?	Yes / No
3	Is this a topic that would potentially galvanise other members?	Yes / No

Collaborative Advocacy Initiatives

Minimum Criteria		
1	Is the advocacy topic within the scope of EU-Cord's mandate – humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, human rights?	Yes / No
2	Are there at least three EU-CORD members already engaged and showing capacity to work on the topic?	Yes / No
3	Is there a clear member lead or co-lead for this action?	Yes / No
Selective Criteria		Yes / No
1	Are there existing areas where the proposed initiative intersects with our member's work?	Yes / No
2	Is it politically relevant and are there identifiable opportunities for engagement?	Yes / No
3	Does the Advocacy Coordinator have capacity to support this initiative?	Yes / No

EU-CORD Strategic Issues

Minimum Criteria		
1	Does the initiative broadly fall under a cross-cutting theme such as climate change, disability inclusion, reframing partnerships and the role of faith?	Yes / No
2	Is the topic politically relevant to the EU agenda?	Yes / No
3	Are there at least eight EU-CORD members who agree that Secretariat work on this topic is relevant?	Yes / No
Selective Criteria		
1	Can members link it to a broader organisational agenda and understand why it is important?	Yes / No
2	Can we add value to a broader coalition of people/organisations working on this issue?	Yes / No
3	Raise the profile and relevance of the network to an external audience (visibility)	Yes / No

Advocacy Criteria – 1-pager

Criteria	Member Initiated	Collaborative	Strategic
Minimum <i>3x yes</i>	Does the topic have a European Union link?	Is the advocacy topic within EU-CORD's scope?	Does the initiative broadly fall under a cross-cutting theme such as climate change, disability inclusion, reframing partnerships and the role of faith?
	Is this initiative in line with EU-CORD's current strategy and mandate	Are there at least three EU-CORD members already engaged and showing capacity to work on the topic?	Is the topic politically relevant to the EU agenda?
	Does the member have capacity to develop messages and evidence base?	Is there a clear member lead or co-lead for this action?	Are there at least eight EU-CORD members who agree that Secretariat work on this topic is relevant?
Selective <i>2x yes</i>	Does the advocacy coordinator have capacity to help interact with advocacy targets on behalf of the member?	Are there existing areas where the proposed initiative intersects with our member's work?	Can members link it to a broader organisational agenda and understand why it is important?
	Does the advocacy coordinator have capacity to help support the member to develop advocacy messages/lobby strategies?	Is it politically relevant and are there identifiable opportunities for engagement?	Can we add value to a broader coalition of people/organisations working on this issue?
	Is this a topic that would potentially galvanise other members?	Does the Advocacy Coordinator have capacity to support this initiative?	Raise the profile and relevance of the network to an external audience (visibility)