

## 7 M&E FOR ADVOCACY: How to know when you succeed (or fail)

You have now elaborated your advocacy strategy and are ready to start advocating on your issue of concern. Great – let's go! But... how will you know if your strategy works? How can you be sure that you are on the right track and things are happening as you would like them to?

As mentioned in the previous sections of this toolbox, it is essential that you build in regular checks and moments for reflection. Discuss with your team, your partners and allies whether your advocacy work is on track, and what you want to adjust in order to stay focused and effective. The problem, however, is to figure out whether you are doing the right thing and whether your advocacy is really leading towards the change you want to see. Obviously, you don't want to wait until the new law you are advocating for gets passed and implemented, as this might take years. So, focusing on your final change objective alone will make you frustrated. Even more, you might miss many of the small but important changes that are happening on the way towards your desired change.

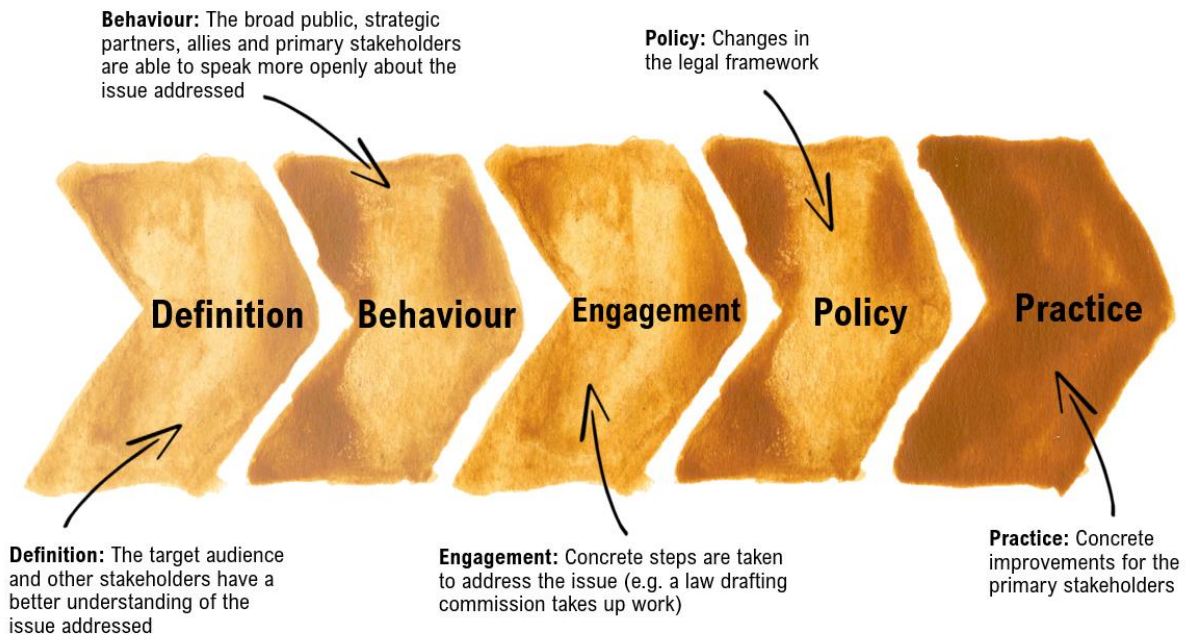
To avoid this, and to keep your motivation as an advocate high, there is a simple model which helps you to better understand change processes – and to see where your advocacy currently stands, and whether it is successful or not.

### The 5-step model of policy change

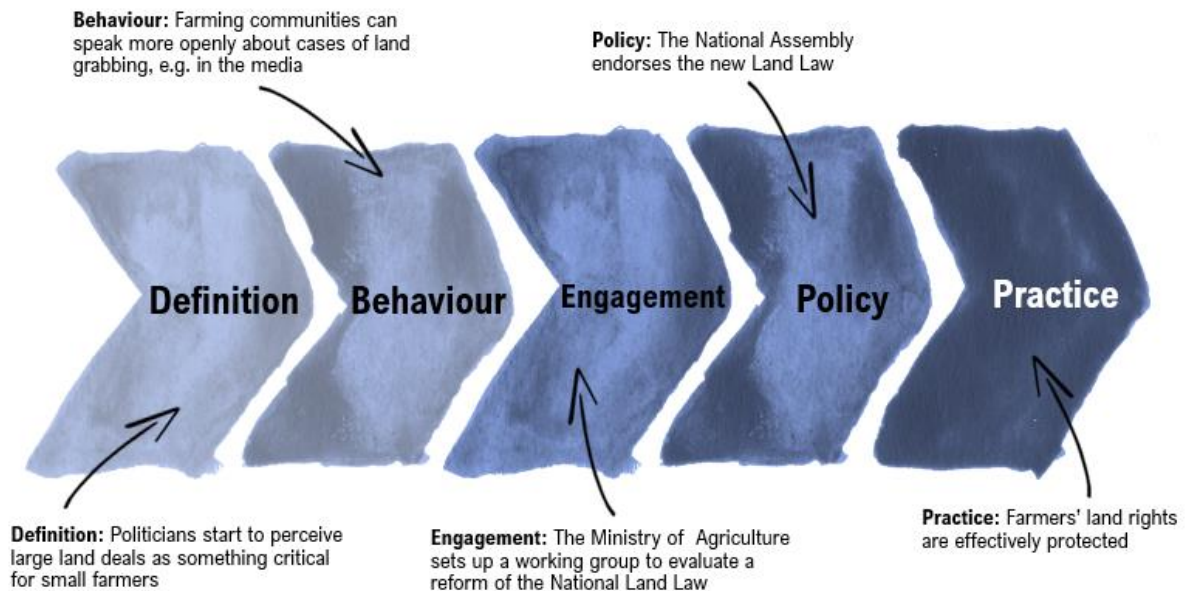
Whether you are advocating for a new law, for more funding to a particular community or social group, or for better quality in basic education – the change process you have to go through is nearly always the same. In principle, policy change (and change in general) is usually non-linear. It always starts long before a concrete policy gets endorsed and implemented, and it usually happens step by step. As an advocate, you want to understand these different steps to see where you are and what comes next.

A simple but helpful model divides the policy change process into **five distinct steps or shifts**:

1. **Shift in definition** – People start to see things differently: your target audience and others have a better understanding of the issue addressed.
2. **Shift in behaviour** – People start to behave differently; the broad public, partners, allies and primary stakeholders are able and ready to speak more openly about the issue.
3. **Shift in engagement** – People start to engage: Concrete steps are taken to address the issue.
4. **Shift in policy** – A policy, law, regulation or practice gets changed.
5. **Shift in practice** – Things start to change in real: The new policy, law, regulation or practice results in concrete improvements for people's daily life.



It takes some practice to apply this model to your own cause so that you can differentiate the different steps in the change process you are advocating for. But once you manage to do so, having this model in mind will help you a lot to better understand where your advocacy stands and what you have already achieved – although the final objective might still seem far away.



To apply this in practice, take your Theory of Change (Section 6) and discuss where and when your advocacy work might make (or contribute to) one of these shifts along the way. Referring to the land rights example, the following could be **relevant questions to ask**:

1. **What needs to happen so that politicians start acknowledging that large land deals can be problematic for smallholders?** And if this happens – how do we know? Possible indicators could be media reports, or recordings of parliamentary debates.
2. **What needs to happen so that farming communities dare to speak openly about critical land deals and demand their rights?** And if this happens – how do we know? Possible indicators could be first-hand accounts of concerned communities, or media reports.
3. **What needs to happen so that the Ministry starts reviewing the Land Law?** And if this happens – how do we know? Possible indicators could be official statements from the Ministry, or an official invitation to a roundtable with concerned parties.
4. **What needs to happen so that a new, better Land Law gets endorsed by parliament?** And if this happens – how do we know? Possible indicators could be ... well, that's rather easy to find out!
5. **What needs to happen so that the new Land Law helps to improve the everyday life of small farmers and effectively protects their land rights?** And if this happens – how do we know? Possible indicators could be first legal cases in which local farmers successfully protect their land rights.

Try to **formulate at least one example for each of these five shifts for your own advocacy** and define specific indicators so you can prove that the shift has actually happened. You can even try to define these shifts for each advocacy route in your Influence Tree – this will help you to check whether the chosen path makes sense and how it leads to the change you want to see.

Being able to define these five shifts for your specific change process will make your life as an advocate much easier, and the whole advocacy process more rewarding. You will be able to identify even small steps and celebrate them as an interim success – because you know that you are on track and heading towards the big change you want to see.

With this, you are getting close to a full-fledged advocacy strategy with defined action points, roles and responsibilities, resources, a timeline, and indicators of success. However, as things may not always happen the way you want them to, there is one thing left to do...