



➔ FACTSHEET 7

Strategy for growth and impact





A strategy is your group's plan for the future: the way in which you propose to grow your group to achieve your vision of its impact - that is, the benefits or changes you achieve for your members. You can also refer to Factsheet 11: Guide to Patient Advocacy.

Benefits of an advocacy group strategy

It gives your group purpose, helping to motivate your members, management committee, trustees, supporters, volunteers and staff

It helps to identify your group's priorities, and the resources you need (including funding) to achieve your objectives

It gives your group a clear direction to identify common aims when working with stakeholders and linking with potential funders

It determines how your group relates to your local environment: how to make the most of opportunities, respond to change and overcome any obstacles

Your strategy will generally look to the medium to long term (say, three to five years ahead), but it also needs to be flexible for the short term. No one can predict changes that may take place in the near future, and a flexible strategy can help you to cope with unexpected events.

Strategies can be developed by a few people (for example, a sub-group of your management committee) and then finalised after consulting your group's members. Alternatively, you may want to mobilise your members by surveying their views and basing your strategy on their responses.





Where are you now?

Before you formulate your strategy for where you want to be in a few years time, you need to identify your group's current position. This assessment must be as full and as honest as you possible to identify potential opportunities and obstacles that your group may encounter. You should also take into account your country's external healthcare environment, as this is likely to influence the services you may want to offer women with gynaecological cancers.

Healthcare environment	Possible services
Free system provided by your government	Information on treatment options; advice on social benefits; advice on services not offered by the health system
Mainly free with some contribution from women/ employers	Information on treatment options; advice on social benefits; advice on meeting additional financial payments; advice on services not offered by the health system
Costs largely or fully covered by health insurance	Information on treatment options; advice on social benefits; advice on meeting additional financial payments; advice on affordable therapy for uninsured members
Costs fully covered by insurance, with support for people on low incomes	Information on treatment options; advice on social benefits; advice on affordable therapy for uninsured members; advice on social benefits

There are several tools that can help you to systematically assess where you are now. You do not need to use them all. Instead, choose the tools that you think will best help you to develop your strategy.

Stakeholder analysis

First identify your stakeholders, who might include health professionals, health providers, your local and national government, and industry partners. Then for each stakeholder list their:

- Name
- Importance to your group (high, medium or low)
- Interest in your group (high, medium or low)
- Influence over your group (high, medium or low)
- Expectations of your group (high, medium or low)
- Needs from your group (high, medium or low)
- Attitudes to your group's performance
- Any important or unique facts about them.

It is useful to show your thoughts visually as shown in the template table.

Name	Importance	Interest	Influence	Expectations	Needs	Attitudes	Unique facts
Health professionals							
Providers							
Local government							
National government							
Industry							

Then use the analysis to decide on each stakeholder’s relative importance to your group and the strategies you need to adopt with them.

SWOT analysis

This helps you to assess the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for your group:

- Strengths: what your group does well
- Weaknesses: where your group could improve
- Opportunities: changes or trends in your environment that could benefit your group
- Threats: changes or trends in your environment that could threaten your group’s work.

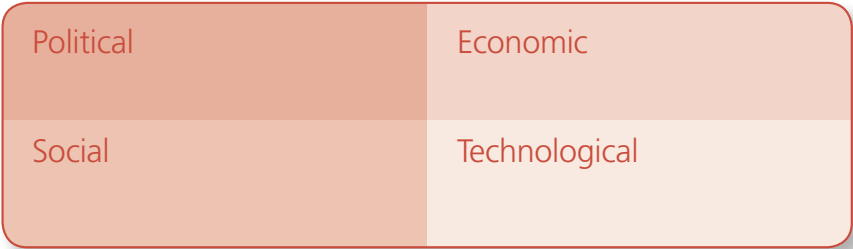
This analysis can be shown simply as four squares, so is an ideal tool to use when ‘brainstorming’ your strategy with a group of your members.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

PEST analysis

A PEST analysis is another good discussion or brainstorming tool that can also be visualised as four squares. It is designed to help you assess the future environment of your group in terms of:

- Political trends
- Economic trends
- Social trends
- Technological trends.



If you think it would be helpful, you can extend the analysis to incorporate legal and environment factors in a PESTLE analysis. When you have listed the trends under each heading, you can decide on their importance according to the likelihood that they will occur and their potential impact on your group.

Risk analysis

A risk analysis is designed to help you to identify and rank risks to your group. Using a scale of 1 to 5 (1= lowest and 5 = highest), for each risk you assess:

- How likely the risk is to occur
- The potential impact of the risk on your group.

You can visualise the degree of each risk by using a ‘heat map’ as shown in the table.

LIKELY TO OCCUR?	IMPACT?					
	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	
	Very high	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Very high risk	Very high risk
	High	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Very high risk
	Medium	Low risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Very high risk
	Low	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk
	Very low	Low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk

Once you have identified the risks with the highest scores for likelihood and impact, you can plan your strategy to help remove, reduce or avoid the risk for your group.

Setting priorities

Any organisation needs to consider its priorities. One reason could be the need to set your fundraising objectives to meet your priorities, but confirming your group’s priorities will also help to ensure that everyone is working towards the same agreed objectives.

A simple way to consider your priorities is to list each of the things you want to do and ask people to score them (1 = lowest, 10 = highest) based on:

- How much impact should it have on women with gynaecological cancers?
- How many resources is it likely to need?
- How urgently do you need to achieve it?
- What are the risks in doing it?
- How durable is it likely to be? Is it a short-term ‘quick fix’ or does it have a long-lasting benefit?

Then total the scores to find out the highest priorities for your group.

Asking people to complete a simple table is a good way of recording their views and achieving a consensus about your group’s priorities.

Setting our priorities

Please score the following list of priorities from 1 to 10 (1 = lowest, 10 = highest). This will help us to decide which are most important to achieve for our group

Priority	Impact	Resources	Urgency	Risks	Durability
A					
B					
C					
D					
Total score					



Implementing your strategy

Without a plan for implementation, your strategy may be filed away and ignored, so you must agree a plan for how to implement your agreed priorities. This includes assigning responsibility for implementation - that is, who needs to do what and by when—so your implementation plan should include:

- Each task or objective you want to achieve
- Who will be responsible: who will take the lead in implementing the planned task and reporting back to your management committee
- Timescales: agree a series of deadlines by which the task should be completed. The deadlines should be realistic, but not so far in the future that people lose interest in completing the task
- Measures or benchmarks: people tend to focus on activities by which they are measured or assessed, so each task and its relevant measures should be included in volunteer or staff work plans
- Rewards: it is important to acknowledge people’s contributions to implementing your strategy. Rewards do not need to be large or financial; a small gift of a framed certificate, for example, will show that your group recognises an individual’s valuable contribution to your work.

The table shows an example of a simple implementation plan for members of a subcommittee, who have been asked to commission a website.

TASK	RESPONSIBLE	DELIVER BY
Draft a preliminary site plan	Jean	Three weeks
Obtain cost estimates from website designers and hosts	Jan	Two weeks
Explore funding with industry supporters	Robin	Three weeks
Prepare a specification for the website	Marie	Two weeks

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Monitoring and evaluation

There are two important reasons for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of your strategy:

- To ensure that your strategy continues to meet the aims and needs of your group
- To ensure that you are accountable to members and stakeholders for the success of your strategy.

There are four key phases to monitoring and evaluation:

- 1** Planning how you will undertake the monitoring and evaluation: who will do it? How will you do it? When will you do it? What resources will you need to do it?
- 2** Monitoring the activities that are taking place according to your strategy
- 3** Evaluating progress towards meeting the objectives of your strategy.
- 4** Using the findings to and improve your strategy and learn any lessons for your group's work.

To be successful, monitoring and evaluation should be a continuous process so that any changes you make at phase (4) are themselves monitored and evaluated

Monitoring and evaluating your strategy

Monitoring

Planned routine and systematic collection of information about your strategy

Evaluation

Judging the value of your strategy to your group where access to the internet may be limited.





Strategy maps

Your strategy can be many pages long, and can be difficult for some of your stakeholders to visualise. A strategy map is another, more visual way of summarising your strategy to share with your members and stakeholders.

The map should show on one page how all the elements of your strategy fit together, beginning at the top with your overall purpose, followed by a summary of your strategy and how you will achieve it, and how you will measure your success. A simple template is shown here.



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