

Process for writing an advocacy note to promote intersectoral collaboration (ISC) work

Step 1. Strategic thinking

Before you start writing an advocacy paper to promote ISC work, think about its purpose and the information needed to present a strong argument. Include all relevant clusters from the beginning of the process and have a joint conversation to reflect on the following questions:

- **What for?** Define the joint problem and how it could be addressed together.
- **Which clusters should be part of this reflexion to address the identified problem?** Your argument will be stronger if all relevant clusters (typically Food Security, Health, WASH, Nutrition and in some contexts also Protection, Education, Shelter) are involved.
- **What evidence do all clusters have to illustrate and strengthen your joint argument?**
- **Who are your target audiences?**
- **What will be the key asks to your target audiences?**

Step 2. Joint drafting

- For joint strategic thinking and writing, all relevant clusters should be included in the conversation from the beginning.
- Any cluster could take the lead on drafting the joint advocacy note, but all relevant clusters are expected to input along the process and jointly validate. It is important to agree on a clear validation process and deadline from the first discussion to avoid unnecessary delays.

Step 3. Writing process

1. **Title:** Use a short and compelling title that outlines your key joint ask that will be further developed in the document. Consider using a subheading for additional information, if needed.
2. **Opening statement:** Open with a statement that gets your audience's attention right away, perhaps using a prominent fact/data. This is your lead-in and should be only one short paragraph with a sentence or two.
3. **Background information:** In two or three paragraphs, describe the country context, identified needs and its impact on the population. You can include in this section information on the needs identified by each cluster, number of people in need and priority areas. Describe work with national authorities, where relevant.
4. **Challenges ahead:** Describe the impact the problem will have if not addressed. You can detail here gaps and challenges for an effective response – for example, limited capacities for ISC, funding challenges, de-prioritization of specific activities, lack of supplies, or reduced access. Remember to explain why it is important to act and the impact if gaps and challenges are not addressed.
5. **Provide facts and data about the problem:** Data is important to demonstrate that a problem exists and to support your position. Look for facts that are relevant to your audience. It can be displayed in the text or in a visual format such as a graph or a chart – always ensure an ethical use of data. Some sources of information include: HRP/HNO; Financial Tracking System; IPC reports; cluster's dashboards and joint assessments analysis.
6. **Connect the issue to wider agendas.** Connect the issue to the audience's interest and explain how it contributes to wider agendas, such as SDGs, gender, humanitarian-development nexus, or the realisation of the Grand Bargain commitments on accountability to affected populations or localization of humanitarian assistance.
7. **Your asks.** Clearly state what you want your key target audiences to do. The more precise you are on **WHO has to do WHAT and WHEN**, the clearer your target audience will be in understanding what are you trying to achieve and what it is expected from them. Consider recommendations for different stakeholder group. For example: governments, donors, OCHA, the wider humanitarian community, development partners, etc.

Tips to write advocacy notes:

1. **Be brief.** Keep the document to 1-2 pages with short paragraphs of 1-3 sentences ensuring that in general each paragraph covers just ONE topic.
2. **Be clear.** Use short sentences and **avoid technical language, acronyms and abbreviations.**
3. Improve your advocacy note with good **intercluster editing and revision.**