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Guidelines on Advocacy and Initiating Legislative Changes

INHOPE



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The Guidelines on Advocacy and Initiating Legislative Changes were created with the purpose to support INHOPE member hotlines to advocate for enhanced legislations and policies within their national contexts. The guidelines include recommendations and strategies on the preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of an advocacy plan. They cover topics such as developing a strategic plan, establishing and maintaining stakeholder relationships, and initiating effective dialogue with policymakers. Additionally, the guidelines include a template on legal argumentation to support the change in legal terminology from "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material" for national legislators (Annex).

The presented guidelines were developed based on recommendations, experiences, and practices of six (6) INHOPE member hotlines from Cambodia, Mexico, Sweden, South Africa, the UK and the US. It is important to keep in mind that this document serves as a guidance and does not contain any mandatory rules that must be followed by member hotlines.

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Introduction

Clear and comprehensive legislation provides a robust framework within which Law Enforcement agencies (LEAs), judicial bodies and hotlines are able to act swiftly, identify and remove online child sexual abuse material (CSAM), work in collaboration as well as prosecute cases and support victims. Nevertheless, the evolving challenges in combatting CSAM, coupled with the rapid technological advancements, often render both national and international legislation outdated and inadequate.

In addition, the European Commission (EC) has adopted a proposal to recast the criminal law rules around child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation in February 2024, which broadens definitions of CSAM offenses, introduces stricter penalties and establishes a firm legal basis for the operation of hotlines in the European Union (EU) Member States. Given these developments, advocating for stricter CSAM legislations at the national level is timely. Many INHOPE member hotlines have already integrated advocacy and legislative initiatives into their core activities, reflecting a proactive approach to address these critical issues.

The aim of these Guidelines is to provide recommendations and strategies on how to advocate for improved national policies. While many seek a quick fix or a definitive guide on how to do advocacy work, it is important to note that each country has unique cultural, social, and political background, and it is vital to recognise and adjust any recommendations provided in these Guidelines to your own national context. The Guidelines are developed based on the advocacy experiences of six INHOPE member hotlines. What works for one hotline or country may not necessarily work for the other. Thus, it is essential to be mindful of this and choose the strategies that best align with your national context and way of working.

The Guidelines are divided into three parts—preparation of an advocacy plan, implementation of an advocacy plan, and monitoring and evaluation of the same plan. Each part includes key elements that lead to the ultimate success of legislative changes.

The Guidelines also include an Annex, which is a template for legal argumentation to advocate for the revision of legal terminology from "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material." This template is designed for hotlines to assist national legislators in better understanding the need for the terminology change.

Acknowledgement: The Guidelines are based on recommendations, experiences, and practices of six INHOPE member hotlines, which are APLE from Cambodia, Fundación Pas from Mexico, ECPAT Sweden, Film and Publication Board from South Africa, Internet Watch Foundation from the UK, and National Center for Missing & Exploited Children from the US.

1. Preparation

Before initiating any advocacy action or policy change campaign, taking time to prepare lays the foundation for successful outcome. It is important to develop a strategic plan, set goals, identify stakeholders, shape a clear message, conduct research and ensure resource allocation. This groundwork ensures efforts are well-informed, strategically planned, and effectively executed. Below are important elements for preparing an advocacy or policy change initiative.

1.1 Develop a strategic plan

Whether the political climate is stable or turbulent, having a good strategy and plan is essential to achieve your goals, as it acts as a roadmap guiding you from your current position to where you want to go. When developing the strategic plan, ensure it is informed by the country's legislative agenda and aligned with your organisation's overall strategy, or integrated into the organisational strategy or performance management cycle if feasible. Additionally, it is vital to consider any Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) or partnership agreements established beforehand when formulating your plan. Many hotlines create yearly advocacy plans to keep their efforts targeted, organised, and effective.

1.1.1 Set the goal

Clear and measurable goals¹ provide direction, identify gaps in current situations, prioritise resources and capacities, ensure team alignment and offer motivation. They also help in measuring progress and success, and ensuring that efforts are aligned with the desired outcomes. Essential questions to consider when setting the goal include: What do you want to achieve through the plan? What changes do you want to see? How does the goal of the advocacy plan align with the organisational mission?

Recommendation 1: Set both long-term and short-term goals

Set a long-term goal and break it down into quarterly targets or smaller, actionable steps to track progress and plan activities accordingly. Establish indicators to measure these steps and activities along the way. It is important to regularly assess whether the indicators are met, for instance, on a quarterly basis. However, when assessing the indicators, focus more on the approach taken to achieve the indicators, as this will support reaching the long-term goal.

Recommendation 2: Be reactive

Advocacy work often hinges on the surrounding societal and political environment. When setting goals, it's crucial to be reactive to ongoing events. By aligning your objectives with what is happening in society, you can effectively address current needs and seize the best opportunities for making a meaningful legislative impact.

Recommendation 3: Be proactive as well

¹ The [SMART goals](#) is one of the approaches that assist in establishing attainable and clear goals and objectives. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.



While it's important to be reactive to current events, it's equally crucial to be proactive in defining the changes you want to achieve. Set clear, proactive goals that outline your vision for the future to work diligently towards them. Balancing reactivity with proactivity ensures that your advocacy efforts are both timely and forward-thinking.

Recommendation 4: Be agile

Flexibility is key in advocacy work. As you pursue your long-term goals, be prepared to adjust your objectives in response to emerging challenges and changing circumstances. Advocacy efforts can be lengthy and complex, and staying adaptive ensures that you remain effective and relevant. Regularly reassess your progress and be willing to modify your strategy to better align with the evolving political and societal landscape and ultimately achieve your overarching goals.

1.1.2 Choose the issue(s)

Identify policy issues that you would like to work towards in the advocacy plan.² Policy issues may include the absence of a legislation or policy, an inadequate legislation or policy, or the lack of enforcement of a certain legislation or policy. It is important to talk to hotline analysts and other staff members in the organisation to identify the roadblocks and challenges they are facing that can potentially be resolved with a legislative fix.

Recommendation 1: Use an internal survey to collect urgent issues

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) from the US distributes an internal survey to the operational team every year to collect policy issues. The policy team screens the results of the survey to identify commonalities and concerns raised that have legislative solutions. Very often, the survey reveals issues unknown by the policy team and helps determine the final policy issues to be addressed.

Recommendation 2: Stay attuned to current developments or real problems

Choosing a suitable advocacy issue requires being sensitive to current developments and real-world challenges. Focusing on emerging problems often gives you more leverage and impact, allowing you to effectively communicate with legislators and highlight urgent issues that need to be addressed. For example, many countries currently have laws that are insufficient to tackle AI-generated CSAM. As awareness of this issue grows, law enforcement agencies are likely to push for necessary legislative changes to keep pace with technological advancements.

Recommendation 3: Prioritise and be selective

It is important to prioritise your efforts by being selective about the policy issues you tackle, especially given the limited capacity many hotlines face doing advocacy work. Focus on issues that align closely with your organisation's mission, capacity, and resources. Choose issues where you have substantial knowledge, data, experience, and connections rather

² Hotlines employ different approaches when setting goals and choosing issues: some establish goals first and then select the corresponding issues, while others determine their goals based on the issues they prioritise. Both methods can be effective; the choice depends on your preferred planning strategy and national context.

than pursuing issues solely based on their perceived appeal. This targeted approach will maximize your impact and effectiveness.

1.1.3 Plan in phases

Stay organised by breaking down your advocacy plan into distinct phases and scheduling activities for each phase. This can be done by creating a grid or calendar to ensure consistent progress and output. For example, plan to release a story each week that supports your advocacy goals, utilising the resources and content already available within your organisation. This structured approach helps keep your efforts focused and ensures steady momentum throughout your plan.

1.2 Map out allies and potential opponents

After developing a strategic plan, identify key players and potential allies that can support your advocacy work. You may look for vocal advocates within your legislative body who champion children's rights issues or online safety. It is good to know that advocating for online child protection and legislation relating to the removal of CSAM often benefits from widespread concern about child sexual abuse and exploitation, which can be easier to unify support across political lines. Identifying allies in advance helps reveal opportunities and facilitate more effective collaboration and alliances during the advocacy implementation.

1.3 Shape your brand and your message

Every organisation needs to play its strength when it comes to advocacy and initiating policy changes. Building a clear and trusted brand is crucial for promoting your ideas. If stakeholders trust and believe in the strength of your organisation, they are more likely to help you achieve your goals. This trust significantly enhances stakeholder relations during the implementation phase.

In addition to shaping your brand, craft the message you'd like to convey through advocacy thoughtfully to reach your target audience, whether they are politicians, policymakers, law enforcement or the general public. Additionally, be mindful of the sensitivity of the issue hotlines address and delicately tailor your messaging to resonate with your target audience, ensuring it is both impactful and effective.

Recommendation 1: Leverage the Hotline brand and expertise

Hotlines hold a unique position with their legal mandate to process CSAM reports, their close collaboration with LEAs and their firsthand knowledge and insight of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. Thus, this expert role of hotline can be leveraged to build a strong reputation and serves as a significant strength when preparing for advocacy work. Moreover, use the unique insights hotlines have through their everyday work, which politicians, decision-makers, and other stakeholders cannot easily access elsewhere, to create impactful storytelling. These compelling narratives and powerful stories can more easily grab the attention and effectively move your audience.

1.4 Conduct research



Research acts as a key component of successful advocacy work. Thorough research helps in understanding legislation in depth, identifying gaps and overlaps, performing international benchmarking, and recognising challenges faced by other regulators. Additionally, it is important to analyse where the hotspots are and how they manifest. It is important to shape your advocacy plan based on research insights for maximum effectiveness.

1.5 Build collateral

Compile existing data, research results as well as stories and specific moments captured in your work that can create compelling or persuasive points to build your advocacy collateral. It takes time to build and memorise the collateral; however, having a solid collateral is crucial to a persuasive conversation with stakeholders. For example, when you're talking to a law enforcement agency, detailing a specific moment in a case, even if you don't have a lot of your own data, can sound more compelling and specific than vaguely describing a point of view.

2. Implementation

Implementing an advocacy plan and initiating legislative or policy changes can be a lengthy and challenging process. Nevertheless, grabbing a few key elements during the implementation stage can help you in navigating the complexities and challenges that arise, and ultimately leading to seeing successful outcomes. These key elements are listed below.

2.1 Establish and maintain stakeholder relationships

One of the biggest and most important parts of doing advocacy and initiating policy changes is about reaching the right people to amplify your message, gain support and influence, build trust and credibility and ultimately influence key policymakers into initiating the changes you want to see. Therefore, establishing, maintaining and nurturing strong and supportive stakeholder relationships is the key to successful advocacy work. It is important to understand your surrounding and build up ties and collaborations with those who will be able to bring your message further into the limelight. This can include law enforcement agencies, politicians, policymakers or legislators, industry, other NGOs, or other strategic partners. In addition, advocacy is typically a long-term effort requiring sustained engagement. Building strong stakeholder relationships ensures ongoing support and the ability to address new challenges as they arise.

2.1.1 Relationships with Law enforcement agencies (LEAs)

Given the unique issues hotlines work on, building strong and trusted relationships with national law enforcement agencies is always crucial in not only the hotline work and operation itself, but also pushing for policy or legislative changes, such as expanding the hotline's mandate.

Recommendation 1: Sensitise LEAs on the topic

One common thing observed by hotlines is that the team in national LEAs dealing with CSAM or child sexual abuse and exploitation is usually a small team that often faces capacity challenges, leading to lack of resources. They also lack time and energy for relevant trainings to stay informed and up to date on the topic. The first step that Fundación pas México has taken in reaching out and fostering a positive relationship with their national LEA is by offering trainings on the topic to raise awareness about the issue. In particular, in-person trainings or meetings can serve as an icebreaker with LEAs. By offering in-person trainings by INHOPE³, INTERPOL or other partner organisations provides an opportunity for LEAs and hotlines to sit side by side with each other, demonstrating their collaborative approach in combating these issues. Thus, sensitising LEAs and establishing this kind of peer-to-peer relationship is crucial in building a positive, cooperative and responsive relationship with LEA.

Recommendation 2: Act as an open door to the world and facilitate global connection

The strength of the INHOPE network comes from its interconnected and global nature. Fundación pas México found it very helpful to leverage this strength while establishing a relationship with their national LEA. In the initial stages of building this relationship, Fundación Pas from Mexico informed the LEAs that they could serve as a gateway to global connections by linking them with INHOPE, INTERPOL, LEAs from other jurisdictions, and international partners like NCMEC, alongside providing training. Through connecting the national LEA into the global network, Fundación pas México observed increased motivation and openness to collaborate efforts in addressing the issue by the LEA.

Recommendation 3: Acknowledge LEAs as authorities

It's crucial to respect the authority of LEAs and give them the place accordingly during interactions. Recognising their work and showing understanding of the challenges in working in this field helps foster a more personal and respectful relationship with them. Additionally, it's important to keep in mind that the differing roles of LEAs and hotlines mean they may not always perceive issues in the same way or have the same resources as hotlines do.

Recommendation 4: Set clear boundaries and responsibilities

Setting clear boundaries and responsibilities in collaboration with LEAs is crucial. APLE Cambodia achieves this by detailing in their MoU what the organisation will and will not do, as well as outlining the expected responsibilities of the LEAs. By demonstrating an understanding of and respecting these boundaries while showcasing your expertise, you build trust and confidence with law enforcement, leading to more effective collaboration.

Recommendation 5: Engage with both key decision-makers and operational teams

³ INHOPE offers a variety of trainings to both hotlines and LEAs. In particular, CPORT trainings are targeted toward national LEAs. If needed, INHOPE is readily available to arrange trainings or connect INTERPOL for hotlines and their national LEAs.



Identifying key decision-makers within LEAs is essential, but equally important is building strong relationships with the operational teams. These teams are at the forefront of combating CSAM and child sexual abuse and exploitation and serve as vital points of contact for day-to-day collaboration. By cultivating relationships with both decision-makers and operational officers within LEAs, hotlines can influence significant decisions and receive day-to-day crucial support for their advocacy efforts.

2.1.2 Relationships with Politicians/ Policymakers/ Legislators

Governmental and political relations is at the core of initiating advocacy or legislative changes. This includes reaching out and maintaining good relationship with governments and policymakers at all levels, including different ministries, local governments, politicians, members within the legislative body or other key legislators. By establishing the right contact, you can gain support to open doors and drive changes to the problem you are addressing. It is also important to understand the different dynamics of governments and politicians in the country. Building key political relations takes immense time, efforts and carefulness.

2.1.2.1 Reaching the right people

Recommendation 1: Finding the hook

In order to reach the right people to build connections with, it's important to find the hook to reach out. This can be, for example, opportunities where a political party has raised an issue related to the sexual abuse or exploitation of children, or a legislator has recently given a talk on related issues. In addition, knowing where to break in makes your advocacy efforts more targeted and effective. For example, if you're having trouble reaching a specific politician, identify their connections who will be meeting with them soon. This can provide insights into the politician's background and interests, helping you approach them more successfully.

Example: Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) holds a Champion Programme where at the start of the parliamentary term, they invite politicians to become champions for their cause. Those that agree will participate a press release, have their photo published on IWF's website and their involvement will be promoted at social media as well. This public endorsement gives IWF permission to engage with those politicians and further build stronger connections from there. This collaboration has proven to be influential in achieving their goals.

Recommendation 2: Research on their profiles

To effectively reach the right connections, it is crucial to research the profiles of politicians and policymakers. Avoid wasting time and energy on those unlikely to be interested in your issue. Thus, you will need to identify individuals with knowledge and interest in child protection, home affairs or tech issues broadly, such as those with backgrounds in children's rights or violence against children, those who are former prosecutors, judges, lawyers, or defence counsels, or those who have children themselves. By researching their profiles in advance, you can tailor your approach to what will most appeal to and catch their attention.

2.1.2.2 Building relationships

Recommendation 1: Build personal relationship

Politicians are often more likely to listen to and support causes advocated by individuals or organisations they know and trust. Therefore, building personal relationships provides opportunities for direct communication, collaboration, consensus-building, and ultimately, the effective advancement of policy and legislative changes.

Example: Before the start of the new legislative term, ECPAT Sweden reaches out to all the members in the parliament. They will also invite all parliament members to a 1-1 coffee for more in-depth discussion on child sexual abuse and exploitation issues and building personal relationship. Though not all members will agree on the 1-1 coffee, sometimes these personal meetings lead to bigger meetings with the party group or special committee in the parliament, further expanding the reach for lobbying work. ECPAT Sweden finds this kind of personal relationship helpful and successful.

Nonetheless, relying solely on personal relationship for advocacy work can also be risky. As key supporters and legislators can be elected, unelected or retire from their positions, it's crucial to constantly cultivate new relationships with the next generation of influencers. For example, NCMEC, now 40 years old, has seen many of its early supporters retire over the past decade. Recognising this pattern, NCMEC has focused on creating new connections, understanding that ongoing and sustained advocacy success depends on continually engaging with emerging leaders and decision-makers.

Recommendation 2: Establish diverse political connections

It is important to be prepared for political changes throughout your long-term advocacy work. Elections can shift the political landscape, requiring you to reintroduce yourself, your mission, and its importance to new politicians who may have different priorities. Therefore, in addition to focusing on building relationships with current policymakers, it is crucial to maintain strong connections across various parties and political focuses to navigate these changes effectively. Identify allies and opponents, focusing on building relationships with allies while staying informed about your opponents' activities. This approach helps ensure your advocacy efforts remain resilient and adaptable in a changing political environment.

Recommendation 3: Find a champion agency and opportunities in the legislation

Identify a champion within the legislative body. Having good champions can kick doors in, table amendments, and facilitate legislative process. While success is not assured, their support can accelerate progress and foster crucial connections that advance your advocacy goal.

Recommendation 4: Don't forget the staffer

Staffers⁴, particularly advisors, can be your key to reaching legislators. Thus, it is important to build good relationships with staffers and engage with them to gain valuable insights about legislators' interests and priorities. You can ask staffers about their boss's current interests and goals. Sometimes, a legislator's passion is sparked by something they read or heard, which may only be known by the staffers, and knowing this can help you identify and reach more key players and tailor your advocacy efforts effectively.

Example: Supporting staffers to build strong relationships is an important part of NCMEC's advocacy strategy. Recognising that staffers juggle multiple responsibilities and demands, NCMEC simplifies their workload by providing comprehensive information and data on relevant issues, particularly those related to child sexual abuse and exploitation. This approach fosters trust and reliability with staffers, ensuring they turn to NCMEC for assistance. Moreover, NCMEC maintains a high

⁴ A "staffer" refers to a person who works on the staff of a political office or organisation.

level of responsiveness to staffers' inquiries, offering tailored data specific to their state and additional resources. This proactive engagement further underscores NCMEC's expertise, commitment to support, and extensive knowledge base.

2.1.2.3 Maintain and nurture the relationship

After establishing a connection or relationship with politicians, policymakers or legislators, it is crucial to invest in time and efforts to maintain and nurture the relationship. Sustaining these partnerships and building trust ensures continued collaboration and support, which are essential for achieving long-term advocacy goals.

Recommendation 1: Stay connected with them

Maintaining ongoing communication with policymakers or legislators is crucial to staying on their radar. Keep in touch by assisting their constituents, providing information when needed, inviting them to events as stakeholders, strategic partners or guests, and updating them via email about new publications. Additionally, it is crucial not to forget the staffers and experts around politicians, as they significantly influence and shape policy decisions. Keep in mind to stay in touch with staffers and include them in invitations and emails to build a more robust network of support.

Example: The Film and Publication Board (FPB) from South Africa maintains a database recording the communication and interactions with stakeholder. They also ensure stakeholder inclusivity by making sure that they are invited to their events. They will also co-brand the event with important partners if necessary to strengthen their partnership and relationships. In turn, FPB is frequently invited to participate in or attend various events by stakeholders, thus having the opportunity to speak or engage with them on the issues FPB wants to address.

Recommendation 2: Build trust

Experiences have shown that trust is extremely crucial in supporting your advocacy work. Consistent interaction fosters trust and encourages politicians, policymakers and legislators to return to you for insights and support. It can be challenging to keep up with everything that is happening on the legislative level, but staying informed of what is going on and having reliable relationship in the government or the legislative body is extremely helpful. Regularly meeting with politicians and building trust is crucial for maintaining these valuable relationships.

2.1.3 Relationships with Other partners

In addition to working with LEAs and reaching out to politicians, policymakers and legislators, working with other partners is also vital to a successful advocacy.

Recommendation 1: Partner with local governments— All politics are local!

Whether you're working on major or minor legislative changes, it's important to not overlook the local level. Maintaining good relationships with local governments can pave the way to connections with higher-level decision-makers. For example, Fundación Pas from Mexico partners with local governments on various events, inviting them to participate, take photos, and increase visibility on social media. This keeps them engaged and interested. Additionally, it's important to keep in mind that local governments often want to know why an issue matters specifically to their state or city. They can be less

concerned with national trends and more interested in how it impacts their local constituents. Highlighting the local relevance of an issue will capture their interest and strengthen your connection.

Recommendation 2: Work with the industry

Though industry partners play an important role in the fight against CSAM, working with online companies on advocacy or outreach activities can be challenging. While it's essential to hold the industry accountable and ensure compliance, it's equally important to collaborate effectively to have the industry come on board on certain topics. Thus, the key to working with them is balancing this uneasy relationship and finding the common denominator on what you can at least agree up on. Don't get frustrated when discussions get watered down and focus on maintaining constant dialogue and building reliable relationships.

Recommendation 3: Build up coalitions with other organisations

When an advocacy goal is overriding, collaborating with other organisations and forming a coalition can be highly effective. Working in bigger groups can amplify your impact, create more compelling stories and ensure your issue remains prominent. However, it's crucial to stay aligned with your mission and be mindful of your capacity and bandwidth. Avoid getting lost in the coalition's broader goals and keep your end objective in focus.

2.2 Hold effective communications with stakeholders

In addition to a maintaining a good relationship, effective communication with stakeholders is what drives the advocacy plan forward. Given everyone's busy schedule, it can be challenging to convey your message clearly within the limited time you're given to talk to a stakeholder, and focus can easily wane. Below are some recommendations for holding an effective communication.

Recommendation 1: Do a concise pitch

Politicians and policymakers are usually busy. Thus, it is important to be concise both in writing and verbal communication when engaging with them. When reaching out, craft concise and impactful emails— avoid lengthy explanation or attachments to stand out among their daily influx. Keep all communications brief and to the point. For scheduled meetings, prepare a focused elevator pitch that outlines your objectives, reasons, and supporting evidence within their limited timeframe. Nevertheless, it is important to be ready to provide detailed information or briefings promptly upon their request or interest.

Recommendation 2: Strategic approach to meetings

It is possible that you get no response after sending hundreds of emails or invitations. Therefore, when requesting for meetings, make sure that you have specific and actionable requests and avoid casual updates. This focused approach ensures that meetings are productive and constructive, and your audience will be more inclined to engage and respond in the future because they know there is always a clear ask in your request.

Recommendation 3: Talk to the staffers

When it is challenging to reach the decision-maker, don't forget to reach out to their staffers. Experiences have shown that staffers often have certain influence on the direction their boss takes on issues. Therefore, recognising staffers as gatekeepers to communication is essential for the message to reach the right person effectively and efficiently.

2.3 Utilise the media

Initiating legislative changes is a time-consuming process, often prone to delays. When faced with stagnation or setbacks, utilising the media to voice up can be effective. By using the media, you can amplify your message to the government, highlighting necessary changes and bringing crucial issues to the forefront. Moreover, cultivating a strong relationship with the media can lead to future collaborations, where they may seek your expertise on relevant issues. This interaction helps increase the visibility and bolster the credibility and trustworthiness of your hotline and organisation over time.

2.4 Read the timing, be patient but persistent

Initiating advocacy or legislative changes involves navigating political landscapes, where timing is extremely crucial. It is important to read the timing and know when to push things further, when to hold back, and when to engage local versus central government. For example, election periods can be a great opportunity for advocacy in some countries, as politicians often seek causes to champion, while political shifts in other countries might necessitate a pause or regrouping of current efforts.

On the other hand, reaching your end-goal of the advocacy plan can take an incredible amount of time. It is vital to be patient and not get discouraged when things are not moving forward. Being persistent is key to navigating the lengthy journey. Continuously make your case and keep battering the door down, while always be prepared for every potential debate and ensuring that you can effectively brief others on short notice.

2.5 Teamwork

The successful implementation of an advocacy plan requires cross-departmental collaboration within the organisation. Each team in the organisation acts as an important part and brings in unique expertise that contributes to the advocacy work. For example, the Communications and Public Affairs team should work closely with the Policy team on press releases, communications and stakeholder engagement/ relations. The Operational team can provide valuable insights into ground-level activities and issues that need to be address or changed, which can be crucial for guiding the Policy team's direction.

3. Monitoring and evaluation

Even the most well-crafted advocacy plan does not guarantee success. The dynamic nature of advocacy work requires continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of your activities and strategies to ensure alignment with the end-goal and

responsiveness to current conditions. Tracking and evaluating progress and challenges can be used to identify areas where improvements can be made to inform future advocacy development.

3.1 Monitor and track progress

Monitor advocacy activities using the indicators established during the initial planning stage. Track whether these indicators have been met along the way: How many legislators did you reach out to regarding the issue? How many responded? Did any of them further introduce the issue to others or the national legislative body? How many 1-1 coffee meetings were held? This should be an ongoing monitoring process and can be done by utilising a tracker or chart to record all the information. In addition to seeing how many indicators you have fulfilled, it is crucial to track and analyse how you fulfilled them to identify what went well and what could be improved for future efforts.

3.2 Evaluation

While tracking activities is essential, it's equally important to measure and evaluate key results periodically. Did the strategy effectively reach the right people? If communication failed, why? What obstacles arose when pushing the legislation forward? The activities in your implementation plan should be monitored for their pace and constantly evaluated for their effectiveness. Identify what worked and what didn't and adapt your strategy to align with political and societal changes. This way, you will be able to adjust your medium- to long-term strategy based on these evaluations, reaching your end-goal more efficiently.

Conclusion

As emphasised throughout the Guidelines, advocacy efforts and initiating legislation changes is a long and battling process that requires many different aspects to be involved to have a comprehensive result. Taking the necessary time to prepare and develop a thorough planning provides direction and stability for the advocacy efforts. When implementing the advocacy plan, building and maintaining trusted relationship with key stakeholder is important. This has consistently proven to be a key in gaining access and pushing things forward. It is also the process that takes up most time and energy; thus, being patient and persistent is crucial, as success often requires perseverance and sometimes a bit of luck. In summary, as this is a long process, it is crucial to do it smartly with a sharp eye, while remaining adaptable to challenges and responsive to changes. This ensures the sustainability of your long-term advocacy goal and creates enduring impact.

Annex

Terminology change—The importance of updating the terminology in national legislation regarding child sexual abuse and exploitation

The text below provides a detailed argument template to lobby for the amendment of terminology in national legislation from "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material." It is designed for translation into your national language and can be shared with national legislators to support this crucial shift in legal terminology.

“Child sexual abuse material” and “child sexual exploitation”

It is internationally recognised that the term “child pornography” is outdated and fails to describe the true nature of the material. The preferred terminology instead is (1) **“child sexual abuse material”** and (2) **“child sexual exploitation material”** as the two terms reflect accurately the true nature of the crime and the abuse behind the creation of images and videos depicting child sexual abuse and exploitation (i.e. children being groomed, coerced, and exploited by their abusers).

Referring to child sexual abuse materials as “pornography” puts the focus on how the material is used, as opposed to the actual crime itself. It is crucial that the legislation makes a clear distinction between people making or watching pornography and perpetrators sexually abusing children and distributing such material to others which leads to re-victimisation. It is incorrect to categorise material depicting child sexual abuse under the umbrella term of “pornography”, which in its conventional and ordinary meaning involves a consensual sexual act between adults. Using the term “pornography” might lead to understanding such kind of material (depicting children in sexually explicit behaviour) as sub-category of pornography which in turn raises the risk of normalising, trivialising and even legitimising the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Furthermore, using the term “child pornography” raises the risk of conveying that producing material depicting sexual acts with children may in some circumstances be consensual and/or legal. As a result, this might even place blame on the child rather than on the perpetrator of the offense.

Conversely, using the term "child sexual abuse material" and “child sexual exploitation material” underscores the need to protect children from exploitation and abuse. This terminology reinforces the severity of the crime and promotes a stronger legal response. It also better protects the dignity of the abused children and acknowledges that they are grossly exploited victims rather than voluntary participants in a legal industry.

The use of "child sexual abuse material" further clarifies the legal status and implications of these materials, making it easier for law enforcement and legal professionals to identify, investigate, and prosecute cases involving child exploitation. By emphasising the abusive nature of these actions and their depiction in images and videos, the term discourages potential offenders by making it clear that their actions are criminal.

Using "child sexual abuse material" and “child sexual exploitation material” also reinforces the criminal liability of those who produce, distribute, or possess these materials, ensuring that offenders are held accountable for their actions. The global and harmonised use of these terms (1) supports international multi-sectoral cooperation in the fight against child sexual abuse online and (2) helps to educate the public about the seriousness of the issue and promote a better understanding of the harm inflicted on child victims.

International approach

The Global Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as the Luxembourg Guidelines, offer guidance on the terms commonly used at global level when addressing the exploitation and sexual abuse of children. This was created in cooperation with 18 international key stakeholders in the field of child online safety and has been taken into use and promoted by numerous states⁵, international and regional governmental organisations⁶ and international nongovernmental organizations⁷.

Hence, numerous countries and international/regional organisations are changing their national laws, official documents and use of language to align with international legal standards, emphasizing the need for a robust legal framework to combat child exploitation. Several examples can be found below.

United Nations

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) (1999) defines child sexual abuse “*as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (stranger, sibling or person in a position of authority such as a parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object for the older child’s or adult’s sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure.*”

Child sexual exploitation involves child sexual abuse and/or other sexualized acts using children that involves an exchange of some kind (e.g., affection, food, drugs, and shelter) (UNODC, 2015).⁸

European Union

The European Parliament, in its Resolution on Child Sexual Abuse Online of 11 March 2015, explicitly set forth that it “*is essential to use the correct terminology for crimes against children, including the description of images of sexual abuse of children, and to use the appropriate term ‘child sexual abuse material’ rather than ‘child pornography’*”.

In February 2024, the European Commission proposed a recast of the Directive 2011/91/EU (CSAM Directive). The recast includes changes in the terminology used to “*child sexual abuse material*” and defines it as material constituting child pornography or pornographic performance as defined in Article 2, points (c) and (e), respectively.

Europol’s definition of “*child sexual exploitation*” refers to the sexual abuse of a person below the age of 18, as well as to the production of images of such abuse and the sharing of those images online.⁹

⁵ Australia: [Child Sexual Abuse \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au); Norway: [rapport-lanzarote-konvensjon-en.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](https://www.regjeringen.no) p.41

⁶ UN: [Legislating for the digital age .pdf \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org); Interpol: [Appropriate terminology \(interpol.int\)](https://www.interpol.int) Europol: [Online Child Sexual Exploitation - IOCTA 2016 \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu); ITU: [Guidelines for policy-makers on Child Online Protection \(itu.int\)](https://www.itu.int)

⁷ INHOPE: [INHOPE | ‘Luxembourg Guidelines’ on terminology: A step forward in the fight against online and offline sexual exploitation of children](https://www.inhope.org); ECPAT: [Luxembourg Guidelines - ECPAT](https://www.ecpat.org); ICMEC: [International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.docx \(live.com\)](https://www.icmec.org)

⁸ [Cybercrime Module 12 Key Issues: Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org)

⁹ [Child Sexual Exploitation | Europol \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu)

It is also important to note that the European Union has adopted this terminology in all of its recent official documentation, such as strategies¹⁰ and briefings¹¹.

INTERPOL

INTERPOL promotes on its homepage the use of the Luxembourg Guidelines and explains that terms such as "child porn" should be avoided by legislators, law enforcement, the judiciary and more generally the public, as such language is also used by criminal organisations. INTERPOL calls on the global law enforcement community to contribute to a cultural change by being precise in the way that such crimes are described.¹²

National approach

Australia

The Combatting Child Sexual Exploitation Legislation Amendment Act 2019 removed the term "child pornography" from the Commonwealth legislation relating to child sexual abuse and adapted "child sexual abuse offence" instead.¹³

Belgium

Belgium uses the term "images of sexual abuse of minors" in their national law.¹⁴

Art. 417/44. The production or dissemination of images of sexual abuse of minors

The production or dissemination of images of sexual abuse of minors consists of exposing, offering, selling, renting, transmitting, providing, disseminating, making available, delivering, manufacturing or importing images of sexual abuse of a minor, by any means. This offense is punishable by imprisonment of five years to ten years and a fine of five hundred euros to ten thousand euros.

Scotland

In their national law, Scotland defines "child sexual exploitation" as a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act.¹⁵

¹⁰ EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse COM/2020/607 final: [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0607 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹¹ [Combating child sexual abuse online \(europa.eu\)](#); [Curbing the surge in online child abuse \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹² [Appropriate terminology \(interpol.int\)](#)

¹³ [Combatting Child Sexual Exploitation Legislation Amendment Act 2019](#)

¹⁴ [LAW - WET \(fgov.be\)](#)

¹⁵ [Child sexual exploitation: definition and practitioner briefing paper - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Norway

Norway uses the term “depiction of sexual abuse of children” in its national legislation.¹⁶

Penal Code Section 311. Depiction of sexual abuse of children or depiction which sexualises children

A penalty of a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years shall be applied to any person who

- a. produces a depiction of sexual abuse of children or a depiction which sexualises children,*
- b. publishes, offers, sells, supplies to another person, makes available or otherwise seeks to disseminate depictions as specified in a),*
- c. acquires, imports or possesses depictions as specified in a), or intentionally acquires access to such material,*
- d. gives a public presentation or arranges a public performance or exhibition of depictions as specified in a), or*
- e. induces a person under 18 years of age to allow himself/herself to be depicted as part of commercial production of moving or still pictures with sexual content.*

In this section «children» means persons who are or appear to be under 18 years of age.

United Kingdom

UK has adopted in its new Online Safety bill the terminology “Child sexual exploitation and abuse offences”.¹⁷

Conclusion

There is a need to update the national legislation to be better equipped in the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation. The term "child pornography" is outdated and misleading because it implies consent and legality, which is never the case when minors are involved. It is also undermining the actual seriousness of this crime. Using the terms "child sexual abuse material" and/or “child sexual exploitation” in the national legislation would reflect more accurately the nature of the content and highlight that the creation and diffusion of such content is abusive, exploitative and harmful to children. Adopting a more precise terminology to refer to child sexual abuse would be a welcome step in line with the international standards and recommendations.

¹⁶ [The Penal Code - Part II. Criminal acts - Lovdata](#)

¹⁷ [newbook.book \(parliament.uk\)](#)