



Commonwealth Foundation

Participation and Transparency Tool (PATT) for measuring progress in policy advocacy processes

Introduction to the tool

Welcome to the Participation and Transparency Monitoring Tool (PATT). PATT is an **easy to use scale** that will provide **indicators** and **numeric levels** to quantify progress or change in policy advocacy processes. It is designed to enhance collaboration and learning between civil society and institutions engaged in governance processes.

The context within which policy change happens is a complex one, happening with a range of different actors at different levels. Policy change can take many forms and although changes to legislation are often seen as the most concrete ways of making change happen, there are many other indicators of change.

The Commonwealth Foundation is particularly concerned with the participation of civil society in governance. The Foundation promotes constructive engagement - an approach to advocacy for social change and transformation that seeks a reciprocal relationship between civil society and government based on mutual respect, trust, legitimacy, transparency and competency.

PATT was developed originally by CAFOD and consequently adapted by Progressio. This version of PATT has been further adapted by the Commonwealth Foundation to look at the following dimensions of policy advocacy:

- A. Organisational capacity for influencing policy
- B. Constituency and representation building
- C. External linkages and communication for influencing policy
- D. Engagement with regional and international institutions
- E. Government engagement with civil society

These dimensions are placed in a table of five columns (A to E). Under each column there will be five **scalable** blocks of statements (1 to 5) describing each of the dimensions of the work carried out by all involved in the implementation of a **project**

	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E
Scale	Organisational Capacity for Influencing Policy	Constituency and Representation Building	External Linkages and Communication for Influencing Policy	Engagement with Regional and International Institutions	Government Engagement with Civil Society
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

It is important to understand **the meaning of the scale and the scoring system**. It goes from 1 (lesser degree of participation and collaboration) to 5 (greatest degree of participation and collaboration). The headings of the table (columns A-E) are the **dimensions to be measured**.

The statements filling in the blank boxes will contain a description of **what concrete changes we should be looking at on each level**, in order to compare those with the project performance. The following sections will illustrate this better. **The full tool is a separate document**.

Purpose of PATT

PATT will provide a **quantitative baseline and evidence of change towards constructive engagement between CSOs and institutions in governance**. The legal and policy environment for CSO participation is greatly uneven across the Commonwealth and this is why the use of indicators such as used in PATT will help to quantify change from different starting positions.

Measuring changes in policy and advocacy is difficult because:

- Change is hard to see and attribute
- Results can take a long time
- Advocacy deals with complex social change so results can be unpredictable.
- It is hard to capture the complexity of a) what has occurred and b) organisational learning
- It is hard to capture learning or change when unexpected or unplanned situations happen
- Traditional indicators to monitor advocacy tend to limit the discussion and do not contribute to strategic thinking

PATT attempts to address the challenge of measurement by using a range of indicators that have been designed and are registered in the Foundation's performance framework and can be registered in partners' performance frameworks.

How does PATT work?

The tool takes the form of a **scale** that looks at different aspects of policy advocacy. The scale has **5 different levels or steps** with a brief description of what each level represents. The wording of the statements in each level may be adapted to the specific context of the project but always maintaining the same level of scoring.

The decision making process to decide the level reached in a project can be done by **collecting the information in a participatory way through focus groups**. The facilitator can read the statements from the PATT and ask the group if they agree or disagree that the organisation is operating at this level. If the whole group do not agree then the majority vote should decide the given level. The decision should be accompanied by a statement from the group supporting their choice of level. There may be other ways of **reaching a consensus**. The most important thing is that all participants have a say and that **the decision is backed by a statement**.

- For the **baseline** an organisation will find the level that best describes their position for that element **now**.

- For the **impact**, in a year (or the required monitoring period) the organisation will look back at the tool and see if the levels have gone up or down or stayed the same.

It may not be completely obvious which level to choose as elements of different levels may be happening at the same time. What we are looking for is the level that **best reflects** the position you are now in. The levels are intended to be cumulative - we *assume* that what is happening in level 1 will carry on happening while relevant when an organisation moves onto level 2 and so on.

- **Organisations could move up or they could move down.** However it is not a judgement on the work being good or bad - it is about recognising how many factors, including elements of the external context, are interacting with the work being done. The levels are displayed with numbers on the tool to make comparisons easier but they might not automatically follow each other in such a logical path. They are like the milestones along a path showing where you are. However the actual path you take may not be a straight line.
- **All organisations will also not start in the same place.** In some places the government is quite open and willing to talk to civil society but in others the atmosphere is much tougher. Some countries may also have been engaging in advocacy for years while others are just emerging from conflict and so just starting to think about the work. Therefore each organisation will have to find its own place on the tool and two organisations places cannot be directly compared. If an organisation is lower down this is a recognition of where that organisation is.

What does PATT look at? Dimensions to be measured

As mentioned at the beginning, PATT looks at five dimensions as follows and explained further below:

- A. Organisational capacity for influencing policy
- B. Constituency and representation building
- C. External linkages and communication for influencing policy
- D. Engagement with international institutions
- E. Government engagement with civil society

	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E
Scale	Organisational Capacity for Influencing Policy	Constituency and Representation Building	External Linkages and Communications for Influencing Change	Engagement with Regional and International Institutions	Government Engagement with Civil Society
What does it mean?	<p>This aspect looks at how far the organisation is doing in its advocacy in a strategic way and where it is in terms of networking with others.</p>	<p>This column looks at the constituency of the regional platforms – the CSOs they are representing. They could be sub-regional, national or local CSOs.</p> <p>It is important to think about how regional CSO platforms are speaking for and engaging members and constituents in the advocacy process. How much do members and constituents understand the processes addressed? How much are their voices heard?</p>	<p>This aspect looks at how key, influential relationships are managed by the organisation and the level of integration of communications in programmes.</p> <p>Ideally, relationships with national and regional governments and donors should involve broad dialogue on topics of mutual interest as well as discussion of funding.</p>	<p>This column helps to assess what changes have occurred at the regional and international level. What policies or practices have been adopted by governments that changes the way institutions in government work with civil society</p> <p>In the accompanying 'summary findings' form, there should be an explanation of the external factors which have either stalled progress or caused a reverse, and how far regional CSO platform' work has been affected or mitigated the effects of this.</p>	<p>We want to know how the relations with government are. Is the door open to civil society or closed? Can civil society influence the agenda and change policy? How much space is there for civil society in the policy process?</p>

Summary of Findings

Country/Region	
Name of the Project	
CSO project lead or coordinator	
Month and year PATT conducted	

Column A score	/5
Column B score	/5
Column C score	/5
Column D score	/5
Column E score	/5
<i>Please note: Only some of the columns will be relevant to your project</i>	
Percentage change from last year (if this is not the baseline)	Column A: % Column B: % Column C: % Column D: % Column E: %

Agreed statements for each column. Include or refer to evidence to support each agreed statement (max. 200 words)
Column A agree scale and statement(s)
Column B agree scale and statement(s)
Column C agree scale and statement(s)
Column D agree scale and statement(s)
Column E agree scale and statement(s)
Other key findings (max 400 words)
Key learning for the partner organisation (max 400 words)