

## IFLA Internal Advocacy Capacities Grid

A core part of IFLA's mission is to strengthen the voice of the global library field. We do this by working to build capacity throughout the field, both in terms of skills and coordination within associations and teams, and in terms of new contacts and networks. Through this, the idea is to ensure that libraries are well placed to convince key decision-makers of their value, and so of the need for adequate funding and laws.

The need for such advocacy is likely to be as great as ever in a post-COVID-19 world. Faced with a combination of debts to repay and/or falls in revenue, governments at all levels are likely to want to make savings. This may be felt most immediately in libraries that receive direct public funding (as is the case for many public libraries). The response here will often be 'public' advocacy, aiming to bring the local population onside.

However, such public advocacy may not always be possible. This can be the case when libraries are part of another institution such as a school, university, research centre, government department or parliament, which can risk cutting their budgets as part of cost-saving measures. The same can happen when the status of librarians is such that public advocacy may be made difficult by an obligation not to criticise decision-makers openly, as can be the case within the public sector in many countries.

Nonetheless, advocacy – efforts to convince those taking decisions about libraries of the importance of our institutions – remains vital. In these cases, we can talk about 'internal' advocacy.

How to do this will vary from setting to setting, and so it is not possible to devise a single global strategy. However, a number of key capacities will be relevant everywhere – understanding the landscape, mobilising colleagues, gathering evidence, communications, building relations with decision-makers, building partnerships, and evaluating your advocacy. Clearly, advocacy activities are also built on top of real-world successes; excellent library and information services, including those mobilising partnerships with others, are essential.

The below matrix therefore aims to provide a framework for library associations, libraries and library and information professionals to think about where they stand on each of the capacities now, from 'starter' to 'advanced' levels. You can do this on your own, or through a group discussion. The next step will be to discuss how to move one box to the right in each area, and how to do this.

For example, looking at communications, you may have a standard description of why the library matters (box 4B). Your next step would therefore be to think about how you can adapt this message for different audiences within the organisation, reflecting their interests, and so reach 4C or 4D.

	<b>A. STARTER</b>	<b>B. BASIC</b>	<b>C. INTERMEDIATE</b>	<b>D. ADVANCED</b>
<b>1. UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE</b>	We are not aware of how decisions are made about our library, or why.	We are aware in broad terms of how decisions on library funding and support are made, and overall organisational objectives	We have a strong knowledge of the decision-making process, engage in good time, and understand well what strategic goals our host organisation is working to achieve.	We have a privileged position in decision-making processes, knowing how to shape decisions before they are made, and a detailed knowledge of wider strategy processes.
<b>2. MOBILISING COLLEAGUES</b>	There is a passive attitude to influencing decisions, and no-one is engaged in advocacy.	There is an awareness of the need for advocacy, with at least one responsible person ready to act when necessary.	There is an active group of people with a variety of skills ready to get involved in advocacy when needed, and someone ready to coordinate.	All members of the team understand how they can contribute to advocacy, and how to do so in an effective and coordinated way.
<b>3. GATHERING EVIDENCE</b>	We do not have any examples of the positive impact that we have on the wider organisation.	We have a limited set of examples and stories of how we contribute to wider organisational goals.	We have a good collection of stories and data we use in our advocacy to show our value to the wider organisation in different ways.	We can share well-evaluated evidence of library value to specific organisational goals, and can also draw on examples from the wider world.
<b>4. COMMUNICATIONS</b>	We do not have a clear way of expressing our value to the organisation.	We have defined basic messages which can be used with the person responsible for decisions about the library.	We have clear messages that can be adapted for use with different stakeholders in order to explain the value of the library.	We have a full strategy for how to communicate effectively with different groups in order to build support for the library.
<b>5. BUILDING RELATIONS WITH DECISION-MAKERS</b>	We don't know who is taking decisions about library funding, support or other related issues.	We know who is directly responsible for taking decisions about our library, and have periodic contact with them	We have regular contact with the main decision-maker about the library, and have also met others who are involved in taking decisions around support for our library.	The lead decision-maker, as well as others involved, knows the library well, understands your work, is ready to listen to your ideas and concerns, and proactively reaches out to you.
<b>6. BUILDING ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIPS</b>	We do not seek to engage with users or other parts of our organisation about the value of the library	We encourage individual users to see the library as an asset and have an idea of potential allies elsewhere in the organisation.	We actively encourage individual users to advocate for the library, and have relationships with the leads of other teams or departments who can help	We can count on our users to promote the library, and on heads of other departments to speak up for the library when decisions are being taken.
<b>7. EVALUATION OF ADVOCACY</b>	We do not evaluate the effectiveness of our library advocacy.	When planning ahead, we think about what did and didn't work in the past.	For each major effort, we carry out an assessment of what did and didn't work.	We pre-define indicators of success and metrics for all major actions, and then evaluate against these at the end.