Advocacy tool: Developing your advocacy roadmap

Please refer to the **toolkit** (especially section 6) for further guidance.

You have identified your advocacy goal. And you have decided on your overall approach for achieving this change, based on your analysis of the issue, the political and social context you are working in, and the context within your organisation or coalition.

Now you need to think about the sequence of actions and activities that will move things from where you are now (current situation) to where you want to be (the change(s) you want to see). This is your advocacy `roadmap'.
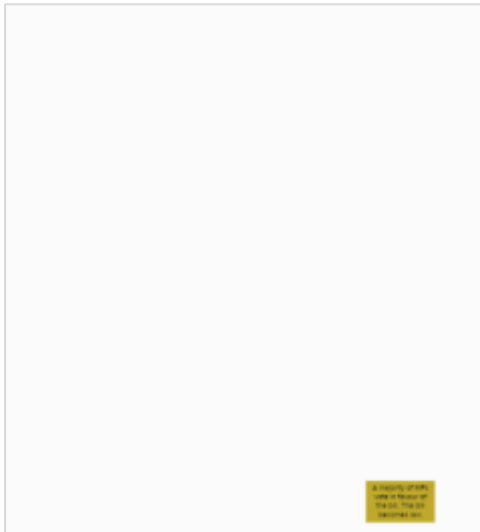

Exercise:

Try developing your advocacy road map with a simple device: `so that' (`in order to...').

By using the `so that' technique, think through the chain of actions and consequences that could lead you – in the end - to the achievement of your advocacy goal. This technique will help ensure there is a clear connection between your actions the and anticipated outcomes of these actions. This is important, given how unclear and undefined the road to change can be in advocacy.

1. Take a large sheet of flip-chart paper and some sticky notes, or use a virtual whiteboard (Mural, Miro, Jamboard…). Write your advocacy goal on a sticky note, and place it at the bottom of the paper (in YELLOW in the example).
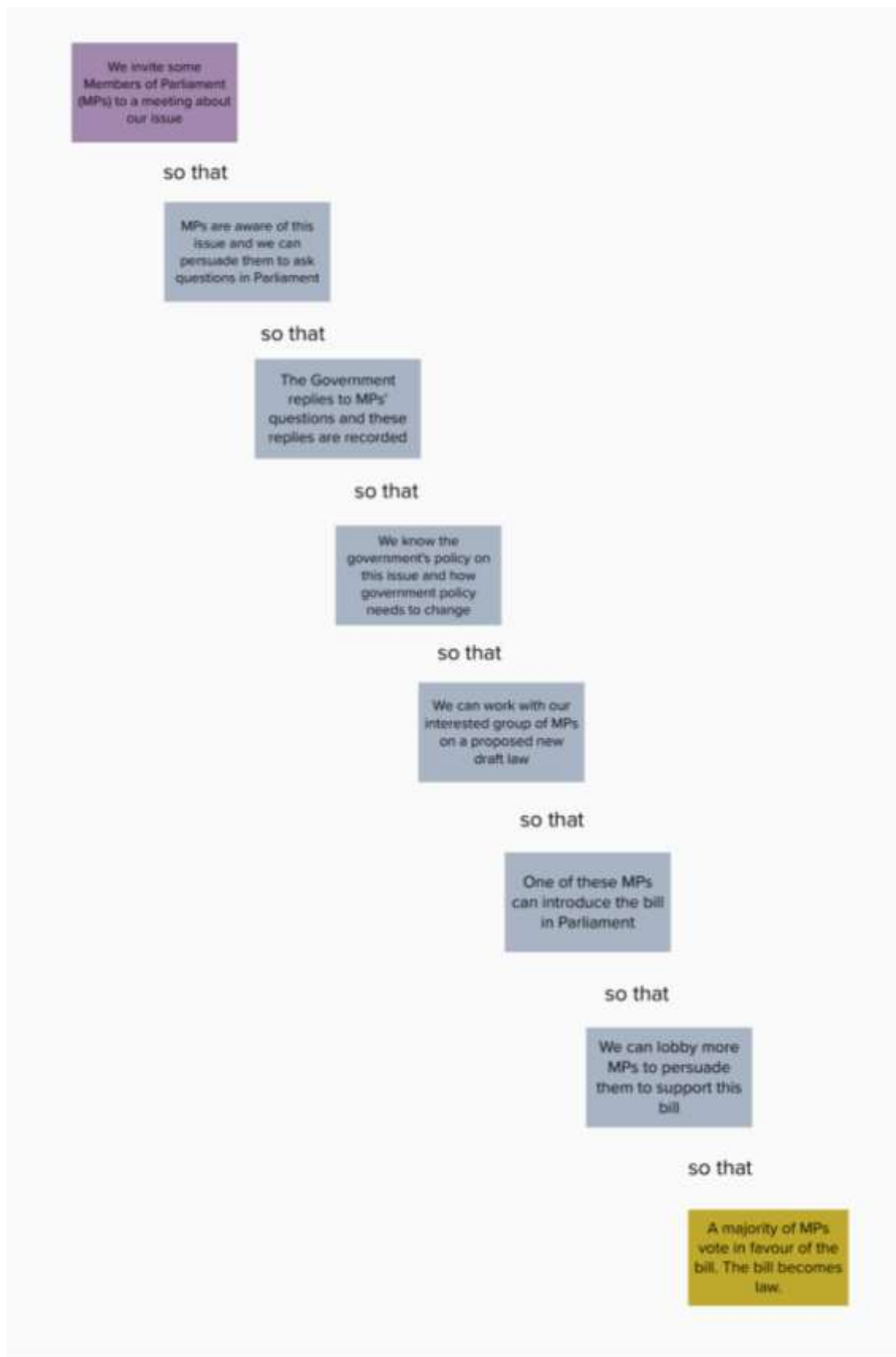

2. Write down the first action you plan to take on another sticky note (shown in purple in the picture below) and place it at the top of the paper. Write `so that' underneath.

3. Then, write down the outcome of the first action on a third note, and stick it underneath the words `so that'.

4. Repeat the exercise until you have reached your goal at the bottom of the paper. Here's an example of a completed roadmap.

We invite some Members of Parliament (MPs) to a meeting about our issue

so that

MPs are aware of this issue and we can persuade them to ask questions in Parliament

so that

The Government replies to MPs' questions and these replies are recorded

so that

We know the government's policy on this issue and how government policy needs to change

so that

We can work with our interested group of MPs on a proposed new draft law

so that

One of these MPs can introduce the bill in Parliament

so that

We can lobby more MPs to persuade them to support this bill

so that

A majority of MPs vote in favour of the bill. The bill becomes law.

Note: If you opt for a combination of `insider' and `outsider' approaches, you may need to draw up two `so that' chains - or more. Think through how each of the chains complements and strengthens the other and where they inter-connect.

Work backwards? Some people prefer to start from the change they want to see (ie their advocacy goal) and work backwards to develop their roadmap, using the connector `if'. For example `The majority of MPs will vote in favour of the bill if we can persuade enough MPs to support the bill..' and so on.

Just remember: Your roadmap probably won't go exactly to plan!
This is because your advocacy actions are generally intended to influence other actors (eg. MPs, government ministers, ordinary citizens, journalists etc) and you don't have full control over their reactions or their actions. Moreover other developments and events in the external context over which you have no control may occur and these may undermine or counteract your actions. So, be prepared for detours, dead-ends, and going backwards. Indeed, you may have to draw up a whole new and different roadmap if none of your actions are producing the consequences you were seeking.
The key to effective advocacy is flexibility!

Political chess game to help you anticipate alternative scenarios
1. Try to anticipate what you would you would do if the opposite happens to what you had anticipated as a result of each of your actions.(alternatively ask your colleagues to do this).
2. 2. Now try to think what action you would undertake in response, if the opposite were to happen from what you were expecting.