

ADVOCACY ACADEMY

GOST Framework

A template for *public affairs strategic planning*

Goals · Objectives · Strategies · Tactics

Why build a GOST Framework?

Public affairs without a framework tends to be reactive — busy, but not necessarily effective. GOST gives your programme two things it needs to succeed.

01 Communicate your direction

Your board, members, and coalition partners need to understand what you are trying to achieve — and why. A GOST framework gives everyone a single, coherent picture of your public affairs priorities.

- Align your board and leadership on strategic priorities
- Give trade association members a clear sense of direction
- Build a shared narrative around your policy objectives

02 Organise your team's work

Strategy only delivers results if the people executing it know exactly what they are doing and why. GOST connects every action back to an objective, so no effort is wasted.

- Every team member knows which objective their work serves
- Priorities are clear when time and budget are stretched
- Progress can be tracked and reported at every level

GOST Architecture

A four-level hierarchy. Each level answers a different question — and every tactic must be traceable back to a goal.

CORE FRAMEWORK

G GOALS

Long-term strategic direction — qualitative, standing priorities

O OBJECTIVES

The policy outcome sought — SMART, with an annual focus

S STRATEGIES

The routes to influence — the big choices on how to get there

T TACTICS

The concrete actions — assigned, with owners and deadlines

MEASUREMENT LAYER

Qualitative / narrative

Achievement assessment

Outcome KPIs

Process KPIs

Every tactic must link back to a strategy, an objective, and a goal. If it can't, ask why you're doing it.

How to use this template

1 Work top to bottom

Start with Goals — your long-term direction — then work down through Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics. Don't fill in Tactics before you have clear Objectives.

2 Use the explanation slides

Each section opens with an explanation slide covering why that level matters and how to write it. Read it before filling in the template slide that follows.

3 Delete the explanation slides when done

Once your GOST is written, delete all the explanation slides. You will be left with a clean, working strategic document.

4 Connect everything upward

Every tactic must link to a strategy; every strategy must serve an objective; every objective must advance a goal. If a link is missing, the action lacks strategic purpose.

GOALS

Long-term direction. What position does your organisation need to hold in the policy environment?

What are Goals?

Your organisation's long-term public affairs direction — the standing strategic priorities that anchor every decision in your programme.

WHY IT MATTERS

1 They anchor your decisions

Without goals, every choice has to be justified from scratch. Goals give you a fixed reference: does this advance one of our standing priorities?

2 They align your organisation

Board, members, and partners need to understand your long-term direction. Goals are your answer to: what is this programme ultimately trying to achieve?

3 They filter reactive work

In public affairs you are constantly pulled toward new issues. Goals help you decide what to engage on — and, just as importantly, what to decline.

HOW TO DO IT

HOW MANY

3–5 goals maximum. Goals 1–4 are typically policy-facing; a fifth can cover internal capability.

WHO SETS THEM

Board or leadership level — not the PA team alone. If not yet defined, get leadership in the room before proceeding.

WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE

Qualitative and standing — they do not expire and do not have deadlines. They describe a position, not a campaign outcome.

WHAT TO AVOID

Goals with specific endpoints ('get Article 7 amended by Q3') — those are objectives, not goals.

Think about this: *"If your programme achieved everything it set out to over the next three years, what would be different about how policymakers see your organisation?"*

Your Strategic Priorities

Enter your organisation's 3–5 long-term public affairs goals below.

Goal 1

[Enter your goal here]

Goal 2

[Enter your goal here]

Goal 3

[Enter your goal here]

Goal 4

[Enter your goal here]

OBJECTIVES

The specific policy outcome you are seeking, and your annual focus.

What are Objectives?

One objective per issue file, written in two parts — the ultimate policy outcome you want, and what must happen this year to move toward it.

WHY IT MATTERS

1 They define success

Without a clear objective, you cannot tell whether your advocacy on a given issue is working. A well-written objective gives you a target — even if measurement is qualitative.

2 They focus effort

Every strategy and tactic should serve the objective. Without one, your team makes independent judgements about what to prioritise — and those judgements often diverge.

3 They sharpen your ask

A clear objective tells coalition partners exactly what you're working toward — making it much easier for them to decide whether and how to support you.

HOW TO DO IT

PART 1 — MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOME

What the final text, decision, or regulation should say. Stable year to year.

e.g. "Ensure [product] is recognised under [regulation] on workable terms."

PART 2 — ANNUAL FOCUS

The milestone you need this year, tied to a real decision point or legislative moment.

e.g. "Secure an amendment to Article X in Parliament's draft report."

WHAT TO AVOID

Vague objectives ('raise awareness') — that is a tactic. And don't bundle multiple asks into one objective.

Think about this: *"What is the single most important change you want to see in the final text or decision — and what must happen this year to get there?"*

Your Policy Objectives

Complete one block per issue file. Duplicate this slide for additional issues.

Issue File 1

Links to Goal: [G_]

OBJECTIVE

[Medium-term outcome — what do you want policymakers to decide or include?]

ANNUAL FOCUS

[What must happen this year to advance toward that outcome?]

Issue File 2

Links to Goal: [G_]

OBJECTIVE

[Medium-term outcome — what do you want policymakers to decide or include?]

ANNUAL FOCUS

[What must happen this year to advance toward that outcome?]

Issue File 3

Links to Goal: [G_]

OBJECTIVE

[Medium-term outcome — what do you want policymakers to decide or include?]

ANNUAL FOCUS

[What must happen this year to advance toward that outcome?]

STRATEGIES

The routes to influence. Not what you do — how you create change.

What are Strategies?

The routes to influence you will use to advance each objective. Choose 2–3 of the five pillars — not all of them.

WHY IT MATTERS

1 They force a choice

You cannot pursue all channels equally. Choosing your strategy means focusing on the routes most likely to work for this specific issue — not spreading resources thin.

2 They connect tactics to outcomes

Every tactic you plan should serve a deliberate strategic choice. Without that link, you are just making a list of things to do.

3 They reveal gaps

The five pillars give you a structured checklist: are you missing an obvious lever? Is your evidence base strong enough to be credible with policymakers?

HOW TO DO IT

P1 Direct institutional engagement

P2 Member & national-association mobilisation

P3 Value-chain & coalition-building

P4 Technical evidence & regulatory input

P5 Thought leadership & narrative

Enabling base: Secretariat coordination — internal tracking, roles, KPI follow-up

Think about this: *"Which 2–3 routes give you the best access to the people who will actually make this decision?"*

Your Routes to Influence

Issue File: *[enter issue name]*

P1**Direct institutional engagement**

Commission, Parliament, Council, Member States, agencies

Will use?

[]

How / who leads?

[]

P2**Member & national-association mobilisation**

Use your member footprint to influence Council and national uptake

Will use?

[]

How / who leads?

[]

P3**Value-chain & coalition-building**

Align with suppliers, downstream users, and affected sectors

Will use?

[]

How / who leads?

[]

P4**Technical evidence & regulatory input**

Data, feasibility analysis, transition timelines, implementation input

Will use?

[]

How / who leads?

[]

P5**Thought leadership & narrative**

Frame around competitiveness, safety, sustainability, proportionality

Will use?

[]

How / who leads?

[]

TACTICS

The concrete actions you will take. Assigned to a person, with a deadline.

What are Tactics?

The specific, deliverable actions that execute each strategy — assigned to a person, with a deadline.

WHY IT MATTERS

1 Strategy without tactics is theory

Tactics turn your GOST framework into real-world action your team can execute, track, and report on. Without them, the strategy remains intent.

2 Vagueness creates accountability gaps

'Engage with the Commission' cannot be tracked or delegated. Specific tactics — with an owner and deadline — create clear accountability.

3 Tactics reveal over-commitment

Writing them out often shows you've planned more than your team can deliver. Better to know this before the quarter starts than after.

HOW TO DO IT

EVERY TACTIC MUST NAME

The action · The owner · The deadline · The strategy it serves (P1–P5)

COMMON TYPES

Position papers · Bilateral meetings · Coalition submissions
· Member briefings · Technical notes · Event participation
(with a defined goal)

THREE TESTS FOR EVERY TACTIC

Can it be assigned to one person? · Does it have a deadline?
· Would you know when it's done?

WHAT TO AVOID

Attendance without a goal · Any action not traceable to a strategy pillar.

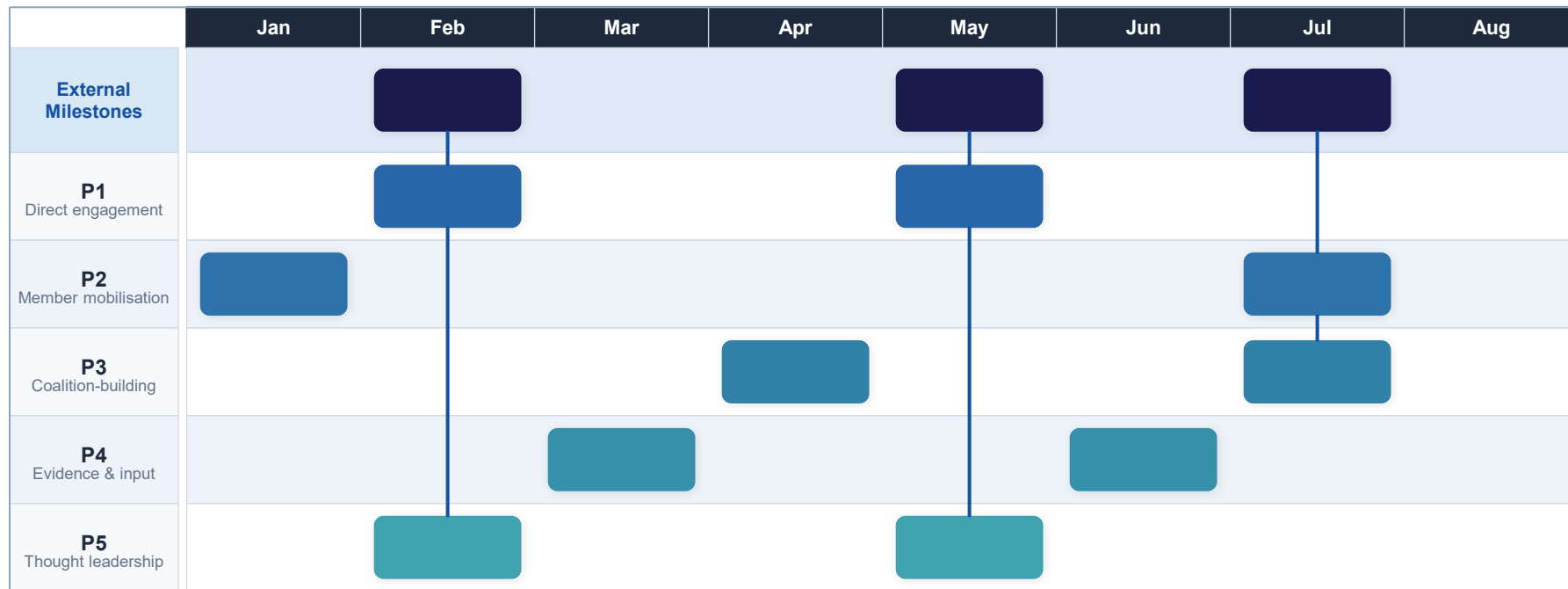
Think about this: *"For each tactic: one person, one deadline, one clear deliverable. If you can't name all three, it is not yet a tactic."*

Your Action Plan

TACTIC / ACTION	STRATEGY	OWNER	DEADLINE	STATUS
[Enter tactic]	[P_]			
[Enter tactic]	[P_]			
[Enter tactic]	[P_]			
[Enter tactic]	[P_]			
[Enter tactic]	[P_]			

Tactics Timeline

Monthly view — external policy milestones + five strategy pillars



Version A · Monthly grid — each strategy pillar (P1–P5) has its own dedicated row. External policy milestones sit at the top; vertical connector lines show exactly which policy trigger drives which tactic. Best choice when you want the complete campaign plan visible on one slide and the audience is familiar with the pillar structure.

Measuring Progress

Measurement in GOST works in two layers. Process KPIs tell you whether you executed. Outcome KPIs tell you whether your work is actually influencing the policy outcome. Both are necessary — but they answer different questions.

Process KPIs

Did we do what we planned?

Process KPIs sit at tactics level. They tell you whether your team executed — meetings held, papers submitted, briefings delivered. They confirm activity, not influence.

Examples:

- Number of bilateral meetings with DG X
- Position papers submitted to consultation
- Members briefed on Council working group timetable

High scores on process KPIs do not mean your strategies are working. A team can be very busy and have very little influence.

Outcome KPIs

Are we influencing the outcome?

Outcome KPIs sit at strategy level. They assess whether your efforts are shifting policymaker positions or moving the policy text in your direction. They are often qualitative.

Examples:

- Language included in Parliament's draft report
- Shift in Commission position on transition timeline
- Coalition partners aligned behind joint ask

Outcome KPIs in public affairs are inherently qualitative. A traffic light or directional assessment (improving / stable / worsening) is more honest than a precise number.

Your KPIs

Select 2–3 KPIs per issue file. Use traffic lights (Green / Amber / Red) to report on outcome KPIs — a directional assessment is more honest than a precise number.

PROCESS KPIs

Did we execute?

KPI 1

[Enter KPI here]

KPI 2

[Enter KPI here]

KPI 3

[Enter KPI here]

KPI 4

[Enter KPI here]

OUTCOME KPIs

Are we influencing?

KPI 1

[Enter KPI here]

KPI 2

[Enter KPI here]

KPI 3

[Enter KPI here]

KPI 4

[Enter KPI here]

GOST on a Page

Complete this summary view once all four levels are filled in.

GOALS

Long-term direction

[Fill in your goals here once the section is complete]

OBJECTIVES

Policy outcomes + annual focus

[Fill in your objectives here once the section is complete]

STRATEGIES

Routes to influence

[Fill in your strategies here once the section is complete]

TACTICS

Actions — owned and dated

[Fill in your tactics here once the section is complete]

MEASUREMENT

[Key process and outcome KPIs]