



International Association for Counselling
Founded 1966

IAC Global Counselling Policy and Guidelines Partnerships

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Summary: An opportunity to benefit your counselling association/organisation, and the profession worldwide, exists through partnering on international counselling policy/guidelines. Create or enhance international counselling policy/guidelines, submit documentation to United Nations agencies, and generate high-level internationally credible documents for use in your national counselling advocacy campaigns. This work serves counsellors, their clients, and the profession worldwide.

1 Introduction: What is Partnership on Counselling Policy/Guidelines?

IAC invite counselling associations, organisations and relevant stakeholders to work together – under the auspices of IAC -- to create global counselling policy/guidelines in areas of importance to the profession. IAC consider partnerships to be of fundamental importance in the way we work towards achieving our mission. The ultimate purpose of working in partnership is to increase the

positive effects for our intended beneficiaries (counsellors and their counselling clients). Policy solutions are always improved through additional input from multiple perspectives. Partnership enables utilization of the considerable experience, knowledge and contacts of national counselling associations and organizations. In particular, where the organisations have already worked on, or published, in the policy area, the policy/guidelines can be readily enhanced and made globally applicable.

The counselling profession needs professional unity and development. Partnership allows us all to co-create policy and guidelines leading to the delivery of sustainable services. International partnership on policy/guidelines is common across multiple established professions. Partnership in this area can avoid unnecessary duplication. Partnership allows us to combine our resources and expertise with our partners', meaning that we can work more effectively – and achieve more – than we would if working individually. Partnership facilitates capacity building and sustainability by supporting partner organisations to develop their skills and capacities.

2) How will Policy Partnership benefit your organisation?

Attainment/Enhancement of a highly valuable counselling advocacy tool: Creating internationally agreed counselling policy and recommendations generates a high-level, global, evidence-base that can be used for targeted national and international advocacy. National (from one country) policy/guidelines become much more powerful documents for advocacy if they have been adopted internationally and submitted to, and considered/accepted by intergovernmental (e.g., United Nations) and regional bodies (EU, ASEAN, African Union). Elevating the importance and international applicability of your work through partnership allows the counselling profession to play its part as a fully-fledged profession in the sphere of global mental health and well-being.

Shows Proactive Leadership: Takes initiative in a rapidly changing global profession, with the realisation that global changes will both impact and can be influenced by your country and organization/association.

Scientific Practice and Knowledge: Attainment of the most up-to-date information pertaining to the policy/guidelines area -- from around the world.

Builds your Professional and Community Relationships: Policy Partnership enhances your international contacts database including U.N. agencies, National counselling associations, Education Institutes and multiple other stakeholders

Social Justice and Empowerment: Counselling Policy has social justice and human rights at its core. Leading and contributing as an IAC policy partner directly enables and empowers the counselling profession in less developed countries - thereby helping to address inequality.

Widespread Acknowledgement: Of your organization/association's policy work through:

- The IAC E-Newsletter
- IAC Reports
- The IAC website and social media pages
- Related presentations and publications
- At the IAC Annual Conference
- Media pieces and impact reports

International Strategy: Delivers on, and enhances, your organization/association's international aims and strategy.

Other Important reasons to consider involvement:

- In our more densely interconnected world, the development of health and wellbeing (including counselling) in multiple countries, and sometimes all countries, are linked and interdependent.
- The IAC policy partnership process ensures that under-represented and under-resourced voices are brought into global discussions and policy/guidelines and ensures participation from low-income countries where resources for policy development are scarce.
- Major world bodies (e.g., United Nations) and regional bodies (e.g., E.U., ASEAN, African Union) strongly encourage 'joining up' of national policy approaches
- Working globally helps identify and alert to risks to the profession

- International work provides useful analysis and country comparisons
- Multi stakeholder consultation strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of the policy/guidelines.
- International projects increase interconnectedness of the profession and improves professional unity and development worldwide.
- Partnerships can provide novel approaches to health and social problems through multi-stakeholders' networks.

3. Policy Partnership: How Does it Work?

Partnering on the development of global counselling Policy/Guidelines is a straightforward and exciting process. IAC works with member associations* to decide on their preferred way of working. Associations can either work with leaders from associations in other countries on the overall project, or develop the policy/guidelines themselves and connect with other associations through the consultation steps in process.

Oftentimes, if an association has already developed policy/guidelines in an area, or has particular expertise, then using that policy as the basis from which to cooperate on production of global policy/guidelines makes good sense. Sharing a national counselling policy -- and giving it global applicability -- exponentially multiplies its reach, includes those from low-income countries, and boosts professional counselling unity worldwide.

Following introductory meetings, your association/organizations lead, or co-leads, the development of the policy/guidelines -- in line with the Policy Process and Steps (#4 below). The substantive work (creating/developing the policy and following the policy process steps) is primarily carried out by the partnering national associations. IAC provides support throughout the policy/guideline's development process. In particular:

- IAC provides access to associations worldwide (so that they can be contacted during the consultative phase).

- IAC provides access and contacts to relevant personnel in United Nations bodies to which the finalised document will be submitted. See IAC and the [United Nations HERE](#)

* IAC Policy partnership requires a commitment from the association/organisation to be [IAC members](#) -- sharing in, and agreeing with, the IAC vision and values. We also:

- Ask that those allocated to the partnership have project management experience and knowledge of the profession. Diplomacy skills and an understanding of international work are a bonus,
- Highlight that partnering on policy is low-cost and in the majority of cases only involves the association's/organizations contribution of in-kind support, such as the provision of the staff member or volunteer who will work on the policy project and supporting the IT needs of the allocated person.

4. Policy Process and Steps

The steps to create (or adapt existing) counselling policy/guidelines to make them international applicable are listed below. Some phases

- **Planning / Agenda Setting Phase:** Identifying and defining the policy area, the need in the area, the principal partners that will work together on it, timeframes and outputs.
- **Research Phase:** The principal policy partners research what is already available on the subject, and agree project aims.
- **First Draft:** The principal policy partners produce a first draft of the document
- **First Consultation:** The draft is circulated to counselling associations and stakeholders worldwide (including all six geographical regions) for review and feedback.
- **Review of Feedback:** Submission and comments are considered and the document amended accordingly.
- **Second Draft:** The principal policy partners produce a second draft of the document.
- **Second Consultation:** The second draft is circulated to counselling associations and stakeholders worldwide.

- **Review of Feedback:** Any further comments are considered and the document amended accordingly.
- **Open consultation:** Finalized draft can be put onto websites/portals for public consultation/commentary (with an online feedback facility).
- **Document Finalised and Signed:** Counselling associations and stakeholders worldwide offered to be signatories.
- **Presentation / Declaration Phase:** Document is presented to United Nations Organisations as the International Counselling community's policy / position / guidelines on the subject area.
- **Dissemination and advocacy Phase:** Document is presented to national governments, departments of health and other stakeholders.
- **National Advocacy Implementation:** IAC and policy partners offer guidance and assistance to stakeholders (e.g., national associations) on how to implement the policy to maximize advocacy efficacy, and implementation of the recommendations -- in their national context.
- **Evaluation Phase:** Implementation of agreed process to review, revise, sustain, or exit, the policy.

An additional option, depending on the policy area and resources available to the partner, is to host an international online webinar, or conference, on the policy/guidelines area -- at any chosen stage of the process above.

5. Policy/Guidelines Areas

Global Policy/Guidelines development is welcome in any of the following areas:

- **Universal Client Issues (examples):** Mental Health; Suicide; Relationships; Substance Use and Recovery; Trauma; Grief and Loss; Depression and Anxiety; Well-being; Cultural and Identity Issues; Stress and Burnout; Career; Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence; Life Transitions; Anger Management; Body Image and Eating Disorders; and Parenting and Family Issues.

- **Professional Issues:** Counselling Standards; Competencies; Scope of Practice; Advocacy and Public Awareness; Professional International Counselling Unity; Accessibility and Equity; School Counselling; Professional Supervision; Ethics; Legal Issues; Crisis Intervention; Research; Professional Development/Continuing Education; Confidentiality; Cultural Competence and Diversity; Payment and Insurance; and Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.
- **Specialist Settings:** Online/Remote; Prisons; Hospitals; Community Centres; Schools and Education Institutes; Workplaces; Private Practices; Rehabilitation Centres.
- **Global Issues:** Climate Change; Refugees / Migration / Displaced peoples; War and Conflict; Child and Youth safety online; Racial Discrimination: Poverty; Gender Equality; Economic Inequality; Rights of LGBTQ+ People; Catastrophic Pandemics; and Political Polarization.

How to become an IAC Policy/Guidelines Partner

Thank you for your interest in partnering with the International Association for Counselling (IAC).

- Become an IAC Member (in the relevant category – [see HERE](#))
- Fill in the brief IAC Policy/Guidelines Proposal Form (5 minutes) [CLICK HERE](#)

Your proposal will be treated confidentially and we will aim to reply with feedback and next steps as early as possible. Please email any questions to the IAC CEO (ceo@iac-irtac.org)

Thank You.





International Association for Counselling
Founded 1966

The International Association for Counselling (IAC) is the world body for the counselling profession. Established in 1966, IAC is an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO). IAC's humanitarian movement advances the development of counselling in order to improve people's lives and well-being. Our association and members strive for human rights and the inclusive, sustainable development of our profession through the promotion of counselling, best practice and international cooperation. Our Vision is: "A World Where Counselling is Available to All".

Website: <http://www.iac-irtac.org>

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