Guidelines for Guest Blogs

International Science Council
The global voice for science

Guidelines for contributors to the International Science Council Blog

The Council's blogs provide a space for scientists and researchers, and others working on scientific issues, to share ideas and connect with each other and the wider science community, including researchers, research funders and policy makers.

Blog posts appear at: https://council.science/?page=1&type=blog

What types of content make for a suitable blog?

Content that, for example:

- Is timely - i.e. features new research or thinking
- Contributes to current discussions related to scientific research, or to the process of doing science, or to science-policy debates
- Has a link to current research or science policy news agendas, or to a major conference related to these areas
- Is relevant to science policy
- Is visually interesting, featuring surprising or illuminating images and graphics
- Is linked to ISC priorities, projects, and programmes of work

What kind of content is not appropriate?

- Institutional announcements (e.g. new team member appointed - such news could rather be framed as a Q&A with the new person).
- Promotional news (i.e. that is intended to sell a product or service).

Editorial guidelines

Length: 300 to 1000 words

Language and Style: It is important that you write clearly and succinctly, for a wide audience. English will not be the first language of many readers. So please:

- Write in plain English – avoid jargon, or explain it
- Be clear and concise

- Don't use clichés, puns or ambiguous language that will confuse the reader
- Use active language, rather than passive
- ISC uses British English, with –ize endings preferred to –ise endings (OED style). The editorial team can standardize this for you before publication.
- Non-sexist language: Where both sexes are implied please use words that include women and girls. Rather than use words such as mankind, layman, or manmade replace with, for example, humanity, non-specialist, or manufactured.

Introduction: Presents the main topic being addressed, and its relevance for the scientific community

Acronyms: Must be spelled out on first reference

References: The inclusion of references can make for difficult blog reading – instead, please provide a URL link to the source that can be hyperlinked from the blog text, or provide sources as a list of 'Further reading' at the foot of the blog piece.

Conclusion: Draws the narrative to a close, most often with a summary of the main findings and their significance. It could also end with a question to stimulate debate.

Title: This should tell a story, and clearly signpost what the blog is about. The editorial team is responsible for deciding on titles in collaboration with authors.

Who is the ISC editorial team?

The ISC team includes:
- Alison Meston, Director of Communications
- Léa Nacache, Communications Officer (starting 20 February 2023)
- James Waddell, Communications and Science Officer
- Anne Thieme, Membership Officer

Tips and ideas

- Try writing a list of ideas, places or things around a certain topic, such as '10 transformative ideas from X', '7 environmental conflicts you've never heard about, but should have done', '5 people we want to hear more from on X', and so on.
- People are interested in people. A human angle to your stories helps to bring them to life and make them tangible for the reader, so don't hesitate to include personal experiences of field trips, events, and to share detailed, specific information from your interactions, in everyday language. Where a journal article might say 'engagement with stakeholders provided new insights on precipitation', a blog might say 'Pat told us the land had flooded every year for as long as he could remember'.

Please fill in the form here to request a blog submission:
https://council.science/blogsubmission/

In need of inspiration?

How to write a blog post from your journal article:
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/01/25/how-to-write-a-blogpost-from-your-journal-article/

So you want to be a science blogger?
http://blogs.nature.com/houseofwisdom/2013/06/so-you-want-to-be-a-science-blogger.html

How to write a science blog people want to read (part 1):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zb1MRAIDBf0

How to write a science blog people want to read (part 2):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1cCU6xtRKk

Seven easy expert secrets on improving your writing
http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2016/10/how-to-improve-your-writing-2/

Resources for science writers
https://scienceobserved.wordpress.com/2017/02/14/resources-for-science-writers/

Top tips on narrative and storytelling
https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/do-it/techniquesapproaches/narrative-storytelling

Tips for conference bloggers
http://giussani.typepad.com/loip/conferenceblogging/conferenceblogging_zuckerman-giussani_A4_color.pdf

A manifesto for the simple scribe – my 25 commandments for journalists
https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2011/jan/19/manifesto-simple-scribe-commandments-journalists