Blog

Writing guidelines
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Blogs feature narrative and short-form written content catering to a wide online audience, including non-experts. It must include insights, thoughts, data and/or stories on social protection or related topics, possibly also featuring photos and infographics that can help to better illustrate or demonstrate the text’s argument.

For guidance on themes, please refer to our Theoretical Content Classification Guideline. To learn how to add a blog post, please refer to our Technical Content Classification Guideline and our video guidelines on how to add a blog post.

1. **Word Limit**

   - Your blog must be between 900 and 1500 words long. If your subject requires longer analysis, we suggest you divide your submission into two separate blogs.
   - It is important to note that the first 780 characters (including spaces) appear on the list view of the blog listing page. Hence, including a small teaser might provide leverage and bring more attention to your blog (please see more details in item 2).
   - Footnotes are not considered within this word limit, but we suggest using them only when needed and keeping them as short as possible.

2. **Title**

   The blogs with higher access rates clearly state their subject in the title. Keep the following elements in mind:
• The title should be up to 75 characters (including spaces).
• Only capitalise the first word and proper nouns.
• Do not use a full stop at the end of the title.

3. Teaser

The teaser is not mandatory, but it can be useful to spark the reader’s interest. Keep the following elements in mind if you decide to use it:
• It should be up to 780 characters (approximately 3 or 4 lines) and summarise the blog’s main argument, perhaps also briefly describing its main findings and conclusions.
• Do not use abbreviations in the teaser.

4. Tags

Tags can help readers find your blog through the tag cloud or tag search, but these are not mandatory. Keep the following elements in mind if you decide to use them:
• Include only terms that are not available or comprehended in the blog classification form.
• Do not use hashtags (#).
• Separate the tags with commas (,).

5. Body

Short sentences and paragraphs make the text easier for the audience to read:
• Use sub-headings every 3–4 paragraphs.
• The use of numbered or bullet-point lists is recommended if you are listing elements.
• You can add figures, graphs and other visual elements to illustrate your arguments (see more information in item 6 and in our Technical Content Classification guideline).

6. Level, style and tone

socialprotection.org caters for a wide audience from very diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of familiarity with social protection. Therefore you should try to explain your arguments thoroughly and clearly, keeping specialist vocabulary to a minimum.

• Always try to explain terms or acronyms that are likely to be unfamiliar to people. You can also link a term to our Glossary or add footnotes.

7. References

Do include, at the end of your blog, a list of references which details any research used within the blog is based upon. References should be added in the Chicago Manual of Style's Author-Date System, as exemplified below:

• Format for in-text citations:
  (Author year) or (Author year, p.)

  Example:
Over two decades of experience, BRAC has developed key lessons on how to enhance existing social protections programmes by incorporating the Graduation approach (O’Donnell 2020).

- Format for the list of references:
  Author, X. (Year). Article title italicized. Journal or Source name. Location. Accessible: [link]

Example:

- If the blog was first published somewhere else, please inform the audience at the beginning of the text and hyperlink it to the source, adding it also to the list of references at the end.
- Use et al. for citations with three or more authors.
- Whenever possible, add the references to the socialprotection.org platform.

8. Table, pictures and charts

- Add a clear and concise title to each image.
- Label axes clearly.
- We suggest not using the terms ‘below’ and ‘above’ to refer to figures and tables in the text but referring to them by number or name.

Example:
Finally, the authors introduced the concept of shock-responsive SP, given the context in MENA and the occurrence of migratory crises and due to the Covid-19 crisis more recently.

Illustration 1 Key conceptual debates involving inclusion of migrants in SP systems

Source: IPC-IIG Presentation

9. Cover image

- You must include a cover image (1920px x 1080px) to accompany the post.
- Include the image source and credits on the image. Paint or Canva are recommended tools to do that.
- All images must be free of copyrights and freely available for commercial use. Flickr, Unsplash and the United Nations Photo Library are recommended sources.

10. Style instructions

10.1 Dates

Present as day-month-year with no punctuation (e.g. 19 January 2014).

10.2 Foreign words
These should be in italics unless they have become essentially a natural part of the English language (e.g. ad hoc, per se and faux pas).

10.3 Abbreviations

A title or name of an organisation, programme or institution that recurs in the text should normally be written in full the first time it is mentioned and then followed by the acronym between parentheses. See examples below:

- UK, EU, US (no full stops).
- G20 and G7 (no hyphens).
- The term ‘vs’ can be used in titles and headings, but ‘versus’ should be used within text.

10.4 Punctuation

- Itemise lists with commas, not semi-colons (unless list items contain commas, which is the case for using semi-colons).
- Bulleted lists should have each item begin with a capitalised word.
- No comma after e.g. or i.e.
- Use double marks (“x”) for direct quotes and singles (‘x’) for quotes within quotes.

10.5 Numbers

- Use ‘per cent’ in longer prose. The % symbol should be used in tables and figures.
- Use billion and million, not bn and mn or other abbreviations.
- References to currencies should follow the 3-letter ISO 4217 Currency Codes, followed by the nominal amount without a space (e.g. USD215, BRL215, CHF215).
- When mentioning values in a currency that might be unknown to the audience, we suggest adding the equivalent value in US dollars or euro (also adding the date for reference).