WRITING FOR THECITYFIX

What is TheCityFix?

Launched in 2007, TheCityFix connects a global network of writers, urban planners, designers, engineers and citizens who work to make cities better places to live. The blog is produced by WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, a program of the World Resources Institute that combines global research and on-the-ground experience to spur action to improve life for millions of people. TheCityFix has partner sites in Portuguese (TheCityFixBrasil.com), Spanish (TheCityFixMexico.com) and Turkish (TheCityFixTurkiye.com), as well as a learning platform, TheCityFix Learn (TheCityFixLearn.org).

What is a blogging opportunity?

Many things can be a blogging opportunities; the important question is what is the news? Why should someone care? Is there new information? Examples of potential news-making opportunities include commentary on current events, trends, research, or a book informed by your experience; the launch of a new publication or tool; coverage of an important conference or meeting; on-the-ground reporting from interesting places; and updates on important projects or communities.

What should I keep in mind while writing my post?

- **Length:** ~800 words
- **Tone:** Non-academic, direct and conversational, rather than formal and academic (and a sense of humor never hurts!). Think op-ed style.
- **Audience:** Content should be written for a *global, non-technical audience*. The majority of examples should come from non-U.S. countries or be applicable to countries with rapid urban growth. Explain major concepts and acronyms on first use (and avoid acronyms whenever possible).
- **Visuals:** We greatly encourage incorporating photos, infographics, maps, charts, videos and other visual elements into blogs – as long as we have permission to use them. Please include sources for all visuals.
- **Originality:** Most importantly, be original – all content must be your own, or properly referenced. Plagiarism is not acceptable. Statistics, quotes or ideas that are not your own should always be sourced via a hyperlink; if replicated directly, language should be quoted.

What is your main message?

Before writing, it’s important to understand what your main thesis/argument is; this should be closely related to *what is the new news*. The main message and news should be communicated to the reader within the first few paragraphs, preferably following a *hook* that engages the reader with an interesting or evocative idea, image, person, quote, story or fact. See more on recommended structure below and examples of good hooks/ledes.

How should I structure my post?

Generally, our stories follow the *inverted pyramid structure*: start with an interesting *hook* or *lede*, follow with the most substantial information about your *main message* and/or *new news*, fill in with additional detail and background information afterwards. Recommendations and challenges to your main idea (alternative viewpoints) are often best brought up in the concluding section.

Introduction (100-200 words)
• **Hook/lede:** An interesting or evocative idea, image, person, quote, story or fact. Award-winning examples can be read here.

• **Main message and new news:** Sometimes these are the same, but sometimes not. The main message should preview the full discussion to come and your likely conclusion (do not “bury the lede”).

**Body, 2-3 Subsections (500-600 words)**

• More detail on your main message
• More detail on the problem being solved
• General background information
• Examples/case studies

**Conclusion (100-200 words)**

• Very briefly reiterate your main message, synthesizing your main points.
• Note any outstanding challenges and challenges to your thesis
• **Call to action:** What does the future look like? What changes should take place? What’s happening next?

**How can I promote my post?**

Time spent on promotion is just as an important as time spent on creation. We promote stores on Twitter, Facebook and by linking to them from other stories on the blog. You can help by...

• Sending a link to your colleagues and ask them to read and comment on it
• Posting a link to your personal social media streams (blog, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) or organizational website
• Posting comments on related blogs and interacting with people who are part of the broader conversation about your topic