

Introduction to Communications at WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities

By the end of this guide, users will:

- Understand how and when to reach out to the Comms Team
- Have ideas for new ways to engage your audiences
- Be ready to collaborate on a communications strategy!

Course Content

What This Guide Will Cover

1. WHAT DOES COMMS DO?

Difference between Knowledge and Comms Products

2. EDITORIAL PRODUCTS

Blogs, Commentaries

3. EVENTS

Event materials, Webinars, Report launches

4. DESIGN PRODUCTS

Branding, Infographics, PowerPoint presentations, 2-pagers, Publications, Photography, Video

5. WEB PRODUCTS

Website Management and Creation, Emails, Social Media

6. MEDIA RELATIONS

7. HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

What Does Comms Do?

We are here to help you engage with your audience, partners and stakeholders.

It's not just communications **products** that we support you on, but the **strategy** behind these products. We help you look at the different aspects of communications as a complete package and how they can support your broader goals.

When should you loop us in?

As early as possible! Preferably during grant writing so that we can provide guidance on strategy, capacity and budget. But today is always better than tomorrow.



The winners and finalists of the inaugural WRI Ross Center Prize for Cities at WRI's Courage to Lead gala in 2019.



WRI Ross Center staff at Transforming Transportation, our largest annual event.



The launch of a working paper in the World Resources Report, Towards a More Equal City.



A promotional video we created for the Health & Road Safety team's Vision Zero Challenge.

What's the Difference Between Knowledge & Comms Products?

What's the Difference Between Knowledge & Comms Products?

Knowledge Products (KPs) are reports, working papers, technical notes and other products that are based on original research and are subject to the peer review process driven by the Research, Data & Innovation (RDI) team (formerly Science & Research). More info in <a href="https://www.writer.com/



TOWARDS A MORE EQUAL CITY

WORKING PAPER

Untreated and Unsafe:

Solving the Urban Sanitation Crisis in the Global South

David Satterthwaite, Victoria A. Beard, Diana Mitlin, and Jillian Du

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Working Papers contain preliminary research, analysis, findings, and recommendations. They are circulated to stimulate timely discussion and critical feedback and to influence ongoing debate on emerging issues. Most working papers are eventually published in another form, and their content may be revised.

Suggested Citation: Satterthwaite, D., V.A. Beard, D. Mitlin, and J. Du. 2019. "Untreated and Unsafe: Solving the Urban Sanitation Crisis in the Global South." Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available online at www.citiesforall.org.

Cover photo: SuSanA Secretariat

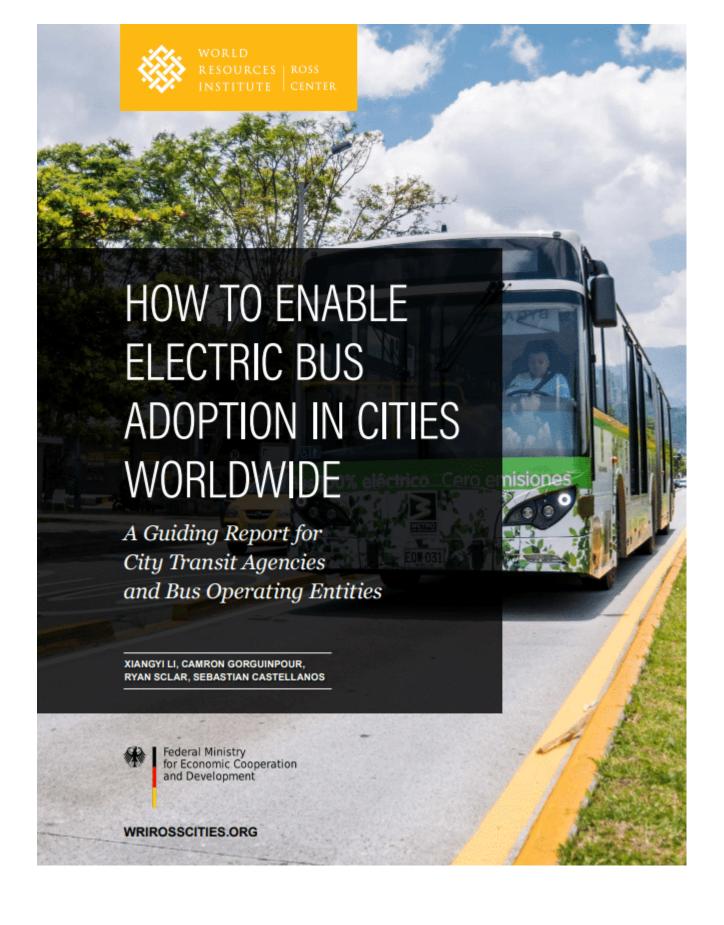
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

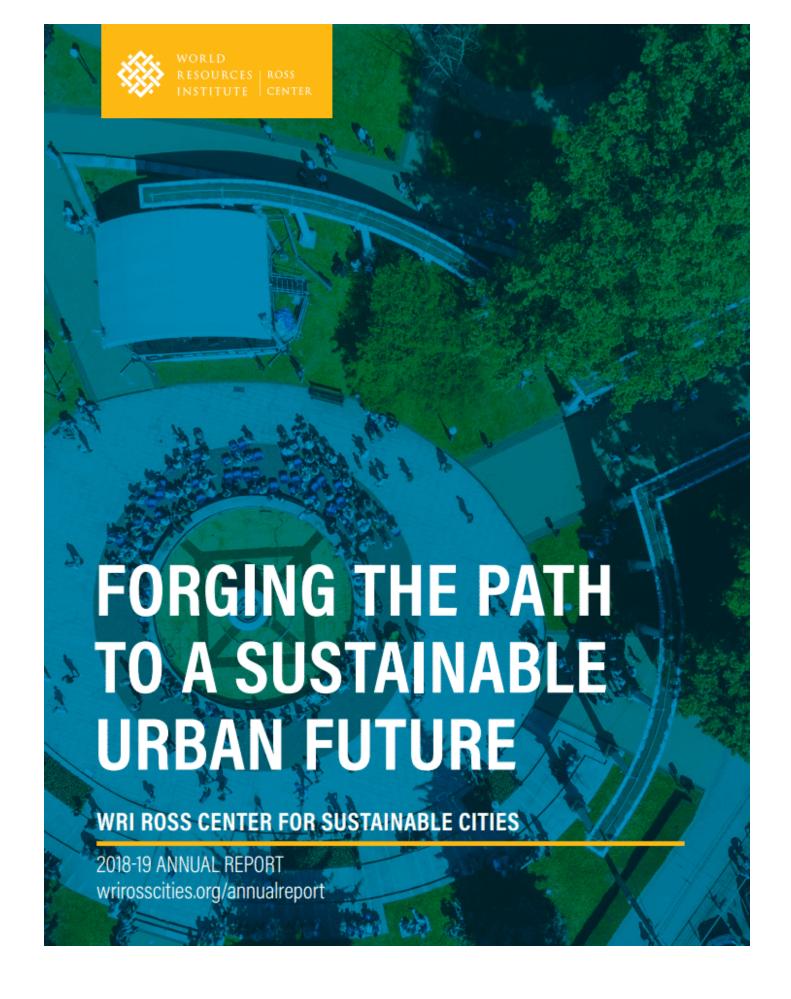
Highlights

- Cities must ensure universal access to safe, reliable, and affordable sanitation so that all urban residents can lead productive, healthy, and thriving lives. New analysis of 15 cities in the global South shows that on average, 62 percent of sewage and fecal sludge is unsafely managed somewhere along the sanitation service chain.¹
- Global monitoring efforts have resulted in an underestimation of the urban sanitation crisis and the risks to public health, the economy, and the environment. New data and analysis at the city and sub-city level is needed to galvanize action.
- Sewers are convenient, safe, sanitary, and work well in dense urban environments and in multistory buildings. From the perspective of the household, sewer connections and services are often less expensive than on-site sanitation options.
- In the absence of universal access to sewers, cities need to find an optimal combination of off-site and on-site sanitation options. On-site sanitation systems place enormous responsibility on households and private providers, and thus require strong government capacity to regulate and enforce sanitation standards to ensure public health and safety.
- Citywide upgrading of informal settlements can improve low-income households' access to urban sanitation. City governments should work with community organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and federations to improve and extend sanitation to informal settlements and address affordability.











About Us Write for Us Topics TheCityFix Learn TheCityFix México TheCityFix Türkiye

Urban Development

How Will COVID-19 Affect Urban Planning?

By Rogier van den Berg April 10, 2020 Edit This



The fate of millions of small businesses and workers that make urban centers work is up in the air. Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo by Corey O'Hara/iStock

The impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic are still being understood, but it does seem clear that this crisis will make a mark on cities, physically and socially, that will echo for generations.

How we plan our cities has always been a reflection of prevailing cultural and technological trends and even major crises. The cholera epidemics in the 19th century sparked the introduction of modern urban sanitation systems. Housing regulations around light and air were introduced as a measure against respiratory diseases in overcrowded slums in Europe during industrialization. The introduction of railroads had an immense impact on national urban systems, and the mass production of the car has led to cities that bleed seamlessly into sprawling suburbs, creating vast city regions. In recent years, digitalization and data have changed the way we navigate cities and how communities mobilize and

Editorial Products: Blogs

- WRI Ross Center utilizes two main global blog platforms: <u>TheCityFix</u>, run by our Cities Comms team, and <u>Insights</u>, WRI's flagship blog for the entire institute.
- In addition, IO teams have their own channels for locally tailored content and non-English content, including TheCityFix Mexico and TheCityFix Mexico and TheCityFix Mexico and TheCityFix Turkey.

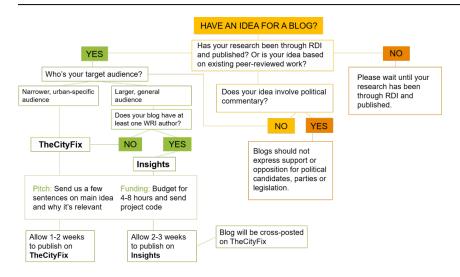


- Focus: Everything cities
- Who can blog? Staff and qualified guest contributors
- Process: Send a pitch and brief outline of your idea before drafting. A Director may be asked to sign off on your post. We will coordinate process.
- Cross-posting: We will cross-post any Insights blog relevant to cities issues on TheCityFix.
- Audience: ~30,000 pageviews/month

INSIGHTS: WRI'S BLOG

- Focus: Themes across WRI's programmatic areas, often with a higher-level perspective
- Who can blog? Must include at least one WRI author
- Process: Send a pitch and brief outline of your idea before you start drafting and we will connect
 you with Insights Editor Sarah Parsons. A Director will be asked to sign off on your post. Insights
 editors will coordinate process.
- Audience: ~175,000 pageviews/month

The Blogging Process



Writing a Strong Blog

Once you've understood the editorial workflow, <u>please read our short guide to writing for TheCityFix</u>. Even if you're writing for Insights, this will help you structure your article, hone your message and think of an interesting lede or hook.

You can find further guidance on what makes the best blogs work from WRI's Core Communications team

in their Anatomy of a High Impact Blog and Insights' Blogging Guidelines, which also explain Insider blogs.

Understanding and identifying these elements will help you draft a stronger piece in less time, so it is worth the effort!

Further reading:

News writing: Want more tips on the differences between research/academic prose and more journalistic writing? <u>Please find our short guide to news writing here</u>.

Style Guide: TheCityFix, Insights and all Comms Products use <u>AP Style rules</u>. For information on the most commonly used rules, <u>see here for a cheat sheet</u>.

Op-eds: If you need to write an op-ed, you can find guidance from Core Comms <u>here</u> and a helpful walk-through <u>here</u>.

Top 5 Writing Tips (Plus a Golden Rule)

From a former longtime WRI blog expert, Debby Zabarenko:

- 1. **Simple > Complex.** This doesn't mean you dumb things down; it means you distill your idea to its purest form. That goes double for technical jargon. The point isn't to show readers how smart you are. It's to help them understand your idea in the simplest words that do the job.
- 2. **Specific > General.** "The world's in a terrible state these days." Yeah? So what? "More than 4 million people have been infected with the coronavirus and nearly 300,000 have died, sending the world into an economic tailspin not seen since the Great Depression." Holy smoke!
- 3. **Active > Passive.** "A tiger attacked me" is intrinsically more interesting than "I was attacked by a tiger."
- 4. **Nouns and Verbs > Adjectives and Adverbs.** You can do without modifiers and in many cases, you should. Only in rare cases can you do without nouns and verbs.
- 5. **Ideas > You > Words.** You serve the ideas. The words serve you. You are their boss, so don't be afraid of them. Without you, they are NOTHING.

Golden Rule: Embrace the rough first draft. Getting something down in writing helps you figure out what you really want to convey, before you try to make it a polished piece.

Other key tips:

- Blogs should be 700-1000 words.
- You're writing for **educated non-experts** don't assume people know acronyms or specific concepts. This will also help you write clearer and stronger.
- Breaking down your blog into **short paragraphs** and sections with sub-headers helps with readability.

Commentaries

WRI Commentaries offer long-form views and insights by senior staff. Commentaries draw on existing WRI research and other peer-reviewed publications to argue for a specific point of view, supporting it with

evidence, to encourage informed discussion and debate.

- What's the difference between a Commentary and a blog or Knowledge
 Product? Commentaries take the style of a persuasive essay and are typically longer than blogs (2,000-3,000 words). They present a fresh perspective on an issue, make a clear argument and are not tied to a particular moment in time. They are not a substitute channel for new research, which should be vetted through the RDI review process.
- **Process:** Commentaries are edited by VP for Communications Lawrence MacDonald. As thought-leadership vehicles, Commentaries are authored by Directors and senior staff with their Director's approval.

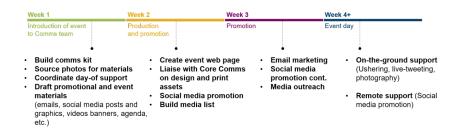


Find example Commentaries here and further guidance on Commentaries here.

Events

We can help you produce in-person events around the world to promote projects, launch new initiatives or reports, and engage the broader network of urban change-makers.

- Like all projects, the sooner you talk to us about an event, the better. Webinar licenses and event spaces are shared resources across WRI, so we need to coordinate to ensure they are available. The timeline below will vary depending on the event.
- We can support on strategic vision, planning, promotion and logistics. For large events, we can produce custom agendas, roll-up banners and promotional videos.
- Simple templates for event agendas and speaker bios can be downloaded <u>here</u>.



Webinars

Digital events like webinars, which can reach a wide audience, have a custom workflow.

- Core Comms' <u>webinar guidance and workflow</u> outlines the main categories of webinars hosted at WRI from institution-wide panels for a broad audience to smaller, technical sessions. The below guidance mainly applies to institutional webinars on which we coordinate with Core Comms.
- If your team is planning a webinar, come talk to us early so we can understand what promotional and logistical support you need, especially if you're planning a **webinar series**. Webinar licenses are also a finite, shared resource across WRI, so we need to coordinate to ensure one is available for you at the time you need it.

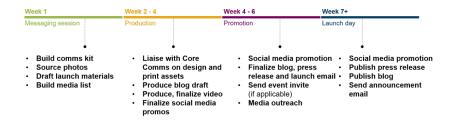


Planning a webinar? Plan early and plan with us!

Report Launches

If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? Report launch events can help significant publications make a larger impact in the media and practitioner spaces. We help develop messaging, craft pitches and reach out to select audiences to make sure your hard work is heard.

- Report launches should be on our calendars **2-3 months in advance**. An initial **messaging session** with us will explore key findings, hone topline messages and brainstorm promotion.
- A comms kit will organize all the components that report partners and other WRI staff need to
 promote the report: topline messages, findings and recommendations, social media graphics
 and video, press release, blog. Launches also include an announcement email (or invite if an
 event) and targeted outreach to media.
- We can also provide support for any **launch event, press call** or **workshop** with the authors.



Put your upcoming report on our radar and plan for outreach so we can amplify and promote your hard work.

Design Products

We can help your team produce branded digital and print products by either creating them ourselves or liaising with the Design Team in Core Comms.

- All design products follow these general guidelines and the WRI Brand and Style Guide.
- Common design products include event materials, infographics, charts, social media graphics, 2-pagers, PowerPoint presentations, videos and GIFs.
- Publications have a specific Design workflow that syncs with the RDI review process.
- The WRI Ross Center logo is available in several colors and formats, including country office variations. It should never be modified. Logo variations and assets can be downloaded from brand.wri.org.





On our name:

"WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities" is the full program name, and "WRI Ross Center" for short.

Note: No "the" before, or "Ross Center" on its own, or "WRI Cities."

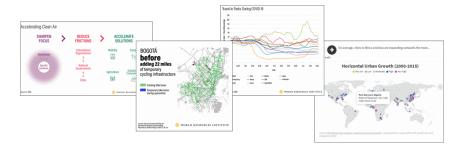
Check out our templates!

<u>This folder houses do-it-yourself models</u> for PowerPoint presentations, agendas and social media cards, though you still need to coordinate with us on this type of content.

Infographics, Charts and Animations

Infographics, charts and animations can liven up blogs, social media, PPTs, flyers and more.

- Consider what concepts can be better illustrated than explained in text.
- GIFs are especially helpful in bringing maps and multi-stage graphics to life.
- Flourish allows us to create interactive, searchable charts, maps and multi-stage embeds. An audio narrator can even be added. See an example in one of our report launch blogs.
- Content should be based on published research, with sources.



Have an idea for an infographic?

Check out WRI's Infographic Guidelines to help you get started.

PowerPoint Presentations

WRI uses PowerPoint presentations to communicate with internal and external audiences. It is crucial that the design of these presentations reflects the high quality of WRI's work.

To ensure cohesiveness, please make sure your presentation is created in a 16×9 format and uses the <u>global template</u> with the correct WRI Ross Center logo.



- Reach out to us for design assistance on major presentations.
- When preparing a PPT, **less is more**. Try to use more images than text, designing slides to augment rather than repeat your talking points. The less text, the more likely it is to be read and remembered. The more large, impactful images, the more likely people are to pay attention.

Other key tips for creating memorable PPTs:

- Keep slides consistent. Use <u>our template</u> and <u>brand colors</u>! Template fonts are Arial and Arial Narrow.
- Make it visual. Use compelling photos and graphics. Avoid clip art and complex schematics.

2-pagers and Flyers

2-pagers are printed promotional products that succinctly introduce a new project or initiative. They are meant as an overview and can be updated and reprinted quickly and inexpensively.

Flyers are graphics-heavy promotional products that contain a simple, targeted message.





Interested in creating a 2-pager or flyer for your project?

Let us know and we will coordinate the editing and layout process with the Design Team.

Publications

Once you have completed the RDI internal and external review process for publications, the Design Team will lay out your working paper, report, technical note or other Knowledge Product in one of our branded formats.

- You can learn more about the format guidelines in the WRI Style Guide.
- We can help you source photography and/or create infographics or charts for your publications, as well as convert existing imagery into social media, PPT and blog assets.



A working paper in the World Resources Report, a case study in the World Resources Report, a background paper for the Global Commission on Adaptation, and a technical note.

Need a compelling cover photo or an engaging graphic for your publication? We can help!

Photography

Photography brings our work to life. When sourcing images for a presentation, publication, blog or other

content, note that our photographs should always appear human and not overly corporate.

The locality of our work should be portrayed through the unique character of each country and city.

All photos used in our work must be either Creative Commons or licensed to us. We cannot use images that we do not have explicit permission to use (e.g., from news articles, all rights reserved Flickr accounts, from publications that do not explicitly allow re-use, etc.).









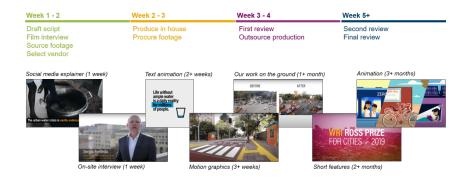
Looking for photos you can use?

- Check out the Flickr accounts of <u>WRI</u>, <u>WRI Ross Center</u>, <u>WRI Mexico</u> and <u>WRI Brasil</u> for great repositories of images of our work on the ground.
- We also scour Flickr, Creative Commons and Pexels for Creative Commons, royalty-free images.
- Still can't find what you're looking for? Consider buying a photo from iStock or Shutterstock.

Video

Video is among our most impactful communication tools. Short explanatory videos and interviews should focus on the human implications of our work and tell a broad story connected to our mission.

- With Core Comms, we can help you film and produce **interviews**, 60-second **social media explainers**, **animations** and **teaser/hype trailers**.
- Videos should have a shelf life of more than one year and **show** stories in a compelling way.
- Videos are among the most labor-intensive comms products. Consider script needs, required footage, music choices, copyrights/permissions, promotional plans (how will it be distributed?) and more. Depending on the type of video we may need between 2 weeks to 3 months lead time.

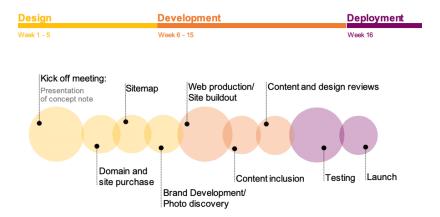


Learn more about WRI's Video Brand Guidelines.

Website Management

WRI Ross Center has more than three dozen web properties, and counting. We monitor, manage and produce – and help you monitor, manage and produce – websites, webpages, microsites and more.

 We directly manage updates to several core sites, including wrirosscities.org (bios, staff pages, project pages, publication pages, events, press releases, news stories), thecityfix.org, transformingtransportation.org and prizeforcities.org. • If you need to create or update a staff bio, event page, pub page, or other content on wrirosscities.org, let us know. If you need to update anything on wri.org, we will connect you to the right person in Core Comms.



Let us know when you need to update and post new content on our website(s)!

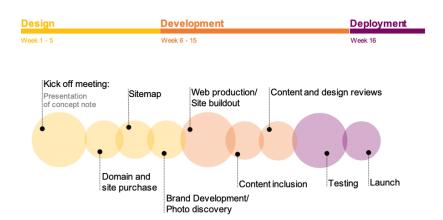
New Websites

If your project includes the creation of a new webpage or website, please reach out to us as early as possible – ideally during proposal development to ensure that proper funding is included for web development costs.

Together with Core Comms' Digital Team, we will work with you to discuss the many considerations that go into creating a new digital property,

including **budget**; **RFP** creation; **vendor** selection; **analytics**; **legal and security** adherence; **domain** registration; **hosting**; **content** strategy; and more.

- It takes at least **16 weeks** to produce a new website. New sites are labor-intensive and complex.
- New websites also have a long shelf life it's important to coordinate and get them right the first time so this effort is not wasted and the end result is stable, secure, functional, on-brand and serves the project well!



Thinking about creating a new website?

- Start by filling out Core Comms' web project brief and reaching out to us.
- Learn about budgeting and requirements for a <u>Squarespace site</u>, which can be produced in-house.
- Find out more in WRI's Digital Products and Online Communications Guidelines.

Emails are a crucial arm of our external communications strategy. While we use plain-text Outlook emails for regular communication and internal sends, we use the external email platform Pardot for branded, customized, more expansive email sends to external lists and targeted audiences. These include event **invitations**, launch **announcements**, **newsletters** and project or program **updates**.







If your team needs to plan an external email send, come talk to us at least **two weeks** before the send date. With support from Parker Miller in Core Comms, we'll help you determine the best email lists and design engaging content.



Find more info and specific Pardot guidance in WRI's <u>Newsletter & Email Communication</u> Guidelines.

WRI Ross Center Monthly Newsletter

Keeping us looped in on your projects and responding to requests for input to our internal memos will ensure that your content gets included in our monthly newsletter!

The WRI Ross Center Monthly is one of the most fundamental engagement points with our audiences – all subscribers to our email list receive it. It features an update from Ani, project updates from across the program, upcoming events, new publications and blogs, and a Tweet of the month.



Want to make sure your content is included in the Monthly?

Be sure to respond to Looking Ahead emails and loop in the comms team for any/all launches.

WRI Digest is the institute's flagship newsletter, sent out by Lawrence MacDonald. The email informs WRI staff, board, funders and other stakeholders of new Knowledge Products, blogs, statements and other relevant information from WRI. We coordinate with Lawrence to ensure that important launches, events and other activity from the Cities program are included.

Looking Ahead is an internal memo that highlights upcoming events across the institute. We also compile a weekly **Looking Ahead for the Cities program**, drawing input from across our global network. To make sure your content is included, be sure to respond to the Cities Looking Ahead emails and loop in the comms team for any/all launches.

Snapshots is WRI's internal newsletter spotlighting the institute's outreach and impact around the world. We liaise with Core Comms to get our big events and announcements included.







Have an event coming up? Email the Comms team so we can promote it in email.

Social Media

Our main social media platforms are Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. We interact with partners, stakeholders and programs, within WRI and externally, to promote our messages and thought leaders. Follow us!



Time frames: It can take a mere **hour** to produce a social media card, **days** to produce a video explainer and **weeks** to create a social media kit including all the above plus an overview of the campaign, proposed posts, key partners and dates. It all depends on the needs of your project.



Still curious about posting on social?

- Take a look at the <u>Social Media Policy and Guidelines</u> created by WRI's Online Engagement Architect and Strategist, Laura Lee Dooley. We run all our social media products by her.
- We also have pre-approved social media templates.

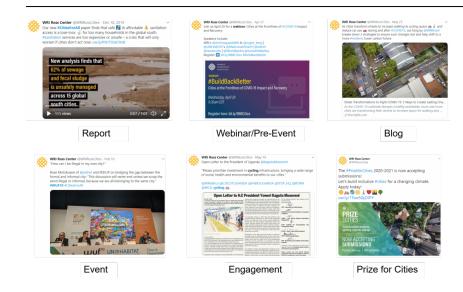
Offices, Programs and Centers across WRI have independent accounts. Follow and amplify our impact!



Join the conversation!

You are a huge part of what makes our content go viral. We highlight our staff on social when promoting blog posts, research, events and media mentions. We can help you build your social presence to amplify your work and that of your team – but your own personal interaction can ultimately be among the biggest drivers of traffic!

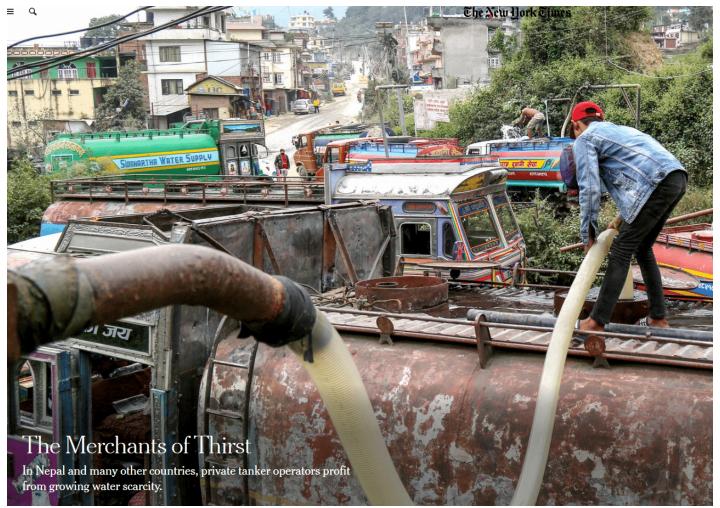
Types of Social Media Posts



We can help you develop a tailored social media strategy for your audience and content.

Media Relations

- We cultivate relationships with reporters around the world to elevate our experts and our work and to establish WRI Ross Center as a go-to for all things cities.
- We do targeted outreach to media on new reports, blogs, events and our general expertise, often collaborating with Core Comms.
- If a request comes in from a reporter for an interview with one of our experts, we should be looped in to that process, and we will help coordinate. We can also advise on interview strategies and compile supporting data if needed.



Coverage in The New York Times for our 2019 report on urban water access.

RELEASE: Lack of Reliable and Affordable Water a Hidden Threat for Urban Households of the Global South

New research finds millions have access only a few hours a day to poor quality water, while others are forced to pay up to a quarter of monthly household income for private provision

August 13, 2019



Photo by Sarel Kromer/Flickr

Our press release for the same report.

Send us your media mentions!

Let us know when your interview or quote comes out and we'll help promote and add to our internal tracking.

Key Contact



Practice Areas:

Water

Urban Development

Related Projects:

World Resources Report: Towards a More Equal City

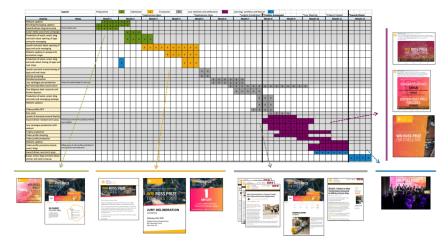
Tags:

Universal Access Water Risk

More

How It All Comes Together

The Prize for Cities is a great example of a comprehensive communications strategy coming together. From branding and website creation, to social media promotion, blog and multimedia storytelling, to event planning.



Words Don't Grow on Trees

We rely on project funds to support you!

It's important to keep in mind that your team will need to budget for comms products and time. Through the integrated funding model, most comms activities are funded on a per project basis.

If you have questions about comms budgeting, have your Project Coordinator talk to our Project Coordinator.



Budget funds for comms and speak to our PC!

Now that you know what we can do, let's recap...



Come speak to us as early as possible both for specific requests and general project support so we can build a strategy for your needs. Be mindful that some comms products take days to produce, but others can take months.



We help you liaise with Core Comms and external vendors, if needed. Please come to us first so we can coordinate requests.



Be sure to follow brand and editorial guidelines for presentations and any other external-facing products you may be working on.



Budget funds for comms. If you have questions about comms budgeting, have your PC contact our PC.

Visit other websites in our broader digital ecosystem:



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