ACUTE - Accessibility and Connectivity Knowledge Hub for Urban Transformation in Europe

WP3 – Practitioner Interaction

D3.3 Production of first material/activities in line with resources available - Communication Guidelines: reaching practitioners and the public

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Foreword

This document serves as a comprehensive guide for researchers involved in the ACUTE knowledge hub, an EU-funded initiative focused on improving communication between scientific research and various stakeholders, including practitioners, policy-makers, and the general public. Recognising the importance of effectively disseminating research findings, this guide offers detailed instructions on crafting press releases, fact sheets, policy briefs, and other communication materials tailored to different audiences.

The purpose of these guidelines is to equip researchers with the tools and knowledge needed to convey complex scientific information in a clear, accessible, and impactful manner. By doing so, the ACUTE project aims to bridge the gap between research and practice, ensuring that scientific advancements are effectively translated into real-world applications to maximise impact.

This document is intended primarily for researchers across different countries, acknowledging that there may be cultural and national differences that influence how information is perceived and utilised. While every effort has been made to provide universally applicable advice, it is important to recognise that these guidelines should be adapted to fit the specific context in which they are used. Which news and industry media are best suited for disseminating research results, for example, must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

As a foundational resource, this guide should be seen as a starting point. Users are encouraged to personalise and refine the strategies presented here to suit their unique needs and objectives. The document is not exhaustive, but rather a flexible framework designed to support ongoing development and adaptation in communication practices within the ACUTE project.

Setting up and designing a project website is essential for the successful dissemination of research results, providing a central platform to reach diverse stakeholders. However, as the creation of a website is a comprehensive, one-time task, it is less suitable for inclusion in this context. In contrast, the other formats in the document focus on ongoing, individual efforts that support continuous engagement.

This practical compilation complements the more theoretical communication plan developed in WP3 - Practitioner Interaction (Deliverable 3.1 - Outreach and engagement plan). The Outreach and Engagement Plan describes the thinking behind the communication work in ACUTE, the main objectives, and the most important target audiences. It also addresses how various communication efforts can be measured and monitored.

1. Enhancing your communication skills

Effective communication is crucial when sharing research with practitioners, policymakers, and the general public. By honing your writing and speaking skills, you can ensure your research has a tangible impact and reaches a broad audience. The following guidelines will cover how to write popular scientific texts and deliver presentations that translate complex ideas into accessible language, helping you convey your message clearly across various platforms.

1.1. Guide: Writing popular science text

Academic writing can be dense and full of jargon, making it hard for non-experts to grasp. Writing in popular scientific language allows you to translate your research into clear, engaging content that resonates with a broader audience. Whether you're addressing the media with a press release, sharing insights with practitioners on social media, or influencing policy-makers through a policy brief, using popular scientific language makes your message more accessible and impactful.

Key strategies:

- **Tailor your message:** Keep your language simple and concise, as most readers – whether practitioners, policymakers, or the general public – are often short on time. Adapt your content to the platform: use brief, punchy language for social media, and provide more detailed explanations for longer formats like blogs.
- **Simplify, but don't oversimplify:** Avoid technical jargon while maintaining the integrity of your findings. Analogies and examples can help clarify complex concepts.
- **Focus on relevance:** Highlight the practical implications of your research. Readers are generally more interested in why the findings matter rather than the theoretical background or methodology.
- **Use active voice:** Active sentences are more direct and easier to understand (e.g., "We discovered…" instead of "It was discovered…").
- **Organise your content:** Begin with a clear introduction, highlight your key findings, and end with their practical applications or implications.
- **Utilise AI:** Leverage AI tools such as DeepL and ChatGPT for adapting texts to different audiences. These tools can help tailor language and tone to suit specific target groups

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Inspiration: Writing example

Instead of: "Hederos and Hellberg (2000) provide an overview of the effectiveness of public transport. The authors argue that public transport is better now than ever before. Stridsberg and Malmström (2013) further offer a comparison of various countries in Europe to highlight which has the most attractive public transport system. It turns out that public transport is excellent in most countries, except for Portugal and Poland, where Maggio and Hellström (2015) found no signs of improvement."

Write: "Research shows that public transport is better now than ever before. This is true for most European countries, except in Portugal and Poland, where no signs of improvement have been observed."

By writing in this more direct manner and avoiding extensive citations, the text can be condensed, creating a more engaging flow for the reader.

1.2. Guide: Delivering effective oral presentations

Presenting research to a lay audience requires breaking down complex ideas and making them un-derstandable and engaging. Below is a step-by-step guide to help you, as a researcher, prepare and deliver an effective oral presentation.

1.2.1. Preparation and planning
- **Understand your audience:** Consider those to whom you will be speaking. What prior knowledge do they have? What questions or interests might they have? This will help you tailor your content.
- **Avoid jargon and technical terms:** If you must use technical terms, explain them simply and clearly.
- **Define the purpose:** What do you want the audience to take with them from your presentation? Identify 2-3 key messages you want to convey.
- **Consider the importance of a storyline.** A coherent storyline is as important as a clear structure. Try to think beyond the classical building blocks of a scientific paper (e.g. introduction, literature review, methods,…).

1.2.2. Structure the presentation
A clear structure helps the audience follow your argument. Your presentation should include the following sections:
- **Introduction:** Start by introducing yourself and providing a brief background on your research area. Explain why this topic is important and relevant to the audience. Example: "Hello, my name is [your name] and I research [subject]. Today, we will look at how [your research area] affects [aspect relevant to the audience]."
- **Problem description:** Explain the specific problem or question your research addresses. Use concrete examples or analogies that the audience can relate to. Example: "Consider how much we rely on [example] in our daily lives. But what happens when [problem] arises? My research investigates this."
- **Research methods (simplified):** Briefly describe how you conducted your research. Avoid technical details and focus on the overarching methods. Example: "We collected data from [number] people over a period of [time]. By analysing this information, we could see clear patterns."
- **Key findings and results:** Present your main findings. Use visuals such as images, diagrams, or short videos to illustrate your points. Explain what the results mean in simple terms. Example: "The results showed that [key finding]. This means that [consequence or significance]."
- **Significance and implications:** Discuss why your results are important and how they might affect society, individuals, or specific groups. Relate it to something close to the audience. Example: "This research could lead to [improvement] in [area], which directly impacts [audience's interests]."
- **Conclusion and summary:** Summarise your key points and relate back to the purpose of the presentation. End with a strong conclusion that leaves the audience with something to think about or act upon. Example: "In summary, my research shows that [conclusion]. By [application of results], we can make significant progress in [relevant area]."
- **Q&A Session:** Allocate time for questions from the audience. Be prepared to clarify and be flexible in your responses.

1.2.3. Delivering the presentation
- **Use engaging language:** Employ storytelling techniques to make your presentation more vivid. Share anecdotes or personal experiences related to your research. Vary your voice to maintain the audience's interest and emphasise key points.
- **Visualise Information:** Use images, diagrams, and infographics to support your points. Ensure these are simple and clear, without unnecessary details. If using PowerPoint or other presentation tools, keep on-screen text to a minimum – use bullet points or brief phrases.
- **Engage the audience:** Ask questions to the audience to make them think and feel involved. Use examples or analogies relevant to their everyday lives or experiences.
- **Practice your presentation:** Rehearse several times before the actual presentation. Time yourself to ensure you stay within the allotted time. Practice in front of someone who is unfamiliar with your topic and ask for feedback on how well they understood the content.

- **Manage nervousness:** Remember that it is normal to feel nervous. Focus on delivering your message rather than on yourself. Take a few deep breaths before you begin, and use pauses in your presentation to gather your thoughts.
- **Be flexible:** Be prepared to adapt your presentation based on the audience's reactions. If something is not understood, take the time to explain it in another way.

1.2.4. After the presentation

- **Questions and discussion:** Encourage questions and actively participate in the discussion. This can provide valuable feedback and help clarify any misunderstandings.
- **Summarise the discussion:** After the Q&A, conclude with a brief summary of the key points discussed.
- **Follow-up:** If possible, provide your contact details or links to additional materials for those who wish to learn more about your research.

2. Engaging with media

Effectively engaging with the media is a powerful way to disseminate research and reach a wider audience, including policymakers and the general public. The following guidelines explore essential tools and strategies for communicating your research through press releases and opinion pieces, along with practical advice on reaching out to journalists and media outlets.

2.1. Guide: Crafting a press release

A press release is a tool to communicate research findings to journalists, making it easier for them to write stories on your work. Below is a step-by-step guide on how to write a press release and what components to include.

1. Headline: The headline is the first impression and determines whether the press release will be read. It should be short, clear, and enticing. Focus on the most interesting or newsworthy aspect of your research.
→ Example: "New discovery in [your research area] could transform [specific application]" (e.g. "New ways of collecting waste boost recycling").

2. Introduction: The introduction is a brief summary (1-2 sentences) of the key points in the press release. It should answer the basic questions: **Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?** The introduction acts as an extension of the headline and provides the recipient with a quick overview.
→ Example: "Researchers at [your organisation]/within [your project] have identified a new mechanism for [specific process], which could lead to improvements in [specific area]" (e.g. "Researchers within the [XY] project have found several ways to facilitate the collection of waste. The research result has the potential to multiply the recycling of certain materials."

3. Main Body: The main body expands on what is presented in the introduction and contains more detailed information. Structure the text with the following sections:

- **Background:** Present the background of your research. Why is this important? What problem or question have you addressed?
- **Results:** Describe the main findings of your research. Use simple and understandable language. Avoid overly technical terms and explain complex concepts.
- **Methods:** Briefly describe the methods used in the research. This is especially important if the methods are innovative or of particular interest.
- **Implications and Applications:** Discuss the potential implications of your research. How might the results impact society, industry, or future research?

- **Quotes:** Include one or two quotes from yourself or a colleague that provide a personal or expert perspective on the research. Quotes give the press release a more personal and engaging tone.

→ Example: "This discovery opens up new possibilities for [application], which could significantly impact [field]," says [your name], researcher at [your organisation].

4. Conclusion: Briefly summarise and reiterate the key point of the press release. You may also mention if additional material is available, such as reports or research articles.

5. Contact information: End with clear contact information. It should be easy for journalists to reach you for interviews or additional information.

6. Images and attachments: If possible, include high-resolution images, graphs, or other visual elements that support your research. These can help make the press release stand out and increase the chances of publication.

7. Related Information and links: If your research has been published in a scientific journal or another publication, include a link to it. Also, link to your organisation and any related projects or previous press releases.

Inspiration: Press release examples

[Transportforskning i världsklass när VTI firar 20 år i Göteborg](#) (in Swedish)

[Ny forskningsplattform för bättre vägar - och mycket mer](#) (in Swedish)

2.2. Guide: Writing an opinion piece
Writing an opinion piece is a powerful way for researchers to share their expertise with a broader audience and influence public discourse. If you are new to writing opinion pieces, follow these steps to craft a compelling and effective piece for local or national newspapers.

1. Identify a relevant topic
- **Choose a timely issue:** Select a topic that is current, relevant, and of interest to the general public or policy-makers. Look for issues related to your field of expertise that are being discussed in the news or are pertinent to ongoing public debates. A recent report or emerging trend in your field can serve as a strong starting point. Ask yourself whether this article matters to a wider audience – and why now?
- **Focus on your expertise:** Leverage your research to provide a unique perspective on the issue. Your insights should add value to the discussion by offering evidence-based arguments or new solutions.
- **Find your angle:** Consider what makes your viewpoint unique. What fresh insights or angles can you offer that have not already been covered?

2. Understand your audience
- **Tailor your message:** Different publications have different audiences. For local newspapers, the focus might be on community issues, while national platforms often address broader, policy-oriented topics. Think about where you are pitching. Does your piece align with the type of content they publish? Is it suited to their audience?
- **Review submission guidelines:** Each publication has specific requirements for length, format, and submission method. Ensure you follow these requirements to increase the likelihood of your piece being accepted.

3. Clarify your key messages
- **Define your core argument:** What is the main point of your article? How would you summarise it in one sentence? Keep your argument focused and ensure every point/paragraph supports it.
- **Stay on message:** Avoid introducing too many ideas or straying from your central theme.
- **Straight to the point:** Your viewpoint should be immediately apparent. Readers should not need to reach the end of your piece to grasp what your key take-away is.

4. Structure your opinion piece
- **Start Strong:** Open with a compelling hook – a surprising fact, a powerful anecdote, or a provocative question – to capture your readers' attention.
- **Present your argument:** Clearly state your main argument or thesis early in the piece. Follow with supporting evidence from your research, using specific data, examples, or case studies to reinforce your points.
- **Address counterarguments:** Acknowledge and address potential counterarguments to strengthen your position. This demonstrates a well-rounded understanding of the issue and builds credibility.
- **Conclude effectively:** Summarise your key points and suggest a call to action or a practical solution. End with a memorable closing statement that leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

5. Write in a persuasive and engaging style
- **Be concise:** Opinion pieces are typically short (800-900 words). Ensure your writing is concise and focused, sticking to the core argument without unnecessary details.
- **Use persuasive language:** Employ persuasive techniques such as appealing to emotion, presenting logical arguments, and using rhetorical questions to engage readers and persuade them of your viewpoint.
- **Write for clarity:** Assume your readers may not have specialised knowledge in your field. Use clear, straightforward language and avoid jargon to make your arguments accessible to a general audience.

6. Pitch it to the media:
When submitting your opinion piece, it is important to craft an effective pitch. Here are some key elements to include in your pitch:
- **Provide a one-sentence summary:** Start with a concise sentence that captures the essence of your article.
- **Outline your argument:** Briefly expand on your main points in no more than 200 words. Focus on the core argument and its relevance.
- **Highlight the unique angle:** Explain what makes your piece stand out and why it is interesting.
- **Showcase your expertise:** Clearly state your qualifications and experience that make you a credible voice on the topic.
- **Include relevant multimedia:** Enhance your pitch by offering supplementary materials like photos (of you, for example), videos, audio clips, tables, or graphs to support your article and make it more appealing.

7. Promote your opinion piece
- **Share on social media:** Once published, promote your opinion piece through your social media channels. Engage with readers by responding to comments and participating in discussions related to your piece.
- **Leverage your network:** Inform your colleagues and professional network about your publication. Encourage them to share your piece with their own networks to broaden its reach.

Final notes

- **Be bold:** This is your opinion - feel free to make strong, assertive statements. Not every statement needs to be backed up a specific research project/study. You are the expert, and your perspective is informed by years of research and experience. Do not shy away from taking a stand.
- **Practice:** Discuss your position with someone who is unfamiliar with your work. This can help you clarify your thoughts and identify any terms or concepts that need further explanation.

Inspiration: Opinion piece examples

[Dyr kollektivtrafik gör Sverige mindre rättvist](#) / Expensive public transport makes Sweden less fair (Aftonbladet Debatt) (in Swedish)

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3. Leveraging social media

Social media is a powerful tool for communicating research, connecting with practitioners, and expanding your professional network. Among the various platforms available, **LinkedIn** stands out as a key resource for engaging with professionals, policymakers, and stakeholders in your field.

While platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok and Facebook are valuable for broader public engagement, the following guideline focuses specifically on LinkedIn due to its unique potential for reaching a targeted, professional audience. However, it's important to consider other platforms as well. For example:

- **X (Twitter):** Ideal for short updates and engaging in real-time discussions. Utilise hashtags to expand your reach.
- **Facebook:** While less focused on professional networking, it can be useful for engaging with community groups and organisations.
- **YouTube:** Excellent for presenting research visually through videos, webinars, or explainer content, making complex ideas more accessible.

3.1. Guide: Maximising impact on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a key platform for connecting with a targeted professional audience, making it ideal for disseminating research to practitioners and decision-makers. Its emphasis on industry expertise, professional networking, and thought leadership makes it particularly effective for amplifying your research within the right communities. The platform serves as a dynamic resume, allowing you to highlight your bio, publications, awards, and honors. You can share posts in different formats (texts, images, videos, blog posts), follow thought leaders, join relevant groups, and send direct messages. LinkedIn also provides an excellent venue for publishing long-form content without the need for a separate blog or website.

Below are a few strategies and best practices for maximising your impact on LinkedIn.

1. Polish your profile on LinkedIn

- **Profile Picture:** Use a high-quality, professional headshot.
- **Headline:** Include your current position and your research focus.
- **Summary:** Craft a brief (3-4 sentences) summary that highlights your research interests, key accomplishments, and how your work benefits practitioners. Emphasise the practical applications of your research.

2. Create engaging posts
- **Share concise summaries:** Present digestible overviews of your research, focusing on key takeaways and their relevance to the field or current trends.
- **Use compelling visuals:** Incorporate visuals such as carousels or short videos to attract attention and enhance engagement (see more at page **Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.** of this document).
- **Publish long-form articles:** LinkedIn allows users to write in-depth articles. This feature is perfect for sharing more detailed analysis, insights, or research findings. For guidance on creating articles, refer to this LinkedIn guide.
- **Share links:** Post links to opinion pieces, upcoming events, or articles you've found useful.
- **Leverage AI tools:** Utilise AI for proofreading your posts or generating content ideas and hashtags.

3. Engage with your network:
Active engagement is crucial for building your network and increasing the reach of your posts on LinkedIn. Regularly interact with others by commenting on posts, sharing relevant content, and congratulating peers on their accomplishments. Building relationships increases the visibility of your work and establishes you as an active contributor in your field.
- **Connect with professionals:** Send connection requests to professionals in your field, industry leaders, policy-makers, and organisations that could benefit from your research.
- **Participate in conversations:** Engage in relevant discussions and comment on others' posts. Share interesting content from others with your audience.
- **Invite feedback:** Encourage feedback from your audience by asking open-ended questions, responding to comments, and creating surveys or polls.
- **Tag people and organisations:** When posting, tag relevant individuals and organisations to increase the visibility of your content.
- **Join groups:** LinkedIn Groups are niche communities where professionals discuss industry-specific topics. Join groups related to your field and actively participate in discussions. Share your research, ask for feedback, or engage in conversations around policy or industry challenges relevant to your work.
- **Use hashtags:** Incorporate relevant hashtags (e.g., #mobility, #sustainability, #publictransport) to expand your post's reach to a broader audience interested in those topics.

Do's
- **Share personal reflections:** Engage your audience by offering thoughtful insights or reactions to current events, trends, or news within your field. Sharing personal reflections not only highlights your expertise but also fosters meaningful conversations. You can also reflect on conferences or workshops you've attended, providing your audience with practical takeaways and encouraging dialogue.
- **Stay active:** Regular activity is crucial for maintaining visibility and relevance. Consistently post updates, comment on others' content, and share research or insights that resonate with your audience to keep them engaged.
- **Use clear, simple language:** Keep your messaging accessible by avoiding academic jargon. Use straightforward language to ensure that your research is understood by a broader audience, including practitioners unfamiliar with technical terms (see "Guide: Writing popular science text" on page **Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.**).

Don'ts:
- **Disclose sensitive information:** Always be cautious about sharing personal data or proprietary research. Ensure that any information you post is appropriate for public viewing and complies with privacy regulations.

- **Neglect professionalism:** While it's important to share your opinions confidently, approach controversial topics with care. Ensure your arguments are well-supported by evidence, and aim for constructive, respectful dialogue to maintain a professional tone.

4. Using a variety of formats

When it comes to communicating your research, diversifying the formats you use can help reach different audiences and make your message more impactful. Different formats cater to various preferences, from quick summaries for busy professionals to more in-depth explorations for dedicated audiences. Using a mix of formats ensures that your research reaches a wide audience, catering to different preferences and engagement styles. Whether through short, concise formats like fact sheets and carousel posts or more interactive and in-depth approaches like podcasts and webinars, diversifying how you present your work can make your research more accessible and impactful.

The following guidelines explores a few effective formats for sharing your research with practitioners and the public. The highlighted formats are straightforward and easy to use without technical expertise. If you have additional resources, you can further enhance these methods to reach a wider audience.

4.1. Guide: Creating a fact sheet

A fact sheet is a concise document that summarises key information about your research on a single A4-page. It is an excellent tool for communicating complex ideas in an accessible way to a broad audience, including policy-makers, the media, and the public. Here is a step-by-step guide to creating an effective fact sheet.

1. Title: The title should be clear, concise, and reflect the content of the fact sheet. It should immediately communicate what the fact sheet is about.
→ Example: "Fact sheet: [Research area] – key findings and implications"

2. Introduction or summary: Start the fact sheet with a brief introduction summarising the main points. This section gives the reader an overview of what the fact sheet will cover.
→ Example: "This fact sheet provides an overview of recent research on [topic] conducted at [your organisation]. The findings show that [main finding] and have important implications for [application]."

3. Main sections: Divide the fact sheet into clear sections to make it easy to follow. Below are some suggested sections to include:
- **Background and purpose:** Briefly describe the overall context of your research. What problem or question does the research address? Why is it important?
- **Key findings:** Present the main findings in bullet points or short paragraphs. Focus on the most relevant and impactful results.
  → Example 1: "Discovery of [specific result] that could lead to [potential application]."
  → Example 2: "Statistical increase/decrease in [key variable] following [specific action or intervention]."
- **Methods:** Provide a brief description of the methods used. Include only the most relevant details and keep it simple.
- **Practical Implications:** Describe how your research findings can be applied in practice. This could include applications in industry, policy recommendations, or future research.
- **Visuals:** Use charts, graphs, or images to illustrate your points. Visuals make the information more accessible and easier to understand. Ensure they are clear and related to the text they illustrate.
  → Example 1: A bar chart showing comparisons between different groups.
  → Example 2: A simple illustration explaining a complex process.

4. Summary Points: End the fact sheet with a list of the most important points that the reader should take away. This could be a recap of your main findings, practical recommendations, or next steps in the research.
→ Example: "Key finding: [Brief description of the most important finding]." OR "Recommendations: [Short list of any practical applications or policy suggestions]."

5. Contact Information: Include your contact information so that readers can reach you for more information. Also, mention where to find additional resources or links to more in-depth material.

6. Design Tips: The following formatting and design tips should be considered:
- **Use clear headings** and subheadings to break up the information and make the fact sheet easy to read.
- **Use bullet points** where possible to simplify complex information.
- **Keep the layout simple and clean:** Leave enough white space to avoid the page looking cluttered.
- **Choose an appropriate font** and font size that is easy to read. Headings can be slightly larger than the body text. Tre recommended fonts are Helvetica, Calibri and Roboto, but there are many more. Recommended font size is 10-12 points for printed material and 12-14 points for digital screens.
- **Images and Illustrations:** Images and illustrations should be used to enhance your text. Make sure they are relevant and contribute to clarifying your message.
  → Examples: A graph showing results over time / a photograph of an experiment or fieldwork / a schematic illustration of the most important findings.

Inspiration: Fact Sheet examples

Metamorphosis project – Fact Sheets

K2 Fact Sheet – Så kan kollektivtrafiken bidra i klimatomställningen (in Swedish)

4.2. Guide: Writing a policy brief

A policy brief is a strategic document that presents research findings and offers recommendations to politicians, officials, and other decision-makers. The aim is to inform them about a specific topic and influence decision-making through recommendations. Here is a step-by-step guide to writing an effective policy brief on four A4 pages.

1. Title: The title should be short, clear, and reflect the main message of your policy brief. It should attract the reader and immediately show what the document is about.
→ Example: "Policy brief: Improving [specific Area] through [relevant action] – recommendations based on current research".

2. Summary: Start with a summary of about half a page. The summary should provide a quick overview of the key points: the problem, the research findings, and the main policy recommendations. This is the first thing many readers will look at, so it is important that it is sharp and engaging.
→ Example: "This policy brief summarises recent research on [topic] and provides recommendations for how [policy area] can be improved through [specific actions]. The research shows that [important result], making it necessary to [recommended action]."

3. Introduction: Here, you describe the background to the problem that your research addresses. Clarify why this is an important issue for decision-makers and put it into context. The introduction should also provide an overview of the research area and the issues that will be addressed in the document.
→ Example 1: A brief history of how the problem has developed.
→ Example 2: Identification of stakeholders affected and why the problem is relevant now.

4. Problem Definition: Provide a clear and concise description of the specific problem or challenge that your research addresses. Explain why it is important and what consequences it may have if not addressed.
→ Example: "According to the latest research, [problem] is a growing threat to [area], affecting [specific groups or sectors]."

5. Research Findings: Present your research findings in a clear and structured form. Use subheadings to break up the information and focus on the results that are most relevant to decision-making. Be sure to use language that is easy to understand, without losing scientific accuracy.
→ Example 1: **Economic effects: "**The results show that [specific result] could lead to [economic consequence]."
→ Example 2: **Social consequences:** "The research indicates that [result] impacts [specific group] in the following way [define consequences/impacts]."

6. Policy Recommendations: This is the most important part of your policy brief. Here, you present the actions you recommend based on your research findings. Each recommendation should be clear, actionable, and supported by the research you have presented.

7. Justification for recommendations: For each policy recommendation, include an explanation of why the proposed action is necessary and how it will lead to improvements. This section should convince decision-makers that your recommendations are both feasible and effective.
→ Example: "Implementing [recommendation] will reduce [problem] by [percent or other measure], according to the research, by [method or mechanism]."

8. Fact Boxes and visualisations: To make your policy brief more accessible and readable, use fact boxes, charts, tables, and other visualisations. These can summarise key statistics, compare different policy options, or illustrate complex relationships.
→ Example 1: A fact box explaining key concepts or definitions.
→ Example 2: A chart showing trends over time or differences between various groups.

9. Consequences and Implications: Describe the long-term consequences if the recommendations are implemented, as well as the risks that may arise if the issue is not addressed. This section should help decision-makers understand the importance of taking action and the benefits that can be achieved.
→ Example: "If these measures are implemented, we can expect [long-term benefit], contributing to [overall goal]. If no action is taken, we risk [negative consequences]."

10. Conclusion: Summarise the key points of the brief, reiterating the importance of addressing the problem and implementing the recommended actions. The conclusion should leave a strong impression and inspire action.
→ Example: "The research clearly shows that [problem] is a serious issue that requires immediate action. By implementing the proposed measures, [positive outcome] can be achieved."

11. References: Include a list of the sources you have referred to in the policy brief. Use a consistent citation style.

12. Contact Information: Conclude with your contact information, and if available, include information about where to find the full report or additional research.

13. Tips for Design:
- **Use clear headings** and subheadings to break up the text and make it easier to scan.
- **Maintain a clean and professional layout** with ample white space to avoid information overload.
- **Choose a simple yet effective colour palette** that makes the document visually appealing without distracting from the content.
- **Include page numbers** and possibly a brief header to aid navigation.

Inspiration: Policy brief examples

CIVITAS policy brief: Integrated planning

SLU policy brief: Biogas stärker och tryggar hållbar svensk energi- och matproduktion (in Swedish)

4.3. Other formats: Videos & carousel posts

Beyond traditional formats like fact sheets and policy briefs, incorporating dynamic content such as videos and carousel posts can significantly expand the reach and impact of your research. These formats are particularly effective for engaging audiences on social media platforms like LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram, where visual storytelling and concise communication are key.

4.3.1. Video

Videos are a powerful way to bring your research to life. Whether through interviews or visually engaging explainers, video content can make complex findings more relatable and accessible to a broader audience.
Key strategies include:
- **Interview-style videos:** Feature yourself or experts discussing your research in a conversational manner. This humanises the content and makes it more approachable.
- **Text-based videos:** Use text overlays or animated graphics to summarise your research in a visually engaging way. These videos work well with or without sound.
- **Keep it concise:** Aim for 1-3 minutes to retain viewer attention, focusing on one or two main points.
- **Keep it simple:** Professional equipment isn't necessary. A good phone camera and simple tools like Canva can produce high-quality results.

Inspiration: Video examples

Cargo Bike Heroes: The Entrepreneurial Mother (YouTube link)

Cargo Bike Heroes: The Small Business Owner (YouTube link)

ASAP Videos (smarturbanlogistics.eu link)

A guide to planning Cyclelogistics Hubs (cyclelogistics.eu link)

4.3.2. Carousel or Slideshow posts

Carousel posts, commonly used on LinkedIn and Instagram, allow you to present complex ideas step-by-step through a series of images. This format is ideal for breaking down information into manageable, visually

appealing segments. This format works well for explaining processes, showing trends, or walking an audience through your findings step by step. **Key strategies include:**

- **Create a logical flow:** Each slide should build on the previous one, leading the audience through your key points in a coherent sequence.
- **Limit text and focus on visuals:** Don't overwhelm the slide with text. Use strong visuals, keeping text to short bullet points or key phrases. The goal is to make your message easy to absorb at a glance, not to fill the whole slide with information.
- **End with a call to action:** The final slide should summarise the key message and encourage the audience to learn more, contact you, or apply the insights.
- **Use tools effectively:** Tools like PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Canva are excellent for creating/designing these slides. Export the slides as PDFs and upload them on LinkedIn by selecting the document icon when creating a post.