



European  
Commission

# Creative Communications for Evaluation Dissemination

## How-to Guide: **Blogs**



This How-to Guide is prepared by the  
Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

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# INTRODUCTION

A blog provides an accessible and user-friendly format to communicate your evaluation results. You can share findings from the evaluation as a whole or specific aspects such as key learning, recommendations or experience of using different methods and tools. All of these may incite your audience to read the full report. The DEVCO/ESS study to understand the different ways in which evaluation results are communicated reveals that 7 out of the 18 institutions consulted use blogs to disseminate their evaluations. Blogs do not require particular preparation in terms of budgeting and planning, but there are some writing principles to respect. These guidelines provide you with practical tips, examples, and references to additional resources to get you started on evaluation blogs.

## WHY BLOGS?

Blogs provide a great way of engaging your audience and encourage them to read the full report. They also enable you to:

- ▶ Convey key messages faster
- ▶ Reach a wider audience base
- ▶ Provide a summary of the evaluation results in a non-formal way
- ▶ Present images and graphs from the report
- ▶ Present different perspectives, e.g. a blog can provide views from different stakeholders of the evaluation process.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

Target audiences could include:

- ▶ Evaluators/technical experts
- ▶ Different EU institutions
- ▶ Print and electronic media

## WHERE TO MAKE IT?

Evaluation blogs can be written locally by evaluation teams or at headquarters.

## HOW MUCH TIME?

The average production time of an evaluation blog is relatively short – usually taking around one week (including time to incorporate feed-

back). However, it all depends on the scope and quantity of key messages which you want to convey. Also, if it is a blog written by multiple people it is likely to take longer than a blog written by one person.

## HOW MUCH MONEY?

The study found that the average cost to produce one blog is normally free as it is produced internally. Please find some examples and their associated costs on [page 4](#).

Note that the cost depends on the scope and the quality of the blog you are producing and whether there is in-house resources and capacity available to produce it or whether there is a need to hire a consultant.

## WHERE TO START?

Have a read through the [Communication & Visibility Manual for European External Action \(2018\)](#), look out for existing templates or create your own.

**Need inspiration?** Have a look at the useful resources from the wider evaluation community on [page 5](#).

## TIPS TO GUIDE YOUR EVALUATION BLOG PLANNING

1

### Decide on target audience & purpose

Who do you want to read the evaluation blog? What do you want to communicate? How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

3

### Share the communications guidelines

Share [EC Communication & Visibility Manual](#) with the evaluation team and consultants involved in the blog production; they are bound to abide by the rules described in the manual, including branding, disclaimers, visual identity, approval etc.

5

### Respect image rights and obtain consent

If images identify a person, consent forms are needed. Ensure that blog writers are aware of the need to request and obtain consent before publication and include this provision in the evaluation ToR.

7

### Choose your dissemination channels

There are various online platforms such as the [Europe Aid website](#), and other social media channels where your evaluation blog can be shared. Choose the right channel for your target audience and make sure that you are aware of processes to follow for each channel.

2

### Agree messages to convey

Blogs usually focus on a particular topic, rather than trying to highlight all of the evaluation findings in one go. It is good practice to summarise what you are going to talk about in the first paragraph and encourage the reader to read the rest of the post.

4

### Include images, quotes and stories

A strong image, an interesting quote, a story or data visual from the report can make a big impact on the reader and provide a moving way to illustrate your key points.

6

### Think about crosscutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change and human rights addressed in your evaluation should also be mentioned in your blog. Ensure a balanced gender representation, avoid gender biases and let the blog reflect the sensitivity approaches used in the evaluation.

8

### You are not alone!

Share your idea(s) and blogs with colleagues and the Communications focal point if you work in EU Delegations. Contact the Communication Unit of DG DEVCO and The Evaluation Support Service for more advice and publishing on the [Capacity4Dev website](#).

# EVALUATION BLOG - EXAMPLES

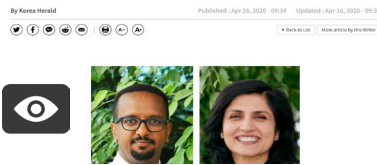
## #EvalCrisis Blog - No 02 - Evaluation from space



**European Union DG DEVCO/ESS**  
*#EvalCrisis Blog Series – Evaluation during the Covid-19 Crisis*

**Description:** describes the use of satellite data for remote evaluations with an example of a UNOPS rural electrification project in Sierra Leone.  
**Cost:** Produced in-house  
**Production time:** 2 days  
**Produced by:** DEVCO ESS team  
**Language:** English  
**Full series:** [#Evalcrisis Blog](#)

## [Contribution] Country ownership in times of international assistance



**Green Climate Fund**  
*Country ownership in times of international assistance.*

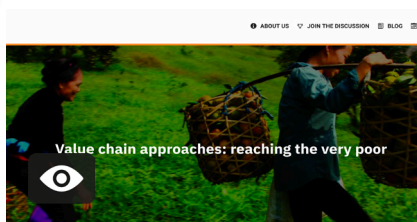
**Description:** written to showcase the findings of the IEU's evaluation on the GCF's Country Ownership Approach (COA).  
**Cost:** Produced in-house  
**Production time:** 2 weeks + 2 weeks to publish in news outlets.  
**Produced by:** headquarters  
**Language:** English

## Creating Markets: A Special Challenge for Low-income Countries



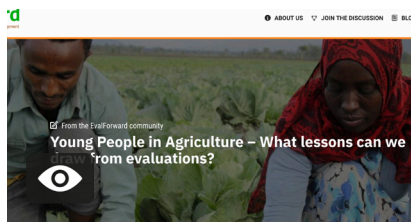
**IEG World Bank Group**  
*Creating markets: A special challenge for low-income countries*

**Description:** Blog within the 'Creating Markets' series uses findings from relevant IEG evaluations to provide lessons of experience and key takeaways regarding the World Bank Group's Creating Markets concept.  
**Cost:** Produced in-house  
**Production time:** unknown  
**Produced by:** Internally  
**Language:** English  
**Full series:** [Creating Markets](#)



**International Fund for Agricultural Development**  
*Value Chain approaches: reaching the very poor*

**Description:** practical insights into how value chains can be improved. IFAD's IOE is part of EvalForward, a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development.  
**Cost:** Produced in-house  
**Production time:** 4 days  
**Produced by:** IOE IFAD  
**Language:** English  
**Full series:** [EvalForward](#)



**EvalForward**  
*Young People in Agriculture – What lessons can we draw from evaluations?*

**Description:** learning from a discussion with the EvalForward community on the growing disconnect between youth and the agriculture sector. It includes lessons from evaluations of related projects.  
**Cost:** Produced in-house  
**Production time:** unknown  
**Produced by:** EvalForward  
**Language:** English  
**Full series:** [EvalForward](#)



**GEF Independent Evaluation Office**  
*Evaluating Environmental Peacebuilding: Difficult but Necessary*

**Description:** published on the Earth-Eval website, these blogs are written/developed to promote evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learnt, issues or recommendations.  
**Cost:** Produced in-house  
**Production time:** 3 hours  
**Produced by:** GEF IEO staff and Eval-Earth community members  
**Language:** English  
**Full series:** [EarthEval Blog](#)

EXAMPLES

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EVALUATION BLOGS

### 1 Blog planning

- ▶ This [web page](#) describes 5 tips to help you create an effective blog.
- ▶ This [guide](#) describes how to start a successful blog.

### 2 Evaluation blog examples

You can have also look at the following blog series for some more inspiration:

- ▶ The [BetterEvaluation blog](#) – sharing information on global evaluation practices and programs.
- ▶ The [Genuine Evaluation blog](#) series includes posts on evaluation practices and strategies
- ▶ [EvalCentral](#) – a mix of blog posts from the global evaluation community.
- ▶ The [RAND blog](#) series features expert commentary and informed analysis on the latest world news, as well as research highlights on different policy issues.
- ▶ Oxfam's [Real Geek](#) blog series - includes learning discussions based on practical implementation of research and evaluation tools.

### 3 Free online courses

There are several courses online which can be accessed to improve your skills:

- ▶ [Blogging Basics](#) – The Open University (course duration =23 minutes)
- ▶ [10 Free blogging tools that will make you a better blogger](#)– Udemy (course duration =32 minutes)
- ▶ [Design Your Own Blog](#) – Learn how to update your blog layout, increase the functionality of your blog, create beautiful graphics and more! – BASS (course duration = 7 Day course)

READ ON

## BLOG WRITING TIPS



**WRITING STYLE** – A blog should be **conversational**; imagine an audience outside the development or evaluation sector. Use short paragraphs and sentences and **avoid** unnecessarily **technical words**. A blog also provides an opportunity to represent a **personal view** on a topic so phrases like 'I believe' are more appropriate than referring to the organisation you work for.



**KEEP THE AUDIENCE ENGAGED** – Most people scan online content rather than reading it closely. Therefore, **use key words and headings**, links, and images to break the text. **Bullet points** help to list details in a concise way. Links to further information can also be included via **hyperlinks** to avoid repeating information.



**PROVIDE A DISCUSSION SPACE** – Inviting readers to provide comments or questions at the end of a blog post is a great way to **initiate conversations** and hear from the wider evaluation community.

A blog is conducive to raising questions and admitting confusion about the topic being covered..

Find more guidance on disseminating evaluation results [here](#).

Design by Saskia Brand ([lotusillustrations.nl](http://lotusillustrations.nl)).