PolyCIVIS Policy Briefs Guidelines

1. Introduction

This document outlines the procedures and structures that will guide the production of the PolyCIVIS policy briefs. It details the processes for reviewing policy briefs, clarifies the types of briefs to be produced, and provides a template to ensure consistency and high-quality content.

The PolyCIVIS policy work package bridges the gap between research and policy action. Its primary output will be the production of 20 high-impact policy briefs that inform and shape the discourse on the multifaceted concept of the "polycrisis." These briefs will address both conceptual frameworks and specific policy challenges, drawing on the expertise of a diverse network of researchers and practitioners. The aim is to engage policymakers at different levels, including the institutions of the European Union and the African Union, regional economic communities, and civil society organisations.

2. Alignment with the PolyCIVIS Framework

Policy brief proposals must demonstrate clear alignment with the PolyCIVIS framework for addressing the polycrisis. This means that the proposed brief actively engages with *at least one* of the following cross-cutting dimensions:

- **Across Crises:** Examine how different crises (e.g., climate change, conflict, economic instability, social inequality) interact and amplify each other, and propose integrated solutions that consider these interconnections.
- **Across Time:** Combine insights from the latest research and data with historical perspectives and lessons learned from past crises to inform policy recommendations.
- **Across Disciplinary Clusters:** Integrate insights from multiple disciplines (e.g., political science, economics, sociology, environmental studies, etc.) to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the polycrisis.
- **Across Territories and Languages:** Consider the polycrisis at various scales (local, national, regional, continental, and global) and across linguistic and cultural boundaries to develop policy solutions that are contextually relevant and inclusive.

Proposals that fail to demonstrate a clear connection to at least one of these cross-cutting dimensions will not be considered for review.

3. How to give Policy Advice and Types of Policy Briefs

PolyCIVIS's policy briefs are designed to inform and guide decision-makers on various aspects of the polycrisis. While all outputs will be referred to as "policy briefs," their specific focus and content will vary. The primary target audience for these briefs includes policymakers at various levels (especially national, regional, and global), as well as practitioners working on polycrisis-related issues, and researchers seeking to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

3.1. Some practical guidance on how to formulate policy advice:

- Tailor your recommendations to the specific roles and needs of your intended audience.
- Address a specific policy area with targeted recommendations.
- Offer fresh perspectives and solutions that go beyond existing knowledge and common-sense.
- Make recommendations that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- Support recommendations with credible evidence and sound reasoning.
- Adapt best practices to the unique context of the policy issue.

3.2. Types of Policy Briefs

There are different types of policy briefs that fit into the PolyCIVIS series. Please select one of the below formats

Unpacking Concepts: Foundational Briefs

- **Purpose**: To establish a shared understanding of fundamental concepts related to the polycrisis, including definitions, theoretical frameworks, and key terminology.
- **Example**: "Understanding the Polycrisis: A Multidisciplinary Perspective"

Deep Dives into Themes: Thematic Briefs

- **Purpose**: To provide in-depth analysis of specific sub-themes related to the polycrisis, their interconnectedness, and the social, institutional, and policy responses.
- **Example**: "Tipping Points in Climate Change: Policy Responses for Addressing the Unknown Knowns"

Case Studies: Deep Focus Briefs

- **Purpose**: To illustrate the concrete manifestations of the polycrisis through real-world examples, highlighting challenges, responses, and lessons learned.
- **Example**: "Governance in Times of Polycrisis: A Case Study of the Sahel Region"

Assessing Current Policies: Policy Options Briefs

- **Purpose**: To provide concise and actionable policy recommendations for addressing specific challenges related to the polycrisis, drawing on analysis of current policies, considering research findings.
- **Example**: "Addressing Violent Extremism in the Context of the Polycrisis: A Comparative Analysis of EU and AU Strategies"

4. Policy Brief Template

To ensure maximum impact and accessibility, all PolyCIVIS policy briefs will follow an *inverted pyramid structure*, presenting the most critical information first and then gradually delving into supporting details. Policy briefs have an indicative limit of 3,000 words.

4.1 Title Page

- **Title of the Policy Brief:** Clear, concise, and informative, reflecting the main topic and focus.
- **Author(s):** Full names and affiliations of the author(s).
- **Date of Publication:** Month and year. (Inserted by Work Package coordinator.)
- **PolyCIVIS Logo and Project Information:** Prominent placement to identify the brief as a product of the PolyCIVIS network. (Inserted by Work Package coordinator.)

4.2 Executive Summary (250-350 words)

- **Brief Context:** Briefly outline the issue being addressed, emphasizing its relevance and urgency in the context of the polycrisis. State the central questions addressed in the policy brief.
- **Key Findings and Recommendations:** Begin by clearly stating the main findings of the research and the most important policy recommendations. This section should be a stand-alone summary that captures the essence of the brief.

4.3 Introduction (250-350 words)

- **Context and Relevance:** Expand on the context and background of the issue.
- **Central Questions:** Clearly state the questions that the brief seeks to answer.
- **Link to Recommendations:** Explicitly connect the introduction to the recommendations, explaining how the analysis and findings led to the proposed solutions.

4.4 Background and Analysis (900 – 1500 words)

- **Evidence and Supporting Arguments:** Provide the evidence and analysis that supports the recommendations, drawing on relevant research, data, and case studies.
- **Logical Flow:** Structure the analysis to logically build up to the recommendations.
- **Detail and Scope:** will vary depending on the type of brief:
  - Foundational briefs: likely focus on theoretical frameworks and conceptual underpinnings.
  - Thematic briefs: likely focus on drivers, impacts, and interlinkages of sub-themes.
  - Deep Focus briefs: likely provide an analysis of a specific case, highlighting lessons learned and best practices.
  - Policy Options briefs: likely assess policy options and their potential outcomes.

- **Non-Narrative Elements:** The section may include additional data, tables, figures, or supplementary information in text boxes, supporting the analysis and recommendations. Ensure any technical aspects are made intelligible to a lay audience.

4.5 Recommendations (300 - 600 words)

- **Detailed Recommendations:** Expand on the key recommendations introduced in the executive summary, providing more detailed explanations, justifications, and potential impacts.
- **Actionable Steps:** Outline the specific actions policymakers can take to implement the recommendations. If relevant, formulate actions specific to various key audiences.
- **Prioritisation**: in case of multiple recommendations, prioritise them based on impact and feasibility.

4.6 Conclusion (300 words)

- **Summary of Key Points:** Briefly summarise the main findings and recommendations.
- **Call to Action:** Reiterate the importance of addressing the issue and urge policymakers to take action.
- **Future Directions:** May suggest potential avenues for further research or policy development.

4.7 References

- All sources cited in the policy brief should be formatted according to American Psychological Association (APA) style. https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples

5. Benefits for Authors

While authors will not receive direct monetary compensation, participating in the PolyCIVIS policy work stream offers several benefits, including:

- Visibility: Policy briefs will be disseminated through major channels reaching policymakers, including the OECD, the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), and PolyCIVIS's own communication platforms.
- Collaboration: Opportunities to collaborate with other academics and practitioners within the network, fostering the exchange of ideas and perspectives.
- Cross-Pollination: Policy briefs can serve as a foundation for further activities within and beyond PolyCIVIS, such as developing academic articles or integrating content into the project's Teaching Work Package.

6. Review and Publication Process

To ensure the timely completion and high quality of the 20 policy briefs, the following timeline outlines the key milestones and activities of **Batch 2** of the PolyCIVIS policy briefs, spanning from March 2025 to Oct 2025 (A call for submissions for **Batch 3** will be launched in Q4 2025, with an anticipated similar timeline.)

Batch 2 (Policy Papers)	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31	Apr 1-16	Apr 16-30	May 1-15	May 16-31	Jun 1-15	Jun 16-30	Jul 1-15	Jul 16-31	Aug 1-15	Aug 16-31	Sep 1-15	Sep 15-30	Oct 1-15	Oct 15-31
Review & Selection	✅	✅														
Batch 2: Agreement with authors on content & process			✅													
Batch 2: First Drafts				✅	✅	✅	✅									
Batch 2: Review Drafts 1							✅	✅								
Batch 2: Revise & Resubmit								✅	✅							
Batch 2: Review Drafts 2										✅						
Batch 2: Incorporate Feedback											✅	✅				
Batch 2: Copyedit & Proofread													✅	✅		
Batch 2: Publication															✅	
Batch 2: Launch Event *Oct 2025*																✅

Notes:

- The entire first batch of policy briefs is expected to be published at the end of Mar 2025; the launch event was held on **13 Mar 2025,** during which two policy briefs submitted as part of Batch 1 were spotlighted. The publication of any delayed policy briefs will be staggered over Q1-Q2 2025 to allow for subsequent promotion and dissemination.
- The final impact assessment for the publication of all policy briefs will be conducted in Q3 2026, assessing the overall reach, impact and effectiveness of the policy briefs.
- The timeline is subject to adjustment based on the progress of individual briefs and unforeseen circumstances.

7. After Publication

Once your paper has been published, we will promote it through our social media channels. Papers will be published in batches and we plan to have an online launch for each batch of publications. All papers will be hosted on the project website: https://civis.eu/en/discover-civis/civis-alliance-projects/polycivis/publications-and-outcomes