



Social Media Guidelines for Country Clusters

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Using Social Media at the Global and Country-Level

The **overall aim** of social media for clusters is to share timely, coherent and consistent messaging with audiences at the community, district, regional, national and global level about key displacement issues.

Many global-level clusters have a presence on social media, including CCCM, Shelter and Protection Clusters, with either a **communications team or a single person dedicated** to generating and managing social media content. In addition to this, several clusters also have their own social media platforms, maintaining a social media presence at country-level. Social media platforms most commonly used include Twitter and LinkedIn and in some cases, Facebook and Instagram as well.

To improve the social media activities of the three global clusters it is imperative to frequently amplify activities and voices from the country-level and have a streamlined source of information that will be easier for the general audience to identify.

This guideline is meant to offer insights into how best to streamline social media presence for cluster teams and partners.

Overview of Social Media Platforms

There are numerous social media platforms worldwide, but due to the specific work of clusters (namely not being an operational actor) and the technical audiences that need to be reached (decision makers, humanitarian practitioners, specialized media), **some platforms are more suited than others**. Since managing social media accounts require quite some effort and time to be handled well, country cluster teams need to consider if they have enough human resources capacity to manage a social media platform, and if continuity can be ensured, before they embark on opening accounts.



Twitter is ideal for bite-sized versions of news, publications, events and other content. Tweets can be both technical and more mass-appealing messages that are succinct, simple, timely, and relevant to global audiences. Twitter is also the platform where governments and journalists are most active.

Twitter is useful for sharing invites for events organized by the cluster and its partners, updates on the activities in the sector and key publications to generate high engagement.



LinkedIn is designed specifically for networking among groups with professional relevance, but institutional pages are also being used. It is also important to note that the content posted on LinkedIn is slightly different from Twitter. As there is no restriction for character-count, it is important to explain in greater, but simple details, about activities or key communication messages.

Sharing publications, key events, management updates specifically jobs openings is therefore ideal to be shared on LinkedIn. Since the audiences reached there are often more technical profiles, the information can also focus on key aspects of the cluster work.



Facebook and Instagram are similar in the type of content that is shared; useful for sharing stories and information that have a “human-touch”. The two platforms are different in a few ways as well. For example, more emphasis on high quality audiovisual material, visual coordination and uniformity is needed on Instagram so that the profile looks visually more appealing. While Facebook continues to be the most popular social media platform worldwide, the community management aspects of the platform can be quite time-consuming.

Moving anecdotes, gripping statistics and visuals tend to garner more audience on Facebook and Instagram.

Currently the three clusters are using the following platforms at global level:

- Protection: [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)
- Shelter/NFI: [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)
- CCCM: [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)

Objectives of Clusters Communication through Social Media

The **main objectives** to choose the use of social media for country-clusters should be:

1. To **inform** about the clusters’ and cluster partners work in the country of operations. This can be achieved through the sharing of fact sheets, updates, sitreps, key documents, news, activities, missions, human stories related to the displacement situation and sectoral needs.
2. To create **engagement** with key stakeholders. By tagging specific partners or stakeholders, liking and sharing posts of partners, or highlighting the work of cluster partners, the social media accounts can create engagement with key stakeholders.
3. To contribute to the **visibility** of the country operations and **advocacy** on the humanitarian situation.

Good Practices

Below are good practices to keep in mind while brainstorming ideas for social media messaging:

- Inclusive collaboration

Country Clusters and their local partners can explore possibilities to conduct joint social media campaigns, including with other stakeholders and clusters, during key international days and events such as, International Women’s Rights Day, World Humanitarian Day, 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, Human Rights Day. On international days such as these, the cluster can work towards highlighting its own key messages or news-worthy information from partners, news outlets, global press releases or blog posts.

Depending on the content of the message to be shared, it can be communicated to the CCCM, Shelter or Protection Cluster global teams for amplification of the messaging.

- Strengthening localization objectives

Country Clusters can offer visibility to the work of local partners and support in highlighting specific situations related to their sector in support of local actors, highlighting key messages that local actors are a driving force of humanitarian work.

- Reaching a wider public

Since social media platforms reach a variety of audiences beyond the humanitarian community, it is important to develop messages that: (i) Avoid the use of acronyms, (ii) Convey strong and crisp messages, (iii) Are aesthetically appealing with visuals, graphics and short videos.

- Amplifying the voice of the affected populations

Country-level clusters can support the advocacy and awareness-raising about forced displacement by amplifying the voice of people affected by displacement crises. It is important to place the topic of internal displacement at the center of social media messages and the solutions the clusters and their partners are providing. The country Cluster can support this objective by sharing powerful video statements, testimonies and photographs.

Do-s and Don’t-s

1. When people are represented in pictures or videos, ensure to have an informed consent note written, by email or audiovisual recording regarding content, audio/ video, or photo. All country-level clusters managing social media are also encouraged to apply the principles of ethical storytelling. 2. Always choose dignified photos of subjects/persons. Take a look at	1. Do not post hateful content which can be perceived as promoting violence against, threaten, or harass other people based on race, ethnicity, national origin, caste, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease. 2. Do not disclose personal information of the affected population group (IDPs, Returnees/Refugees) as in line with the principles of “Data Protection” which can
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Photographers Without Borders Code of Ethics here. 3. If a partner provides a picture or video for use on social media, make sure to give appropriate credits for content that is being shared (person/agency). 4. Depending on the communication protocols in the country, ensure to have the validation of the appropriate colleagues or line-managers before sharing content on the social media platform. In times of intensified crises, ensure that sign-off procedures are discussed with the agencies' communication teams on any red lines and apply strictly all protection protocols. 5. In the event of coming across misrepresentation of the cluster's work, correct it with factual information and, whenever possible, a link to additional information by forwarding it to the coordinating social media team. 6. Ensure that information is coming from verified sources especially when relating to news articles. 7. Amplify the post with the use of relevant hashtags (#) for a given event, topic, campaign. A good practice is to limit the use of two/three hashtags per post. 8. Tag (@) as many key actors as relevant (local partners, co-chairs, inter-cluster actors, donors etc).	increase the risk of re-identification of any personal data collected at the field level. Read UNHCR's Data Protection Policy here. 3. Do not "name and shame" countries. Instead, center it around "call to action(s)" and solutions. 4. Do not use photos that have the potential risk to compromise the security or confidentiality of people and avoid using images that feature militia or armed people. 5. Do not take positions that would jeopardize the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence.
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Social Media Scheduling Plan

Whether for one's own social media or for collaborative campaigns at the global-level, maintaining a social media scheduling plan is recommended. Below table can be used as an example:

Date and Status	Text	Visual	Tags and hashtags	Proposed by
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If the message is timebound (for an event, campaign,...) mention the ideal date to be published. If not, a recommendation is helpful! Ensure to write the status of the message so as to not miss any draft.	Twitter: Keep the messages short (1 to 3 sentences) to allow easy conversion into Twitter language, where the limit is 280 characters (includes hashtags and links to websites). LinkedIn: Longer texts are possible, but the overall recommendation is to provide simple explanations with relevant hashtags and account tags. Facebook & Instagram: Texts should not be too long. Messages should be crisp and catchy.	If you have a visual in mind, share here a thumbnail or a link to a picture. For Twitter and LinkedIn, landscape pictures are strongly recommended. Do mention the copyright and/or tag the organization who holds the copyrights. If collaborating with global-level, suggestions for visuals or requests for visuals from the communication team can be made.	If any partners, organizations or individuals need to be tagged, please mention them (and ideally with a link to their Twitter or LinkedIn profile).	Person or organization proposing a message.
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Global-level or Country-level Accounts?

There are two ways in which Cluster Coordinators can think of using social media.

Using global-level social media accounts	Creating/Managing country-level social media accounts
- Sharing and collaborating with global-level accounts to amplify information from the country clusters. Advantages - Making use of an already established social media accounts and a	- Either creating from scratch the cluster's social media (whether Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, or all), <i>or</i> managing existing social media accounts. Check Annex for some useful tools to help guide the process of creating a new social media account.

communications team • Providing global visibility to activities conducted at country-level • In case a separate social media account exists at country-level, can re-share content being shared at the global-level to attract more audience • A uniform branding for both country and global-levels, important for the general audience to identify with cluster partners Disadvantages • Increasing lines of communication in order to coordinate social media posts can take more time before ability to post • No possibility for personal branding– which would include color schemes, fonts of texts etc. This would need to be aligned with global-level accounts.	Advantages • Flexibility to plan and schedule posts • Own branding • Sharing partners' activities Disadvantages • Additional workload for often overstretched teams. Handling a social media account well requires enough human resources and time dedication of the team • Beginning from scratch would mean more time to build audience reach (followers, impressions etc.) • Dedicating ample time to plan for social media posts and adequate content can be time-consuming. Long periods of inactivity negatively affects social media presence • Sometimes limited ability to balance among all cluster partners when publishing
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Annex: Useful Tools

Creating a New Social Media Account

The following points need to be kept in mind while creating a new social media account:

- Decide on who will be the primary account manager and determine a secondary contact as back-up.
- Registering with a valid generic email and password and storing it for future use (avoid using personal email addresses due to the turnover of teams).
- Reflect on the frequency and type of content that will be shared. If it will require creating content, plan this into the workplan of the cluster.
- Based on the capacity of the team, the decided frequency of posting and type of content, determine which platform(s) to use.
- Decide on which language to use. If it is deemed necessary to communicate in more than one language, consider this in the workplan.
- Determine clear objectives with the team and expected results in a specific timeframe (six months, one year) to assess progress.

- After creating an account, make sure to take a look at global-level list of accounts being followed and begin creating a follower-base from there. This will be followed by adding to the list local NGO accounts, media agencies and/individuals.

Checklist

- ✓ What are the main objectives of the account?
- ✓ Who is the primary audience?
- ✓ Why is this the best platform for reaching them?
- ✓ Do any other country/global level accounts already serve this audience? If country level accounts exist and serve this audience, is cluster content normally published?
- ✓ If yes, then in what ways will the content being shared be different?
- ✓ What does success look like for this account?
- ✓ What tools will be used to measure impact?
- ✓ Does the community manager have sufficient experience and training?
- ✓ What kind of content will be posted, and how often?
- ✓ Will those managing the account have the seniority and experience to manage negative comments?
- ✓ Do you have the capacity to listen effectively to comments?
- ✓ How will audience engagement be managed outside of work hours?

Process to Open Social Media Accounts

To ensure that the social media work of country-level clusters is in accordance with the Global Cluster's and lead agencies work and is meaningful, it is recommended that:

1. Any decision on opening social media channels is discussed with the respective **communication teams** in the country of operations and in consultation with the Focal Points of the Global Clusters.
2. The work on social media is **included in the strategy** and/or action plan of the country-level cluster.

3. The cluster team identifies one **focal point and a back-up** to ensure the updating of the social media account. If the focal points do not have any former social media management experience, a **training** from the Global Focal Points can be requested before opening the account.
4. An initial **content planning calendar** is set-up for a 3 to 6 month period defining a specific frequency to share content.
5. **Specific reporting moments/tools** are discussed to assess the social media work in quarterly or bi-annual meetings.
6. If the social media use cannot be continued due to specific human resources or contextual challenges, or the end of a response, consider making the accounts dormant (pausing/making it invisible). Social media accounts which **do not show regular activity** can give a **negative impression** to visitors.