

## China ★ Africa Research Initiative (CARI) Author Guidelines

CARI publishes working papers, policy briefs, briefing papers, and economic bulletins. Briefing papers and economic bulletins are, with few exceptions, written by CARI staff based on CARI research. Working papers and policy briefs are authored by CARI research fellows and other China-Africa experts, based on empirical research, and usually submitted to CARI by invitation.

This guide is intended to standardize important elements of style, and thus to aid authors, editors, and proofreaders in preparing copy for publication on the CARI website.

Authors must recognize that they (and neither CARI nor the CARI editors) are responsible for the content of their articles, for the accuracy of quotations and their correct attribution, for the legal right to publish any material submitted, for the inclusion of mandatory acknowledgments and/or disclaimers, and for submitting their manuscripts in proper form for publication.

**All contributing authors are encouraged to publish their research in peer-reviewed academic journals or edited volumes.** The working paper series and policy briefs are specifically designed to disseminate empirical research in a timely manner and in formats that are publicly available – to journalists, policy makers, students, and researchers – and which lend themselves to news and policy analysis.

### Working Papers

Working papers must be based on new empirical research that has not been previously published. They should be a more polished version of fieldwork reports but are meant to be works in progress. Most of our working papers are also turned into policy briefs and these are published together on our website (see below for policy brief guidelines). CARI also encourages all contributing authors to eventually publish these working papers in books and/or journals.

The main text of working papers should not exceed 10,000 words.

### Working Paper Format

Working papers should include all of the following elements:

- **Title:** Titles should not be overly long but should be attention grabbing, if possible.
- **Executive Summary:** The executive summary should describe the direction and highlights of the discussion to come. Give the reader an overview of the purpose and conduct of your study, what

topics and themes will be explored, what key results you uncovered, and whether they are “obvious” or unexpected/interesting. 200-250 words in length.

- **Introduction:** The introduction should briefly place the study in a broad context and highlight why it is important. It should define the purpose of the work and its significance, including specific hypotheses being tested. *If a substantial literature review is conducted and needs to be discussed in detail to build up to presenting your own findings, the literature review should be its own section.* The current state of the research field should be reviewed carefully, and key publications cited. Please highlight controversial and diverging hypotheses when necessary. Finally, briefly mention the main aim of the work and highlight the main conclusions. Keep the introduction comprehensible to researchers working outside the topic of the paper.
- **Research/Methodology:** New methods and protocols should be described in detail while well-established methods can be briefly described and appropriately cited. Use simple analyses where possible and put highly technical material in appendices. Distinguish between data and ideas that must be developed in the text, and those that can be more efficiently presented in a table, figure, or appendix.
- **Findings & Discussion:** Provide a description of the research findings. Discuss the how they can be interpreted/understood with respect to previous studies. The implications of the findings should be discussed in the broadest context possible and limitations of the work highlighted. Future research directions may also be mentioned. Findings and Discussion sections can be separated if overly long.
- **Conclusion:** Explain how your work helps advance understanding of your subject and creates new opportunities for practitioners and researchers. The conclusion should answer these questions: How might your findings and interpretations affect and alter strategies, behavior, and practices for governments or industries you are investigating? What are the limitations of your study, and what aspects of your topic need further study? What is the next step for practitioners and researchers?
- **Appendices:** Include any technical information here, as you see fit, as well as extensive diagrams, survey results, graphs, etc. If you are uncertain whether data belongs in the paper itself or in the appendix, CARI’s editors will offer their recommendations.
- **Citations:** Please see the section below on proper citation format.

### **Additional Working Paper writing tips**

- The full word/term should be spelled out the first time they appear in the abstract, main text, and in figure or table captions with the abbreviations or acronyms appearing in parentheses (e.g. “the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)”) and used consistently thereafter. Also, please be careful with your use of abbreviations – if you don’t intend on using the abbreviation

more than once, it may be best to not use it at all (unless the abbreviation is more well-known than the full name, of course). You want to try and limit the “alphabet soup” that results from using too many abbreviations, if at all possible.

- Use headings/subheadings to direct readers to the sections that are of greatest interest to them. Keep in mind that headings and subheadings are a way for you, the author, to guide the reader through your research and your findings. If you want to highlight major points, but at the same time dive into detail about larger themes, sub-headings are a useful tool. *Please be sure to use the heading function in Word to create all headings/sub-headings – it can be difficult to discern sections based on fonts/indentations alone. If you use the heading 1/2/3 etc. function in Word, you’ll be able to create a table of contents that can help you visualize the path your working paper takes and serve as an outline. Writing tip: starting with an outline that includes sections and subsections can help you organize your research before you even begin to write.*
- Keep your language clear and keep your sentences brief and concise. Avoid jargon. Finally, don’t assume that your reader has an extensive background in your topic.

## **Policy Briefs**

Policy briefs are commonly issued by government departments, think-tanks, research institutes, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with research units. In general, policy briefs are written in a neutral, non-polemical style, unlike an “op-ed” or another piece of advocacy. Your policy brief should be a condensed version of the working paper, concluded by three to four policy recommendations.

Policy briefs can be no longer than 2,000 words. They should contain minimal pictures and/or graphics (word count will be reduced by each additional graphic), and all content should be your own and require minimal citations (direct quotes and figures are the main exceptions).

Most CARI working papers are meant to be simultaneously published as policy briefs, the idea being that your full working paper is available for the in-depth analysis, while the policy brief serves as an instrument to offer policy recommendations based on your research. Unless otherwise informed, all authors should submit a policy brief based on their research and working paper. Authors should begin work on the policy brief after the working paper has gone through the initial evaluation; in other words, the policy brief should be based on the revised draft.

## Policy Brief Format

- **Title:** A good title quickly communicates the contents of the brief in a memorable way. Historically, the working paper and policy brief have had the same title – but if your working paper title is on the longer side, consider reducing it down.
- **Executive Summary/Introduction:** This section is often one to two paragraphs long; it includes an overview of the problem and the proposed policy action. Here is where you'll give an overview of your research questions, your main findings, and your takeaways. If you're having trouble getting started, focus on the conclusion of your working paper – often your conclusion will serve as a roadmap for the key takeaways you will ultimately present in the policy brief. Don't feel you have to talk about your policy recommendations up front – policy recommendations (especially with the kind of research CARI supports) will spring up organically from your findings.
- **Subheadings:** Go through the body of your working paper, start by condensing each section. If there are sub-sections that dive into technical details (for example, how cow hides are turned into leather) consider excluding them altogether. It can be difficult to cut down to 2,000-2,500 words, keep in mind the more subsections you include the more space you'll ultimately be taking away from fitting in more words (don't worry, the editor will be the one worrying about spacing), so if you can find ways to combine sections and reduce sub-sections it will ultimately allow you to include more words.
- **Conclusion:** Now that you've described the progress of your research and your findings along the way, you can choose to "introduce" your policy recommendations. This is where you wrap up the findings from your research in a way that the policy recommendations which come next seem like a clear "next step".
- **Policy Recommendations:** This section contains the most detailed explanation of the concrete steps to be taken to address the policy issue. Depending on how you want to use your word count, policy recommendations can actually be quite short and concise. Some policy recommendations require more of an explanation, if they are more intricate in nature (compared to a broader stroke sort of recommendation). For example, broad stroke: "The Kenyan government should direct more resources to infrastructure planning" versus more detailed: "The department of transportation within the Kenyan government should allocate 10-15% of their budget to improve the electric grid. In conjunction with the work currently being done by A, B, and C departments and private enterprises, the department of transportation should consider how they use their resources to ensure no overlaps occur, as has been the case during the time of this research." If you have trouble coming up with policy recommendations, the CARI's editor can offer you some ideas after reading the working paper.

## Additional Policy Brief writing tips

- Terminology can be a tricky portion to policy briefs – when you’re cutting down the 10k word working paper, sections that rely on technical vocabulary (aka “jargon”) are generally the sections that can be summarized or entirely removed.
- Research methodology is another section you can almost entirely remove from your working paper when narrowing down into a policy brief. One or two sentences are enough for a policy brief.
- Literature reviews are also an easy place to cut down on the word count from the working paper, unless you are directly proving/disproving a specific scholar’s work and their findings are an integral part of your own research.

## Review process

All papers that are submitted for the working paper series must be no longer than 10,000 words. Deborah Bräutigam and/or Yoon Jung Park generally evaluate proposed working papers. Once the decision has been made to publish, the paper will be sent back to the author/s to address any substantive questions; this section will also include reviewer comments and/or editorial recommendations. The revised drafts then go to our technical editor, Daniela Solano-Ward, for final review and formatting; she will likely have some additional questions with regard to the organization and presentation of the paper. We aim to get papers through this process within 2-3 months. Once working papers are ready for publication, our technical editor will work with the author to write a companion policy brief.

If you are submitting a policy brief as a stand-alone document, this must also undergo a content review by either Deborah Bräutigam or Yoon Jung Park. If CARI decides to publish, the author will address any substantive/content questions at which point it will be submitted to our technical editor.

When revising your work, always use the track changes function in Word. Please respond promptly to all questions and comments from CARI staff; failure to do so may result in your paper being dropped from the publications queue.

If your publication has multiple authors, you must indicate who will be the **corresponding author**, responsible for taking the lead in the editing process. Although all authors will remain on copy and fully informed throughout the editing process, we have found it is much more efficient for one author to serve as the point person - streamlining the publication process.

If you are unsure how to turn your working paper into a policy brief OR have any other questions about substance, tone, or format, please refer to the publications page on the CARI website. We recommend the following examples: working paper 17 and policy brief 24 (Chinese geese) and working paper 16 and policy brief 22 (David Landry’s Sicomines research). If you still have questions, you can contact either Yoon Jung Park or Daniela Solano-Ward at CARI.

## Visual Elements

- **Format:** To facilitate review, use 8 ½" x 11" (US Letter) or A4 size with standard margins (top, bottom, and both sides; at least 1 inch or 2.5 centimeters) throughout the manuscript. All pages of the manuscript should be numbered consecutively.
- **Tables:** All tables and graphs must be numbered consecutively within the body of the paper. If it is an original table based on your research, please also submit the original data used to create the graph, preferably in an Excel spreadsheet. During the editing process, all graphs are remade using Adobe Illustrator for publishing. Any tables that are from other publications, either in their entirety or adapted, must come with proper citations.
- **Figures:** They must be submitted in a form suitable for publication. Again, they should be placed within the body of the paper, together with the original material (saved and submitted as a separate document) for the technical editor to properly format. Again, anything that is not original must be submitted in high resolution and with proper citations.
- **Photos:** All contributing authors are required to submit 2-5 photographs taken during their fieldwork. Photographs should be good quality/high resolution. Authors will be asked to release photograph rights to CARI for use in announcing publications and/or for the website or other marketing purposes.

## Textual Elements

- **Textual emphasis.** The only forms of textual emphasis used in production are italics and bolding. Please do not format any text by underlining.
  - **Italics.** Words in languages other than English are italicized at the first occurrence only; use standard orthographies, including diacritical marks and accents, and explain unusual symbols. Subsequent occurrences of non-English words will be set in roman type and therefore should not be italicized. Titles of books, journals, poems, and other literary works are italicized when mentioned in the text; article titles are set off by quotation marks. Foreign words and phrases in common usage (and found in an English dictionary) should not be in italics.
  - **Bolding.** Bolding is used only in the following contexts:
    - the title of the essay
    - the name of the author
    - the word **Abstract** that precedes the abstract text
    - section and sub-section headings
- **Headings.** If you wish to divide your article into sections, section headings must be used. Do not use numbers. Please only use two levels of headings to divide sections and sub-sections.
- **Punctuation.** Use American-style punctuation: double quotation marks (but single quotation

marks for quotes within quotes), periods and commas inside quotation marks, colons and semi-colons outside quotation marks. CARI does use the serial comma, also known as Oxford comma (“There were three children, thirteen adults, and six pets.”) A parenthetical dash should appear as a one-em dash (rather than as two hyphens).

- **Quotations.** Direct quotations exceeding four manuscript lines of type should be set off from the text by indenting the entire quotation one stop from the left *and* one stop from the right. (Anything less than four lines should be left within the body of the paragraph.) No further indentation is necessary for the first quoted paragraph; the first line of subsequent paragraphs in the same quotation should have an additional paragraph indent. Remember that quotations must be double-spaced. Material added by the author of the article *within* the quoted portion should be enclosed in brackets, not in parentheses. (However, minor syntactical changes do not require brackets around a single letter, as with an initial capitalization.) Added emphasis should be identified as “emphasis added” and placed in brackets at the end of the quotation.
- **Citations.** Please refer to the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition), as described in Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL). You should follow citations in the endnote/footnote format denoted as (N) in the Chicago Style section of the OWL website - specifically you’ll see the (N) throughout the links to different forms of sources listed along the left column of the website. For further examples, please refer to our recent working papers (from 2018 on).

## Attachments

Please include *as separate sections within the same document and in the following order*:

- title page with complete title, author name(s) and affiliation(s), a current mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address;
- a brief bio (100 words) that identifies your affiliation and most important research accomplishments;
- a short abstract (150 words) that summarizes the essential points of the paper (it is not meant to be an introduction or a mere list of topics);
- a separate description of the paper for CARI’s communications team (maximum 250 words). While the abstract is more academic, this should be conceived as a marketing tool and should therefore aim to have an appealing tone.

For any further information, please contact SAIS-CARI at [sais-cari@jhu.edu](mailto:sais-cari@jhu.edu).

**Note:** These author guidelines were adapted from the *African Studies Review* style guide, the working paper section was adapted from <https://www.mdpi.com/journal/humanities/instructions> and [https://www.msi.org/uploads/email/2017\\_Working\\_Paper\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.msi.org/uploads/email/2017_Working_Paper_Guidelines.pdf), and the policy brief section was adapted from <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/policy-briefs/>.