

Climate Frontline



A Toolkit for Climate Hazard Reporting and Community Resilience

An initiative by



European Journalism Centre

REVOLVE

Index

Introduction_	3
Module 1_	8
Module2_	22
Module3_	30
Module4_	41
Tools_	52

Introduction

Climate emergencies and extreme weather events are no longer isolated events. Floods, wildfires, droughts and heatwaves are reshaping territories across Europe, exposing systemic vulnerabilities and challenging the role of journalism in democratic societies.

But here is the central problem this toolkit was built to address: **most climate emergency reporting still focuses on the moment of impact**. Communities, however, need something different - information and narratives that help them understand risks before disasters occur, navigate uncertainty during emergencies, and sustain accountability and recovery long after media attention has moved on.

This toolkit proposes a shift. From event-based reporting towards what we call **systemic resilience journalism**: reporting that helps communities understand not only what happened, but why it happened, who is most affected, how risks and vulnerabilities are created, and what actions can strengthen preparedness, accountability and resilience over time.

That shift starts with one word: **preparedness**.

What do we mean by climate hazards?

Climate hazards are physical events and trends linked to climate variability and climate change that can harm people, ecosystems, infrastructure and livelihoods.

They include sudden-onset events such as floods, wildfires and storms, as well as slower-moving processes such as drought, extreme heat, sea-level rise and changing precipitation patterns.

A climate hazard is not the same as a disaster. A hazard becomes a disaster when exposure, vulnerability and lack of preparedness combine to create harm.

A broad range of physical climate hazards shape communities worldwide — from floods, wildfires and droughts to changing temperatures, coastal erosion and other climate-related risks. While this toolkit focuses primarily on floods, droughts, wildfires and extreme heat, many of its approaches can be adapted to other climate hazards and territories

What this toolkit focuses on

The Climate Frontline Toolkit was built from a year of workshops, listening sessions and expert consultations with journalists, newsrooms, researchers, emergency actors and community organisations in **Spain** and **Portugal**. Its tools, case studies and lessons draw primarily from two climate hazard pairs: **wildfires** and **extreme heat**, and **floods** and **droughts** - the realities our project communities lived through directly.

The project unfolded during a period in which climate hazards repeatedly dominated headlines across Europe. Between May 2025 and May 2026, Portugal and Spain experienced severe flooding and storms, while wildfires, heatwaves and drought conditions affected communities across the continent. The Netherlands, traditionally not associated with extreme heat risk, saw renewed debate about municipal preparedness, while the European Commission's Joint Research Centre reported that 2025 was the most destructive wildfire season on record in the European Union.

These events reinforced a central lesson emerging throughout Climate Frontline: climate hazards are no longer exceptional events but recurring realities that require stronger public information systems and more prepared local journalism.

As climate hazards become more frequent and more interconnected, journalism's role is not only to document emergencies, but also to help communities prepare for them, navigate them and recover from them.

The frameworks are adaptable to other hazard types and territories. But the field evidence behind them is specific, grounded and honest about where it comes from.

Who this is for

This toolkit is designed primarily for journalists, editors and local newsrooms. Many of its tools and approaches are also useful for civil society organisations, local leaders, communicators and other actors working at the intersection of climate risk, public information and community resilience.

Before you begin: know your territory

The starting point for any newsroom serious about climate hazard reporting is understanding the specific risks, communities and information ecosystems of its own territory.

The Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment Template was developed with and field-tested by participating newsrooms in Spain and Portugal. It is designed to be completed before a hazard season begins and revisited each year as risks evolve.

It is the first practical step this toolkit asks of you, and the foundation everything else builds on.

How to use this toolkit - and a confession

We'll be straightforward with you: this is a long document. We know you have a deadline, a breaking story, or a hazard season that starts next month.

So here is our honest recommendation: **if you read nothing else, read the four Field Guides**. One per module, each designed to be pulled out, printed, and pinned to the cork board in your newsroom. They won't replace the full toolkit - but they will give you what you need, fast. We designed them precisely because we didn't want this toolkit to be the thing everyone respects and nobody uses.

Come back to the rest when you have time to breathe.

The four Field Guides follow a simple arc: **prepare, act, report** with **care, learn**.

The four modules

These four modules follow the full cycle of climate hazard reporting: from preparedness and community engagement to accountability, information integrity and learning. While designed primarily for journalists and newsrooms, many of the tools and approaches may also be useful for civil society organisations, local leaders and other actors involved in climate preparedness and resilience.

MODULE	CORE QUESTION	MAIN USERS	KEY PRACTICAL OUTPUTS
MOD1_ Editorial framing for systemic resilience	How should climate hazards be covered before, during and after emergencies?	Editors, reporters, newsroom managers, local media leaders	<u>Before the Clouds Gather</u> : A framework for climate hazard reporting before, during and after emergencies
The backbone of the toolkit. A framework for editors and newsroom leaders planning coverage across an entire hazard season - with key questions, editorial approaches and practical actions for each phase. The Field Guide is designed to live on a newsroom wall.			
MOD2_ Reporting with communities, vulnerability and trust	Who is affected and how can journalism report responsibly and inclusively?	Editors, reporters, engagement teams, civil society organisations, community leaders and local content creators.	<u>Who's in the Room</u> : A community reporting guide for inclusive and trusted journalism
The human infrastructure of good climate journalism. How to build the relationships, listening practices and sourcing habits that make reporting more inclusive, more trusted and more useful - before the emergency makes them urgent. The Field Guide is part audit, part prompt, part dignity check.			
MOD3_ Navigating climate information, accountability and public trust	How can journalists make sense of science, governance, misinformation and recovery?	Reporters, editors, data journalists, fact-checkers, science communicators and trusted local information intermediaries.	<u>Through the Noise</u> : A verification workflow for climate emergency reporting
The operational core. When information is moving faster than verification allows, this is what you reach for. The Field Guide is a verification workflow designed to be scanned in thirty seconds and used under pressure.			
MOD4_ Impact, learning and continuous improvement	How can newsrooms evaluate and strengthen their contribution over time?	Newsrooms, civil society partners, local leaders, funders and programme managers.	<u>After the Storm</u> : A newsroom review for climate hazard reporting
The closing of the loop. After the Storm is a half-day newsroom review to run with your team after a climate event, or once a year before the next hazard season begins. Because the newsrooms that improve are the ones that make time to ask: what did we learn?			

Risk assessment is a yearly exercise

One practical note before you begin. The tools in this toolkit – and particularly the risk assessment frameworks in Module 1 – are not one-time exercises. They are designed to be revisited each season, improved each time, and adapted as your territory's climate risks evolve. Build them into your editorial calendar. Assign them to named people. Return to them before the next hazard season begins.

The newsrooms that were best prepared during the emergencies we documented were the ones that had already done this quiet, unglamorous work.

This toolkit belongs to you – help us make it better

The Climate Frontline Toolkit is published under a **Creative Commons licence**. You are free to use, adapt and share it, with attribution.

More than that: we want you to make it better. If something doesn't work in your newsroom – tell us. If you find a resource that should be here – send it. If you cover a hazard type or territory we haven't addressed, we want to hear from you.

This toolkit was built with journalists and communities, not for them. That doesn't stop at publication.

Share your feedback, suggestions and experience at info@ejc.net or info@revolve.media

MOD1_

Editorial Framing for Systemic Resilience

**Reporting Before, During and After Climate
Emergencies:** A newsroom framework for
covering climate hazards across the full
emergency cycle

Purpose of this Module

Climate emergencies are often covered as isolated breaking news events. Communities, however, experience them as long-term realities that begin long before the disaster and continue long after media attention fades.

This module proposes a practical editorial framework to help journalists and newsrooms move beyond reactive disaster coverage and adopt a longer-term approach to climate hazards: one that connects emergencies to preparedness, governance, inequality, adaptation, and territorial resilience.

The objective is not to transform journalists into emergency responders, but to strengthen journalism's role as part of the public information infrastructure communities rely on before, during, and after climate disruption.

The module responds directly to one of the central findings emerging from the Climate Frontline project workshops and newsroom consultations: climate disasters are still too often framed as exceptional events rather than recurring manifestations of structural vulnerabilities and climate risk.

At its core, this module proposes an operational mindset shift for newsrooms:

From:

- covering disasters as isolated breaking news events

Towards:

- covering climate resilience, preparedness, vulnerability and recovery as long-term public-interest issues.

The module is organised across the full emergency cycle:

- Before the emergency
- During the emergency
- After the emergency

Each section includes:

- key editorial questions,
- practical newsroom actions,
- lessons learned,
- tools and outputs,
- and suggested approaches for building more useful, trusted, and accountable climate hazard reporting.

The Field Guide for this module is **Before the Clouds Gather: A framework for climate hazard reporting before, during and after emergencies**.

It is designed to be used as a seasonal planning tool – pinned to a newsroom wall, filled in before each hazard season, and revisited as conditions change. Everything this module covers about editorial framing, preparedness and the full emergency cycle finds its practical expression there.

If you read this module and do one thing: build your seasonal risk calendar and pin **Before the Clouds Gather to your newsroom wall before the next hazard season begins.**

1.1 Before the Emergency

Preparedness and Risk Communication

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

Before the Emergency

CHALLENGE

Reporting before people feel at risk

"We have to prepare ourselves and prepare the population. Climate change is no longer an exception. It's a new reality."

— Luna Bartual, El Salto (Spain)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

Preparedness reporting is often overlooked because disasters have not yet occurred and audiences may not perceive an immediate threat. Yet local journalism can help communities understand recurring risks, warning systems, vulnerable areas and adaptation measures before an emergency happens. Building preparedness into editorial planning can make reporting more useful when a crisis strikes.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Journalism can help communities better understand risks, navigate uncertainty, and identify vulnerabilities before emergencies occur. Yet prevention coverage often receives less editorial attention than disaster coverage itself.

Climate hazards are rarely unpredictable. Many climate hazards - including wildfires, floods, droughts, and heatwaves - increasingly follow identifiable seasonal patterns. Local media coverage can play a critical role in helping communities prepare, understand risks, and identify accountability gaps before emergencies happen.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- What climate risks are recurring in our territory?
- Which risks are increasing due to climate change?
- Which communities are most exposed?
- Which populations may not receive official warnings?
- What information do people need before an emergency occurs?
- Which local adaptation measures already exist?
- What misinformation or myths circulate before emergencies?
- Who are the trusted local actors and sources?
- How does trusted information circulate locally during emergencies?
- Which digital platforms do communities rely on most?
- Are verified news sources visible and accessible on those platforms?
- Which local creators, radio stations or community channels amplify reliable information?

LESSONS LEARNED FROM NEWSROOMS, COMMUNITIES AND EXPERTS:

- Communities repeatedly expressed the need for clearer preparedness information.
- Many citizens do not fully understand warning systems or risk terminology.
- Journalists often lack the time and resources to prepare stories before emergencies occur.
- Prevention stories frequently receive lower editorial priority despite their high public value, making it important to identify storytelling approaches that connect preparedness and adaptation efforts to audiences' everyday lives.
- Local trust networks often matter more than national communication during crises.

SUGGESTED EDITORIAL APPROACHES

- Build seasonal climate risk calendars.
- Produce explanatory journalism on local risks and preparedness.
- Develop long-term reporting around adaptation and prevention.
- Collaborate with scientists and emergency actors outside crisis periods.
- Identify vulnerable zones and underserved communities before disasters occur.
- Create recurring coverage formats tied to seasonal risks.
- Use solutions-oriented reporting to explore preparedness, adaptation and risk reduction efforts.
- Report not only on risks, but also on how communities, institutions and individuals are responding to them.
- Highlight evidence-based prevention and adaptation measures that can reduce vulnerability.
- Develop platform-specific preparedness strategies for social media and messaging platforms.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

Instead of waiting until a flood or wildfire occurs, invite a hydrologist, firefighter or climate scientist for coffee before hazard season. Add them to your contacts list before you need them.

REPORTING PREPAREDNESS THROUGH A SOLUTIONS LENS

Preparedness stories do not need to focus only on risks and vulnerabilities. Solutions-oriented reporting can help newsrooms investigate how communities, institutions and experts are reducing risks, preparing for emergencies and strengthening resilience. This approach can make prevention coverage more relevant, actionable and engaging for audiences.

Further resource:

Solutions Journalism: An Introduction for Journalists and Newsrooms (EJC)

QUICK NEWSROOM ACTIONS

- Conduct a Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment.
- Build a database of trusted scientific, municipal and emergency contacts.
- Prepare explainer templates before hazard season.
- Map vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities in your territory.
- Establish communication channels with local responders and municipalities before crises occur.
- Prepare simple explainers on warning systems and emergency terminology.
- Assign journalists to monitor adaptation plans and prevention measures.
- Identify which social platforms communities rely on most during crises.
- Build relationships with trusted local creators, radio stations and community groups before emergencies occur.
- Prepare mobile-friendly and platform-adapted emergency content formats.
- Test how verified information performs across different platforms.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

A local newsroom creates a spreadsheet with three tabs:

- wildfire risks,
- flood risks,
- vulnerable communities.

It is updated every spring before hazard season begins.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

Instead of waiting for fire season, assign one reporter to follow municipal fire-prevention spending from March to September.

PRACTICAL OUTPUTS AND TOOLS

[Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment Template for media organizations](#) ↗

EXAMPLE NEWSROOM SCENARIO

A newsroom in a wildfire-prone region creates a pre-season editorial package including:

- local information ecosystem map: radio stations, WhatsApp groups, local creators, NGOs, neighborhood associations, emergency actors,
- wildfire preparedness explainers,
- evacuation information,
- interviews with firefighters and scientists,
- a map of high-risk areas,
- and a monitoring plan for municipal prevention measures.
- a solutions-oriented story examining how neighbouring municipalities have successfully reduced wildfire risk through prevention and adaptation measures.

The newsroom also prepares a verification workflow and establishes communication channels with local emergency actors before fire season begins.

1.2 During the Emergency: Useful, Trusted, and Verified Information

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE

Access to operational information during emergencies

The information they give us is exactly what's on the website. They give us nothing more. Sometimes official entities tend to delay information. They are slow in taking the information out."

— Hugo Rodrigues, *Sul Informação* (Portugal)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

Build relationships with emergency services, civil protection authorities, scientists and local institutions before disasters occur. During an emergency, trusted contacts can be as important as official communication channels. Preparing a source map and emergency contact list in advance can help newsrooms verify information more quickly when time is critical.

WHY THIS MATTERS

During climate emergencies, journalism becomes part of the public information infrastructure that communities rely on to make decisions, reduce uncertainty, and access trustworthy information. In moments of crisis, audiences often value clarity, practicality, and local relevance more than volume or speed alone.

During emergencies, communities increasingly receive information through fragmented digital ecosystems where misinformation, rumours and emotionally charged content can spread faster than verified reporting. Algorithm-driven platforms may amplify speculative or misleading information, creating additional challenges for newsrooms attempting to distribute accurate, actionable and trustworthy reporting.

This means that climate emergency journalism is no longer only a reporting challenge. It is also a public-interest information and distribution challenge.

Audiences often encounter journalism through social media platforms, messaging apps and algorithmic feeds rather than through news homepages directly. As a result, trust increasingly depends not only on editorial quality, but also on accessibility, clarity, formatting and distribution strategies adapted to crisis situations.

INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION DURING CRISES

Climate emergencies unfold within fragmented digital information ecosystems where verified journalism competes with rumours, speculation and emotionally viral content.

Newsrooms increasingly need to think not only about what information they publish, but also about how reliable information reaches communities during crises.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEWSROOMS:

- Audiences often encounter journalism through platforms, not homepages.
- Speed alone does not guarantee visibility or trust.
- Verified reporting may circulate more slowly than misinformation.
- Clear formatting and mobile-friendly content become essential during emergencies.
- Messaging apps and social platforms can rapidly amplify rumours and confusion.
- Accessibility, clarity and local relevance are critical for public trust.
- Trusted local actors, creators and community networks can help amplify verified information.

SUGGESTED NEWSROOM ACTIONS:

- Prepare mobile-first emergency formats before crises occur.
- Use consistent visual branding for verified information.
- Create short, shareable explainers optimised for social and messaging platforms.
- Monitor how misinformation circulates locally during emergencies.
- Build relationships with trusted local amplifiers before crisis periods.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- What information is most useful for affected populations?
- What information can be verified quickly?
- What information remains uncertain?
- Which voices are missing?
- Which rumours are circulating locally?
- How can journalists avoid amplifying panic or misinformation?
- How is misinformation spreading locally?
- Is verified information reaching communities fast enough?
- Which platforms amplify panic, confusion or false information?
- How can trusted journalism remain visible within algorithm-driven feeds?
- How will verified information reach audiences who are not actively seeking news?

LESSONS LEARNED

- During emergencies, information ecosystems become fragmented very quickly.
- Communities often struggle less with a lack of information than with an excess of fragmented, contradictory and rapidly changing information.
- Messaging apps and social media circulate faster than institutional information.
- Journalists face pressure to publish rapidly with incomplete information.
- Audiences consistently value clarity, usefulness, and local relevance.
- Trust can be lost quickly through speculation or inaccurate reporting.

SUGGESTED EDITORIAL APPROACHES

- Prioritise actionable and practical information.
- Clearly distinguish verified and unverified information.
- Coordinate with trusted scientific and emergency actors.
- Avoid sensationalist imagery and speculation.
- Ensure affected communities are represented in reporting.
- Explain uncertainty openly and transparently.
- Adapt verified reporting into mobile-first and platform-native formats.
- Prioritise clarity, accessibility and shareability during emergencies.
- Collaborate with trusted local amplifiers and community actors.
- Monitor how misinformation circulates across messaging platforms and social feeds.

QUICK NEWSROOM ACTIONS

- Create a live “What we know / What we don’t know” format.
- Publish only verified information and clearly label uncertainty.
- Coordinate internally on verification responsibilities.
- Monitor local messaging apps and community networks for rumours.
- Prioritise practical guidance over dramatic visuals.
- Ensure reporting includes vulnerable and underserved populations.
- Use consistent terminology across updates.
- Create short-form emergency explainers optimised for social platforms.
- Use consistent visual branding for verified information.
- Publish updates in formats easily shareable through messaging apps.
- Monitor whether misinformation is outperforming verified reporting.
- Coordinate with trusted community amplifiers when appropriate.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Publishing unverified images or videos.
- Amplifying rumours or speculation.
- Focusing exclusively on dramatic destruction.
- Over-relying on official institutional voices.
- Ignoring accessibility and language barriers.
- Creating panic through sensational framing.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

When a flood hits, everyone wants updates immediately. Before publishing, pause for one extra question: How do we know this is true? Assign responsibility for verification, even if it's only for the next hour.

EXAMPLE NEWSROOM SCENARIO

During severe flooding, a local newsroom creates a continuously updated live page separating:

- verified information,
- uncertain information,
- emergency contacts,
- road closures,
- shelter availability,
- and fact-checks of circulating rumours.

Journalists coordinate with local authorities, scientists, and community organisations while maintaining transparent verification standards.

1.3 After the Emergency

Recovery and Accountability

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE

Maintaining attention after the disaster

"The only ones that continue speaking about those disasters are us, the regional newspapers."

— Hugo Rodrigues, *Sul Informação* (Portugal)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

National media often move on once the immediate crisis has passed, but recovery can take months or years. Local journalism plays a critical role in tracking reconstruction efforts, monitoring adaptation measures, documenting community recovery and holding decision-makers accountable long after headlines fade.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Recovery is not only about rebuilding infrastructure. It is also about understanding which vulnerabilities existed before the disaster, who benefits from reconstruction, and whether communities are becoming more resilient or more exposed to future risks.

The recovery phase often reveals structural inequalities, governance gaps, and failures of preparedness that may not have been visible during the emergency itself.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- What happens when media attention fades?
- Who is recovering and who is being left behind?
- What vulnerabilities existed before the disaster?
- Which promises are being fulfilled - and which are not?
- What long-term health, economic, or psychological impacts remain?
- What changes are being proposed to reduce future risk?
- Are reconstruction efforts reducing or reproducing vulnerability?
- Which adaptation measures were promised, funded or announced after the emergency?

LESSONS LEARNED

- Recovery stories often disappear too quickly from public debate.
- Communities frequently expressed frustration with short-term media attention.
- The recovery phase exposes governance failures, gaps, and inequalities.
- Long-term journalism is essential for accountability and public memory.
- Community-led resilience initiatives are often overlooked in coverage.

SUGGESTED EDITORIAL APPROACHES

- Continue reporting months after the disaster.
- Track reconstruction promises and adaptation measures.
- Compare recovery across different neighbourhoods and social groups.
- Cover social and psychological recovery, not only infrastructure damage.
- Revisit the same communities at regular intervals to track whether recovery commitments are being fulfilled.
- Investigate whether rebuilding efforts reduce or reproduce climate risk.
- Highlight community-led resilience and solidarity initiatives.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

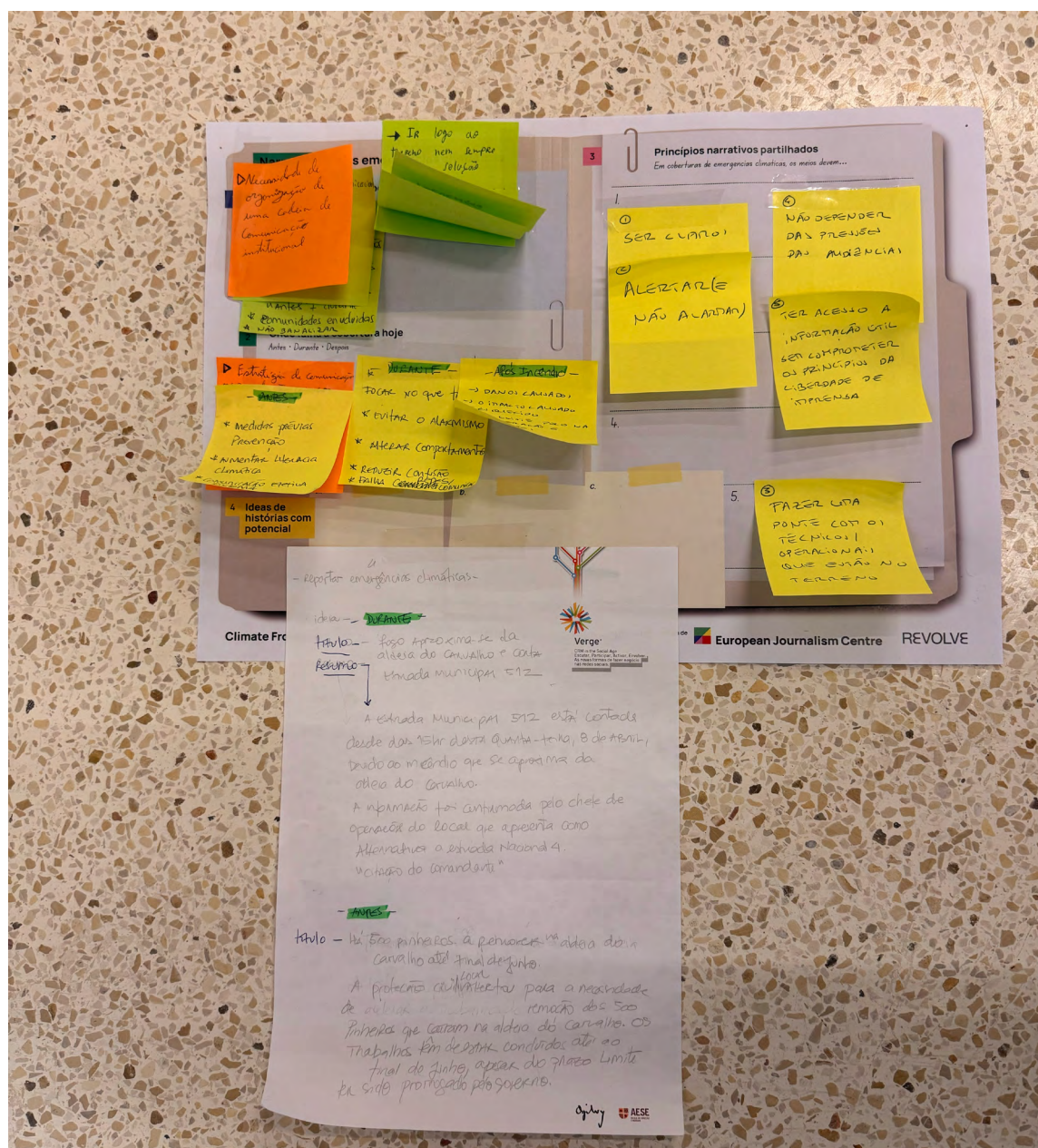
Six months after a wildfire, a reporter revisits the same three families interviewed during the emergency and asks a simple question: “What changed?”¹⁸

QUICK NEWSROOM ACTIONS

- Schedule follow-up reporting 3, 6 and 12 months after the event.
- Track reconstruction and adaptation commitments.
- Revisit affected communities after media attention fades.
- Monitor how recovery funding is allocated.
- Compare recovery outcomes across territories and communities.
- Investigate whether institutions implemented lessons learned.

STORY IDEAS

- Where reconstruction funding went
- Communities still waiting for support
- What changed after the disaster?
- What scientists warned before the event
- Informal resilience systems created by residents
- The psychological and social recovery process
- Which adaptation promises were implemented?
- Projects that inspire hope in the face of climate change
- Create a section that explores fictional futures using journalistic principles
- From the Portugal Workshop:



STORY 1 - DURING**Title:** *Fire approaches the village of Carvalho and cuts off Municipal Road 512***Summary:** Municipal Road 512 has been cut off since 3pm this Thursday, April 8th, due to the fire approaching the village of Carvalho. The information was confirmed by the local operations chief, who presents National Road 4 as an alternative. "Commander's victory."**STORY 2 - BEFORE****Title:** *500 pine trees remain in the village of Carvalho until the end of June.***Summary:** Civil protection is planning for the necessary removal of the 500 pine trees that fell in the village of Carvalho. The work must be completed by the end of June, despite the deadline having already been extended by the government.**STORY 3 - AFTER****Title:** *"Safe People" saves village from fire***Summary:** The village of São Carrapatoso escaped the violence of the fires last weekend, thanks to the project's interventions.**Body:** The construction of the shelter made it possible to guarantee the safety of the 32 residents and some foreign tourists. This village had already been the target of interventions under the Village Condominium project, funded by the Environmental Fund. No houses burned down, because the peripheral sprinkler system worked!**EXAMPLE NEWSROOM SCENARIO**

Six months after a major wildfire, a newsroom revisits affected communities to investigate:

- whether reconstruction funds arrived,
- whether prevention measures changed,
- and whether vulnerable populations received adequate support.

The newsroom compares official promises with on-the-ground realities and tracks adaptation measures over time.

WRAPPING UP MODULE 1

Climate emergencies are not only environmental events. They are social, political, and territorial crises that expose how societies prepare, communicate, govern, and recover.

Journalism cannot prevent disasters. But it can help communities better understand risks, identify vulnerabilities, hold institutions accountable, and strengthen collective preparedness over time.

Moving from reactive disaster reporting towards long-term climate resilience journalism is not only an editorial shift, it is also a democratic one.

MOD2

How To Report with Communities, Vulnerability and Trust

Climate hazards do not affect everyone equally. Reporting that treats communities as a single group often misses the people most exposed to risk, least represented in decision-making and slowest to recover. This module helps journalists identify those gaps and report them more accurately

One of the clearest lessons from the discussions within the Climate Frontline community workshops - specially in the one in Valencia post-DANA 2024 - was that disasters are not socially neutral. Existing inequalities shape exposure, preparedness, response capacity and recovery outcomes, and journalism that ignores these dynamics risks reinforcing them.



The Field Guide for this module is **Who's in the Room: A community reporting guide for inclusive and trusted journalism**.

It is designed to be used before a hazard season as a preparedness exercise, or after coverage that felt incomplete. It works as a team conversation or individual reflection. Everything this module covers about community relationships, inclusive sourcing and dignity in reporting finds its practical expression there.

If you read this module and do one thing: run the sourcing audit in *Who's in the Room* after your next climate story - and act on what it reveals.

2.1 Understanding Vulnerability

Vulnerability is not a fixed characteristic of certain populations. The question is not simply who was affected, but why. Housing, income, age, health, mobility and planning decisions often determine who is most exposed before a disaster and who recovers fastest afterwards.

KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

- Climate reporting often relies heavily on officials, emergency services and experts. Yet some of the most important perspectives come from people living the consequences of the event, while local organisations frequently hold knowledge absent from institutional narratives.

Older people, children, low-income households, undocumented migrants, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups may experience the same climate hazard very differently. Ask not only who is speaking in your story, but who is missing.

Framing communities only through suffering erases their agency, knowledge and mutual support networks. Report not only on what happened to people, but also on how they respond, adapt and help one another. A simple sourcing audit after publication can reveal whose voices dominate coverage and which perspectives remain underrepresented.

- Climate emergencies expose existing territorial and social inequalities. The same flood can have very different consequences depending on housing, income, mobility and access to support.



- The DANA events in Valencia made visible how flood plains, industrial zones and ageing housing stock are disproportionately occupied by lower-income populations. These land-use decisions have decades-long histories. Journalists who can connect emergency reporting to planning archives, housing data and zoning records tell a structurally richer story.
- Recovery timelines diverge sharply along socioeconomic lines.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- Which groups face the greatest risks locally?
- What social factors increase vulnerability?
- Which voices are consistently absent from coverage?
- Who benefits from the dominant narrative of a disaster?
- Are infrastructural inequalities being named or left implicit?

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- Diversify sourcing practices beyond official spokespersons.
- Work with community organisations as knowledge partners.
- Map local territorial realities before emergencies occur.
- Avoid reducing communities to victims or passive subjects.
- Report on structural causes, not only acute consequences.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

Create a source list that includes not only emergency services and municipal officials, but also teachers, nurses, neighbourhood associations, volunteer groups and community leaders.

When a crisis occurs, these sources can help verify information and identify impacts that official briefings may overlook.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

[Inclusive sourcing checklist](#) ↗

2.2 Community Listening and Participation

Climate emergency communication does not depend on media alone. Scientists, civil protection actors, local governments, NGOs, community organisations, schools, neighbourhood networks and citizens all play a role in how information circulates during crises.

One of the clearest lessons from the Climate Frontline workshops in Coimbra and Valencia was that communication systems often become fragmented precisely when coordination matters most. This section explores how stronger local communication ecosystems can improve preparedness, reduce misinformation and strengthen public trust before emergencies occur.

KEY LEARNINGS

- Effective emergency communication starts long before the emergency itself. Newsrooms, emergency services, scientists, local authorities and community organisations are often expected to coordinate during a crisis despite having few established relationships beforehand. Participants consistently identified pre-existing communication channels, trusted contacts and regular exchanges between actors as essential foundations for reliable public information when emergencies occur.
- Journalists, scientists and public authorities often operate in parallel rather than together. Several workshop participants highlighted the need for clearer communication channels before emergencies occur.
- Community listening often reveals insights absent from official reports and institutional narratives. Participatory journalism does not mean surrendering editorial control. It means expanding the definition of legitimate evidence to include local knowledge, lived experience and community-held data. Journalists retain the responsibility to verify, contextualise and challenge, including information provided by communities themselves.
- Trust is built through continuity and presence, not only coverage volume. Communities value being heard beyond moments of crisis.

In many disaster-affected areas, journalists arrive when the story is dramatic and leave once attention shifts elsewhere. Sources are interviewed, communities are photographed, but follow-up coverage is rare. Many communities experience this as extractive behaviour: media organisations take stories, quotes and images from a place without maintaining relationships or returning to report on what happened next.

Trust-building requires consistent reporting, transparent corrections, follow-up stories and accountability to the people affected. It is slow work that begins before the next emergency.

Strong local media are not only observers of a crisis. They are part of the local information infrastructure that helps communities stay informed, prepared and connected between emergencies.

- During crisis moments, communities need clear, practical information they can act on immediately.

In the first hours and days of a disaster, audiences are often looking for answers to urgent questions: Which roads are closed? Where can people find shelter? Is drinking water safe? How can someone access support?

Practical information often matters more than analysis at this stage. Newsrooms that have invested in trusted relationships and local information networks are better positioned to provide it quickly and accurately.

Focus first on what people need to know. The deeper analysis can follow.

- Informal community networks frequently become critical information infrastructures during crises.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

“CLERs are essential, because it is the community that knows itself and organises to manage these situations.”

– Juan Bordera, CTXT

WHY IT MATTERS

Communities are not simply recipients of information during emergencies. They are often the first to identify risks, organise responses and support recovery efforts. Journalism can strengthen resilience by listening to and amplifying local knowledge, experiences and solutions.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- What information do communities actually need, not only what journalists want to tell them?
- How can journalists rebuild trust with populations who feel misrepresented?
- How can reporting become more collaborative without losing independence?
- Are we present between crises, or only during them?
- What feedback mechanisms exist for communities to respond to our coverage?

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- Organise listening sessions before and after emergencies.
- Use participatory reporting methods (community mapping, co-investigation).
- Build long-term relationships with local actors, not only episodic contact.
- Create editorial space for lived experience and local knowledge as legitimate evidence.
- Develop a clear policy on anonymity, consent and source protection.
- Build cross-sector relationships before emergencies occur.
- Organise informal exchanges and knowledge-sharing sessions.
- Create local communication coordination structures: identify three organisations you can call during an emergency besides the municipality.
- Identify trusted community channels and intermediaries.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

Before publishing a story about flood risk, spend one hour speaking with residents, shop owners and community groups in the affected area—not only officials. Ask a simple question:

“What are we missing?”

The answers often reveal vulnerabilities, local knowledge and story angles that do not appear in official reports.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

[Listening session facilitation guide](#) ↗

[Community interview prompts](#) ↗

2.3 Ethical and Trauma-Informed Reporting

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- How can journalists report responsibly in moments of grief and uncertainty?
- How can coverage avoid retraumatisation or exploitation?

KEY LEARNINGS

- Affected communities often feel overexposed immediately after disasters.
- Emotional reporting without context can reinforce fear and helplessness.
- Journalists themselves may also experience emotional stress during prolonged crises.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- Prioritise dignity and consent.
- Avoid intrusive reporting practices.
- Recognise emotional impacts on reporters and interviewees.
- Focus on context and solutions alongside impacts.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ETHICAL AND TRAUMA SENSITIVE REPORTING

Climate emergencies often place journalists in direct contact with people experiencing loss, displacement, trauma and uncertainty. Reporting in these contexts requires balancing urgency, public interest and accuracy with dignity, care and ethical responsibility.

- [Ethical reporting checklist](#) ↗
- [Trauma-sensitive interview guidance](#) ↗
- [Consent and image-use recommendations](#) ↗
- [Safety and dignity considerations](#) ↗
- [Recovery Follow-Up Calendar](#) ↗

MOD3

Navigating Climate Information and Public Trust

Climate emergencies generate confusion very quickly. Scientific uncertainty, fragmented institutional communication, misinformation and political tensions often make it difficult for journalists – and the public – to understand what is happening, who is responsible and which information can be trusted.

This module focuses on how journalists can navigate complex climate information during emergencies while maintaining clarity, accuracy and public trust.

The Field Guide for this module is **Through the Noise: A verification workflow for climate emergency reporting**.

It is designed to be kept open alongside live coverage during a breaking climate event - a set of decision points to move through quickly under pressure. Everything this module covers about information integrity, misinformation and verification finds its practical expression there.

If you read this module and do one thing: keep **Through the Noise** open alongside your live coverage during the next climate emergency.

3.1 From Policy to Practice: Making Climate Governance Understandable

Climate adaptation plans, emergency protocols and recovery policies often remain inaccessible to the public, despite directly shaping local resilience and preparedness.

Journalists play an important role in translating these systems into understandable and locally relevant information.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- What climate risks and adaptation plans already exist locally?
- Who is responsible for preparedness, emergency response and recovery?
- How do national and EU policies affect local realities?
- What information is missing or difficult for citizens to access?

KEY LEARNINGS

- Many citizens do not know who is responsible for preparedness, emergency response or recovery. Journalism can help make those responsibilities visible before a crisis occurs.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

“The goal is not simply to provide more information, but rather to provide strategic and relevant information for the people and the region.”

— Neide P. Areia, University of Coimbra

WHY IT MATTERS

Climate information only becomes useful when it helps people understand risks, make decisions and prepare for emergencies. Journalism plays a key role in translating technical information into practical public knowledge.

- Institutional communication is often fragmented or overly technical: Participants flagged the confusion between technical and political information as a structural failure of coverage, and called for an editorial practice of translating complex concepts and building bridges with technicians.

- Local climate adaptation policies frequently remain disconnected from public debate: The DANA in Valencia made visible how decades-old planning decisions, flood plains, riverbed urbanisation, drainage infrastructure, quietly shape the scale of any single event. Adaptation plans, when discussed at all, tend to surface only after an emergency and rarely as objects of routine local journalism. Adaptation plans should not only become news after a disaster. Treating them as a local reporting beat and following them before the next emergency arrives is a basic precondition for an informed public debate.
- Journalists themselves often struggle to navigate complex governance structures during emergencies: Valencia workshop raised this as an operational gap: journalism must “communicate who is responsible for what, before, during and after,” and newsrooms need to “know the resources, use them and establish protocols” before a crisis hits. Building those reference maps and source relationships in advance is what allows newsrooms to work at the speed of an emergency without losing rigour.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- Translate climate policies into local and practical implications.
- Clarify institutional roles and responsibilities.
- Focus on how decisions affect communities and territories.
- Build relationships with scientists, emergency actors and local authorities before crises occur.

3.2 Accountability After the Emergency

Climate emergencies do not end when media attention fades.

The recovery phase often reveals deeper questions around preparedness, inequality, institutional coordination and long-term resilience.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- Why were some systems or communities more affected than others?
- What preparedness gaps existed before the emergency?
- What recovery commitments are being made?
- Are territories rebuilding vulnerability or resilience?

► IN THE NEWSROOM

After a flood, don't only report on the damage. Ask for the municipality's adaptation plan and compare what was promised with what was implemented.

The gap between the two is often where the accountability story begins.

KEY LEARNINGS

Communities expressed frustration with the rapid disappearance of media attention after disasters: Valencia participants characterised media as “slaves of immediacy”, abandoning the story when the most consequential decisions are being made.

The DANA floods exposed major coordination and preparedness failures: Workshop participants identified concrete gaps that became visible only after the event: warning systems that did not reach the right populations, evacuation decisions taken too late, and territorial planning choices made decades earlier.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

“Disasters are not natural. We must stop placing responsibility on nature. If we leave responsibility to nature, we will not take any action to prevent these events.”

— Yaisa Córdoba, Fundación Felisa

WHY IT MATTERS

Climate hazards become disasters when existing vulnerabilities, planning decisions, infrastructure weaknesses and social inequalities increase exposure and risk.

Journalism can help communities understand not only what happened, but also the underlying conditions that made impacts worse.

- Recovery processes are often unequal and difficult for citizens to follow: The post-DANA recovery foregrounded how reconstruction timelines and resources diverge along socioeconomic lines, and how children, migrants and single-parent families are disproportionately exposed.
- Long-term reporting is essential to maintain accountability and public memory: Both workshops named the same set of practices that make this possible: returning to the story after time has passed, treating reconstruction as an investigative beat, and demanding responsibility from public authorities rather than waiting for the next event to surface old failures.
- Investigative and data journalism (money flows, transparency, contract oversight) and mental-health stories of recovery were highlighted as concrete reporting angles for this phase.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE:

Identifying long-term and hidden impacts

"Maybe there are consequences of climate hazards that we do not know they exist."

— Carlos Almeida, *Jornal Região de Leiria (Portugal)*

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

The impacts of climate hazards often continue long after the immediate emergency has passed. Journalists can strengthen accountability by investigating environmental, social, economic and health consequences that may only become visible over time.

- Continue reporting beyond the breaking-news cycle.
- Investigate preparedness and coordination failures constructively.
- Monitor recovery measures and adaptation commitments over time.
- Highlight community-led resilience initiatives and local responses.

3.3 Information Integrity During Climate Emergencies

During emergencies, false information spreads rapidly through social media, messaging apps and fragmented information networks.

In moments of uncertainty, trust becomes one of the most important public resources.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- How does misinformation spread during climate emergencies?
- What verification challenges emerge under pressure?
- How can journalists maintain public trust while information is evolving?

KEY LEARNINGS

- Audiences often receive contradictory information from multiple channels during crises: Valencia's roundtable concluded that misinformation does not appear from nowhere, it rushes in to fill the gaps left by slow, fragmented or absent official communication. Public communication and dissemination, the workshop concluded, are themselves tools against fake news, and strong local media outlets are essential to ensure citizens share a verified factual base.
- Citizens value clarity and transparency more than certainty: Both workshops converged on the same editorial principle (to alert without alarming) and translated it into a commitment to prioritise verified, actionable and solution-focused information over spectacle. Ana Abrunhosa (President of the Municipal Council of Coimbra) framed the whole challenge around trust: "it is trust that generates safety and safe behaviours. It is this trust and this communication that helps to understand, anticipate and rebuild."

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

“It is trust that generates safety and safe behaviours. It is this trust and this communication that helps to understand, anticipate and rebuild.”

– Ana Abrunhosa, President of the Municipal Council of Coimbra

WHY IT MATTERS

Effective communication during climate hazards depends not only on information accuracy, but also on trust. Journalists can contribute to public safety by providing clear, transparent and empathetic reporting that helps communities understand risks, navigate uncertainty and recover after emergencies.

Rumours and misleading narratives can undermine preparedness and emergency response: Coimbra participants flagged image misuse and AI generated content as specific risks of the recovery phase, when official narratives consolidate and visual verification becomes harder.

Journalists need simple and adaptable verification protocols during emergencies: Both workshops produced a converging short list of practices: go to those who know first, confirm information before reach, treat images with particular caution, use official sources to reach affected communities while preserving editorial independence, and maintain independence from both audience and institutional pressure.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- Clearly distinguish verified and unverified information.
- Explain uncertainty transparently.
- Avoid amplifying rumours or speculation.
- Develop newsroom verification workflows before emergencies occur.
- Focus on pre-bunking common myths and misinformation patterns before crises escalate.

3.4 Working with Scientists, Data and Uncertainty

Climate emergencies generate large amounts of technical information, evolving forecasts and scientific uncertainty. Journalists play an important role in translating this complexity into clear, accessible and trustworthy public communication.

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE:

Accessing scientific expertise and technical interpretation

"Sometimes we need a scientist to help us analyse the information. If that person doesn't have the time or willingness to help, that's another story that goes without being written."

— Carlos Almeida, *Jornal Região de Leiria* (Portugal)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

Local newsrooms often lack the resources to commission technical analysis or specialist expertise. Building relationships with scientists, universities and research institutions before emergencies occur can help journalists access the knowledge needed to investigate climate risks, interpret complex evidence and strengthen the quality of their reporting.

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE:

Climate literacy inside newsrooms

"The problem is our education about climate change and its effects."

— Sergi Pitarch, *elDiario.es Comunitat Valenciana* (Spain)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

Climate hazards increasingly affect every reporting beat. Developing basic climate literacy helps journalists ask better questions, interpret scientific findings and communicate risks more effectively.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEWSROOMS

- How can journalists build stronger relationships with scientists and technical experts?
- How should climate data, forecasts and risk projections be interpreted and contextualised?
- How can uncertainty be communicated clearly without creating confusion or distrust?
- How can journalists avoid oversimplifying or misrepresenting scientific information?

KEY LEARNINGS

- The challenge is rarely a lack of information, but difficulty translating complex climate knowledge into meaningful public communication.
- Relationships with scientists and experts work best when built before emergencies occur.
- Audiences value clarity, transparency and practical relevance over technical detail.
- Scientific uncertainty is often misunderstood and can easily be distorted through oversimplification or misinformation.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- Build long-term relationships with trusted scientists and technical experts.
- Focus on translating risk and uncertainty into accessible public-interest reporting.
- Contextualise data and projections rather than presenting isolated statistics.
- Communicate evolving information transparently and avoid false certainty or false balance.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

When a new climate study is published, call the author and ask: “What is the one thing local residents should understand from this research?”

This often produces a more useful story angle than simply reporting the study’s findings.

MOD4_

Impact, Learning and Continuous Improvement

Strengthening journalism's contribution to
climate resilience

Core question:

How can newsrooms evaluate and strengthen their contribution over time?

Climate hazard reporting does not end when a story is published.

Every emergency reveals new information gaps, reporting challenges, community needs and opportunities for learning. Newsrooms that take time to reflect on their coverage can improve preparedness, strengthen relationships with communities and experts, and develop more effective reporting practices for future emergencies.

This final module focuses on how journalists and newsrooms can evaluate their work, learn from experience and build long-term capacity for climate hazard reporting.

The Field Guide for this module is **After the Storm: A newsroom review for climate hazard reporting**. It is designed to be used as a half-day team workshop: either within four to six weeks of a climate event, or once a year before the next hazard season begins. Everything this module covers about impact, learning and long-term capacity finds its practical expression there.

If you read this module and do one thing: run *After the Storm* with your team.

4.1 Journalism as Resilience Infrastructure

Climate emergencies generate large amounts of technical information, evolving forecasts and scientific uncertainty. Journalists play an important role in translating this complexity into clear, accessible and trustworthy public communication.

Climate emergencies are also information emergencies.

Before, during and after disasters, communities depend on trusted information to understand risks, make decisions and navigate uncertainty.

Journalism contributes to resilience when it helps communities:

- understand local risks before emergencies occur;
- access reliable information during crises;
- monitor recovery and adaptation efforts;
- hold institutions accountable;
- learn from previous events.

Public trust is therefore not simply an outcome of journalism. It is one of journalism's most important contributions during climate emergencies.

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE:

Understanding whether reporting makes a difference

"After the publication of our report, some of the support was released and began to effectively reach people."

— Hugo Rodrigues, *Sul Informação* (Portugal)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

The impact of climate hazard reporting is not always reflected in audience metrics alone. Reporting can influence public debate, improve access to information, prompt institutional responses and help ensure that resources reach affected communities.

CLIMATE FRONTLINE IN PRACTICE**Reporting that contributed to community support****CONTEXT**

Following a climate-related emergency, communities were waiting for support and recovery measures to be implemented.

WHAT HAPPENED

Sul Informação continued reporting on the situation after the immediate crisis had passed, helping maintain public attention on the needs of affected communities and highlighting delays in support mechanisms.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The impact of climate reporting is often visible through real-world outcomes rather than audience metrics alone. Sustained reporting can help keep recovery efforts visible, accountable and responsive to community needs.

4.2 Looking Beyond Clicks

Audience metrics remain important, but they only tell part of the story.

Climate hazard reporting can contribute to:

- increased public awareness;
- improved preparedness;
- stronger community engagement;
- policy discussions and institutional responses;
- greater accountability around recovery and adaptation;
- stronger relationships between communities, experts and local institutions.

Newsrooms should consider a broader range of indicators when reflecting on the value and impact of their work.

Examples include:

- audience feedback;
- community participation;
- follow-up reporting;
- institutional responses;
- public engagement and dialogue;
- evidence of learning or behavioural change.

Impact does not always happen immediately. In many cases, the value of reporting becomes visible over time as communities, institutions and decision-makers act on information that has entered the public sphere.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

A preparedness explainer receives modest traffic but is shared repeatedly in local WhatsApp groups during a heatwave. The newsroom considers that a meaningful impact indicator.

4.3 Learning After Emergencies

Every climate emergency provides an opportunity to learn.

Newsrooms can strengthen future reporting by asking:

- What information was most difficult to obtain?
- Which sources proved most valuable?
- What stories emerged after the emergency?
- Which communities were underrepresented?
- What would we do differently next time?

Structured reflection helps transform individual reporting experiences into newsroom knowledge.

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE:

Identifying long-term and hidden impacts

"Maybe there are consequences of climate hazards that we do not know they exist."

— Carlos Almeida, *Jornal Região de Leiria (Portugal)*

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

The impacts of climate hazards often continue long after the emergency has passed. Journalists can strengthen accountability by investigating environmental, social, economic and health consequences that may only become visible over time.

CLIMATE FRONTLINE IN PRACTICE

Following the story after the disaster

CONTEXT

Many climate-related impacts only become visible months or years after an emergency.

WHAT HAPPENED

Participating newsrooms repeatedly highlighted the importance of continuing to investigate environmental, social and community impacts long after national media attention had moved elsewhere.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Recovery reporting often reveals the most important accountability, adaptation and resilience stories. Some of the most significant consequences of climate hazards emerge long after the immediate crisis has ended.

4.4 Building Long-Term Capacity

Climate hazards increasingly affect every reporting beat.

Building a climate reporting culture means moving beyond occasional climate stories and embedding climate awareness throughout newsroom practice.

This may include:

- strengthening climate literacy;
- developing expert networks;
- collaborating with scientists and researchers;
- sharing knowledge across beats;
- building relationships with communities;
- creating preparedness reporting plans;
- maintaining climate coverage beyond individual projects and funding cycles.

The goal is not for every journalist to become a climate specialist, but for every newsroom to become better equipped to understand and report climate-related risks.

NEWSROOM REALITY CHECK

CHALLENGE: Climate literacy across the newsroom

"The problem is our education about climate change and its effects."

Sergi Pitarch, elDiario.es Comunitat Valenciana (Spain)

TOOLKIT RESPONSE

Climate literacy is increasingly essential across all beats. Continuous learning helps journalists interpret risks, understand scientific evidence and communicate climate impacts more effectively.

CLIMATE FRONTLINE IN PRACTICE

Building preparedness into newsroom culture

CONTEXT

Climate emergencies are becoming more frequent, complex and interconnected.

WHAT HAPPENED

Participating newsrooms identified the need for stronger relationships with scientists, emergency actors and local communities, as well as greater preparedness before emergencies occur. Several highlighted the importance of developing expert networks and climate knowledge outside crisis periods.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Effective climate hazard reporting depends as much on preparation and relationships as it does on reporting skills. Investing in expertise, trust and collaboration before emergencies occur strengthens reporting when crises happen.

► IN THE NEWSROOM

KEY LESSONS FROM CLIMATE FRONTLINE

1. Climate emergencies are also information emergencies.
2. Local trust is a strategic resilience asset.
3. Journalism can strengthen preparedness before disasters occur.
4. Recovery deserves as much attention as impact.
5. Communities are knowledge holders, not just sources.
6. Reliable information is part of resilience infrastructure.

Climate emergencies are not only testing infrastructure, institutions and ecosystems. They are also testing the strength of our communication systems.

Across the Climate Frontline project, one insight consistently emerged: information itself becomes a form of resilience infrastructure during crises.

Communities rely on trusted communication systems to understand risk, make decisions, navigate uncertainty, coordinate responses, maintain social cohesion, and hold institutions accountable over time.

In this context, journalism is not only about reporting events. Local media, community networks, scientists, emergency actors and public communication systems all become part of a broader public-interest information ecosystem that shapes how societies prepare for and respond to climate disruption.

Strengthening climate emergency communication therefore requires more than improving reporting skills alone. It requires investing in trust, preparedness, coordination and long-term relationships between institutions, media and communities.

The Climate Frontline project suggests that resilient futures will depend not only on stronger physical infrastructure, but also on stronger communication infrastructures capable of supporting collective understanding, accountability and action in increasingly unstable climate conditions.

About Climate Frontline and this Toolkit

Climate Frontline is a pilot initiative supporting local and regional journalism on climate hazards and community resilience in Portugal and Spain.

The project brings together journalists, local newsrooms, scientists, civil society organisations, emergency actors and public institutions to strengthen climate hazard reporting before, during and after emergencies.

Through training, workshops, reporting support and practical resources, Climate Frontline seeks to help newsrooms produce journalism that is more prepared, more community-centred and more useful to people living on the frontline of climate disruption.

Climate Frontline Toolkit: Reporting Climate Hazards and Community Resilience

Version 1.0 – June 2026

This toolkit was developed through the Climate Frontline pilot project and reflects the experiences, lessons and contributions of participating newsrooms, experts, communities and project partners in Portugal and Spain.

We welcome feedback, examples of use and suggestions for future editions. Climate hazard reporting is an evolving field, and this toolkit is intended as a living resource that can continue to grow through newsroom practice and shared learning.

Toolkit Credits

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Research, Workshops and Content Contributions

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International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

Copernicus Land Monitoring Service (CLMS)

Design and Visual Identity

Dariana Guevara

Field Guides

Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment Template

Before the Clouds Gather

Through the Noise

After the Storm

Who's in the Room?

Developed as part of the Climate Frontline project by the European Journalism Centre and REVOLVE.

Participating Newsrooms

Sul Informação (Portugal)

Jornal Região de Leiria (Portugal)

El Salto (Spain)

elDiario.es Comunitat Valenciana (Spain)

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We welcome feedback, examples of use, and additional resources from journalists, newsrooms and practitioners working on climate hazard reporting.

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The views and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting organisations or funders.

This toolkit is intended as a practical resource. Newsrooms should adapt its recommendations to their editorial context, audience needs and local realities.

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External Resources & Tools

Each resource below is matched to a tool or approach already in the toolkit. Entries are free to use unless noted; many are available in Spanish or Portuguese, and several speak directly to the Spain–Portugal and post-DANA Valencia context.

MOD1_ Editorial Framing for Systemic Resilience

Covering hazards before, during and after — risk calendars, verification, recovery and accountability.

RESOURCE	AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	WHAT IT OFFERS — AND THE TOOLKIT TOOL IT SUPPORTS
Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment Template for media organisations	Climate Frontline Initiative	This assessment evaluates the environmental and climate-related risks that may affect the organisation's ability to operate safely and continue reporting during disruptions caused by extreme weather events, infrastructure failures, environmental hazards, or related emergencies. → Toolkit fit: Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment
Climate Change Adaptation Appendix A: Climate Hazard Classification	European Commission	Reference classification of physical climate hazards used in climate risk and vulnerability assessments. Covers floods, wildfires, droughts, changing temperatures, coastal hazards and other climate-related risks. Toolkit fit: Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment; local hazard mapping; expanding coverage beyond the most visible hazards.
Reporting Extreme Weather and Climate Change: A Guide for Journalists	World Weather Attribution (F. Otto, G.J. van Oldenborgh et al.)	Hazard-by-hazard checklists (heat, flood, fire, drought) for linking an event to climate change with the right level of confidence. Spanish edition available. → Toolkit fit: Seasonal risk calendars; explanatory journalism on local risks (1.1).
Climate Reporting 101 & best-practice guides	Covering Climate Now (CCNow)	Ready-to-use, science-checked language for connecting local events to climate, plus reporting templates and story angles. → Toolkit fit: Recurring seasonal formats; explainer templates before hazard season (1.1).
Copernicus Emergency Management Service — EFFIS · EFAS · EDO	European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC)	Free near-real-time monitoring and forecasts for wildfire (EFFIS), floods (EFAS) and drought (EDO), plus rapid satellite mapping after an event — covering Spain, Portugal and the wider Mediterranean. → Toolkit fit: Climate & Environmental Risk Assessment; high-risk-area maps; live verified updates (1.1–1.2).
EFFIS Current Situation Viewer	European Commission, JRC (Copernicus EMS)	In-browser fire-danger indices and active-fire monitoring by satellite, updated daily. → Toolkit fit: Pre-season wildfire packages; monitoring municipal prevention measures (1.1).
Solutions Journalism: An Introduction for Journalists and Newsrooms	European Journalism Centre	A practical introduction to reporting that examines credible responses to challenges, including adaptation, preparedness and recovery efforts. Includes reporting frameworks, key questions and common pitfalls. → Toolkit fit: Recovery reporting; adaptation stories; accountability and solution-oriented coverage after climate hazards (1.3).
Climate Journalism Needs Solutions Journalism. Here's How to Do It	Solutions Journalism Network and Climate Adam	Short practical video explaining how solutions journalism can strengthen climate reporting by moving beyond documenting problems to investigating responses, adaptation efforts and evidence of what works. Introduces key principles, common misconceptions and practical approaches for applying solutions-oriented reporting to climate stories. Toolkit fit: Recovery reporting; adaptation and resilience coverage; reporting on responses and preparedness measures; strengthening public understanding of actionable climate solutions (1.3, 4.1, 4.2).
Verification Handbook (emergency coverage)	European Journalism Centre; ed. Craig Silverman	Step-by-step verification of user-generated photos, video and rumours during breaking events. Spanish and Portuguese editions exist. → Toolkit fit: Newsroom verification workflow; the 'What we know / don't know' format (1.2).
Investigating Climate Change — resource hub & Climate Accountability Project	Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)	Reporter's guides, data sources and reconstruction-accountability angles, with worked investigations for inspiration. → Toolkit fit: Recovery timeline & municipal promise trackers; accountability interviews (1.3).
IPCC Sixth Assessment — Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation & Vulnerability)	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	The authoritative framing of exposure, vulnerability and adaptation; the Summary for Policymakers is the practical entry point. → Toolkit fit: Structural framing for preparedness and adaptation reporting (1.1, 1.3).
Solutions Journalism resources	Solutions Journalism Network	Methods for rigorous reporting on responses and what is working, not only damage. → Toolkit fit: 'Projects that inspire hope'; recovery and resilience coverage (1.3).

MOD2_ Reporting with Communities, Vulnerability and Trust

Stakeholder and information-ecosystem mapping, community listening, and trauma-informed practice.

RESOURCE	AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	WHAT IT OFFERS – AND THE TOOLKIT TOOL IT SUPPORTS
Inclusive sourcing checklist	Climate Frontline Initiative	A before-publication checklist to ensure your coverage does not systematically exclude affected communities. Use after initial sourcing and again at the editorial stage. → Toolkit fit: Editorial framing; understanding vulnerability
Listening Session Facilitation Guide	Climate Frontline Initiative	A structured method for journalists to convey community listening events that generate story leads, trust and editorial accountability within the local stakeholders. → Toolkit fit: identifying local climate angles; preparedness and recovery reporting; listening-session prep (2.1–2.2).
Community Interview Prompts	Climate Frontline Initiative	Open-questions template for community interviews to get factual answers, not just emotional answers. It is designed to help people learn, take action and understand how systems work. Toolkit fit: identifying local climate angles; preparedness and recovery reporting
Ethical Reporting Checklist	Climate Frontline Initiative	A pre-publication guide covering five key areas for ethical reporting: Accuracy & Verification; Harm & Dignity; Inclusion & Representation; Accountability & Context; and transparency. → Toolkit fit: safety & dignity section
Trauma-sensitive Interview Guidance	Climate Frontline Initiative	A step-by-step protocol to help journalists conduct interviews with people affected by disaster or crisis in a respectful, ethical way. → Toolkit fit: safety & dignity section; identifying local climate angles;
Content and Image Use Recommendations	Climate Frontline Initiative	A practical guide to ethical visual reporting, covering the full journey from capture to publication and circulation. → Toolkit fit: safety & dignity section; identifying local climate angles; preparedness and resilience
Safety and Dignity Considerations	Climate Frontline Initiative	A comprehensive framework to help newsrooms and field journalists navigate the physical, psychological, digital and ethical risks of climate hazard reporting. → Toolkit fit: safety & dignity section
Recovery Follow-Up Calendar	Climate Frontline Initiative	A template that prompts newsrooms to revisit the story at fixed intervals, each revisit tied to a specific angle: reconstruction progress, mental-health recovery, displaced communities, fund disbursement. → Toolkit fit: Editorial framing; identifying local climate angles; preparedness and recovery reporting; building long-term climate reporting capacity (1.1, 1.3, 4.4).
Freelancer's Guide for Reporting on Climate Change	European Journalism Centre	Practical guidance for journalists seeking to integrate climate reporting into their work. Covers story identification, audience engagement, accountability reporting, climate storytelling and connecting local experiences to broader climate trends. Particularly useful for journalists without a dedicated climate beat. → Toolkit fit: Editorial framing; identifying local climate angles; preparedness and recovery reporting; building long-term climate reporting capacity (1.1, 1.3, 4.4).
Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) methodology	Internews	The journalism-applied form of stakeholder mapping: maps how information flows, who is trusted, and which intermediaries matter in a community. Spanish-language assessments (including Colombia) are published.
Guide to Actor Mapping (PDF)	FSG	A facilitated workshop method to map people, roles and relationships in a system, with templates and a step-by-step session plan. → Toolkit fit: Mapping sources and partners before emergencies; listening-session prep (2.1–2.2).
Power Analysis & Stakeholder Mapping (Spectrum of Allies)	Museum of Protest (organising-tradition methods)	Frameworks to position actors as allies, opponents or neutral and locate where influence sits – a quick complement to actor mapping. → Toolkit fit: Sourcing audits; naming who holds power in a territory (2.1).
Disaster reporting & trauma resources	Global Center for Journalism & Trauma (formerly the Dart Center, Columbia Journalism School)	Tip sheets on interviewing survivors, consent, dignity, and journalist self-care / secondary trauma. Archived Dart Center materials remain at dartcenter.org. → Toolkit fit: Trauma-sensitive interview guide; safety & dignity section; journalist debriefs (2.3).
5 Ways to Engage Audiences with Your Climate Reporting	Tara Kelly, DataJournalism.com (EJC)	Audience-centred climate storytelling and engagement strategies. → Toolkit fit: Community-centred reporting; trust-building; preparedness and resilience (2.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4).
Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) Toolkit	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Practical, field-tested tools for community listening, feedback mechanisms and acting on what communities say. Hosted with the CDAC Network family of guides. → Toolkit fit: Listening-session facilitation guide; community feedback loops (2.2).
Community Engagement Hub	British Red Cross / IFRC	A 'one-stop shop' of downloadable templates: feedback-mechanism set-up, focus-group guides, rumour tracking and inclusion checklists.

MOD3_ Navigating Climate Information, Accountability and Public Trust

Governance, verification, OSINT and misinformation response – with the Iberian fact-checking network.

RESOURCE	AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	WHAT IT OFFERS – AND THE TOOLKIT TOOL IT SUPPORTS
Climate Change Through a Solutions and Data Lens	Sherry Ricciardi, DataJournalism.com (EJC)	Combining data journalism and solutions journalism in climate reporting. → Toolkit fit: Adaptation and resilience coverage; accountability journalism; recovery reporting (3.2, 4.2).
IBERIFIER – Iberian Digital Media Observatory (+ partner fact-checkers)	Univ. of Navarra (EDMO hub); Maldita.es, Newtral, Verificat, EFE Verifica (ES); Polígrafo, Lusa Verifica (PT)	Verified debunks, quarterly disinformation-trend briefs for Spain & Portugal, and a webinar dedicated to 'Disinformation in times of crisis: the DANA Valencia case' – local, multilingual, directly on point. → Toolkit fit: Climate misinformation response protocol; trusted-sources database (3.3).
European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)	EDMO (European University Institute)	EU-wide network of fact-checkers and media-literacy resources, with monthly disinformation briefs and a repository of investigations.
Satellite Data for Journalists: Turning Earth Images into Stories	Copernicus Land Monitoring Service (CLMS) & European Journalism Centre	Recorded practical training on accessing and using satellite imagery for climate and environmental reporting, including the Copernicus Data Space Ecosystem and CLMS Data Viewer. → Toolkit fit: Working with scientific data; environmental monitoring; evidence-based reporting; visualising climate impacts (3.1).
4 Things to Know About OSINT for Environmental Investigations	Tara Kelly, DataJournalism.com (EJC)	Introduction to OSINT techniques for environmental investigations. → Toolkit fit: Verification workflows; evidence gathering; climate accountability reporting; misinformation response (3.1, 3.2, 3.3).
Climate Blocks	The Newsroom / European Journalism Centre	AI-powered platform that helps journalists explore climate research, identify relevant experts, understand connections between studies and trace findings back to original scientific sources. → Toolkit fit: Finding scientific evidence; identifying experts; understanding uncertainty; building climate literacy (3.1–3.4).
The Debunking Handbook 2020	Lewandowsky, Cook, Ecker et al. (22 scholars)	Evidence-based methods to correct misinformation without reinforcing it. Portuguese translation available. → Toolkit fit: Pre-bunking myths before crises escalate; verification messaging (3.3).
Inoculation Science – prebunking resources	Univ. of Cambridge / Bristol (van der Linden, Roozenbeek, Cook, Lewandowsky)	Practical prebunking guides and the Conspiracy Theory Handbook, with tested techniques to build audience resistance to manipulation. → Toolkit fit: 'Pre-bunk common myths and misinformation patterns' (3.3).
Online Investigation Toolkit	Bellingcat (developed by Johanna Wild)	A curated, maintained directory of mostly free OSINT tools – satellite imagery, geolocation, archiving, social search – each with use cases and limitations. → Toolkit fit: OSINT verification tools; image and video checks under pressure (3.3).
Climate Accountability Project – reporter's guides	Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)	Where to find documents, data and human sources to hold governments and industry to account, with reconstruction and 'follow-the-money' angles. → Toolkit fit: Governance accountability checklist; reconstruction monitoring tracker (3.1–3.2).
DRR Terminology & the Sendai Framework	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)	Precise, shared definitions of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, resilience and early warning – and the global policy frame governments report against. → Toolkit fit: Local climate governance mapping; translating policy to plain language (3.1).

MOD4_ Impact, Learning and Continuous Improvement

Measuring contribution and closing the loop with communities.

RESOURCE	AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	WHAT IT OFFERS – AND THE TOOLKIT TOOL IT SUPPORTS
News Impact Summit: Elevating Climate Journalism ↗	European Journalism Centre	Recorded conference sessions exploring climate science, misinformation, satellite data, environmental journalism, visual storytelling and audience engagement. → Toolkit fit: Professional development; climate literacy; continuous learning; newsroom capacity building (4.4).
News Impact Summit: Fighting Climate Misinformation ↗	European Journalism Centre	Video playlist featuring journalists, scientists and communicators discussing climate misinformation, audience trust and effective climate communication strategies. → Toolkit fit: Newsroom learning; misinformation preparedness; strengthening public trust (3.3; 4.4).
Impact & engagement measurement resources ↗	Solutions Journalism Network	Frameworks for measuring contribution beyond clicks – behaviour change, engagement and institutional response. → Toolkit fit: Impact indicators framework (4.2).
Information Ecosystem Assessment (feedback loops) ↗	Internews	Reusable method for community feedback surveys and tracking how reporting reaches and is trusted by audiences. → Toolkit fit: Community feedback survey; preparedness self-assessment (4.2–4.3).

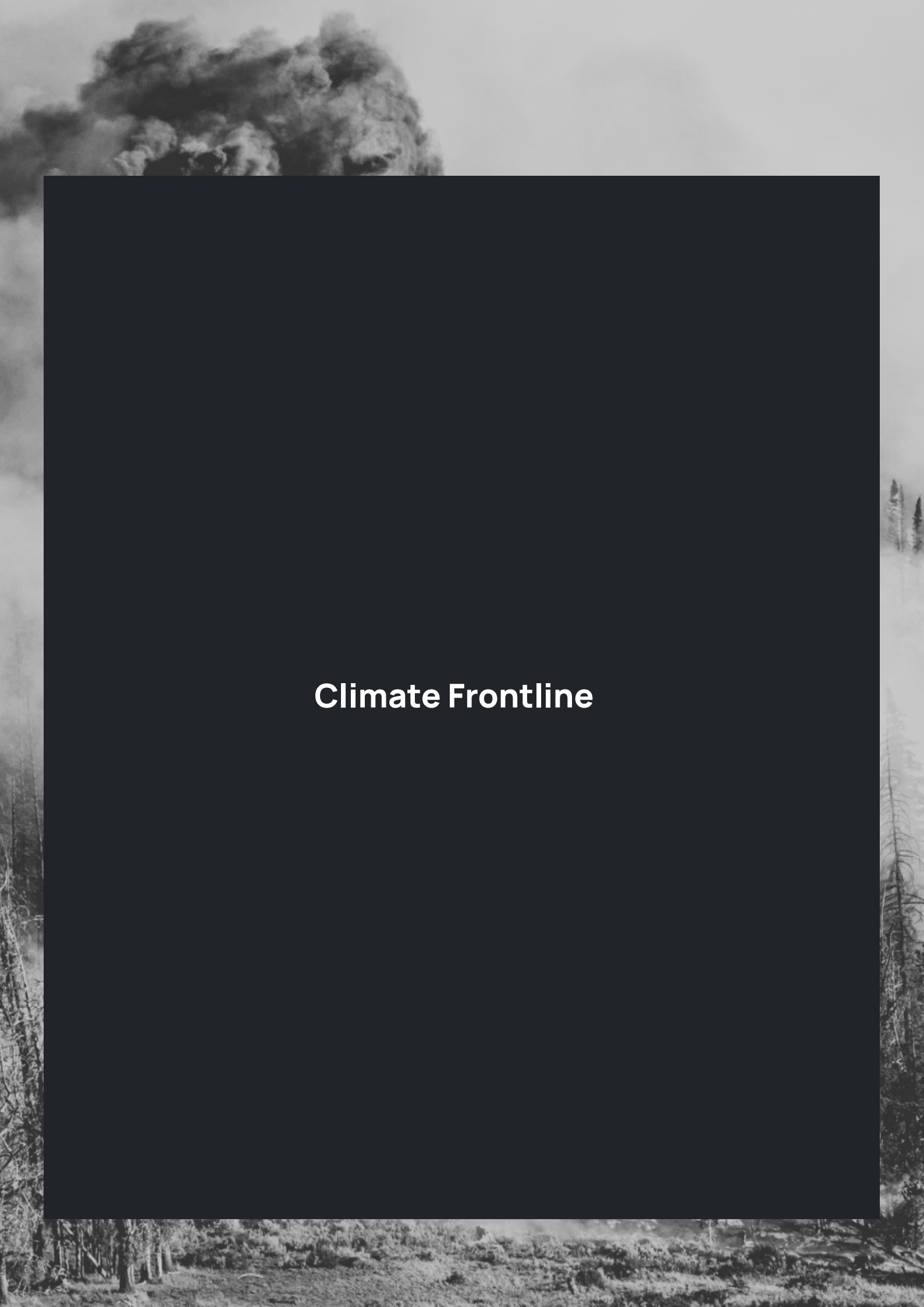
Local quick-access · Spain & Portugal

AEMET — Agencia Estatal de Meteorología (Spain). Official warnings, fire-risk and rainfall alerts.
aemet.es ↗

IPMA — Instituto Português do Mar e da Atmosfera (Portugal). Weather, fire-risk and sea warnings.
ipma.pt ↗

Copernicus EMS — EU wildfire / flood / drought monitoring and rapid mapping for the whole peninsula.
emergency.copernicus.eu ↗

NOTE: organisations and links were verified at the time of writing. The Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma was sunset in 2025; iwts work and archive now sit with the Global Center for Journalism & Trauma.



Climate Frontline