



Field Guide 2

WHO'S IN THE ROOM

A community reporting guide for inclusive
and trusted journalism

For editors, reporters and newsroom leaders

Introduction

The core shift this toolkit asks of you:

From covering disasters as breaking news → To covering climate resilience, preparedness and recovery as long-term public interest journalism.

What this is for

Good climate emergency reporting depends on relationships that exist before the emergency happens. This tool helps you audit who is, and who is missing, from your reporting, and build the community connections that make more inclusive, trustworthy and useful journalism possible.

It is designed for use before a climate hazard season as a preparedness exercise, or after coverage that felt incomplete. It works best as a team conversation, though it can also be used for individual reflection.

How to use it

Work through the four parts in order. Part 1 is a quick sourcing audit - honest answers only. Parts 2 and 3 help you identify gaps and build the relationships and listening practices that will strengthen your next coverage. Part 4 is a dignity check to run before publication during any climate event.

Return to this tool after your next climate emergency as part of your After the Storm review (see Module 4).

The work of building trust starts before the story. Your community is already waiting.

PART 1 – WHO IS IN YOUR REPORTING? A QUICK SOURCING AUDIT

After any climate story, ask:

	YES	PARTLY	NO
Did we include voices beyond officials and emergency services?	☐	☐	☐
Were affected communities represented as agents, not only victims?	☐	☐	☐
Did we include the perspectives and/or stories of women, elderly, migrants, people with disabilities?	☐	☐	☐
Did we work with any local community organisations as partners?	☐	☐	☐
Did we follow up with communities after media attention faded?	☐	☐	☐

If you answered No to three or more: your sourcing needs structural attention, not just better intentions.

PART 2 – THE RELATIONSHIPS YOU NEED BEFORE THE EMERGENCY

These are not sources. They are partners. Build these connections now.

In your territory, can you name:

- A scientist or researcher who knows local climate risks?
- A community organisation working with vulnerable populations?
- A trusted local voice: radio presenter, community leader, neighbourhood network?
- A civil society organisation monitoring recovery and reconstruction?
- A local creator or platform your communities actually use during crises?

If you answered No to three or more: your sourcing needs structural attention, not just better intentions.

PART 3 – LISTENING BEFORE REPORTING

The most useful question you can ask a community before an emergency:

- “What is the most important thing we are not reporting?”
- And after: “What did we get wrong about your community?”

Build at least one structured listening moment into your editorial calendar per hazard season - not as a story, but as preparation.

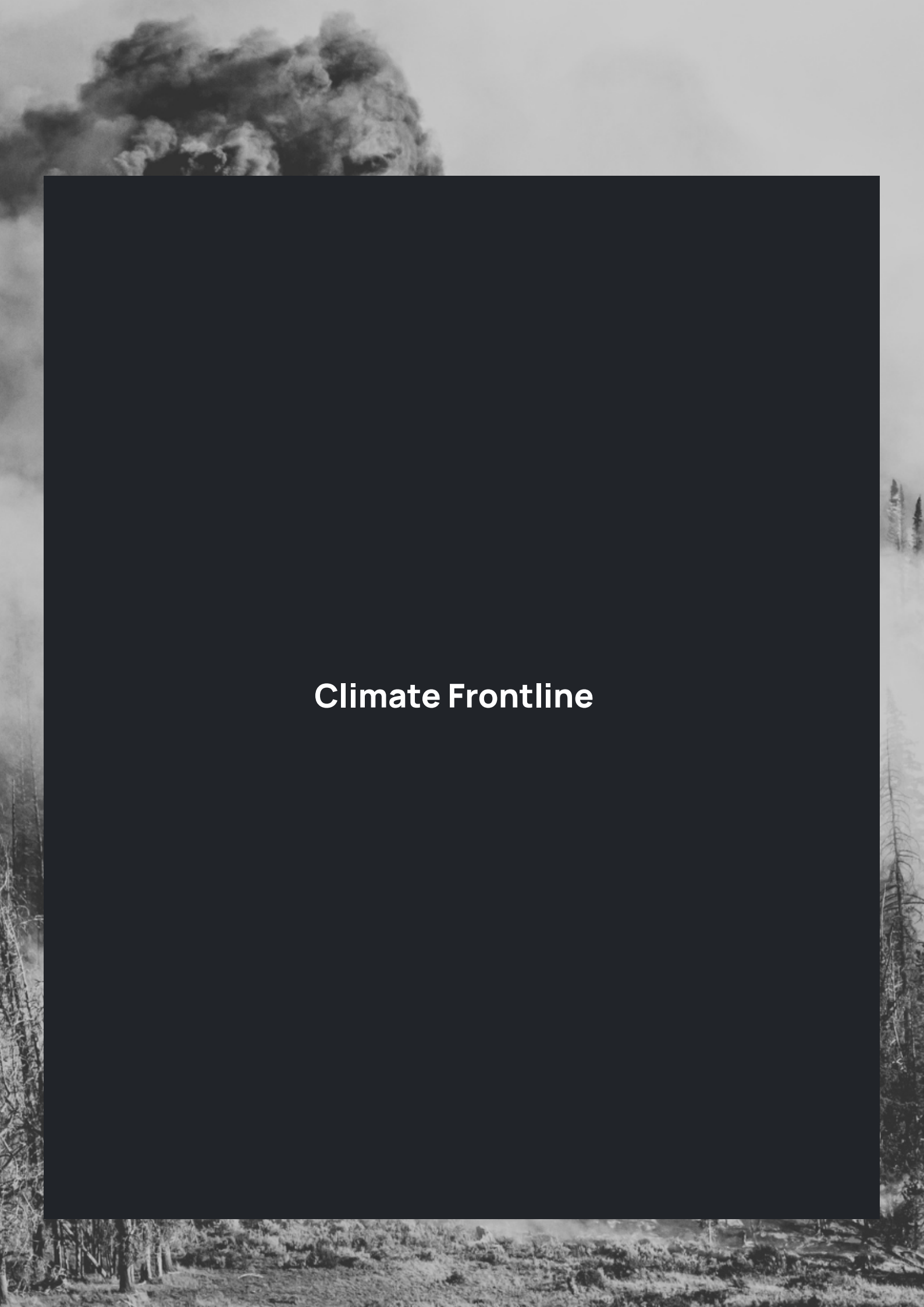
PART 4 – DIGNITY CHECK

Before publishing, ask:

- Are people in this story represented with agency and context?
- Have we included stories of resilience and solidarity, not only loss?
- Could this coverage expose anyone to further harm or unwanted attention?
- Did we obtain informed consent for images and identifying details?
- Would the people in this story recognise themselves fairly in our coverage?

The goal is not to be a community organisation. It is to be a newsroom that communities trust when it matters most.

Feed what you learn here into your After the Storm review in Module 4.



Climate Frontline