

**Call for Investigative Story Pitches**

**Call Number:** 011/2023 (FNF)

The Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) is inviting journalists and documentary filmmakers to pitch story ideas on climate change with data to back them up, using images and/or videos. All articles should influence people towards climate action. The call for investigative story pitches is part of VMCZ’s objective of strengthening watchdog journalism and media reporting for accountability on climate change and environmental issues. An investigation that will break new ground and result in a series of stories will be highly considered for funding.

The pitch should be based on any of the following **Angles.**

**(a) The Culprit Story:** (1)Tell the carbon footprint story of Zimbabwe through each stage of its production (tracing each ingredient) and distribution; (2) analyze the emissions patterns of a specific geographical area of a specific sector eg (Energy; Waste; Industry; Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use); (3) focus on one climate change project in Zimbabwe, examine the practices of the locals and their environmental impacts;

**(b) The policy route:** focus on Zimbabwe’s climate change related policy/ies and what it means for Zimbabweans (how the government is trying to prevent climate change, or actually making it worse). Whatever angle you choose, make sure that there’s a  human-interest element to your story. This should not be an analytical article that bombards and bores readers with facts and expert opinions.

**(c )Human Interest Story:** (Stories with an emotional appeal and human interest)- Effects of an extreme weather event. The weather event doesn’t have to be recent; you can choose a past event that may not have been reported on extensively. Instead of zooming into a particular event, zoom into a particular type of damage and trace it back to extreme weather event(s) and climate change. (eg Has the experience of students at a particular school changed because many shops closed down after a flood? Have families in an area been struggling to deal with damp walls and mold in their house after a flood? Trace the pattern of migration in a particular area (geographical/ sectorial/), its correlation to climate disasters or long-term climate impacts etc ).

**(d) Solution Journalism:** Investigate community, organisational and/or government arms working on climate issues, their goals, and where they get their financial support. Investigate the solutions put forth to prevent and adapt to climate change. Solutions to the climate crisis must be measured, among other variables, by how far and how fast they take the country toward net-zero emissions.

**Expectations-** Selected journalists are expected to publish:

1. 1 (one)- in-depth investigative story with thorough investigations on climate change
2. A minimum of 2 (two)- follow-up story to the in-depth investigative story.

**Selection Criteria**: Grants will be offered to journalists with the strongest applications. Applications will be judged on the quality of the story pitch, the applicant’s journalism skills as indicated by their work samples, and evidence of support from the applicant’s editor.

Pitches and investigative story ideas that will be supported should positively answer the following:

* Why should readers care about this story?
* Why should we publish this now?
* How does the story build on what is already been covered?
* Is the story likely to get traction or impact?

**Number of Required In-depth Investigative Stories**: TWO ie ONE with a provided mentor and TWO or more on your own.

Each successful pitch will be supported with a ceiling payment in the amount of **US $600**. The support shall cover direct costs that shall be incurred by the newsroom/ journalist/s in the production of the investigative story. The costs are limited to courier services, transportation, communication, lodging among other surface costs.

**Deadline:** Due date for submission of this application is COB Monday 24, July 2023 at 1230hrs. All applications should be submitted to: mediacomplaints@gmail.com and copied to director@vmcz.co.zw

**Attachments:** Please submit the completed application form with a signed acknowledgment note from an editor as a guarantee that your story will be published after a successful application process and production.

**APPLICATION FORM**

{NB: DO NOT EDIT OR REMOVE ANY SECTIONS FROM THIS TEMPLATE- you can copy and paste this template to a fresh page to create more space for responses}

**NB. Incomplete applications or applications with missing required supporting documents will not be considered.**

**COMPLETE All SECTIONS**

**Story Focus Area** *(Tick appropriately)*

**(a) The Culprit Story:**

**(b) The policy route:**

**(c )Human Interest Story:**

**(d) Solution Journalism:**

**FULL NAME : SEX :**

**Call Number:** 011/2023 (FNF)

**AGE:** *(Tick appropriately; X Below 35years*  *; Y Above 35years*

**MEDIA HOUSE** *(where the story/stories will be published*

**DUTY STATION:** (Indicate City/Town)

**CONTACT DETAILS:** *(email &phone number)*

**PROJECT OVERVIEW *(****max 150 words****)***

*Briefly summarize your topic & tell us what makes your approach different or unique. What is the expected traction/impact?*

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**STORY PITCH *(****max 400 words****) (Pitch stories not topics)***

*Story pitches must demonstrate research and answer the following KEY QUESTIONS: WHY is this story important? WHO are my sources? WHAT new ground are you breaking?, what is the magnitude (data/statistics)?*

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**WHEN** *do you expect to start and complete the investigation stories? (Submit investigation timeline using the format below)*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Date** | **Description** | **Means of verification** | **Sources/ Key Persons** |
| *1* | *eg 25 July 2023* | *One on One with mentor* | *Physical meeting*  | *Mentor* |
| *2* | *Eg 26-30 July 2023*  | *Eg gathering of facts, evidence* | *Eg cabinet minutes, treasury report, ministry or women affairs procurement documents* | *Eg Cabinet secretary, treasurer, ministry procurement secretary* |
| *3* | *Eg 1 August 2023* | *Investigations (what exactly)* |  |  |
| *4* | *Eg 3 August 2023* | *Submission of 1st Draft to the mentor* | *Story Ist Draft* | *Mentor & VMCZ* |
| *5* | *4-5 August*  | *Incorporation of input from mentor*  |  |  |
| *6* | *Eg 6 August 2023* | *Submission of 2nd Draft to the mentor* | *Story 2nd Draft* |  |
| *7* | *Eg 11 August 2023* | *Submission of Final Draft to the mentor* | *Story Final Draft* |  |
| *8* | *13 July 2023* | *Publishing of approved article* | *Story Link* | *Name of Publication* |

**Methodology: (**Please indicate the specific procedures or techniques to be used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about the selected topic)

**Number of follow up stories:** An indication of proposed *total number of follow up stories* to the in-depth story to be written within 30 days after publishing the in-depth story.

**Please list three Links of your work to demonstrate your skills.**

1

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Any questions regarding the call are answered between 1300rs to 1600hrs on Tuesday and Wednesday (18 and 19 July 2023) ONLY.