

**Call for Investigative Story Pitches**

**Call Number:** 012/2024 (FNF)

The Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) is inviting journalists (from print and broadcast media) and documentary filmmakers to pitch story ideas on climate change. All articles should influence the government, stakeholders and the general citizenry 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.

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| **Characteristics of a Good Climate Change Story** | **Examples of Current Issues** | **Disallowables** | **Story Angles (examples)**  |
| * Breaks new ground
* Data driven
* Uncovering impact
* Exposing hidden information
* Timely-prompt
* Accurate
* Factual
* Informative-meaningful/useful
* Educative- bring behavioural change
* practical/feasible-localised
* inclusive
* hold accountable those responsible
* Inspiring Action
* Impactful storytelling
* Thorough research
 | * Extreme weather events (2023 hottest year in history, erratic rainfall patterns etc)
* Food insecurity
* Health risks
* Economic vulnerability
* Resource management challenges
* Adaptation and resilience
* ozone depletion
* water scarcity
* climate migration
* international cooperation
* loss of biodiversity
 | * Lack of facts and figures
* emotional reporting
* shallow discourse
* false news/ fabrication
* lack of a nexus approach
* sensationalisation
* plagiarism
* misrepresentation
* ethical violations
* selective reporting
* unsubstantiated allegations
* violation of legal standards
* lack of transparency
 | (a) Impact on agriculture and food security(b) Climate migration(c) Adaptation and resilience building (d) Climate finance(e) Solution Journalism |

**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.
3. Demonstration of the impact that resulted from the published articles/broadcasts (ie readership/listenership/viewership stats; and response from government, communities, corporations or other entities

**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**: THREE ie ONE with a provided mentor and TWO or more on your own.

Each successful pitch will be supported with small stipend to 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 Wednesday 9 May 2024 at 1600hrs. All applications should be submitted to: mediacomplaints@gmail.com and copied to programmes@vmcz.co.zw and 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) Impact on agriculture and food security:**

**(b) Climate migration:**

**(c )Adaption and resilience building:**

**(d) Climate finance:**

**(e) Solution Journalism:**

**(f) Other-Specify:**

**FULL NAME : SEX :**

**Call Number:** 012/2024 (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)*

**TOTAL BUDGET REQUIRED TO CODUCT THE INVESTIGATION (**Amount in USD):

**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 1 May 2024* | *eg One on One with mentor* | *eg Physical meeting*  | *eg Mentor* |
| *2* | *Eg 6-10 May 2024*  | *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 14 May 2024* | *Investigations (what exactly)* |  |  |
| *4* | *Eg 17 May 2024* | *Submission of 1st Draft to the mentor* | *Story Ist Draft* | *Mentor & VMCZ* |
| *5* | *Eg 20 – 23 May 2024* | *Incorporation of input from mentor*  |  |  |
| *6* | *Eg 28 May 2024* | *Submission of 2nd Draft to the mentor* | *Story 2nd Draft* |  |
| *7* | *Eg 4 June 2024* | *Submission of Final Draft to the mentor* | *Story Final Draft* |  |
| *8* | *6 June 2024* | *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) Max 100 words

**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 first in-depth story.

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

1

2

3

Any questions regarding the call are answered between 1000rs to 1600hrs on Monday and Tuesday, 6 and 7 May 2024, ONLY.