

Journalist Training on Climate Change and Green Economy Reporting in Zambia

Workshop Handbook



5 – 7 MAY 2026

THE URBAN HOTEL (LUSAKA, ZAMBIA)

ABOUT THE TRAINER

Nicholas Phythian works with professional journalists around the world to develop their reporting and analytical skills, and deepen their knowledge of specialist subjects. He has developed training programmes or delivered workshops on subjects ranging from rural development and climate change to investigative reporting with a focus on extractive industries or illicit finance. He is a firm believer that independent, evidence-based reporting can stimulate and feed informed public debate and offer ordinary people an opportunity to influence decisions made in their name. He worked for Reuters for more than 20 years as a reporter, sub-editor, bureau chief or editor with news editing and management responsibilities. Before that, he worked for Agence France Presse. He runs workshops in both English and French.

INTRODUCTION

This professional development workshop offers you a framework for understanding the science of global warming, the international response to the changing climate and the economics underpinning the emerging Green Economy.

It will make you neither a climate scientist nor an economist. It will, however, share insights and knowledge to help you analyse alternative perspectives or conflicting narratives you might encounter as you investigate the biggest story of our age.

Look on it as the start of a voyage of discovery that you can continue using a range specialist [UN CC:e-Learn](#) courses to deepen your knowledge and broaden your career options in a world searching for a path to a sustainable future.

METHODOLOGY

The workshop builds on what you already know and offers opportunities for you to use your professional curiosity and skills to relate this to the economic and social life of Zambians of all ages and profiles.

Morning Q&A slide presentations, activities and discussion focus on climate and economic knowledge. Afternoon “Over to You” sessions with a panel of guest speakers offer an opportunity to network and connect what you have learnt to stories that resonate with a variety of audiences across Zambia.

A running team quiz at the end of each day adds a little competitive fun and reinforces knowledge gained during the various sessions. An individual quiz on the final day is your key to a UNITAR certificate that will bolster your job credentials.

We have not devoted any sessions to the basic craft of journalism as you, the participants, are professional working journalists.

As the pace of day-to-day reporting and meeting deadlines leaves little time for reflection, however, we have included “Food4Thought” offerings in this handbook to encourage you to step back and think about what you do, why and how.

These reflections form part of recommended overnight reading for Days 2 & 3.

One key message for this workshop, as it should be for any journalism workshop, is Never take anything anyone tells you at face-value.

It is the same with the “Food4Thought” offerings. Feel free to agree or disagree with what they say and, if you think it would be useful, we can find ways of using your feedback to enrich our discussions as we go through the course.

Artificial Intelligence is another topic we will touch on during our discussions. It is a tool, and possibly a useful tool, but, as with a chainsaw, an axe or a sharp knife, there are things we can usefully consider before we use it.

Workshop Agenda - Day One

May 5	The Changing Climate
08:30	Registration
09:00 – 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Opening & Welcoming Remarks • Facilitator Introductions & Workshop Objectives • Housekeeping & Ground Rules • Participants’ Self-Assessment Knowledge Evaluation • Participants introductions and workshop expectations • Module 1 Part 1: Q&A PPT - “Climate or Weather?”
11:00 – 11:15	Break
11:15 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 1 Part 2: Q&A PPT “Global Warming” • Module 1 Part 3: Exercise 1: A climate story • Module 1 Part 4: Q&A PPT “The International Response” • Module 2 “Over to You”: Introduction
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists engage with a panel of guest speakers. Topic: “Impact of Global Warming & the changing climate in Zambia”
15:00 – 15:15	Break
15:15 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 2: Where’s the story? Who cares? • Module 2 Review • BIG Quiz Teams Round 1 • Day One Review
<p>Evening reading: Chapter 2 “Green Growth Situation Analysis” of Zambia’s National Green Growth Strategy 2024-2030 + Journalism “Food4Thought” in the Participant’s Handbook</p>	

Workshop Agenda - Day Two

May 6	
09:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day One Review Day Two Objectives • Module 3 Introduction • Module 3 Part 1: Q&A PPT - “What’s an Economy?” • Exercise 3
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 3 Part 2: Q&A PPT “Unintended Consequences” • Exercise 4 • Module 3 Part 3: Q&A PPT: “A Green Economy” • Exercise 5 • Module 4 “Over to You”: Introduction
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists engage with a panel of guest speakers. Topic: “Opportunities & Challenges posed by the emerging Green Economy for different businesses & communities in Zambia”
15:00 – 15:15	Break
15:15 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 6: Where’s the story? Who cares? • Module 4 Review • BIG Quiz Teams Round 2 • Day Two Review
<p>Overnight Reading: Chapters 5 to 9 of Zambia’s National Green Growth Strategy 2024-2030 + A (re)Introduction to Economic Jargon</p>	

Workshop Agenda - Day Three

May 7	Innovation & Opportunity in a Green Economy
09:00 – 10:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Two Review Day Three Objectives • Module 5 Introduction • Module 5 Part 1: Q&A PPT - “Managing an Economy” • Exercise 8
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 5 Part 2: Q&A PPT “Funding the Green Economy” • Exercise 9 • Module 6: Multimedia storytelling • Module 7 “Over to You”: Introduction
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists engage with a panel of guest speakers. Topic: “Innovation & doing business differently in Zambia’s Green Economy”
15:00 – 15:15	Break
15:15 – 17:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 10: Where’s the story? Who cares? • Module 7 Review • BIG Quiz - Individual Round • WORKSHOP Review • Closing Ceremony

Pre-Workshop Reading

Food4Thought - AI

Artificial Intelligence or AI is making its presence felt in what we watch and read and in every online search we make. Increasingly, it is offering to help us write or organise our thoughts.

Is it, as its promoters suggest, a revolutionary technology that will make all our life easier, or just a tool that is good at some things and not so good at others?

As journalists, we talk to all kinds of sources. People tell us things. Some just want to help us do our job ... or think they do. Others have different motives.

Can we trust what anyone says if we simply take it at face value? What does your experience tell you?

For the journalist, the question “Why is this person telling me this?” is perhaps just as important as what anyone tells you.

The answer should not necessarily rule them out as a quotable source but it may change the weight that you give to what they say or the way you interpret it.

Artificial Intelligence has been taught to “think” by reading through what is available on the internet. It sifts through data quickly and makes interesting connections which can be useful for research for reading medical scans for signs of disease.

It can sift through information fed to it or published on the internet at speed and concoct a plausible story but, like sources you meet as a journalist, should you trust what it tells you and take it at face value?

It has been caught hallucinating by making false connections or dishing up false facts. Changes in the performance of Google and other search engines suggest it can take short cuts. Some offer less authoritative sources than they once did.

You, as a journalist, however, have one huge advantage over AI. You can leave the office, travel to where something has happened, look around and talk to people. AI is incapable of matching your ability to see, listen and judge what you find out when you get there.

Moral of the story? Treat AI as a source for research but, like any source, do not take what it tells you at face value? Stick to what YOU are good at, listen to what your senses and human sources tell you, trust in your judgement.

AI might point you in one direction, or another, but your readers, listeners or viewers trust you to find your own way to the “truth” of what might be happening and tell them, in your own words, what you found out when you arrived.

Day One Overnight Reading

Zambia's National Green Growth Strategy 2024-30

Chapter Two: "Green Growth Situation Analysis" (*Click the above link*) Check out what did not work with Zambia's Vision 2030 initiative launched in 2006, and why.

Food4Thought – The Role of a Journalist

Ask a **journalist** what their **role** is and one reply might be to Inform, Educate and Entertain. The BBC's first director general, Lord Reith, came up with this mantra to describe the role of public service broadcasting.

It is a useful touchstone to describe how journalists see their job. There is, however, another role which has become more challenging with the decline of the business model that once sustained local newspapers - holding vested interest to account.

The big question, in the age of social media with algorithms that prioritise the sensational or the contentious to drive attention, and revenue, is how.

Investigative journalism is a tag that comes with a certain kudos and yet some of the techniques used by investigative journalists can be usefully employed by any journalist who wants to report accurately and independently on any topic.

Every investigation starts with a hypothesis. Something has happened. What, to whom, by whom, where, when, why? These are all questions that the journalist needs to answer. The big question is How?

Dip into the Investigative Journalist's tool kit and you will find the beginnings of an answer to that question and to what the role of the journalist might be.

The Investigative journalist tests the truth, or rather validity, of their hypothesis with evidence. This requires critical analysis of what they see and hear, and the context.

Objective truth exists. A car might crash but establishing how or why is more difficult. Different versions of the truth emerge. The context may be significant.

Witnesses and other sources share their versions of events, but can the reporter take what they say at face value?

Sources might be talking to them in good faith but are they in a position to know what happened? Are they telling the reporter what they think they want to hear or do they have some other motive for saying what they say?

The reporter has the evidence of their own eyes and ears, but that can only take them so far.

They may need to steer a path through a range of alternative perspectives or perceptions, assertions and authoritative insights or objective and generally accepted facts using critical analysis and the balance of probability to guide them.

Trust, credibility, independence and freedom from bias are ideas that go to the heart of the journalist's craft, but demonstrating these values in a story can be a challenge.

Can balance be giving equal weight and voice to all sides, when the evidence and analysis of the context may tell a different story and render this approach misleading?

At the end of the day, the "truth" may not be black and white but rather a version of events that invites the reader, listener or viewer to trust the reporter and their analysis, and, like them, understand and interpret what happened on the balance of probability.

Day Two Overnight Reading

Zambia's National Green Growth Strategy 2024-30

Chapters Five to Nine: Pillars One to Four + Enabling Conditions for Green Growth (*Click the above link*) Check out the pillars for economic growth and Zambia's Macroeconomic economic targets.

A (re)Introduction to Economic Jargon

This is an exercise in skim reading. Click on the links to test your understanding of the different concepts and why they are significant. In many cases, this will be one authoritative paragraph. DO NOT read everything from start to finish!

BIG PICTURE or DIVE INTO THE DETAIL

- [Macroeconomics](#) (Big picture, the economy as a whole)
- [Microeconomics](#) (Detail, individuals, individual markets, individual economic sectors & their behaviour)
- The [Economic Cycle](#) - Four Stages: Expansion, Peak, Contraction, Trough.
- Macroeconomic Stability – The balance between an over-heated or a collapsing economy (Boom & Bust)

UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMY

- [Macroeconomic indicators](#) highlight/confirm risk of instability.
- [CPI GDP Unemployment rate](#) track price rises, growth & employment.
- Check out [Zambia Statistics Agency's](#) indicators for growth, Inflation & employment.

MANAGING THE ECONOMY

- [Fiscal Policy versus Monetary Policy](#)
- [Domestic Revenue Mobilization](#) as a percentage of GDP
- [Budget deficit](#) also known as national or fiscal deficit- government spends more than it earns over a given period, generally a year.

- [National Debt](#) - accumulated deficits.
- [Recession, Depression, Stagnation](#)
- [Inflation, Hyperinflation, Deflation, Stagflation](#)