BBC MEDIA ACTION

CAPABILITY STATEMENT



# SUPPORTING CLIMATE ACTION FOR A SAFER, MORE HABITABLE PLANET

**BBC Media Action is the BBC's international charity.**

Amid a global information revolution, with more armed conflict since World War II and press freedom at record lows, we support local media to deliver trustworthy, often life-saving, information to those living on the frontlines of global crisis, in support of democracy, freedom and human rights.

Our network of nearly 600 media partners reaches a quarter of a billion people a year across nearly 50 countries and 18 time zones - Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and South America. These range from last-mile radio stations in Afghanistan to Ukraine's national broadcaster.

As part of the BBC family, we draw on world-leading expertise - editorial standards, training, formats, equipment – to support local independent media. And like the BBC, we combine trustworthy information with powerful local storytelling that can change lives.

With our partners, we co-create content – ranging from dramas to factual programmes – in more than 50 languages that helps deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prioritising stronger democracies; a safer, more habitable planet; and more inclusive societies.

**Communication is a critical enabler of climate action –** building awareness, knowledge, skills and networks at the critical mass needed to drive change at the speed and scale the climate crisis demands. Yet it is often overlooked and underestimated as a tool for change. Effective climate adaptation and mitigation require informed decision-making by both citizens and policymakers. Yet, climate information is often communicated in ways that are difficult to understand and act upon, and poor or absent communication about climate-related risks can fuel rumours, erode trust, hamper solutions and even increase risk. As information ecosystems are increasingly strained and contested, proliferating climate mis- and disinformation can undermine public and political will to act. Effective communication is therefore essential to translating climate science and policy commitments, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), into meaningful action at community, national, regional and global levels.

BBC Media Action collaborates with a wide range of partners, from journalists to storytellers, climate scientists, meteorologists and community leaders, to strengthen weather and climate information ecosystems for millions of people around the world. We leverage the power of media and communication to:

- Provide access to trusted, timely, understandable and actionable information on immediate and long-term climate-related risks and impacts
- Amplify stories from people at the frontlines of climate change and provide platforms for communities to discuss solutions and imagine new realities
- Strengthen people's knowledge, confidence and skills for preparedness, adaptation and mitigation actions
- Challenge discriminatory attitudes and social norms which prevent inclusive climate solutions, with strong focus on ensuring voice for women, youth and indigenous groups
- Enable inclusive participation in climate governance, improve responsiveness to community needs and promote transparency and accountability
- Combat climate-related mis- and disinformation, build trust in key experts and deepen climate literacy

**And ultimately, drive positive climate adaptation and mitigations actions, both individually and collectively**

Over more than 25 years, BBC Media Action has built research, capacity strengthening, multimedia production and community engagement into communication systems that enhance climate resilience and inspire climate action, drawing on our expertise in both journalism and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC). In addition to ensuring that people have access to accurate, understandable and timely information, BBC Media Action also seeks to impact on other factors that influence individual and collective behaviour beyond knowledge. This includes

confidence, motivation, risk perception, skills, cultural beliefs and social norms, recognising that these factors may be different for linguistic minorities, for women and men, and for early warnings compared to longer-term adaptation and mitigation actions. We use communication approaches that extend beyond traditional weather bulletins or journalistic reporting, including discussion formats to build confidence, dramas to role model behaviours and question social norms, and mobile apps that support informed and localised decision-making. We work with our partners to design engaging, context-specific climate content across every platform and genre, drawing on the production expertise of the wider BBC's climate content-makers. We harness the BBC's platforms to extend the reach of our work and leverage one of the world's most trusted media brands as well as respected community voices to combat climate-related mis- and disinformation.

# STORIES OF IMPACT

Together, these approaches help communities and institutions anticipate and respond to climate-related shocks, adapt to a changing climate, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect and restore natural ecosystems, strengthen climate governance, and support a just transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient development.

## Building weather and climate information services (WCIS) that enable people to protect lives and livelihoods

We work to ensure weather and climate information is accessible, understandable, timely, credible, actionable and genuinely responsive to different audiences' needs. Our work spans the whole WCIS value chain, connecting meteorological and hydrological services, disaster management agencies, media organisations, civil society, community networks and end users. BBC Media Action is delivering a large-scale, multi-country project – BRIDGES – to ensure communities in Bangladesh, Kenya and Nepal have access to weather and climate information that is more localised, practical and relevant to their lives. So far, **together with our local media partners, we have reached an estimated 8 million people with radio and digital content** which is helping people to move from awareness to action, including protecting crops, reducing losses and preparing for extreme weather. Alongside work with media to develop their capacity to understand and report climate risk and vulnerability, we also **strengthen the capacity of technical experts at meteorological and disaster management agencies across Africa, Asia and the Middle East** to de-jargon complex scientific terms, simplify language and package vital weather and climate information into engaging and accessible formats. For instance, in Bangladesh, we are providing training and mentoring for the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) to develop a comprehensive social media strategy and to pilot innovative communication solutions, such as an AI-integrated chatbot system and a user-generated real-time update platform. Simplifying language, improving visuals and adopting a more user-centred approach has led to much stronger digital engagement – 5.7 million viewers over a recent six-month period. BBC Media Action has supported the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) in Nepal to use social media

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people with radio and digital WCIS content

for the first time, with their digital bulletins attracting more than 1.6 million views on Facebook and over two million views on TikTok. Our technical assistance has led to the Public Service Broadcaster in Nepal introducing nationwide weather content coverage in seven local languages for the first time.



***"The death rates of my fisher folk community have gone down."***

*– Nelson Ageke, Fisherman in Kisumu, Lake Victoria, explaining how more understandable early weather information on the radio has reduced drowning deaths*

We strengthen collaborations between meteorologists, local media and community-based organisations, to enable greater localisation of impact-based weather information and improve interaction between information producers and users. In Tunisia and Algeria, BBC Media Action has facilitated collaborations between government departments including forestry, civil protection and state broadcasters, as well as with local community and independent media producers to develop more effective ways of improving preparedness for natural disasters such as wildfires. The resulting communication content has reached over a million people. We also bring in new partners who are key to **engaging "last mile" communities**. This includes, for instance, faith-based networks in Bangladesh through an MoU with the Ministry of Religion, humanitarian responders including the Kenya Red Cross and the Cyclone Preparedness Programme in Bangladesh, and an extensive network of Community Forestry Users Groups across Nepal.

## Advancing locally led adaptation: From Principles to Practice

Our mass media, community engagement and SBCC approaches advance the eight principles of locally led adaptation, helping people to access the information, services and support they need to build climate resilient livelihoods and food security and providing spaces for people to voice their needs, share challenges, crowdsource solutions and learn from experts and peers. This inspires practical, locally led adaptation at scale. For instance, audiences of our partner radio stations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda reported applying the information shared in media programmes to make decisions that improved their livelihoods. They listed a variety of new practices they had learned, including setting up kitchen gardens, planting drought-resistant crops, practicing animal husbandry, harvesting rainwater and selling livestock in preparation for drought. An experimental study explored the impact of our local radio partner's weekly programming in Tana River County, Kenya.

By assessing households' crop yields and calculating their income using market prices, we found that the average crop income among regular listeners was KES 51,425,

**nearly double the average**

of KES 28,771 amongst those unable to listen.

## Protecting ecosystems and promoting nature-based solutions

Our work encourages informed dialogue on nature-based solutions, regenerative agriculture, landscape restoration and environmental stewardship, to build public understanding of how ecosystems, livelihoods and climate change connect. In Indonesia, BBC Media Action's research found that urban youth felt detached from the impacts of deforestation and did not feel any urgency for action. Working in partnership with Indonesian journalists and broadcasters, we produced content for TV and online that reached 24.5 million people, aimed specifically at engaging urban youth on climate issues. A quantitative survey found that **our audiences were more likely than those not exposed to understand the anthropogenic drivers of climate change and recognise the importance of reducing deforestation as a means of mitigating its impacts**. In the border areas between Kenya and Tanzania, BBC Media Action worked with local radio partners to increase audiences' understanding of practical ways to reverse food-system led environmental degradation. **Those exposed to our partners' programmes were more likely to report taking environmental conservation actions than those not exposed**. Reported actions included planting trees or agroforestry, reducing tree cutting, clearing invasive plants, stopping charcoal burning and more controlled grazing.

> ***"I used to believe that soil being washed away was something we just had to live with. But now after listening to the programme, I know that how we manage our livestock and land matters, and that taking care of our grazing areas can help protect it..."***
>
> *– Female audience member*

## Supporting circular economies, low carbon development and sustainable consumption practices

Through credible storytelling, SBCC approaches and public dialogue, we showcase individual and collective action to contribute towards low-carbon development that is both equitable and sustainable. In Indonesia, our digital brand, *Aksi Kita Indonesia*, is the leading social media account for environmental issues, particularly on Instagram, with content building an audience of 14 million. It has a proven track record in driving impactful and sustained discussion on climate issues among young people and a strong engagement rate – on average, 9.6% of *Aksi Kita Indonesia* followers actively interact with each post (liking, commenting, sharing or saving) rather than just scrolling past, significantly higher than the industry benchmark for good engagement. **After watching *Aksi Kita Indonesia* content, 65% of the audience said that they took some individual action** – 51% said they avoided using single plastics, 45% sorted household waste and 23% said they reduced their use of fast fashion products. **50% reported taking collective action**, including engaging in household or community level cooperation activities such as beach clean-ups or mangrove planting (44%) and participating in environmental groups (29%). We have delivered award-winning campaigns in Bengaluru, India, to support circular economy practices, reduce the volume of waste sent to landfill and thereby contribute to broader climate mitigation goals. For instance, our **#WashTheDabba** online and offline campaign to increase the amount of food containers which can be recovered and recycled, **reached an estimated 3.2 million people. 60% of people exposed to the campaign reported adopting the promoted behaviour**.

## Understanding and tackling climate mis- and disinformation

We live in an era of **spiralling mis- and disinformation**, which can spread rapidly at scale through both traditional and social media and lead to uncertainty and feelings of hopelessness. This in turn can reduce people's motivation to act and hinder wider climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. In Bangladesh, Nepal and Kenya, our large-scale research (5,000+ participants) found myths and misconceptions are strongly held – such as extreme weather events being divine punishment, inevitable or exaggerated by the media. In Nepal and Bangladesh, respondents mentioned that false and misleading information is often spread during extreme weather events on online platforms and that they had seen false tsunami alerts and misleading disaster images. BBC Media Action is using these findings to enhance public understanding of the causes of climate change and practical adaptation strategies, debunk common myths, and support social media users to verify data and identify reliable information sources. In response to the increasing volume of climate mis- and disinformation, *Aksi Kita Indonesia* launched a new content segment under the hashtag #benerAKSIh (Indonesian wordplay meaning "Is it true?"). The segment systematically debunks climate mis- and disinformation, including common myths and false beliefs, before presenting verified facts, clear, science-based explanations and strong visual evidence.

## Preventing and resolving conflicts fuelled by climate change

The effects of climate change and environmental degradation can cause new or exacerbate existing tensions and conflict; for example, by putting additional pressures on livelihoods, food and water availability and access to services, or contributing to displacement. Media has a powerful role to play in helping to address climate-related drivers of tension, by **highlighting practical approaches individuals and groups can take to manage scarce resources and supporting peaceful dialogue between communities**. BBC Media Action partnered with six radio stations across Somaliland and Somalia to produce a range of drama and discussion programming to support climate- and gender-sensitive adaptation. Reaching an estimated 755,000 adult Somalis, **regular listeners were more likely than non-listeners to say that women should be involved in resolving disputes over resources** such as water, food and grazing areas and to attribute women a leadership role or equal responsibility alongside men. Female regular listeners were also more confident to contribute to conflict resolution. BBC Media Action recently conducted primary research in the Mandera Triangle, where Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia meet,



to assess how different community groups access, trust and use climate and weather information and how climate-related resource scarcity is increasing competition between communities. This research highlighted how climate shocks are becoming more frequent and severe, increasing pressure on livelihoods, wellbeing and community resilience, and how rumours, misinformation and unverified information are escalating tensions and creating mistrust, particularly during periods of drought. We will be feeding these insights into our work with local media in the region, to build their capacity to produce programming which strengthens climate adaptation, defuses tensions and fosters peaceful dispute resolution.

## Driving accountability, transparency and inclusive policy dialogue




Media can shape the governance conditions that make effective climate action possible: transparent institutions, informed and inclusive public participation, and stronger accountability for policy and financing decisions. **More than a third of followers report that *Aksi Kita Indonesia* has boosted their knowledge of climate and environmental policies** and in a randomised controlled trial, **people who watched one of our climate dramas in Indonesia were more motivated (by 11 percentage points) to join public discussion on climate change than people in the control group**. Globally, our network of community radio partners has promoted greater transparency and responsiveness from government. This includes, for instance, media coverage leading to government endorsement of local land use plans, rebuilding of health facilities away from flood-prone areas, government desilting of local rivers to prevent flooding and allocation of required compensation to farmers affected by wildlife destroying agricultural lands. Such tangible achievements further strengthen the community's trust in local media, demonstrating their role as a credible platform through which concerns can reach relevant authorities and contribute to practical solutions. BBC Media Action has also supported **environmental investigative journalism**, for instance in Sierra Leone where our trainees explored the environmental and human toll of artisanal mining, and in Zambia where reporting has highlighted the devastating consequences of toxic waste leaks into biodiversity-rich areas and revealed gaps in compensation and justice for local people. We seek to amplify the voices of those most affected by climate change. In Indonesia, we worked with local partner KKI Warsi to develop bespoke media outputs and convene discussions within indigenous communities. These led to **increased confidence among participating indigenous groups to engage in public discussions related to environmental rights** with governments, companies and other communities as well as improving government responsiveness to community needs and strengthening indigenous groups'

own identity as guardians of the forest. Through our *Living Climate Change* series of short films, we have brought first person accounts of climate change impacts from around the world to global media audiences and international policy-making events. We are also working across the Pacific Islands to support local media to connect grassroots experiences — such as sea-level rise and coastal erosion — with international climate dialogues such as COP.

## Integrating communication into climate policy frameworks

Climate communication needs to be recognised as essential infrastructure within climate frameworks. We make the case directly to governments, donors and multilateral institutions that media and communication must be integrated into NDCs, NAPs, Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies, disaster risk reduction strategies and climate finance mechanisms. This is consistent with Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) of the UNFCCC framework that identifies, among others, public awareness, education and access to information as important elements of climate action. It also aligns with the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (UAE-FGCR), which highlights the importance of climate information services, early warning systems, capacity-building and inclusive adaptation processes in strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity. In Nepal, BBC Media Action is now a **co-lead for Pillar 3 (Warning Dissemination and Communication) of the 'Early Warning for All' (EW4ALL)** initiative, focused on strengthening early warning systems for floods and other disasters frequently faced by the country. As co-lead, working closely with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and ITU, we are strengthening coordination between stakeholders – including government ministries, ISPs, media and civil society organisations – to enhance early warning systems nationwide. We have played a leading role in the development of the country's Roadmap for EW4All. In Bangladesh, BBC Media Action is supporting the development and implementation of a **National Framework for Climate Services (NFCS)**. Adapted from the WMO's Global Framework for Climate Services, the NFCS will help to coordinate, facilitate and strengthen collaboration across the national climate services value chain and enhance the co-production, tailoring, delivery and utilisation of WCIS.



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