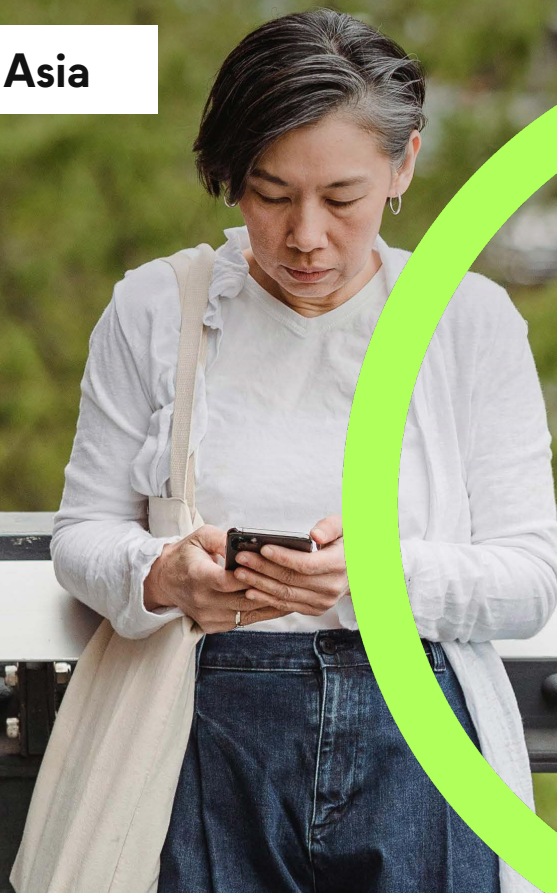


Making climate pay

Creating climate
editorial for sustainable
commercial success

1st Edition: Southeast Asia



Introduction

Prototypes

Prototype A: Save The Dish 

Prototype B: Book for The Future 

Prototype C: Pitch for The Planet 

What's Next?

About Us

climateXchange (cXc) are releasing a series of Sustainable Climate Journalism Product Reports. Informed by newsroom thought leaders in three key regions across the world, they are advancing the development of innovative, financially viable climate news products.

As traditional newsroom monetization models fail, we are committed to collaborative transformation so we can succeed in this new media landscape and specifically climate journalism. The financial challenges of newsrooms are particularly pronounced in the Global South, where the situation is often complex. Here, independent news outlets in countries like Mexico, Malaysia, and South Africa struggle to sustain their journalism's reader and advertiser revenue, as affordability issues and political sensitivities often deter this financial support^{1,2,3}.

Using the output of the Southeast Asian cXc knowledgeXchange in October 2023, this report offers three prototype ideas for sustainable climate journalism news products. They have been developed using our cXc proprietary tool 'Sustainable Climate Journalism Business Model Canvas', which underscores our commitment to strategic and climate-conscious news product collaborations. The product prototypes are in response to the key challenges highlighted by Southeast Asian regional newsrooms, as covered in the November edition of [cXc Global Climate Journalism Insights—Southeast Asia](#):

- 1. Climate journalism in search of relatability** People have positive attitudes to sustainability, but there's a gap between this and actual behaviour.
- 2. Reader attention in a multi-platform world** Audiences crave engaging digital content, yet newsrooms grapple with truly capturing their attention.
- 3. Restricted journalistic freedom and voice** As climate journalism grows, so do legal shackles.
- 4. Resource and knowledge scarcity** On the frontline of climate journalism in Southeast Asia, the story is of scarcity amidst plenty.
- 5. Funding model dilemma** As traditional advertising revenue plummets, media in Southeast Asia scrambles for funds, pushing ethical boundaries.

Our approach targets the intersection of audience needs and broader stakeholder requirements. We aim not only to achieve financial sustainability, proving that climate reporting can be lucrative—but also to empower newsrooms to create impactful climate journalism. These product prototypes are crafted to address these multifaceted needs, enhancing financial viability, community engagement and climate issue awareness, ultimately building a strong social mandate for climate action.

¹Schiffrin, A. (2019). *Fighting for Survival: Media Startups in the Global South*, available [here](#).

²Thorpe, E.K. (2022). *As the New York Times soars, The Washington Post appears to be losing momentum*, available [here](#).

³The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2023). *The Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions 2023*, available [here](#).



Revenue and funding strategies

The climate news product prototypes shared in this report have been developed in relation to understanding the broader financial challenges facing media organisations raised in Southeast Asia. We have leveraged seven possible revenue and funding strategies which have been grouped for journalistic and newsroom applicability with a climate lens:

- 1. Commercial (Advertising, Sponsorships, Brand Partnerships)** Commercial revenue remains a significant source of income for newsrooms. However, there's a growing emphasis on aligning with brands that share similar values, particularly those focusing on sustainability and social responsibility.
- 2. Reader (Subscription, Membership)** Central to newsrooms are reader revenue models, emphasising the need for direct reader support and community building. These models benefit from deepened engagement and loyalty of readers who value the content enough to pay for it.
- 3. Transactional (Events, Ticket Sales, Branded Merchandise)** Transactional strategies turn content and brand affinity into direct income, providing audiences with tangible ways to support and engage with their favourite newsrooms and causes.
- 4. Syndication (Content, Format)** Strategic licensing of original content and formats, both domestically and internationally, can generate new revenue streams. Without additional content creation costs, newsrooms can capitalise on the global appeal of high-quality climate content and innovative storytelling formats.
- 5. Philanthropy (Philanthropic Connections, CSR Initiatives)** Securing funding through philanthropic alignment with journalistic endeavours drives social and environmental organisational goals. As newsrooms create climate desks and hire staff to cover the topic, there is a growing commitment to climate reporting, which appeals to philanthropic donors.
- 6. Venture Capital (VC) / Angel Investment** VC and Angel investors want significant returns that are in line with values, beliefs and predicted growth—where climate is a driving force for investment. This is particularly relevant for newsrooms that are venturing into innovative journalistic endeavours or tech-driven / environmental storytelling.
- 7. Crowdfunding** Harnessing the collective financial power of the audience and allowing individuals to contribute directly to projects they believe in, is a compelling model for engagement and deeper audience understanding. This grassroots funding strategy is effective for initiatives that resonate deeply with public interests and concerns.

Principles for sustainable news products

In addressing the economic challenges facing climate journalism, the following climate product prototypes are designed with a dual focus: ensuring the financial viability of newsrooms and maximising their climate impact.

By adhering to four core principles, these prototypes are not just innovative content products but also strategic tools for financial resilience and enhanced journalistic influence.

Our four core principles for sustainable news products:

- 1. Audience driven** Directly addressing the challenge of relatability, ensuring content resonates with and engages the audience
- 2. Monetizable** Identifying and leveraging diverse financial avenues to support the newsroom's sustainability, whether they are revenue generating or funded.
- 3. Cross-platform** Utilising multiple media platforms to enhance reach and engagement
- 4. Climate-conscious** Prioritising initiatives and partnerships with entities that are environmentally responsible, reflecting a commitment to climate-conscious reporting.

We encourage newsrooms to craft climate news products rooted in all four principles—positioning them for a climate-conscious and financially sustainable future.

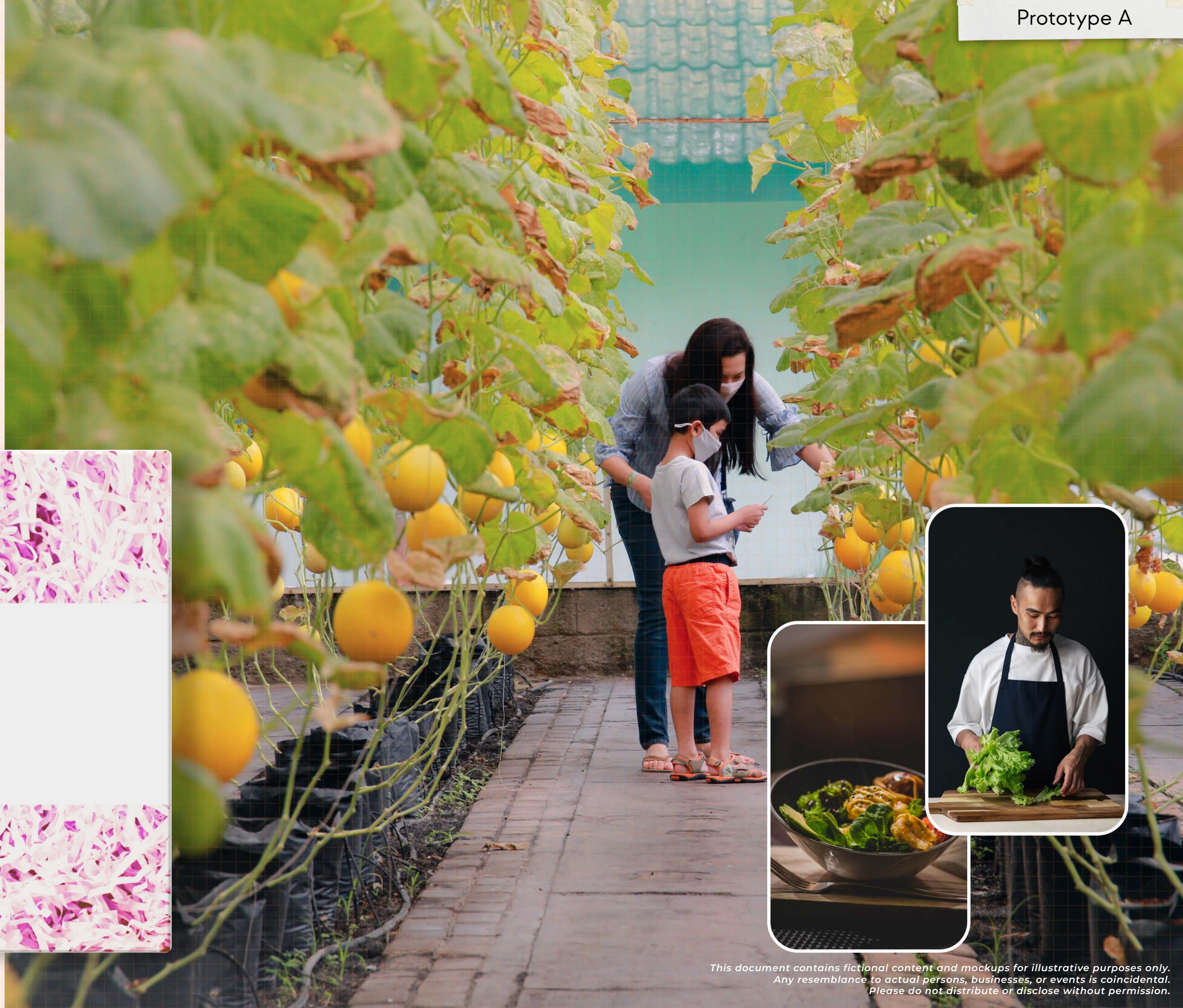




save
the
dish



save
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dish





save the dish

A culinary journey that unearths endangered recipes of a region, serving sustainability one dish at a time.

Statement of need: How newsrooms can combat the lack of good quality content to engage and empower audiences in climate news—and keeps them wanting more.

Food and the climate are interlinked—as are health and community. Any initiative that collects recipes and traditional foods from some of the places impacted by climate change acts as an important record of ways and times that could one day be lost. But they are also a gateway to foods and recipes that offer a way of living free from processed foods, harmful manufacturing methods and the large-scale farming that, paradoxically, is threatening them in the first place.



The idea

Save the Dish is a multimedia collection of oral histories, encounters, interviews and recipes gathered from their custodians around the world. While ostensibly an initiative that platforms local biodiversity, local food and health using the vector of a cultural cooking show—in itself a popular resource—the collection subtly highlights why it isn't only animals and habitats that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Instead, being led by climate and communities operating a low-impact approach, it enables local communities and indigenous groups to benefit from the preservation and wider showcasing of their culinary heritage—whilst also providing valuable access to hard-to-reach areas of the world.



Value proposition

This idea combines several related virtues—climate, food, wellbeing and travel—into an elegant fusion that is both educational and entertaining. It offers its audiences time-proven recipes made from local foods in exciting places, whilst emphasising the fragility and importance of soft-impact living. It is also a great reference point for those wishing to access these recipes both now and in the future—when their survival in context is not guaranteed.

Crop burning, a practice stemming from the green revolution's push for high-yield crops, has led to significant environmental issues, including air pollution and soil degradation. This method, often the only option for small farmers lacking access to machinery, underscores the urgent need for sustainable agricultural practices.

Save the Dish emerges as a vital initiative in this scenario, spotlighting traditional recipes and agricultural diversity as keys to combating such environmental challenges. By celebrating and documenting local culinary practices, it raises awareness about sustainable farming methods that can replace harmful practices like crop burning. In essence, Save the Dish not only preserves cultural heritage but also advocates for a shift towards agriculture that is kind to our planet.



Chapter 3: Challenging traditional methods

Save the Dish

Oral histories, encounters, interviews and recipes gathered from their custodians...



7 Feb . 54 min 18 sec



Target audience

Save the Dish is crafted to appeal not only to those already aware of climate issues but also to a broader audience that may not yet prioritise sustainability in their daily lives. This initiative presents an accessible entry point for those new to the conversation, using the universal language of food to highlight the importance of preserving local cuisines and promoting sustainable practices.



Societal benefits and risks

Save the Dish has the potential to increase societal awareness about the intersection of climate change with our culinary traditions. By documenting and promoting traditional recipes, the initiative not only celebrates cultural diversity but also educates on the importance of preserving these practices in the face of global environmental challenges.

Yet, with the spotlight on diverse cultures comes the responsibility to represent each tradition with accuracy and respect, to avoid the pitfalls of cultural misrepresentation or appropriation. The project must navigate the delicate balance of storytelling with cultural sensitivity, ensuring that in its quest to honour and preserve, it also listens to and accurately portrays the voice of those at the heart of these culinary legacies.



Environmental benefits and risks

Save the Dish enriches the dialogue on biodiversity and sustainable agriculture by showcasing the delicate dance between traditional cooking and environmental conservation. The initiative elevates the narrative of local food systems and their low-impact, high-reward benefits to our ecosystem.

The initiative's production, both in print and digital forms, does carry an ecological footprint that necessitates mindful management to ensure sustainable practices are upheld throughout.

Revenue Stream	Distribution channels	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader (subscription) • Commercial (sponsorship) • Philanthropy • Format syndication • Content syndication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print journalism • Book/E-book • Podcast • Social media channels • Episodic radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local family recipes and stories • Community contributors • Environmental researchers and cultural historians • Multimedia team • Marketing and PR team
Key activities		Key partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach. Engage with local communities, farmers, and indigenous groups to uncover and document traditional recipes and food stories. • Recipe research and documentation. Establish a process for identifying and recording endangered local ingredients and cooking methods. • Ethical sourcing. Develop an ethical framework for procuring stories and recipes, ensuring cultural sensitivity and accuracy. • Digital platform development. Build and maintain digital channels, such as a website or app, incorporating interactive elements like augmented reality or QR codes. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities and indigenous groups • Environmental NGOs • Sustainable food organisations • Cultural preservation groups • Educational institutions



save
the
dish

Book *for the* Future



Book for the Future

A region of young voices weaving stories for a greener tomorrow.

Statement of need: How newsrooms can create impactful content for their audiences so that they will engage and be empowered to tell their climate truth.

When communicating the impacts of climate change, voices from the front lines are the most authentic testimony available. Amongst these, those of young people arguably represent a raw and novel viewpoint free from the conditioned tropes of older, more worldly writers. It is important to the climate narrative that these voices—that belong to the decision makers of tomorrow—have a platform on which to be heard.



The idea

Book for the Future is a storytelling initiative that encourages young people between the ages of 16 and 25 to create a piece of work that highlights their own observations of the changing climate. How have their communities changed? How is life different? What is happening on a macro-local level that has been noticed—and affects their daily lives?

This could take the form of a piece of written journalism, photography, video, or art—which collectively would form a 'book', or showcase platform, that turns their perspectives into a powerful document articulating the impact of the changing climate on the younger generation. Contributors could be aspirant or junior journalists or amateur creators—incentivised by a forum to publicly showcase their talent, and the possibility of material prizes or wider recognition.



Value proposition

This brings together two streams of content—local, and youth—often sidelined in the climate conversation. These two attributes offer particular authenticity of voice because, respectively, they are a stakeholder of the most critical tier in the reporting of their regions; and they have an agenda unlikely to be influenced by the complexities that come with older creators.

For these reasons this group can often feel disengaged and powerless in the bigger picture climate conversation despite, ironically, the youth movement being the most engaged in activism. *Book for the Future* gives young people a voice on their own terms to articulate changes that will likely become acute in their lifetimes—offering a stage for the next generation of climate influencers.

Book for the Future

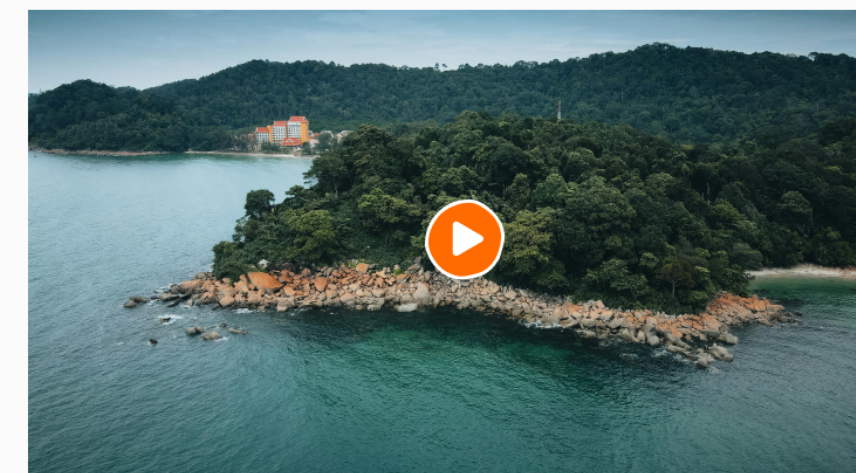
Voices for the Planet

This digital diary is more than just a collection of stories; it is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the ingenuity of our local communities.



Alya Zahra

In this digital space, my aim is to tell the stories of communities across the globe who have woven the rich tapestry of traditional practices into the fabric of their daily lives, demonstrating a profound and often undervalued impact on our collective fight against climate change. These narratives serve as a beacon, guiding us toward a future where sustainability is not just an option but a fundamental aspect of our existence.



My journey is fuelled by a desire to bridge the gap between the past and the present, to uncover and document the age-old wisdom that has sustained generations before us. This quest is not born out of mere curiosity but from a deep-seated belief in the power of these practices to transform our relationship with the planet. The decision to travel and capture these stories is driven by an enlightened consideration of our current environmental predicament. With climate change accelerating at an alarming rate—scientists warn that global temperatures are on track to rise by an average of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-

▶ Target audience

While *Book for the Future* is deeply rooted in the experiences and insights of young people, its unique format—incorporating print journalism and books—extends its reach to a wider demographic. This strategic choice not only fosters climate engagement among younger audiences but also makes these crucial conversations accessible to older generations who may not be active on social media.

▶ Societal benefits and risks

Book for the Future empowers the younger generation, providing a platform for them to articulate their perspective on climate change and to shape the environmental discourse. It serves as a bridge between ages, fostering wider understanding on climate issues across generational divides.

However, the initiative faces the challenge of extending its reach beyond the eco-aware bubble to avoid merely reinforcing echo chambers. It's essential for the project to engage a diverse demographic to ensure it contributes to a more inclusive dialogue on climate action.

▶ Environmental benefits and risks

Book for the Future not only holds the potential to influence environmental policies and practices through its compelling stories but also actively promotes grassroots climate monitoring. This aspect of observing and responding to climate changes at a local level is crucial for fostering a deeper, community-based understanding of environmental issues.

However, it's important to recognise that production of any output needs to be carefully balanced with the potential impact. While digital platforms offer a more eco-friendly alternative compared to traditional print media, they still contribute to carbon emissions through the energy required for digital devices and platforms.

Revenue Stream	Distribution channels	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial (sponsorship) • Commercial (brand) • Transactional (events) • Philanthropy • Format syndication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print journalism • Book/E-book • Streaming (video/podcast) • Social media • Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial team • Graphic designers • Content management digital platform • Marketing and PR team • E-book technology
Key activities		Key partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preparation</i> Define the submission criteria and approval parameters for audience contributions. • <i>Recruitment campaign</i> Implement strategies to recruit young writers and creators. • <i>Evaluation process</i> Establish a methodology for selecting stories, considering both existing databases and an open call for content. • <i>Editing mechanism</i> Set up a system for processing and refining user submissions. • <i>Publishing</i> Outline the approach for curating the final collection of works. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational institutions • Youth organisations • Environmental NGOs • Publishing houses • Literary foundations • Ethical sponsors • Exhibition spaces

Pitch for the planet



Pitch for the planet

A competitive stage where green innovators connect with investors ready to nurture and scale environmental solutions.

Statement of need: How media organisations could change interactions with audiences, so that climate content is more relatable, insightful and financially viable.

Ideas that move us collectively forward towards a more sustainable way of living will change the world—but getting those ideas to market is tough. A product can only make an impact if the public adopts it—and this is only possible with investor buy-in, an inspiring showcase, scale, affordability and publicity. The need for innovation in this space is greater than it has ever been; but so are the barriers to getting ideas noticed. Yet the journey of an ‘idea’ and the need that inspired it are frequently recruited into primetime entertainment slots. How do we make this relevant to climate?



The idea

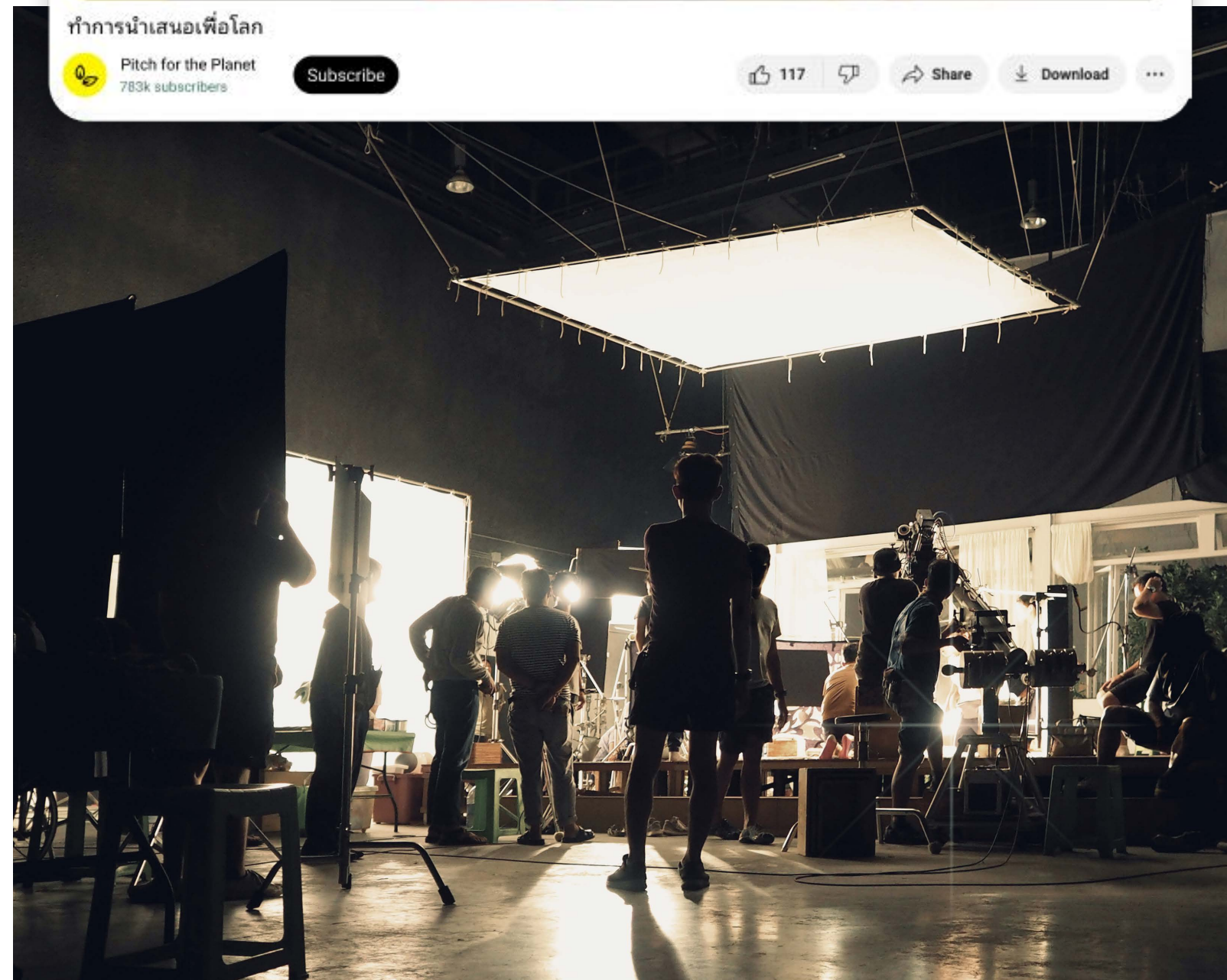
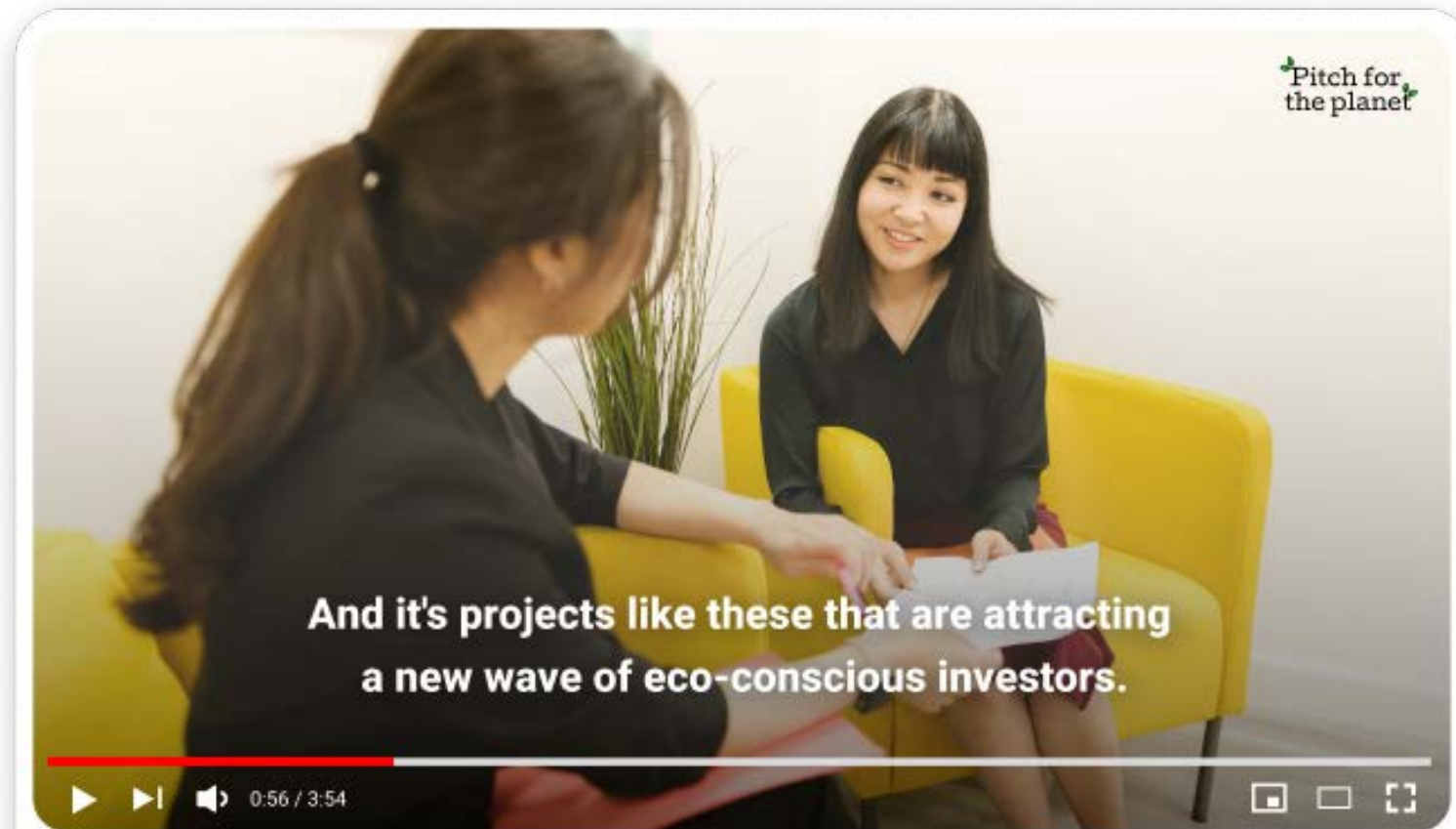
Pitch for the Planet is a versatile format that invites sustainable innovation pitches from members of the public, developers, specialists—anyone with an idea—to pitch to potential backers for investment, support and development. These can be venture capitalists (VCs), professionals, or other influential knowledgeable individuals with the power to judge a planet forward idea on its viability and, if possible, carry it forward.

This prototype offers numerous content streams and focuses on solutions which can be use across channels for live broadcast, social, live blogs, episodic shorts and more. Therefore becoming a powerful forum to articulate both the need for a solution and the solution itself in an entertainment format that is compulsive, engaging and gently educational.



Value proposition

Solutions for sustainable lifestyles are often difficult or expensive to obtain for consumers — because their makers have been denied the opportunity to scale their products into affordability. This could be through lack of investment or awareness and therefore the mass adoption needed to elevate them into the mainstream. Through this format, people will begin to understand the range of solutions available to some of the most pressing problems of our time, through an entertaining and compelling format with charismatic stories and characters at its core. There is also the potential for the audience to get involved in sustainable products/projects, crowdfunding or vote for their favourite—thus exploring real solutions in a way that is fun, valuable and informative.





Target audience

Pitch for the Planet is positioned to resonate with the general public, including those who may not yet prioritise sustainability in their daily lives. This initiative not only showcases compelling stories of innovation and the passionate individuals behind them but also strategically aims to influence government and business communities for environmental change.



Societal benefits and risks

Pitch for the Planet not only propels green innovation and champions sustainable solutions, but also educates the public about climate change and sustainable practices through an engaging format. Additionally, this initiative holds the potential to stimulate economic development by creating new jobs and industries around sustainable technologies, aligning with our shared societal aspirations.

However, the emphasis on commercial viability may lead to prioritising profitability over genuine environmental impact, and oversimplifying issues for entertainment value. Striking a balance between entertainment and responsible portrayal of environmental issues is crucial for this initiative's success.



Environmental benefits and risks

Pitch for the Planet serves as a launchpad for the advancement of green technologies and supports solutions that aim to lower carbon emissions and champion biodiversity. It acts as an influential force, propelling both the creators of sustainable solutions and the wider community toward environmental consciousness and action.

However, the environmental impact of producing such a show cannot be overlooked. The resource intensity required for staging and filming necessitates a conscious effort to minimise the program's carbon footprint. Additionally, the competition must diligently avoid the pitfalls of greenwashing by implementing a strict vetting process to ensure that the projects presented are truly eco-friendly and beneficial to the environment.

Revenue Stream	Distribution channels	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader (subscription, membership) • Commercial (advertising, sponsorship, brand, partnership) • Donations • Philanthropy • Format syndication • Venture capital / Angel investment • Crowdfunding • Transactional (events, tickets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV • Youtube broadcast • Visual podcast • Events • Streaming • Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production crew • Legal advisors • Financial analysts • Investor network • Online portal for contestant applications • Sustainability experts • Research and development resources
Key activities		Key partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investor criteria Establish a clear criteria and roles for potential investors to ensure they bring value beyond capital, such as expertise and networking opportunities. • Participant selection Design a robust process for selecting contestants that includes criteria for innovation, scalability, and environmental impact for example. • Content production Document the journey of contestants from application to pitch, creating engaging multimedia content. • Community involvement Integrate audience interaction, such as voting or feedback mechanisms, to deepen public engagement. • Legal framework Set up legal support for intellectual property rights, investment agreements, and revenue-sharing models. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable brands • Environmental NGOs • Business community • Philanthropic foundations • Venture capitalists and angel investors • Crowdfunding platforms • Academic institutions • Legal and compliance firms

Visuals Credits

Photographs

Cover picture: Greta Hoffman; **Page 1:** Dapo Abideen;
Page 2: Ane Dat; **Page 3,** from left to right: Anete Lusina (fictional book cover), Ramod Kanakath / Climate Visuals Countdown (background photo), Valeria Bolteneva and Ron Lach (dyptich); **Page 4:** Ishan Tankha / Climate Visuals Countdown; **Page 6:** Streetwindy (on the left in the collage); **Page 7:** Pok Rie (thumbnail image of the video insert in e-book mockup); **Page 9,** from top to bottom: Julia Amaral, Ratirath (left column), Anna Schvets, Raphael Pouget / Climate Visuals Countdown, Sudip Maiti / Climate Visuals Countdown, Cottonbro Studio (right column); **Page 10:** rdne stock project (video thumbnail), gnepphoto;

Other visuals

Collages and UI mockups page 3, 4, 6, 8 & 12 and all prototypes logo and branding design: climateXchange.

What's Next?

Interested in developing any of the news product prototypes presented in this report?

Get in touch to discuss Southeast Asia funding collaborations and opportunities. Contact details can be found on the next page.

Have questions about monetising your climate products or need further insights into revenue strategies?

Our team is here to provide insights and assistance. Feel free to contact us for guidance on implementing revenue strategies or accessing our proprietary strategy tools for climate news product development.



About us

About Syli

Syli is a CIC non-profit organisation, founded in London by Tom Trewinnard and Fergus Bell. Syli supports mission-driven journalism in service of informed audiences around the world by fostering new and forward-looking concepts, identifying sustainable financial models for journalism, and creating a healthier, more sustainable media ecosystem.

More information can be found [here](#).

About climateXchange

ClimateXchange (cXc) is Syli's groundbreaking new global initiative aimed at increasing the impact, reach and sustainability of climate journalism. cXc stands on three pillars of complementary activities:

ContentXchange: a reporting and distribution hub where engaging, high impact climate journalism and a just transition can be contributed and republished by glocal news and content media.

RegionalXchange: a network of regional hubs where climate journalism is supported and collaborated on cross-border and cross regionally.

KnowledgeXchange: rewiring of the ecosystem through financial and audience roundtable sessions for newsrooms and content creators covering climate for refined sustainable solutions.

About cXc Evaluation and Research

We are dedicated to evaluating and advancing climate journalism's impact. We value the stories behind the numbers and the numbers behind the stories, embracing mixed-methods research with a deep appreciation for both qualitative and quantitative data. Our aim is to lend an ear to the local storytellers, understand their struggles in reaching people's hearts and minds, and measure the change they're driving.

Our Theory of Change defines desired shifts, measurable steps, and methodologies for impact measurement. We're excited to build a global network of research partnerships with a core goal to amplify the effects of local, climate-conscious journalism.

Our findings reach our community via cXc Digest, comprising research-driven thought-leadership pieces that underpin partnerships and steer dialogues in global forums; cXc Global Climate Journalism Insights, cXc's detailed post-event reports that distil discussions from our events; and the cXc Annual Impact Report, an in-depth yearly review spotlighting the efficacy and reach of climate-conscious reporting.

About The Authors

Dr Carmen Nicoara is the lead of the cXc Evaluation & Research; Simon Ingram is the cXc Editor at large; and Shereen Daver is cXc's Director, with all three based out of cXc's London office. Research is done in close collaboration with cXc partner hubs—WAN-IFRA (South-East Asia) Wits Centre for Journalism (Africa) and Report For The World (Europe).

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Contact Us

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If you are interested in your organisation becoming a climateXchange member gaining access to unique climate reporting tools, sessions and events, please contact our Partnerships Team at:

info@climatexc.org

