



Strategic **Communication Guide**

for Information
Integrity on
Climate Change



Introduction

The climate crisis is also an information crisis.

Whoever tells the story of the problem chooses the solutions that reach the public and sets the political pace of the response.

The Rede de Parceiros pela Integridade da Informação Sobre Mudança do Clima - **Partner Network for Information Integrity on Climate Change - (RPIIC)**, convened by Brazil's Federal Government, civil society, and academia, was launched in 2025 as part of a global initiative led by the UN, UNESCO, and **Brazil**. Our aim is to work together to promote a more reliable, higher-quality information ecosystem on climate.

The goal is to **strengthen information integrity and elevate the public debate**, confronting disinformation while building society's trust in science, in institutions, and in the climate solutions needed to secure the future of Brazil and the planet.

This guide was developed under **Workstream 2: Strategic Communication of the RPIIC**. It brings together practical communication guidelines—based on studies, focus groups, and discourse analysis—to shape the way we talk about the climate crisis and its impacts. The purpose is to offer shared references and effective strategies for communicating about climate in a way that is clear, mobilizing, and socially relevant – strengthening information integrity as a central pillar of climate action.



What this guide is

- * A shared narrative playbook for organizations, communicators, and partner institutions.
- * A map of topics, messages, and formats that expand the reach of climate communication.
- * A baseline rapid-response protocol for disinformation, focused on prevention and coordination.

Who we are writing for

- * Grassroots communicators, creators, local collectives, and independent media.
- * Researchers and institutional spokespeople who need to translate findings into public-facing language.
- * Public officials and civil society organizations working on adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice policies.

What this guide delivers

Throughout this document, you will find framing suggestions, narrative strategies, and practical guidance on how to communicate about climate with impact – from word choice to building stories that connect.

The idea is simple: to strengthen climate communication in Brazil by building shared repertoires among organizations, communicators, and partners. We want to speak to more people, with greater clarity and greater power, without losing the accuracy and urgency the issue demands.

Let's get to work!



1. The Problem: Climate and Disinformation

Climate change is already part of Brazilians' everyday lives: in the heat that disrupts sleep, in food that keeps getting more expensive, in the rains that drive families from their homes. Yet even with the crisis this close, public perception of the issue remains limited and uneven.

A national survey commissioned by Tereos and conducted by Datafolha¹ in 2025 highlights the challenge: **34% of Brazilians say they do not know what climate change is**, a share that reaches 54% among socioeconomic classes D and E. Even so, three in four people acknowledge that their cities are not prepared to face extreme weather events.

This contrast reveals a central point: people feel the crisis in their bodies and in their wallets, but do not recognize it as a political, collective phenomenon. People in the urban peripheries and cities, traditional peoples and communities, and workers in both countryside and city live with these impacts every day. And the climate agenda, as it is presented today, still comes across as technical and distant.

¹ Available at: <<https://datafolha.folha.uol.com.br/opiniao-e-sociedade/2025/02/mudancas-climaticas-e-aquecimento-global-ainda-sao-desconhecidas-por-34-dos-brasileiros.shtml>>.



This disconnect between general public perception and the climate agenda opens space for manipulative narratives, shot through with power struggles and economic interests. The climate agenda has become an arena where denialism operates in an organized way – a deliberate strategy, driven by actors who profit from doubt.

In the political sphere, the problem is frequently distorted: many narratives make it seem that protecting the environment is incompatible with creating jobs or ensuring economic growth. This inversion turns the climate agenda into an obstacle, when in fact it is a precondition for any viable vision of the future. By simplifying complex problems and speaking to the desire for immediate solutions, such narratives cultivate a diffuse sense of powerlessness that demobilizes people and delays action.

The challenge, therefore, is twofold:

- **Protect the public sphere from manipulation**, strengthening information integrity on climate change and the environment.
- **Reconnect the climate agenda to real life**, with narratives that speak directly, emotionally, and accessibly about what is at stake.

Without trustworthy information, there is no viable climate policy – and no collective hope of transformation.

2. The Shift: Communication as Climate Action

Communicating about climate is not just translating data or issuing alerts – it is contesting meaning. **How the problem is told determines whether it generates engagement or indifference**, hope or paralysis. Done well, climate communication is not an accessory: it is the infrastructure of action.

Conversations about the environment are no longer confined to specialists; they now occupy people's daily lives—in the news, on social media, and, increasingly, in their own experiences. The challenge is to turn that awareness into lasting mobilization, connecting the urgency of the issue to people's desire for stability, quality of life, and a future.

Communicating well about climate means **recognizing that emotion and reason go hand in hand**, building bridges between technical knowledge and the stories that reveal the crisis's real impact. This shift requires the climate field to speak not only about what is happening, but **about what can still be done**. Showing solutions, alternatives, and concrete policies can turn concern into action. **Good communication does not appeal to guilt or panic: it invites shared responsibility and gives meaning to change.**



3.

Communication Strategies

The strategies gathered in this section draw on studies, focus groups, and lessons learned from the organizations that make up the Strategic Communication workstream of the Partner Network for Information Integrity on Climate Change. The goal is to offer guidance that elevates the public debate, strengthens trust in information, and broadens engagement with the climate agenda.

More than reacting to disinformation, these strategies are proactive: they seek to make information circulate with clarity, credibility, and emotional connection, making the issue understandable and relevant to different audiences. They are practical guidelines for anyone who communicates about climate day to day – from organizations and public institutions to collectives and content creators.

This is a living resource that brings together what we have learned so far about communicating about climate change with impact and integrity. It stems from the exchange of different experiences and perspectives, and will continue to evolve as new practices and insights emerge.



Up next: the Principles – and concrete strategies for putting them into practice.

3.1.

Start where people are

People are already living the climate crisis, even when they don't call it that. Communication should **build bridges between what is felt and what is understood.**

Talking about climate means talking about **practical life** – the summers that keep getting hotter, the price of food, water shortages, the city that floods. When we start from these experiences, the issue gains materiality, concreteness, identification, and political meaning.



Before talking about climate, listen to what climate already means to people.



How to do it

- **Start from lived experience.** Use situations your audience recognizes from their own reality.
- **Talk about effects, not concepts.** “Floods” is easier to understand than “extreme weather events.”
- **Value the present.** Show what can be done today – not only what must change in the future.
- **Adapt your language to the territory or sea-based counterpart.** A drought in the countryside and a torrential storm in Sao Paulo call for different framings.
- Combine data with stories. Don't throw out the numbers – use them to complement your narrative.



Practical examples

Instead of “climate change increases urban vulnerability,” say:

“The rains are getting heavier and the sewers can't keep up – that's why so many people have lost everything in floods.”

Instead of “food security and local production,” say:

“The climate is changing, and food prices are changing with it. Making sure food is grown close to home means making sure there's food on the plate.”

Instead of “energy transition,” say:

“Nobody can pay sky-high electric bills anymore—or losing power every time it rains. Betting on renewable energy means saving money and creating jobs.”

3.2. Build connection before you explain

The way people get information has changed, and the competition for attention has never been fiercer. On social media, every message competes with an avalanche of stimuli: tragedies, memes, venting, dance trends, outrage. In this battle, speaking louder doesn't help – you have to **awaken something in people**.

Talking about climate in this context means competing for seconds of attention in a feed that changes with every swipe. People don't engage because they understand a problem; they engage because they connect with it. **When a story stirs a strong emotion, it stops being information and becomes a cause.**



Whoever
captures
attention controls
the narrative.

How to do it



- **Use humor as a way in.** Irony and lightness are effective strategies for complex topics, especially when exhaustion is the dominant emotional state.
- **Create narratives, not press releases.** Stories have conflict, characters, and transformation – everything the human brain recognizes and remembers.
- **Show the human impact.** Data comes to life when it has a face, a voice, and consequences. Make the people who live in the region the protagonists of the message.
- **Blend form and content.** A well-made meme can be worth more than an infographic: the right format is part of the message.



Practical examples

“The ‘**Verified for Climate**’ campaign created a global network of young people on TikTok to **debunk rumors about global warming**. The campaign reached more than 280 million views.”



ONU / Purpose



“**João Victor, 16**, saw a **public square overtaken by trash in Belem** and mobilized residents to clean it up. A year later, the space had become a symbol for the community and an inspiration for other cities.”

BBC News Brasil

“During the floods in **Rio Grande do Sul**, a video of a firefighter rescuing a dog went viral and raised millions in donations to help the victims of the tragedy.”

O Globo

3.3.

Talk about solutions, not just problems

Climate communication tends to stop at the diagnosis. And when everything seems lost, what's left is fatigue.

Talking about solutions does not mean denying the severity of the crisis; it means showing that **action is possible and worthwhile**. Hope, in this context, is not empty optimism: it is a strategy of mobilization and political imagination. It is the antidote to the hopelessness manufactured by the endless stream of shared tragedies.

Instead of replaying collapse, we need to rekindle the desire for a future – showing the cities that hold on, the ideas that bloom, and the people who insist on moving the world a few inches forward. Audiences engage more when communication gives back what the crisis tries to steal: **the sense that there is still a future**.

Martin Luther King had a dream, not a complaint.



How to do it



- **Show what is already happening.** Give visibility to local policies, technologies, and practices that work, even at a small scale.
- **Highlight the social gains, not just the environmental ones.** Talking about climate means talking about health, jobs, food, housing, energy, and transportation.
- **Put a face on solutions.** People change their behavior when they see other people acting. True stories help translate and inspire.

Practical examples



A pact for the future

At COP30, Brazil created the **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)**, which aims to raise US\$10 billion to protect the Amazon and other tropical forests. It is a long-term policy that places the country at the center of the global climate transition.

The scientist who reinvented plastic

At UFRRJ (the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro), researcher **José Thomaz** developed a bioplastic made from sweet potato and aloe vera that decomposes in 120 days and turns into fertilizer—a solution with the potential to transform one of the world’s biggest environmental problems.



The Indigenous woman who made the world listen to the forest

Alessandra Korap Munduruku stood up to mining companies and led the fight to protect her people’s territory. In 2023, she was honored with the Goldman Environmental Prize, considered the Nobel of ecology. Her victory showed that the strength of the forest is also the strength of those who live in it.





3.4. Avoid the constant-alarm trap

When everything is
urgent, nothing is

For years, climate communication has relied on a strategy of warning to draw attention and highlight the urgency of the issue. But fear and guilt have only a short-term effect: they paralyze rather than mobilize.

The repetition of catastrophic messages has ultimately led to a vague sense of of catastrophic messages has ended up producing a diffuse sense of **climate anxiety**, in which people do perceive the severity of the crisis but cannot see where they can act.

When the problem seems terrible and out of reach, climate becomes one more burden in an already full daily life. The result is not engagement but withdrawal. That is why avoiding constant catastrophizing does not mean minimizing the crisis – it means creating real conditions for participation.



How to do it

- **Replace “you need to” with “we can.”**
A sense of belonging is more engaging than a sense of obligation. Belonging, it is worth noting, has been one of the greatest weapons of denialists and conspiracy theorists.
- **Show collective paths.**
Reinforce that climate solutions depend on public policies, companies, governments, and communities – not only on individual choices.
- **Acknowledge fatigue.**
Validating people’s feelings reduces resistance and opens space for dialogue.
- **Show changes that make life easier, not ones that demand sacrifice.**
Mobilization is born when transformation seems to improve daily routines, not worsen them.

Practical examples



In Sobral, in the state of Ceará (Northeast Brazilian state), a **sustainable schools project** installed vegetable gardens, rainwater harvesting, and solar power—an experience that became a point of local pride.

Preventing is easier than

rebuilding: the adoption of early warning systems in cities across Bahia (Northeast Brazilian state) reduced material losses and saved lives, showing that climate adaptation has a direct impact on daily life.

“The **‘Sou Amazônia’** (**‘I Am Amazonia’**) campaign showed local residents and producers talking about their sustainable practices, inspiring other communities.”

“The **‘Recicla SP’** (**‘Recycle SP’**) program adopted the slogan “Taking care of the city is taking care of us,” trading a scolding tone for empathy and mobilization.”



3.5.

Ensure information integrity



Reliable information doesn't compete with disinformation – it competes with distrust.

In the climate debate, the biggest obstacle is not only the lies in circulation, but **the crisis of trust** that sustains them. If the public does not trust the source, the content – even when accurate – loses its effect. **Information integrity, here, is not just fact-checking: it is building coherence, transparency, and predictability over time.**

Disinformation thrives where there is doubt, noise, and opacity. Trustworthy information thrives where there is clarity, listening, and consistency. And between these two environments lies a decisive point: **whoever arrives first shapes the meaning of the debate.**



How to do it

- **Be specific, not generic.** Say what is known, what is not known, and what is being investigated. Transparency reduces rumors.
- **Anticipate real questions.** Disinformation always occupies the space that communication leaves empty. Explain before someone distorts.
- **Respond as a network, not alone.** Multiple voices saying the same thing, in different ways, are more effective than a single official denial. Coordination is part of integrity.
- **Reinforce consistency over time.** Trust is born from the whole, not from a single isolated piece.



Practical examples

The “**Fumaça Zero**” (“**Zero Smoke**”) campaign in Acre (Brazilian state in North/Amazon) explained, in simple terms, the difference between a controlled burn and criminal arson – preventing panic and strengthening public understanding.





Water quality alerts in Pernambuco

(Northeast Brazilian state) began using accessible communication, interactive maps, and practical instructions – reducing local rumors and increasing trust in institutions.

The “information of the day” dashboards

used by INMET (Brazil’s National Institute of Meteorology) during heat waves: direct, visually clear, and shareable, helping the public understand risk levels and precautions.

3.6.

Choose the right voices for each audience

In an era of distrust, whoever speaks matters as much as what is said.



The climate dispute is not fought over arguments alone, but also in the relationship of trust between speaker and listener. The same data point, delivered by different people, can produce completely opposite effects.

On social media above all, credibility does not transfer automatically from institutions to the public: it circulates through bonds, affections, and belonging. That is why popular science communicators, influencers, artists, and community leaders are essential agents for information integrity on climate.

How to do it



- **Identify who is already a trusted reference for that audience.**

It is not always the most renowned expert – it may be someone from the community: a local teacher, a nurse, a religious leader, a regional creator.

- **Use the diversity of voices strategically.**

Scientists explain with rigor; artists expand reach; young influencers translate; local leaders legitimize; grassroots communicators bring the message closer. Each plays a distinct role.

- **Support spokespeople with reliable, high-quality information.**
They don't need to become experts, but they do need the confidence to convey the truth.
- **Cultivate ongoing relationships, not only in crises.**
Trust is built before the emergency. A network of messengers only works when a bond already exists.



Practical examples

Anitta and the “PL da Devastação” (“Devastation Bill”)

Anitta (very famous Brazilian singer) denounced the PL da Devastação on social media, explained its impacts, and called on her followers to pressure federal deputies. **Engagement exploded**, and the debate gained national visibility.

Raull Santiago: mobilizing on climate in the urban

A founder of Papo Reto (“Straight Talk”) and of Instituto Movimentos, Raull weaves climate issues into the daily life of the favelas—extreme heat, floods, water shortages.

Community leaders in the Amazon

In regions vulnerable to disinformation about environmental enforcement, **local communicators recorded videos dismantling rumors** about “invasions” and “fake enforcement operations,” reaching more people than official statements.



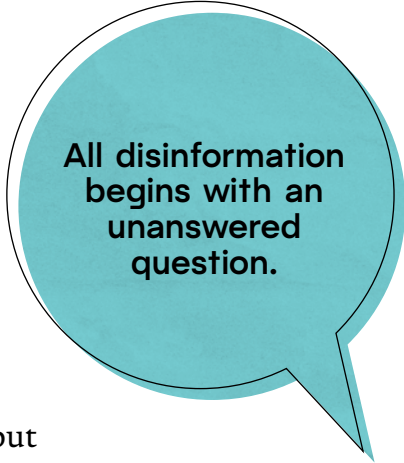
3.7.

Disarm fake news

Climate rumors exploit real fears – loss of income, urban insecurity, the rising cost of living – and take advantage of moments of crisis to offer quick explanations that are usually false but emotionally satisfying.

International research on countering disinformation shows that **correcting is not enough**: the brain tends to remember lies more than corrections. That is why confronting *fake news* requires a different approach: **prevent, contextualize, and explain the mechanism of manipulation**, rather than merely denying the content.

When the public understands how and why certain rumors appear, those rumors lose force. Fighting disinformation is less about refuting and more about **preventing** – building understanding before the lie finds fertile ground to grow.



All disinformation
begins with an
unanswered
question.

How to do it



- **Anticipate what will be distorted.**

Disinformation follows a pattern: it manipulates numbers, clips videos out of context, invents fake experts. When you expose the method, you don't just claim it is wrong—you disarm the narrative.

- **Bring context that makes immediate sense.**

The absence of context is what gives a rumor its force. Explaining who benefits from the confusion, what the recurring motivation is, and what kind of content tends to go viral at similar moments helps the public recognize patterns.

- **Correct without repeating the lie.**

The familiarity effect is real: repeating the rumor makes it stronger. Focus on the correct information, not on the false content.



- **Use formats that circulate.** A clear, simple, visual explanation almost always has more impact than an official statement. Short videos, posts in plain language, and trusted people answering real questions work better because they adapt to the social media ecosystem.



Practical examples

Monitoring and fact-checking during the Rio Grande do Sul floods

Fact-checking agencies such as **Aos Fatos** and **Agência Lupa** debunked false videos and explained how content from 2017 and 2021 was being recycled.

Sabesp and the response to “contaminated water” rumors in the 2023 summer

A viral audio message claimed that the water supplied by Sabesp, São Paulo’s water and sanitation utility, “had been poisoned.” The response was swift: **explainer videos + journalists’ visits to the treatment plants + transparent data.** The rumor died within 48 hours.

The UN’s #ClimateCounts campaign in Brazil

Launched to **combat climate disinformation**, the campaign presents **30 scientific facts about the climate** paired with striking visuals to push back on false narratives before they spread, using social media to anticipate and disarm common rumors.



This guide doesn't end here



Climate communication will keep changing as new research emerges, narratives transform, and challenges grow more complex. What works today may need a different format tomorrow. And that is exactly why this guide is not a closed manual, but a starting point.

Information integrity is continuous, collective work. Every communicator, every organization, every community leader who shares a piece of information, who translates a public policy, who answers a real question, who fills the feed with clarity and responsibility, extends the reach of this effort.

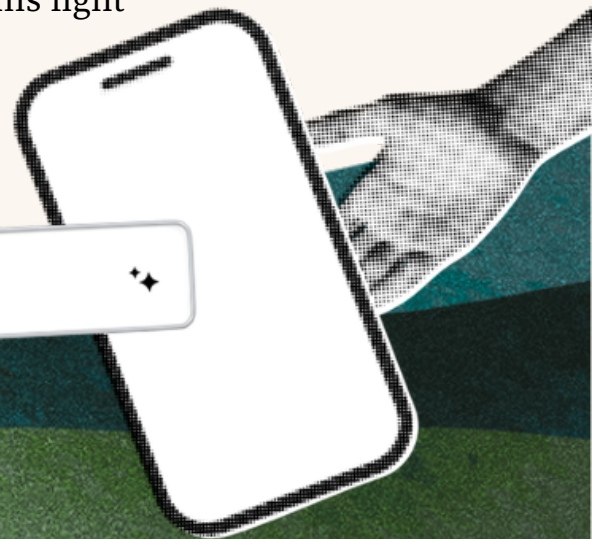
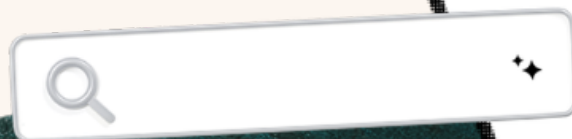
If we have come this far, it is because we understand that communicating is part of climate work – as essential as science, public policy, adaptation, and justice. And the next step depends on each of the people who make up this network.

That is why we close with an invitation: may every partner in the network use, test, adapt, critique, and improve these guidelines. Let's circulate what works, discard what doesn't, and keep the doors open to new voices, new languages, and new strategies. Climate communication only gains scale when it becomes shared practice – and when we stop acting as isolated islands and start operating as a coordinated ecosystem.

We keep building. We keep learning.

And, above all, we keep calling: come be part of this fight with us.

Because when many voices speak together, truth gains power. And so does the future.



For more information, see the **Guia de Comunicação Climática (Climate Communication Guide)** of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change:

guia-comunicacao-climatica.com.br

RESPONSIBLE AND IMPLEMENTING
ORGANIZATIONS

brief



RPIIC

REDE
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**DEMOCRACIA
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OBSERVATÓRIO
DO **CLIMA**

GREENPEACE

SECRETARIA DE
COMUNICAÇÃO SOCIAL

GOVERNO DO
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DO LADO DO POVO BRASILEIRO

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