

‘PANAS! Climate Change Stories in Malaysia’ Project Launched

27 February 2021, KUALA LUMPUR: Science Media Centre (SMC) Malaysia, in collaboration with British High Commission Kuala Lumpur and EcoKnights officially launched ‘PANAS! Climate Change Stories in Malaysia’ project which aimed at promoting evidence-based and accurate reporting on climate change topics in the media.

Through this initiative, Malaysian journalists, writers and content creators are invited to produce local Malaysian stories, responding to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, particularly on the impacts of 1.5°C global warming on natural and human systems, as well as strengthening the global response to climate change.

Project Lead of PANAS! and co-founder of SMC Malaysia, Tan Su Lin, opines that the lack of understanding of climate science and its technicalities attributes to the inability of journalists to link climate impacts to the public, as well as relating climate change coverage to high-level climate policies such as the IPCC report.

As a result, these topics are reported only at the surface level which lacks in-depth analysis and reflection. The lack of reliable and trustworthy sources for interviews such as climate scientists and experts also results in repeated, one-sided viewpoints.

“The nature of Malaysian media coverage tends to be reactive, in the context of climate change. However, when empowered, it has the potential to take on a more proactive role to inform, inspire and encourage all stakeholders to take action toward reducing the impacts of climate change,” said Su Lin.

Sustainability and climate change expert, Dr Renard Siew, stressed that, in the face of climate change, journalists play a major role to help accelerate climate action through advocacy and education.

“For most vulnerable countries, including Malaysia, the 1.5 C warming limit reported in the IPCC is crucial as it requires major and immediate transformation. The role of the media in highlighting the impacts of 1.5°C global warming on natural and human systems will support stakeholders and policymakers address climate change.”

“This is done by providing local statistics, engaging stories and reliable evidence to affect change at a higher level. However, the potential of journalists still remains largely untapped,” said Dr Renard who is also one of the panel experts of the project.

Interested journalists, writers and content creators are invited to submit their 200-word pitch on their story angle and language choice, responding to the IPCC report. Shortlisted journalists, writers and content creators are required to attend a media workshop via Zoom online on 13 March 2021.

During the workshop, participants will be briefed on the IPCC report and a digital media toolkit will also be provided as a reference to produce evidence-based and accurate reporting on climate change topics.

The top 10 best pitch submissions from journalists and content creators from across all media platforms and languages will be selected to produce content based on the IPCC report. Successful winners will receive RM500 each to produce a 500 to 700-word local story on their preferred platform of choice.

Pitches will be judged based on creativity, accuracy of information and relevance to the IPCC. SMC encourages submissions from a diverse range of journalists, writers and content creators from all states in Malaysia and cultural background.

Deadline for pitch submission is 5 March 2021.

Link to submission form here: <http://bit.ly/PanasClimateChangeStoriesForm>

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About Science Media Centre (SMC) Malaysia

SMC Malaysia is an independent resource centre under the auspices of the Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC) which aims to provide evidence-based information to support local journalists to report on complex or controversial science issues that make the headlines.

PANAS! Climate Change Stories in Malaysia project team members include **Dr Renard Siew**, sustainability and climate change expert; **Ili Nadiyah Dzulfakar**, co-founder and chairperson of Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY), **Dr Law Yao Hua**, co-founder and editor of Macaranga; and creative producer, **Kevin Bathman**. The team is led by **Tan Su Lin**, co-founder of SMC Malaysia.

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