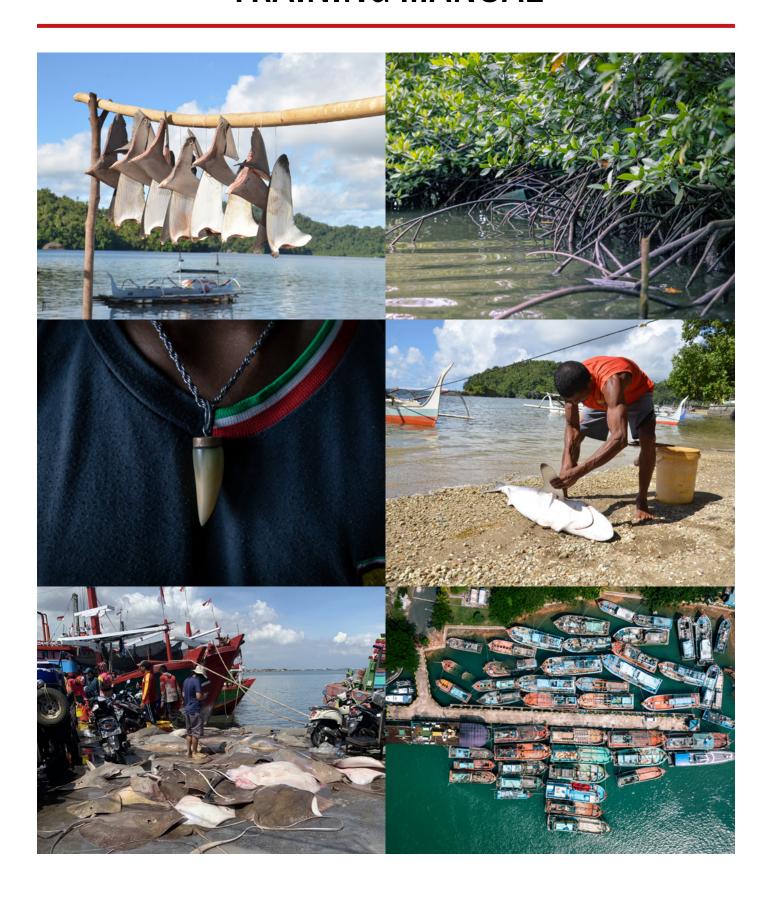




INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM TRAINING MANUAL



This investigative manual is intended to be used by investigative journalists, field researchers and civil society organisations working on environmental issues in Indonesia. It has been produced jointly by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) and Tempo Institute (TI). This manual has been produced with the kind support of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the U.S. Embassy, Jakarta.

The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) exists to protect the natural world and defend our basic human right to a secure environment.

EJF works internationally to inform policy and drive systemic, durable reforms to protect our environment and defend human rights. We investigate and expose abuses and support environmental defenders, Indigenous peoples, communities and independent journalists on the frontlines of environmental injustice. Our campaigns aim to secure peaceful, equitable and sustainable futures.

The TEMPO Institute is part of the TEMPO Media Group (publisher of several mass media outlets in Indonesia). The Tempo Institute focuses on enhancing journalistic, media and communication capacity across Indonesia. Established on the 21st May, 2009, the TEMPO Institute has developed and organized various journalistic and communication training courses designed to build research, field investigation and publishing skills.

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Introduction

This manual has been prepared based on the experiences of EJF investigators who have conducted field investigations on various environmental crimes and issues across Indonesia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and West Africa. It also includes key contributions from senior journalists from TEMPO Media Group, who have pioneered many investigative journalism techniques in Indonesia.

EJF and TEMPO Institute intend for this manual to share both good or best practice methodologies and techniques for conducting field-based investigations into environmental crimes in Indonesia as well as to inspire the next generation of young journalists to take an interest in documenting and reporting on environmental issues. Readers will receive guidance and explanations on how to plan and carry out such investigations as well as how to process and analyse results into final media pieces.

Navigating this manual



This manual explains the various stages of completing an investigation activity. If you have conducted field investigations before, this document is expected to complement, improve, or perfect the investigations you have conducted. If you wish to carry out an investigative activity, this document must be read sequentially starting from section 1 all the way through to section 7.

This manual is divided into seven sections:



1. Logistics & planning

- 1.1 Preliminary planning
- 1.2 Document preparation
- 1.3 Planning for safety and accessibility
- 1.4 COVID-19 precautions



2. What to document and why



3. Personal safety and risk assessment

- 3.1 The fundamentals of risk mitigation
- 3.2 Avoiding/diffusing conflict in sensitive areas.
- 3.3 Filming in sensitive locations
- 3.4 Driving safety



4. Ethics and accuracy

- 4.1 Informed consent and protection of sources
- 4.2 Verification and accuracy
- 4.3 Proving the facts



5. Evidence and gathering techniques

- 5.1 Interviews
- 5.2. Eyewitness documentation
- 5.3. Location scouting and preparation
- 5.4. Undercover work
- 5.5 Tracking (Vehicular/person surveillance)
- 5.6. Counter-surveillance



6. Data security

- 6.1 IT safety and security
- 6.2 Data security in the field
- 6.3 Other IT related concerns in the field



7. Publication

- 7.1 Keep it simple
- 7.2 Using storytelling to engage
- 7.3 Multi-platform considerations

Defining investigations

Investigating environmental crimes or human rights violations is inherently difficult. These crimes and violations may take place in remote areas, be well hidden, and involve hostile actors. NGOs or investigative journalists can use desk-based and field-based research methods to investigate these crimes.

An investigation is the methodology of research, inquiry, identification, examination and collection of data to ascertain facts, from which to draw accurate conclusions. An investigation can be divided into several distinct activities ranging from desk-based research, social media analysis, surveillance, interviews with stakeholders, undercover work, supply chain tracking and document analysis.

Effective investigations often require the implementation of carefully planned, ethically conducted fieldwork trips. A systematic plan, clear set of objectives, sound logistical information, and robust safety and security protocols are essential for the successful delivery of such an investigation.

It is important that trip planning is done collaboratively so that both field investigators and relevant office colleagues are fully briefed of the plan, locations to visit and safety protocols.

How do investigative reports differ from regular news?

Investigative journalism can differ from other forms of news because of the topics it covers, its methods, and the ways in which stories are published. What distinguishes an investigative report from news reporting is: The differences between investigative reporting and other news reporting are:

A. An investigative report exposes issues or concerns that were previously hidden from the public. For example, the public may already know about illegal fishing but an investigative report will reveal additional details such as who is financing or benefitting from the illegal fishing.

- B. An investigative report often looks at issues of a vast scale and helps drive systematic change.
- C. The story dissects a complex, hidden issue and makes it understandable to the public.

We can measure the scale of the issue by looking for three main elements in investigative reports, namely how does it:

- Relate to the public interest.
- Reveal hidden wrongdoing.
- · Have a systemic impact.

Any issue can be investigated, as long it involves these three elements. Often, investigative reports start with small pieces of information, known facts or events: e.g. an unexplained financial report, citizens complaining about public services, repeated failures to report something regular like the wealth increase of a public official, etc. The key with any investigation is then to find the larger issue behind these small snippets of news.

All successful investigations start with the investigators mapping out all the relevant elements of the story and the issues in a comprehensive manner, identifying all relevant actors or stakeholders with their respective roles and responsibilities and finally, determining the complexity of the issue.

REGULAR NEWS	IN DEPTH REPORT	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Explain the 5Ws (what, where, when, who, why)	Explain the 5Ws and how.	Explain the 5Ws and how but also expand this to ask how come, how far, to what extent, who else

1. LOGISTICS & PLANNING

A well-planned investigation with carefully considered fieldwork will enable you to collect the footage, testimony or other evidence you require to complete your objectives. It will also save you time and money and ultimately help to keep you and your local contacts, informants and stakeholders safe and secure.

You should consider all aspects of the planning process, starting from the objective(s) to be investigated, effective and thorough desk-based research, timelines/travel plans/budgets for your time in the field, and the final framing or structure of the film, report or article that you plan to produce. Reviewing and reassessing your plan is an important part of the process to ensure that you are fully prepared and have the most effective, safe and secure plan for your investigation and trip.



1.1 Preliminary planning

- There are many different methods for going about planning and structuring an investigation. One of these methods is using the 'Story based inquiry' method whereby journalists conduct their research and investigation through gathering and analysing personal stories and experiences to understand patterns or insights that might help explain more complex issues. Ask yourself, what is your story hypothesis? What evidence do you need to substantiate your hypothesis?
- Stay focused or concentrate on a specific angle. Mass media outlets (magazines, newspapers, television) often have limited space to publish investigations, therefore focusing the angle will make investigative results easier to digest. Apart from limited publishing capacity, readers may not have time to read very long stories.
- Map out your story: who, what, where, when, why? How will you document and present the answers to each of these questions?
- Be methodical in your desk-based and field-based research. Structure your findings so that you don't lose key bits of evidence. Document templates can help you structure your work so that it is clear for you and your team members. Some useful templates are provided in Story-based inquiry: a manual for investigative journalists.

Template for journalists to use when planning their investigation: Journalists can use the below example template to write down all necessary components for their upcoming investigation. Note, that journalists should define who has access to this document and whether or not confidential information will be included or not.

AREA	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
TOPIC	Often a short, descriptive title that can differentiate the project and provide key information for you and your colleagues	
ANGLE	This contains details of your hypothesis or critical objectives that will originate from the investigation.	
DEADLINE	It can take a long time to conduct an investigation. Deadlines are important but be open to reviewing their feasibility if there are new developments during the course of your investigation. However, also be aware of missing news-worthy moments if you let the investigation run on without a clear time frame.	
SUMMARY	Describe the problem in as much detail as possible so that all team members understand the hypothesis, methods and objectives.	Useful templates are available for gathering, storing and presenting data.
SOURCES	Source person #1 [Mr/Mrs] Always ensure that the security and safety of your sources is your top priority. If you are worried about data/evidence/information and its ability to identify your source, leave it out.	Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 etc.
	Source person #2 [Mr/Mrs]	Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 etc.
What information is already available to you?	Desk-based and background research is key - collect news articles, clippings, reports, public/government statistics, other resources on the issue that you want to cover so that you have a firm knowledge base and background understanding for the subsequent investigation. Download everything that you can in case it is deleted later.	Hunchly (subscription) can help you record browsing data from websites you visit. Alternatively you can use the wayback machine to save webpages.
Geospatial information	Where in the world is this taking place? Provide a map, diagrams, satellite photos so that team members can get their bearings.	
Risk level	Calculate this using a risk assessment form or risk calculation matrix – For more details about risk assessment calculator please go to the appendix.	

- How can you use other data (such as trade or sales data) to better understand the issue, individuals or organisations you are investigating? Is there other publicly available data that could be useful e.g. Google Earth, UN Comtrade, Global Forest Watch, Exact Earth, National Statistic, AHU, IHS Maritime, Equasis?
- Check the Global Investigative Journalism Network for useful resources that you can access.
- Has the issue already been documented by other organisations or news outlets in the past? Have you spoken to them to learn about their experiences operating in the area/sector? Note: Are there safety/security concerns to factor in when discussing the topic with other individuals or organisations?
- Do you need to identify a local partner organisation or fixer who will assist you with the investigation? Will they be put at risk by working with you?

- Define the scope of your investigation, with an outputs list in order of likelihood of documentation/obtaining evidence and risk, taking into account security risks including potential threats (manning agency brokers, company security officers, mafia) and situational risks (working in hostile environments, on boats, in the middle of plantation, illegal black markets).
- Assess digital security risks to yourself, source persons and other stakeholders. Be aware of your digital footprint when visiting websites. When looking into targets you don't want to inadvertently become one yourself. Restrict privacy settings on social media and use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to protect your online presence.
- Be prepared for the angle and scope of your investigation to change as you uncover information. Be prepared to have your assumptions challenged.



OUTPUT	LIKELIHOOD OF DOCUMENTATION	RISKS

- With the assistance of your local partners or "fixer", map out key locations for collecting footage, photographs, activities, or testimony relevant to your investigation and story objectives.
- When considering locations, it is important to consider: distances and travel time between locations, access (are these locations publicly accessible? Do you need permission? Are they within sensitive areas that might restrict your presence there or filming/use of drones and other equipment such as GPS?).
- Use Google Maps or other mapping software to plan your routes into sensitive areas, key vantage points that will provide you with the footage you need and crucially multiple exit routes in case you need to make a swift exit/your primary exit is blocked.
- Carefully plan your schedule to ensure that you can 1) collect necessary material/evidence to complete your objectives, 2) feasibly and safely travel between locations, 3) leave sensible time buffers that allow you to accommodate unexpected events or diversions.
- Carefully plan out your budget based on your predicted schedule, logistics and living costs. You should include contingency funds to accommodate additional accommodation, fuel, boat rental, etc.

1.2 Document preparation

Preparing the correct and legal documentation for your investigation is key to saving you time and money as well as ensuring you do not encounter hostility or issues with local law enforcement or government agencies. Whether you require permits or permission to operate in certain areas should always be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- For investigative work, you should evaluate the necessary permits and permissions required for operations in the area. This should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- If you are working with the government or if it would not raise suspicion, it may be advantageous to obtain official permissions and filming permits. In some cases it may be necessary (e.g. refugee camps, restricted areas, at sea patrol, surveillance patrol).
- If necessary, make sure you obtain permits and permissions well in advance. Always carry a copy of your ID, permits (if you have them) and travel/health insurance.
- Check for special permissions necessary for drones or specialist camera equipment For instance, are drones legal where you are going? You might risk having the equipment confiscated if you do not have the correct permissions. Be especially careful using your drone near sensitive locations such as law enforcement offices, military/naval bases and airports. Use Google Maps or other mapping software to plan your flights, take off and landing zones. For Indonesia, it is necessary to look at government regulation PM 37/2020 on drone operations.



1.3 Planning for safety and accessibility

Investigations into environmental crimes can carry risks to safety and security. Although there are steps that investigators can take to mitigate these risks it is important to always remember that individual, team and source safety must always be of paramount concern. This should always remain above all other considerations of the investigation.

This section describes some measures that investigators can take in the planning phase to limit or mitigate risk. Additional safety measures are explained in section 3 whilst data security is also explored in section 6.

Since you may be working either independently or as a small team it is imperative that you prepare the appropriate safety and security equipment and protocols well in advance of your trip. This should include having a well-stocked first aid kit – you should ensure that both you and your team member are trained in using this.

Charged, reliable cell phones and sufficient mobile data (buy more data than you need if getting a pay-as-you-go sim card) are essential to keeping you in contact with your team and your colleagues in the office. In certain cases, investigations may take you to areas that do not have mobile coverage – i.e. at-sea operations or deep forests. If this is the case, you should prepare a satellite phone and be trained in its operations.

- Make sure you have a medical kit with you and that this is easily accessible at all times.
- Make sure you have reliable mobile connectivity either through a local SIM card or roaming package. Check well in advance how easy it is to get a local SIM card. For instance, in some countries it is very difficult for non-residents to acquire a local SIM card.
- Make sure that your phone is fully charged before conducting fieldwork or ensure you have a power bank that you can use to keep your phone working for extended periods of time.
- Make sure that someone knows where you are and has contact details for you while in the field. This should include information about your daily itinerary, what town you are staying in and what hotel you are in.
- Always use secure, end-to-end encrypted comms we recommend that investigators use the app Signal. We recommend not using a profile name or photo that can identify you.
- Ensure that you have a passwords to protect your laptop and all sensitive documents. In the event your laptop is confiscated, what is accessible?
- Who knows where you are? Make sure you have completed a full risk assessment and have adequate check in procedures in place.
- You may want to turn on location sharing on your phone (or via WhatsApp) so someone can monitor you while in sensitive areas.
- If you are using a messaging service to keep in contact with colleagues, you may choose to use your chat as a simple way to log important information as and when it happens. This provides you both with a secure way of letting your colleague know where you are but also gives you a useful, time-stamped record of your movements in case you need to refer to it in the future when you are writing up your final report.



Investigations at sea require meticulous planning and scrutiny to ensure that they are undertaken in a safe and responsible manner. At-sea trips should never be rushed or organised at the last minute. If you feel that something is not right about any aspect of the trip then pause, reconsider and if necessary postpone/cancel the trip. Your safety and that of the team and vessel crew should be your top priority. Never push the boundaries of the vessel, your team or the crew beyond their safe limits to try and achieve your investigation objectives.

As the list below shows, there are several considerations to bear in mind when planning an at-sea investigation. Go through these carefully and draw up a checklist that you can scrutinise with your team before you leave shore.

- Make sure you have a life jacket, fully stocked at-sea grab bag (a grab bag is an emergency water-proof bag containing all essential survival gear in easy 'grabbing' reach), trauma pack and fully-charged satellite phone (if you're going out beyond mobile range) or personal locator beacon (PLB). A number of high quality and cheap GPS locator devices are also available which can relay your position to your team based on shore.
- Always have at least one member of the team remain on shore who knows:
 - From where you left (pier, port)
 - When you left (precise time)
 - The names of the boat and captain you are on (registration number of the vessel is also useful)
 - Where you plan to go (location, coordinates)
 - What are you planning to do (document fishing activities? Fly a drone?)
 - How long you will be at sea
 - Check in times via satellite phone or other device (see section 3 on risk assessments).
 - What time you will be back (precise time)
 - What to do/who to call in an emergency (Work HQ? Coast Guard? Police?)
- Check the weather at regular intervals before you set out. There are a number of free web-based platforms such as BBC weather and ACCU weather that can give you accurate forecasts anywhere in the world. Windy.com also provides useful data on winds and wave height.
- Ensure the boat is sea-worthy and in good working order. This means checking:
 - Documents for the vessel are in order.
 - Vessel construction (check for leaks, leaning, etc).
- State/maintenance of the engines. Preferably, boats should be fitted with an independent fuel line and backup engine).
- Radio is working. Very high frequency (VHF) radio is a standard means of communication at sea. It is important that the vessel has one of these and that the captain or crew know how to use it and which emergency frequencies to use (commonly this is VHF Channel 16 156.8 MHz but always check your local radio specifications).
- Safety equipment such as fire extinguishers (check expiry dates), life rafts (if applicable), first aid kit and life jackets.
- Make sure the captain (and crew if applicable) have valid credentials, is/are competent, and knows the area well.
- Hold a briefing with the captain and the shore-based team member before you leave so that everyone knows the where/what/when/etc for the trip.
 - Never go to sea with a crew or team under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.
 - Be sure to take a hat or protection from the elements if you plan on staying at sea for prolonged periods of time.
 - Pack adequate water and provisions to last the trip. Stay hydrated.

1.4 COVID-19 precautions (as of March 2023)

EJF will always seek to preserve the health and safety of its staff, local partners, informants and interviewees. This training manual includes special safety aspects related to conducting investigations with regard to COVID-19:

- Determine well in advance whether or not you are able to travel to the intended country, region or province due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.
- Determine whether or not there are quarantine protocols for arriving passengers and whether these are blanket protocols or selective depending on country of origin.
- Ensure you have sufficient and appropriate/required personal protection equipment (PPE) for travel or operations in certain countries. EJF recommends that all staff and investigators should wear at least FFP2 masks whilst travelling.

- Establish investigation protocols for limiting potential exposure to the virus both for yourself, your team, your local partners or fixers and potential interviewees or informants. These might include:
 - ✓ Wearing a face covering when interacting with people;
 - ✓ Not shaking hands with people
 - ✓ Meeting people in outdoors, open environments;
 - ✓ Staying at least 1.5m away from other people;
 - ✓ Ensuring you, your team and local partners/fixers exercise hygiene practices to limit virus exposure and transmission.
 - ✓ Not sharing water bottles, open containers, food items with other people;
 - ✓ Minimising the sharing of equipment amongst members of the team;

2. WHAT TO DOCUMENT AND WHY

Understanding what to document and the evidence required to run a successful investigation is critical. Consider the 5Ws + why and how – 'What, who, why, where, when, what, how?' You need evidence of wrongdoing to build your story, and this can take many forms.

It is important that you have an in-depth understanding of the issue you are trying to document, whether the activity you are seeking to document is truly illegal and what laws and policies are already in place by the national, provincial or local government. This knowledge will assist you in framing your research and investigations within the realms of the law and technical regulations.

Types of evidence that you might choose to collect to corroborate your investigative hypothesis:

• First-hand documentation of an incident (potentially but not necessarily criminal) taking place (e.g., a trawler fishing illegally in a protected area, dangerous pesticides being used by untrained labourers, rainforest being cleared, wildlife trafficking, or local communities/indigenous people being repressed by military/company security).



- Testimony from key actors: suspect, victims or their families, authorized party, witnesses, indirect witnesses and experts.
- Second-hand documentary evidence for example, if the witness or victim has documentation on their cell phone in the form of videos, photos, audio, location data, etc.
- Photographic evidence gathered after the fact, such as documentation of victim injuries, environmental impacts (chemical spill, damaged reef, cleared forest, etc). If possible (and with the informed consent of the individual See section 4 for further details on what informed consent is) ask if you can collect these photos and other evidence. Try wherever possible to collect the original files rather than simply sending them via Signal or Whatsapp. Sending via messaging service risks losing valuable metadata attached to photos and videos.
 - You can get around this by plugging the phone or external memory card into a computer and extract the original files.
 - Alternatively you may be able to send photos via Whatsapp if you can send them as 'files' or 'documents' instead of as photos.
- Physical evidence, such as samples from waterways or soil for further laboratory testing, damaged nets, etc
- Open-source evidence sources such as:
- a. Documents in most cases, there is a paper trail. For example, police reports, government records, registration documents, company information, etc
- b. Existing media reports, social media posts, reports from other organisations (NGOs for example) governmental bodies or academic institutions. Note: Social media posts can be quickly deleted so it is vital that these are saved and preserved.
- c. Evidence of trade links to companies and states to which resources are ultimately sold. This could range from documents issued by the company, government or ports, or photographs of containers (including their identifying code this is absolutely crucial to establish trade links) that resources are being loaded onto.

Throughout the process, meticulous note-taking is critical. Be sure to record dates, locations (especially GPS coordinates if you are in isolated, rural environments), names and details of contacts. You can say these aloud at the start of your recordings if you are shooting video. Try to expand on field notes in a subsequent trip report as quickly as possible after you return from the investigation so that the information is still fresh in your mind.

Remember that by documenting an incident or issue, you are potentially putting yourself, the people you film or photograph, and the distributor(s) at risk if their identities are revealed. You might be able to change source names, blur faces and obscure identifying features of locations but always consider this at every stage of your investigation.

3. PERSONAL SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENT



You should carry out a basic assessment of the safety aspects and potential risks of your investigation during your planning phase. This section will expand on some of the considerations to take into account and how to minimise risk for you, your informants and partners when operating the field.

3.1 The fundamentals

Plan your emergency protocols to establish the following:

- Your risk assessment document is accurate, up to date and has received input and review from your team members and other individuals (as applicable). Templates for risk assessments are available in the appendix.
- Always have at least one daily check-in time with at least one or more chosen colleagues. What time is your daily check-in time? And with who? Establish this protocol well in advance and make sure everyone is informed.
- If you are operating in an especially hostile environment you might consider having multiple check-in times.
- Who knows where you are? Do they know your route, schedule and who you are with?
- What is the procedure if you miss the check-in? Who do they call and in what order?
- Include a dedicated section in your risk assessment if you are considering conducting at-sea investigations (see details in the appendix).

3.2 Avoiding/diffusing conflict in sensitive areas

- Be vigilant and try to continuously 'read' situations and environments while you are in the field and act accordingly the safety of you, your sources and your team are the priority.
- Note the presence and position of law enforcement, security guards, CCTV, and unusually inquisitive/suspicious/hostile individuals.
- Keep cameras and other equipment hidden as much as possible. Avoid openly photographing law enforcement, military personnel or other potentially hostile targets.
- Get your shots and get out don't hang around for longer than you need to.
- In closed areas such as ports, note entry and exit points as well as additional escape routes.
- Brief your driver to park in an easy to find spot, to face in the direction of the exit, and to stay near the car in order to leave hastily if necessary.
- Brief your fixer/local associate to read situations continuously and to notify you immediately if they sense hostility or suspicion. Make sure that your fixer stays close to you when inside sensitive areas so that they can quickly notify you of potential dangers. Identify "safe houses" in the location if there are any. A safe house may be a private and trusted location that you can use to conduct investigation activities, interviews or shelter vulnerable informants. It is wise to change safe houses if you are planning on spending prolonged periods of time in the field.

3.3 Filming in sensitive locations

If you're planning to shoot in a sensitive location (e.g., port, processing facility, company HQ, palm oil refinery, manning agency offices etc) or you're concerned about looking suspicious, think carefully about ways in which you can avoid attracting attention.

- Can you shoot covertly, maybe from inside a car or from a distance? Tinted windows are useful. A tripod can be setup from the back seat if you are using a long lens
- Can you pass as a tourist? Using an SLR will attract less attention. Shoot everything (not just the fish/vessel/person you're interested in) to avoid suspicion. What are you wearing? Do you look like a tourist?
- Can you use a drone to get the shot? If there is adequate background noise on the ground, get low to capture detail (the noise of the drone will be obscured). Hover at a safe altitude and allow the action to continue through the shot (i.e. you do not need to be moving all the time).

3.4 Driving

Travelling by road is inherently dangerous and should be taken seriously. If you are renting a car, specify that:

- The car has seat belts for all passengers
- The car is of sufficient quality and reliability
- The car has tinted windows (if necessary)
- The car has tyres which are in good condition and tire pressures have been checked recently. I.e. tyres have adequately thick tread and are not worn. Worn or flat tyres are one of the biggest causes of accidents outside of driver error.

You and your team should specify that for whoever is driving:

- They have a valid driving license and either she/he or the car is properly insured.
- They are sensible and trusted.
- No one ever drives under the influence of alcohol or other substances.
- No one drives if they are overtired, sick or injured.
- The driver does not use their phone while driving. If he\she needs to make a call, you should stop.
- All passengers should wear seatbelts.

3.5 Local fixers or local organisations/informant

To find a reliable local fixer, we have to pay attention to the following things:

- Find a local fixer through networks of local journalists or NGOs that you have trusted before. Finding a trustworthy, consistent and reliable fixer is essential to making your fieldwork run smoothly and safely.
- Communicate with the local fixer regularly prior to your arrival. Ask them to advise and prepare essential items such as transport, logistics, accommodation, etc. It might also be worth them identifying local influential figures who can assist you in an emergency.
- Ask the fixer for a detailed and up to date security briefing and plan.
- If you do not have a reliable network or your network cannot provide a local fixer, you should choose a local fixer by meeting them in person first and conducting an in-depth interview to understand their affiliations, allegiances and connections.

4. ETHICS AND ACCURACY



4.1 Informed consent and protection of sources

Your first priority is to ensure that sources will not come to any harm because they have interacted with you. Before you begin a recorded interview, explain to your sources who you are, what your objectives are and what you will be using the information they give you for. This is **informed consent**.

Before shooting an interview, offer your source anonymity (obscure their face, distort their voice) and ask them to read and sign a release form (see EJF's interview guideline in the appendix) if they're comfortable with the terms. If the interviewee is unable to read or write you can record you or your translator reading the release form to them and asking them to articulate their responses verbally.

Investigators should always remind interviewees that they have the right to pause and think about their interview participation and that they can take a break or stop the interview at any point. To make the interviewee feel more comfortable during interviews, investigators can also remind interviewees of this right when they are asking sensitive questions such as those concerning physical or sexual abuse.

Interviewees should also be reminded that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any point before, during or after the interview. Investigators should be sure to leave their contact details with interviewees so that they can reach out in such cases.

If you are filming an anonymous interview:

- Be sure that you have sufficiently protected the interviewee's identity. Do they have jewellery, tattoos, scars or injuries that might reveal their identity?
- Be sure that there are no clues in the background of your interview shot that might reveal the interviewee's identity. This could include signposts, local landmarks or vehicle registration details.
- This applies to supplementary footage that you might collect before or after the interview If in doubt, leave it out.

4.2 Verification and accuracy

The assertions you make in your final outputs (reports, films, briefings) need to be accurate and based on firm evidence that you can cite. Don't allow your conceptions of what the story should or would be to steer your conclusions. Be prepared to let the evidence guide and change the story.

- Try to corroborate allegations made by victims or witnesses with others who might have been present.
- For example, if a fisher alleges that they were assaulted while working, can you track down other crew members on board who might be able to substantiate this claim and add details? Is your evidence robust under scrutiny? Those you are accusing may seek to discredit you or your data.



• Are there ways you can anticipate these responses and counter them? E.g., using a geo-tagged camera to show that the crime you witnessed took place where you allege.

4.3 Prove the facts

When presenting your research consider what makes information a 'fact'. How do you really know that an event or problem is occurring? For example, what proof is there that fish species are declining or that a particular company, individual or agency is responsible for this decline?

Check your facts and be able to back them up with credible referenced sources, visuals and other evidence.

- Interviews (see below) and personal accounts should be verified with more than one source if possible and appropriate.
- Just because someone tells you something is true, doesn't mean that it is necessarily true or correct.
- Verify documents that are shared with you to ensure they are not falsified. You can check the credibility of a document by contacting the author (if it is safe to do so), by corroborating it against other, independent sources of the same information (i.e. additional witnesses or documenters), whether or not signatures, handwriting, etc are legitimate by checking these against similar matches.
- Before your information is published, it is prudent to request peer review from colleagues and independent authoritative sources. This is critical to objectively question, challenge and scrutinise your 'facts' to ensure that they are robust.
- Take time to discuss with colleagues the questions that may be posed to you when your information is published. What additional information would a fellow journalist, a government official, agency staff or NGO want to know. You must be able to ensure that the information you get is reliable.

4.4 Limit your bias

It is important to approach your investigation with a balanced, unbiased mindset rather than being overly attached to your original hypothesis. This can cloud your judgement and reduce the final credibility of your work. This can also extend to how you cover opposing views and opinions.

- Journalists should make every effort to give the opposing or accused party an opportunity to provide a defense or perspective that differs from the facts uncovered through your investigation this is known as the 'right to reply'.
- If the accused party is reluctant to provide confirmation or does not want to be interviewed, then in the report, the journalist is entitled to mention this.
- If the subject is evasive e.g. repeatedly ignoring phone calls, emails and letters the journalist should note their effort to obtain a response in their reporting.
- No matter how strong the evidence is, it is advisable to not engage in 'trial by press'. In their writings, journalists are advised against directly accusing a person or institution as having committed a crime before the accusation has been settled in court.
- These principles are ethically important and protect against possible defamation lawsuits or legal action.
- If you are uncertain about any aspect of your news piece, then you could consider seeking legal advice so that they can evaluate your legal risk in naming individuals/organisations implicated in your article.



Unreasonable bias in your published materials will undermine the credibility of your work and may undermine efforts to inform governments, international agencies, the public or NGOs.

5. EVIDENCE GATHERING TECHNIQUES



Investigative journalism relies on using a variety of evidence gathering techniques in combination. One of the most productive methods that EJF employs in geographies across the world is interviews with first-hand witnesses, informants, stakeholders.

5.1. Interviews

Interviews can be useful for a range of reasons. They can provide critical second-hand evidence or background information when you are unable to document something first-hand. Testimony can be one of the most powerful ways to convey something to your audience. Do everything you can to ensure that your sources are reliable and speaking to you for the right reasons.

Getting the interview right is crucial. A good source that is properly interviewed will help you understand the issue better and build material to further the investigation.

You must always make sure everyone you interview can and is giving you informed consent – if you are not sure, take time, explain, listen and follow a set procedure. If in doubt you should not and cannot use the material.

Interviews are essential to any authoritative and substantiated report or film. However, interviewing someone is not a simple process and getting it right can be difficult. Please refer to EJF's interview guide for further information about conducting interviews.

The key to good interviews is knowing what information you are seeking – what added value will your interviews give to your story? Be prepared – note down some initial questions that will cover as much necessary content or material pertinent to your investigation as possible. Always consider the objective of the interview and the knowledge/expertise of the interviewee – keep it relevant.

Think on your feet – you may only have one chance to interview the subject and have limited time to do so and you must carefully listen to and consider their answer. Does it illuminate another set of issues that you need to pursue?

Think how you can coax more information out of your interviewee and how to deal with negative answers. For example, they may not know who owns a company that is causing problems, but have they tried to find out and is there a reason why the information is unavailable?

Conducting interviews

Before beginning your interview, ensure that the interviewee is fully aware of why you are interviewing them and where you will use the information. It is one thing to talk casually to someone about their situation, it is quite another to publish their names and information in a public document or video without their consent.

Make your interviewee feel relaxed and let the conversation flow as naturally as possible – stick with it, a 30-minute filmed interview may only contain a few seconds or minutes of useful information. But, be clear in your objective, stick to the subject and return to it if necessary. Try not to ask 'leading questions' – the interview should be guided by you – but take care not to put words into your interviewee's mouth – you want to establish what they think or know, not what they think you may want to hear.

Most interviews can be recorded using a field notebook but it can be far easier – particularly for lengthy interviews or where you want a visual or audio record – to use a voice recorder or a video camera. Collecting spoken words with visual images is one of the most valuable tools for a researcher. They lend interest and can provide crucial evidence and first-hand accounts of relevant issues. Having a taped interview can be invaluable in refuting contrary claims – they are more valuable than written accounts alone.

Remember that unless you need to protect anonymity, whenever you record an interview you should start by asking the person their name, who they are and where the interview is taking place. You can also say a few words to your camera or tape recorder to note locations, events and other relevant information – your audio or video record can be an invaluable means to personalise the issue and gain publicity and support.

Please refer to EJF's interview guide for further information about conducting interviews.

Before you start...

In order to make sure interviews are conducted safely and responsibly, all interviewers should recognise and/or note down the following considerations:

- Is the current location private, quiet and comfortable for the interviewee?
- Where is the location in relation to possible perpetrators of abuse, brokers, manning agencies?
- Is the interviewee alone? If not, have you identified all possible attendees to ensure that no one who could potentially do harm to the interviewee is present?
- Do you feel safe?
- Have you noted down the name of the person who introduced you to this interviewee?
- Date, start time and end time of the interview
- Interviewee's gender
- Interviewee's migratory status (eg; internal migrant, overseas migrant, citizen)
- Language that the survey is conducted in.

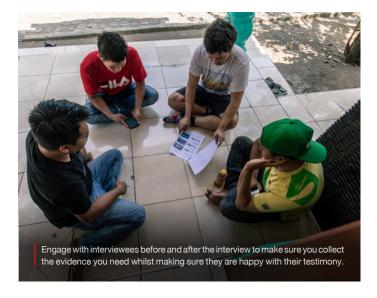


Immediately after conducting the interview, always check your notes, or footage to check you have what you want – this can save time and money. You want to avoid having to come back to speak to someone again.



REMEMBER whenever you record an interview you should start by asking the person their name, who they are and where the interview is taking place.

Be sure to protect anonymity whenever there is a risk, or you are concerned. When in doubt, leave it out.



Gathering authoritative information - check your sources

Who can you trust? Why do you trust them? Unless you need to protect their identity, try and establish your interviewee's credentials – why are you interviewing them rather than someone else. Try to include brief details such as:

- How long have they lived or worked in the area?
- What is their position in a company, the government or community?
- How long have they been a fisherman/broker/etc. This can help establish if their information is credible.

Avoid meeting multiple sources together as this could increase the risks of compromising source identities and/or could adversely influence interview responses.



You should decide on the objectives of the interview before hand. Don't come to an interview with the wrong intentions: are you here to find out background information? To verify a document or an event? To corroborate an accusation?

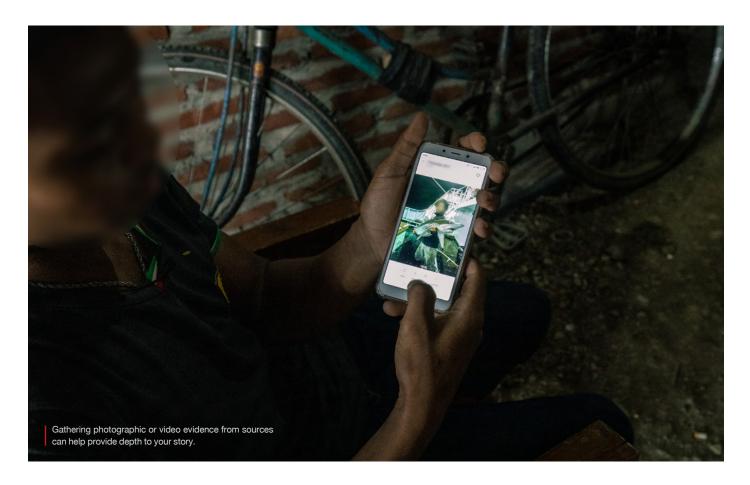


Be impartial during interviews. Don't judge or interrupt the interviewee. Cutting off the conversation may deprive you of information and could jeopardise the investigation.



Ask the interviewee to determine which parts of the interview are off the record, which are on the record, and which should only be published anonymously. Often, all three types of information are present from a single source. Sort through and make sure the editor or writer (if you don't write it yourself) knows which parts are which.

5.2. Eyewitness documentation



When conducting interviews or having casual discussions with people who know a case indirectly, sometimes these sources have documentation related to the case you are investigating. If you encounter something like this, you can practice the following:

- If the source says they have documentary evidence, ask carefully to see it. If you feel the evidence shown can support the investigation, ask permission from the source for the evidence to be copied/recorded/photographed by you.
- Be sceptical, ask tactfully where the source got the evidence and what was the motivation for the source to keep the evidence and then give it to you. If for example the data provided is an image file, make sure you can access the metadata, or you can ask about verification of the evidence to prove that the data has not been edited or processed by another party.
- If possible, you can ask the source specifically to indicate where the evidence was obtained. For example, if the evidence is a photo/video, you can ask your source to take you to the location where the photo/video was taken so that you can find out the angle at which the photo was taken.
- Be careful about sending documents, photos, or other evidence electronically. Avoid your sources sending files via work emails or devices. You should advise them to send using encrypted email or messaging providers such as Protonmail or Signal.

5.3. Location scouting and preparation

Map out investigation locations prior to arrival so that you have a good idea of where key target locations and entry and exit points are. These will make it easier to achieve investigation goals and objectives as well as keep you safe.

- Use Google Maps or other services to establish vantage points and shooting locations. Do you have line of sight from across a river for example that might be safer or less exposed?
- As part of investigation preparation, discuss with your fixer or translator whether or not you require a cover story that can divert suspicion if people ask questions about your presence. Could you pose as tourists, researchers or students for example?
- Try to keep your cover story as believable and as close to the truth as possible so as to hold up against scrutiny or interrogation. Be sure to go over this cover story with the fixer/translator and full team well in advance of your arrival.
- Before entering the location, make sure you know any potential escape routes. For example, when entering a village, pay attention to how many access roads there are.
- Do not accept interview invitations at night and in closed buildings, unless you can trust the interviewee.

5.4. Undercover investigations



In some investigations you may require covert techniques to complete your investigative objectives. This should be regarded as a last resort if other avenues for obtaining information have been exhausted. Such investigations should not be taken lightly and further consultation and training should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Safety and security should always be your top concern before undertaking any undercover investigations. What are the implications if you are caught? Are your actions potentially illegal?
- Cover stories, as discussed above, are key. The cover story/role should be complete. This could include your name, your background, your daily activities, family, work, source of livelihood and other details again keeping it as close to the truth as possible. Be sure to go over this cover story with the local partner and full team well in advance of your arrival into the sensitive location.
- Think about your choice of clothing, accessories, footwear, bags and whether it matches that of your chosen cover story.
- In some cases, it might be advisable to not carry your real identity documents on your person during undercover operations. Leave sensitive or important documents with your trusted partner or in your hotel safe. However, make sure you carry ID if local laws require you to do so.

Understanding the buddy system principle

In high-risk environments investigators may choose to employ the 'buddy' system whereby you consistently ensure the safety and security of yourself and your 'buddy'. In many high-risk environments EJF would recommend always conducting investigations in a team of at least two staff members. Other scenarios might warrant one staff member working alongside another staff member from another trusted organisation.

The function of this principle is: (1) to supervise the safety and security of fellow investigators in the field, and (2) to create the resources needed for investigations, such as emergency assistance, safe houses and cover assistance.

5.5 Tracking (Vehicular/person surveillance)

Tracking can be defined as the observation of targets (people, places of residence, vehicles, or objects), usually by car, to obtain information about the activities and identity of the target. Some important considerations to consider include:

- Prepare a cover story in case you are identified and challenged as to why you are taking the same route.
- Plan and anticipate the route, destination, expected driving time, traffic conditions and other considerations. Brief your team at regular intervals.
- Tracking activity notes should aim to gather information on the target's physical state, activities, movements and communications.
- Before beginning surveillance operations by vehicle ensure that your car is fully fuelled and there are adequate provisions for long drives. You may not be able to stop once the surveillance operation begins. EJF advises against using motorcycles for engaging in vehicular surveillance due to the inherent safety risks of using motorcycles and increased possibility of revealing investigator identity (especially if investigators 'stick out' and are easily identified as an outsider).
- If you are following a target don't get boxed in keep your distance during surveillance operations (and at least one car's length apart when stationary so you can pull away if necessary).
- If a target stops by the side of the road or pulls into a facility and you are too close to stop at a reasonable distance, do not stop immediately or near to the target. Continue driving at a normal speed and then turn around when safe to do so/when out of view.
- Take photos as appropriate during the surveillance operation so that you can log and 'timestamp' the target's journey; i.e., following a truck from a port to a factory.
- You can also deploy remote trackers that can be attached to metallic surfaces. These are useful for tracking multiple targets at the same time, especially if you have limited personnel resources, or if you are tracking targets over large distances.
- Attach trackers as discreetly as possible (i.e., in light fixtures/under truck fenders or bumpers noting however, that enclosed locations on vehicles might restrict the strength of the tracker signal).
- Only use trackers if it is absolutely safe to do so (i.e., at night and when the target vehicle is unoccupied). NB: Remote trackers often require local SIM cards which may stop working if targets travel across international borders or beyond coastal GPRS towers.
- Avoid eye contact with the target and maintain physical distancing at all times.

5.6. Counter-surveillance

- · Be vigilant and keep a close eye on your surroundings and potential threats or vehicles that may be following you.
- Get to know the local area using maps, Google Maps, and other services so that you can identify potential exit or escape routes.
- There are a range of tactics to check if someone is tailing you; increase or decrease your speed, take 3 right turns, 'stall' at a green light, stop suddenly by the side of the road. Observe how other road users respond to these tactics.
- If you suspect someone is following you:
 - 1) follow your emergency contact protocols
- 2) note down the vehicle/driver description and number plate and communicate this to your emergency contact do not take a photo of the suspect vehicle unless you are certain they will not see the camera
 - 3) abort the investigation immediately
 - 4) drive to a local police station if you suspect the threat to be a 3rd party and not law enforcement
- 5) do not drive back to your hotel unless the situation has changed or if you are absolutely certain you are no longer being followed.

5.7. Establish a connection with your audience

Investigative reports in the mass media not only present strong facts and data, but also interesting stories. Therefore, from the beginning, think about how human stories feature in your investigation.

Establishing a connection may involve immersing your audience in the story or through providing vivid details of a situation, location or person. For investigative reports, detailed observations help make the finding more authoritative and authentic. They also provide a human connection to the story, making the findings more powerful.

In the interests of time and resources you may have to prioritise who, what or where you focus your story. For example, if there is an issue that affects a community of 40 families, you may only focus on the stories of one or two families. Their stories will be the vehicle by which you convey data and facts to the public. Without human stories, investigative reports can be dry and impenetrable for a public audience.

6. DATA SECURITY

Investigators should always maintain strict data security protocols. This applies to immediate field work and securing footage, testimony and photographic evidence as well as during transportation and storing of data after an investigation has concluded. Responsible data security is critical for protecting sources and ensuring the integrity of your footage and stills.

6.1. IT safety and security

- If you are sending emails to local partners or informants or are sending sensitive documents, photographic evidence and testimonies, do so via encrypted, two-factor authenticated email we recommend using Protonmail.
- This also applies to using messaging services. We recommend using Signal to ensure that messages are secure and encrypted. Avoid using a nickname or profile photo that can be used to identify you.
- Ensure that you are using strong passwords I.e. your password should not include your name, name of the organisation, date of birth. etc.
- Strong passwords usually contain at least 15 characters, a mixture of upper and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols. For example: Sk!nny_Papaya56.

Be vigilant to possible attempts to extract passwords or other sensitive personal information from you. Malicious entities may try to trick you into giving up this information through a phishing attack. This is where an attacker will pretend to be a trusted individual to trick a victim into opening an email, message, file, or link. This link will often allow the attacker access into the victim's computer, potentially infecting it with virus or exposing passwords and other data.

This example shows us what to look out for in suspicious emails. Note that attackers are constantly evolving their tactics and it will become more difficult to notice clues such as:

- Attackers may mask their true email address behind a legitimate looking alias address in this case 'Bank of America'.
- The email is sent to "undisclosed recipients" indicating possible mass sending of such phishing emails.
- Spelling and grammatical mistakes can easily identify fraudulent emails.
- Phishing emails will try to worry or panic you into acting without thinking. This email for example requests you to review "unusual activity" on your credit card.
 - Emails requesting you to click a link or download a file are suspicious.
- Hovering over the link can give you clues as to its true identity. The real address in this example certainly isn't linked to the real Bank of America.
- If you receive an email from an unknown individual asking you to click a link, download a file, etc, pause and check who the person is. Hover over their email address to see if it is from a known organisation or company.
- Hovering over the link or file should also give you clues as to whether the file is potentially compromised. Note attackers can make viruses/malware seem as though they are pdfs or word documents so always be cautious.
- Note attackers can hack email accounts/social media/messaging services of your colleagues, friends, etc. It is important to always stay vigilant if you receive a suspicious looking email or request from any of your contacts. If in doubt, reach out to the person who sent you the message to verify its origins. Do not reply to the original message if you are suspicious.
- Check within your internet browser to see if your email addresses and passwords are safe or have been compromised. Chrome, Firefox and Safari all provide this service in settings.

6.2. Data security in the field

- Backup memory cards from all cameras at the end of every day
- Backup to two hard drives where possible
- Split the hard drives between locations and team members if possible. Keep these in a secure location or on your person if you are in the field i.e. do not leave hard drives in your suitcase or in the car overnight.
- Make sure hard drives are password protected (see section above about passwords)
- · Backup from camera card to hard drive every time to avoid corrupt files being duplicated (i.e. don't copy from one drive to another)
- If you have good connectivity, send copies of sensitive documents, photographic evidence and testimonies via secure, password protected messaging services such as Signal or secure email such as Protonmail.

• Make sure all online, cloud-based services you are using to store data are protected using strong passwords and two-factor authentication. For more information on strong passwords refer to section 6.1.

6.3. Other IT related concerns in the field

- Whilst conducting fieldwork or investigations refrain from posting on social media with potential clues as to where you are, where you are staying, eating, driving, etc. It is not advisable to post photos of recognisable locations or to tag locations or other individuals.
- If you are going to be using your personal messaging accounts (Whatsapp/Signal/LINE) for work avoid using a recognisable profile photo or full name that reveals your full identity.
- Do not use USB drives that may be given to you as a gift unless you are absolutely certain that you can trust the individual who gifted it. In the worst cases, USB drives may contain malicious malware, location tracking or listening devices.

7. PUBLICATION

Communicating the results of an investigation in an effective manner is essential for your story to be heard. Without a solid communication plan, investigative work will fail to have the desired impact. Investigative reporting can and has changed the world, but will only do so if it reaches the right audience. For that reason, the intended audience should be carefully considered at the outset and this should inform the work at every stage.

To be able to present impactful investigative results, an investigative journalism piece (in any form, whether text or video), should try to:

7.1. Keep it simple

Investigative reports for an expert audience can afford to be longer, include detailed data and use technical terminology. However, investigative reports for a public audience should avoid this complexity and try to be comprehensible for a non-expert audience. Journalists should consider the following:

- Length This should be determined by the media used and the platform where the piece will be published. Magazines or long-form writing in online media may justify pieces of up to 10,000 words. Ordinary news pieces may only be 3,000 words long. Likewise, videos can vary in length from feature documentaries to 15 second social media clips. Good editing skills, especially in selecting the most important elements, are vital across all media.
- Figures. Investigative stories are often full of data and figures. Simplify the numbers to make it easier to digest. For example, don't write IDR 2,456,740. Simply write IDR 2.5 million. You can also put very detailed numbers into tables or infographics to make them easier to digest. Don't overuse numbers or they will lose their impact
- Jargon. Avoid language that is only intelligible to an expert audience if you are targeting the public at large.

7.2 Effective storytelling

Human stories allow you to channel complex concepts and narratives through the experiences of a limited number of people. Without human stories, the results of your investigations may be dry and difficult to digest for ordinary readers. To turn data into stories, you can use these techniques:

- Focus on one or two stories. It can be the story of the victim or the story of the perpetrator.
- Use detailed descriptions so readers can immerse themselves in the story.
- Use quotes to explain data or technical matters but also to deliver emotional impact.

7.3. Multiplatform journalism

For maximum impact, try to use multiple platforms to publish your story. Each platform has its own audience and merits. If you don't have the resources to create a publication in a different format, you could collaborate with another journalist or even with other publishers. Involving multiple collaborators not only lightens the workload, but also helps to improve reach.

8. AVOIDING LAWSUITS AND LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS



Investigative reports can result in strong resistance from those who feel aggrieved. Even though there are steps that journalists can take such as ensuring targeted parties are provided the right to reply, reports may still result in legal or court action.

There are a number of ways to resolve these situations:

1. Use the Indonesian Press Act

In Indonesia, Act No. 40 of 1999, allows disputes due to the emergence of journalistic products to be resolved not in court, but through the Press Council. When there is a dispute, we must endeavour to resolve it with this Press Law. Indonesian press law guarantees the freedom of every journalist to obtain information to convey this to the

public. A Press Council, which was formed through this regulation, has the function of assisting and defending journalists who are experiencing disputes regarding press freedoms.

Although the Indonesian Supreme Court has stated that all press disputes must use the Press Law (which means they do not end up in court), there are still many law enforcement agencies or prosecutors who try to escalate cases using legal processes.

2. Company engagement

If your country doesn't have a Press Law that protects journalists' freedoms, or circumstances force you to go through a legal process, then make sure that you don't face it alone as an individual. Ask that the news agency or media company you work for protects you, provides legal assistance, and is at the forefront.

3. Help from elsewhere

You can seek legal assistance from the Press Legal Aid Institute or journalists' associations. They are contactable at Ibhpers.org or through their call centre: 021-79183485/0821-4688-8873.

4. Keep the public informed

Ensure that all legal processes are transparent and known to the public. This is very important to make prosecutors and aggrieved individuals feel scrutinised by the public. This may result in them dismissing the case.

When conducting any investigation or field research into environmental crimes or issues always ensure that you are operating within the realms of local and national laws and take care to ensure to conduct a proper assessment so that you are fully informed of potential legal risks for your actions.

- 1 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000193078
- 2 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000193078
- 3 https://www.hunch.lv/
- 4 https://archive.org/web/
- 5 https://helpdesk.gijn.org/support/home
- 6 https://www.garmin.com/en-US/p/765374
- 7 https://www.bbc.com/weather

- 8 https://www.accuweather.com
- 9 https://www.windy.com/
- 10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel_16_VHF
- 11 https://www.braveriver.com/blog/what-is-email-phishing/
- 12 https://gijn.org/2021/09/01/a-journalists-guide-to-avoiding-lawsuits-and-other-legal-dangers/
- 13 https://www.trust.org/contentAsset/raw-data/dceec155-7cb8-4860-a68e-4b463e562051/file



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