

Dataphyte Foundation

Community Storytelling Toolkit

A Practical Guide to Methane Emissions
Storytelling and Public Advocacy



Developed by Dataphyte Foundation

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Disclaimer

The Community Storytelling Toolkit, developed by Dataphyte Foundation with support from the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) and the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), is intended as a practical guide to support youth advocates, community members, civil society organisations, journalists, and other stakeholders in using methane emissions data to develop compelling, evidence-based stories that promote public awareness and advocacy.

While the toolkit draws on extensive research, publicly available methane emissions data, and practical experiences in environmental communication and community engagement, it is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It does not claim to be exhaustive, and users are encouraged to apply critical judgment and adapt the guidance to their specific advocacy, communication, and community contexts.

The views, examples, and case studies presented do not necessarily reflect the positions of any affiliated partners, contributors, or funders. References to institutions, policies, datasets, technologies, or projects are included for educational, advocacy, and illustrative purposes only.

Users are responsible for verifying information, using credible and up-to-date data sources, adhering to applicable laws and ethical standards, and ensuring their own safety when conducting community engagement or advocacy activities. Dataphyte Foundation assumes no liability for any outcomes resulting from the use of this toolkit.

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About Dataphyte

Dataphyte Foundation is a social impact organisation driving Africa's development with DATA. We provide data access, policy insight, and hyperlocal research for businesses, governments, and development organisations to achieve their interconnected democratic and sustainable development outcomes.

Its mission is to promote practices and policies that empower vulnerable and underserved groups and give voice to their experiences through actionable data, impact narratives, advocacy, and civic technology. We deliver our work through user-friendly websites, engaging infographics, and impactful social media campaigns, all of which serve as verifiable platforms for delivering on our commitments.

Dataphyte not only conducts insightful research but also contributes to capacity building and technological advancement, making a tangible impact across various sectors.

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1. How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is written for youth advocates and community storytellers (not professional journalists or scientists). Every technical term is explained the first time it's used, and you'll find a full Glossary in Section 2 that you can return to at any time.

You don't need to read this document from start to finish in one sitting. Use it the way you'd use a cookbook:

- New to the topic? Start with Sections 2 and 3 to build your foundation.
- Ready to find a story? Go straight to Section 4 (EMAT) and Section 5 (the 7-Box Framework).
- Ready to write? Jump to Section 6 for templates and worked examples you can copy and adapt.
- About to publish? Don't skip Sections 8, 9 and 12 because they protect you, your sources, and your credibility.

Whenever you see this box, it means we're stopping to explain an idea in the simplest way possible – no assumed background knowledge.



2. Key Terms in Plain Words (Glossary)

Read this section once at the start, then come back to it any time a term feels unfamiliar. Understanding these words will make everything else in this toolkit, and in EMAT itself, much easier to follow.

Term	Explanation
Methane (CH ₄)	An invisible, odourless gas. It is a powerful greenhouse gas, meaning it traps heat in the atmosphere and warms the planet. It doesn't last as long in the air as carbon dioxide, but while it's there, it warms the earth much faster.
Flaring	Burning off natural gas at an oil or gas site instead of collecting and using it. You may have seen this as a tall flame burning day and night near an oil facility.
Venting	Releasing gas straight into the air without burning it. This is often worse than flaring because unburned methane is an even more powerful heat-trapping gas.
Fugitive Emissions	Gas that leaks by accident from old or poorly maintained pipes, valves and equipment – leaks nobody planned or intended.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	Any gas that traps heat in the atmosphere and contributes to climate change. Carbon dioxide and methane are the two most talked about.
NEITI	The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative – the government-backed body that audits and publishes information on Nigeria's oil, gas and mining sector, including, more recently, emissions data.
NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution)	A country's official climate action plan submitted under the Paris Agreement. Nigeria's NDC includes a promise to cut fugitive methane emissions.
Global Methane Pledge	An international commitment, joined by Nigeria, to work toward cutting global methane emissions by 30% by 2030.
EMAT	The Emissions Monitoring and Accountability Tool – an online platform that lets you check company emissions data next to government budget data, to see if climate promises are backed by real spending.
Accountability Journalism / Advocacy	Using facts and public data to hold power-holders (companies, government agencies) responsible for their promises and their impact on people.
Right of Reply	Giving a company, agency or individual named in your story a fair chance to respond to a claim before you publish it.
Informed Consent	Making sure a person fully understands how their words, photo or video will be used and publicly agrees to it – before you record or publish anything about them.

3. Why Methane Emissions Storytelling Matters

3.1 The Problem, Explained

According to the World Bank, Nigeria emitted 193.6 million metric tons (including land-use changes) of 226.66 MtCO_{2e} into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming, making it one of the world's most persistent gas-flaring nations.

To put it simply: every flare stack you see burning near an oil facility is not just wasting a valuable resource; it is actively speeding up climate change and, often, making the air unsafe to breathe for the people living nearby.

3.2 What Nigeria Has Promised

Nigeria has made three big public promises on methane, which include joining the Global Methane Pledge, committing to a 60% reduction in fugitive methane emissions by 2031 under its Nationally Determined Contribution, and pledging to end routine gas flaring. But turning these promises into results has been slow, held back by weak infrastructure and limited enforcement.

3.3 Why Data Alone Isn't Enough

To close this gap, NEITI built a standard template so oil and gas companies could report their emissions consistently, and for the first time, some of that company-level data became public. But during the first two years companies used this template, only a minority of oil, gas and mining companies actually submitted their emissions data. A report sitting in an audit document, unread, changes nothing. A story that reaches the public, and reaches the people responsible, can.

Globally, the pattern repeats. A satellite-based alert system flagged more than a thousand major methane leaks worldwide over two years, and governments and companies acted on only about one in every hundred alerts. Data without public pressure rarely leads to action on its own.

3.4 The Human Reality Behind the Numbers

Research in flaring-affected communities has documented real, lived consequences such as households near flare sites reporting eye and skin irritation, contaminated water, and farmland and fisheries damaged over years of exposure. These are the human details that turn a statistic into a story people care about.

EXAMPLE

A data point might read: “Company X reported zero methane disclosure in the last NEITI audit cycle.” On its own, that's easy to ignore. Paired with: “Residents of [Community], who live beside Company X's flare stack, say their children cough through the night”, it becomes a story that demands an answer.

4. Meet EMAT: Your Data Starting Point

4.1 What Is EMAT

EMAT stands for the Emissions Monitoring and Accountability Tool. Think of it as a single window where you can see two things side by side, like what a company says it emitted, and what the government budgeted or spent on related climate action. EMAT was built by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) and the Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI), and it is free to use at policy-t.vercel.app/emat.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If NEITI's reports are like a company's receipts, and the government budget is like a household spending plan, EMAT is the tool that lets you compare the two, and spot when they don't add up.

4.2 What You'll Find When You Open EMAT

- **Home:** an overview and entry point to the platform.
- **Policy Data:** the core section where emissions figures and related budget or policy information are organised by company, sector or state.
- **Stakeholders:** information on the government bodies, regulators and companies involved, so you know who is responsible for what.
- **News & Reports / About Us:** background and context that can help you understand a data point more fully.

4.3 A Step-by-Step Walkthrough

1. Go to policy-t.vercel.app/emat and open the Policy Data section.
2. **Pick a starting point:** a company you've heard of, a sector (like oil and gas), or a state you know well.
3. **Read what's shown. Look for:** Has this company reported emissions data at all? Is there a related budget or policy figure shown next to it?
4. Write down, in your own words, what the data point says – imagine explaining it to a friend with no background in the topic.
5. **Ask the accountability question:** does the money and action match the promise? If a company hasn't disclosed anything, or a budget line looks too small for the scale of the problem, that gap is often your story.

4.4 Questions to Ask of Any EMAT Data Point

- Has this company or sector disclosed emissions data at all, and if not, why might that be?
- Does the budget allocation look proportionate to the scale of the climate commitment made?
- Has anything changed since the last reporting period including improvement, stagnation, or backsliding?
- Who benefits from things staying the same, and who bears the cost?

4.5 Frequently Asked Questions

What if I can't find data for the company or state I'm interested in?

A missing disclosure is itself worth reporting. Note it down and ask why the information isn't available, that absence is often more revealing than a number would be.

What if I don't understand a figure or a technical label?

Check the Glossary in Section 2 first. If it's still unclear, note the term and contact Dataphyte Foundation for clarity before you publish. It's always better to ask than to guess.

Can I trust the numbers in EMAT completely?

EMAT compiles data from public sources like NEITI reports and government budgets, which is a strong starting point. But good practice is always to cross-check a key figure against the original NEITI report or budget document where you can, especially before making a strong public claim.

5. From Data to Story: The 7-Box Framework

Every strong accountability story answers seven simple questions. This structure works whether you're writing a 900-word article or a 3-line social media post. You'll simply spend more or less time on each box depending on your format.

Steps	Ask Yourself	What Goes Here
The Data	What does EMAT, NEITI or a budget document actually show?	One clear figure, trend or gap – explained in everyday language, not jargon.
The Person	Whose life does this number touch?	One named, real person whose experience makes the number matter to a reader.
The Place	Where, exactly, is this happening?	A specific community, local government area or facility – not a vague region.
The Cause	Why is this happening?	The operational or policy failure driving the problem (e.g., ageing pipes, no gas-capture investment, weak enforcement).
The Consequence	What does this cost people, in terms they feel?	Health effects, lost income, environmental damage, or missed development – described concretely.
The Response	What is being done, or not done, about it?	What the company, regulator or government has said or done – including any right-of-reply response you received.
The Call to Action	What should happen next, and who should act?	One clear, specific ask directed at a named actor – not a vague plea.

5.1 Worked Example: Seeing the Framework in Action

Here is a short, fictional example showing how each box builds into a complete story. Use it as a model by replacing every detail with your own real research.

1. THE DATA

EMAT shows that a gas-processing company in [State] reported no methane emissions data in the most recent NEITI audit cycle, despite operating three active flare sites.

2. THE PERSON

Mrs. [Name], a 45-year-old trader in [Community], says she has treated her two children for persistent coughing three times this year.

3. THE PLACE

[Community], [Local Government Area], [State] – less than 500 metres from the company's flare stack.

4. THE CAUSE

The company has not submitted required emissions data, meaning regulators have no current, verified figure to check its flaring activity against.

5. THE CONSEQUENCE

Residents report ongoing respiratory symptoms; local farmers say crop yields near the flare site have declined over the past three years.

6. THE RESPONSE

The company did not respond to requests for comment by publication time (see Section 8 on Right of Reply). The state environmental agency says it is 'reviewing compliance.'

7. THE CALL TO ACTION

NEITI and the state regulator should require and publish this company's emissions data before its next operating licence renewal.

6. Choosing Your Format (with Worked Examples)

Pick your format based on two things: whom you're trying to reach, and what your strongest material is – a number, a voice, or an image.

Format	Best Platform	When to Use It
News/Feature Article	Blog, newsletter, partner outlet	You have a full investigation: strong data plus a community case study worth 600-900 words.
Social Micro-Story	Instagram, X (Twitter), Facebook	You have one striking number or photo and want fast, wide reach.
Explainer Thread	X (Twitter), Threads	You need to break a confusing topic ('What is methane, really?') into simple, shareable steps.
Radio/Audio Script	Community radio, WhatsApp voice notes	Your audience has low literacy or limited internet access, but a phone and a radio.
Photo Essay	Instagram carousel, print	Visuals – flare stacks, damaged farmland, daily life – tell the story better than words alone.
Short Video (60-90 sec)	TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts	You want to reach a young, mobile-first audience with an emotional, fast-paced story.

6.1 Template A: News/Feature Article (600-900 words)

- **Headline:** lead with the human stake, not the statistic (e.g., 'Every Night, Flames Light Up Their Sky, and Their Medical Bills').
- **Opening (Boxes 2 + 3):** open on the person and the place.
- **The Data (Box 1):** introduce the EMAT/NEITI figure or gap in the second or third paragraph, explained in plain language.
- **The Cause and Consequence (Boxes 4 + 5):** explain why this is happening and what it costs.
- **The Response (Box 6):** include your right-of-reply attempt to the company or agency.

The Call to Action (Box 7): close with what should happen next and who is responsible.

EXAMPLE OPENING PARAGRAPH

“Mrs. Amaka Okon has learned to recognise her children's cough before it starts – a dry, rattling sound that begins most nights around the time the flare stack behind her compound lights up the sky. For three years, she has made the ten-minute walk to the community clinic more times than she can count.”

6.2 Template B: Social Media Micro-Story (2-3 posts)

Post 1 (Hook): one striking data point + one striking image or short video clip.

Post 2 (Human stake): one quote or one-line story from an affected resident.

Post 3 (Call to action): what should followers do – share, tag an official, sign a petition, attend a town hall?

EXAMPLE POST 1 CAPTION

“This company hasn't reported its methane emissions in over a year. Its flare still burns every night in [Community]. 🔥 #MethaneAccountabilityNG”

6.3 Template C: Radio/Audio Script (2-3 minutes)

[INTRO – 10 sec] Host introduces the topic in one sentence.

[DATA – 20 sec] Host explains the EMAT/NEITI figure in everyday language, avoiding jargon.

[VOICE – 60 sec] Recorded or paraphrased testimony from a community member (always with consent – see Section 9).

[CONTEXT – 30 sec] Host explains Nigeria's commitment (e.g., the NDC methane target) and the gap.

[CALL TO ACTION – 20 sec] Host tells listeners what they can do or where to find more information.

6.4 Template D: Short Video Script (60-90 seconds)

[0-5s] Hook: striking visual (flare stack, affected farmland) + on-screen text with the key statistic.

[5-20s] Voice-over or on-camera advocate explains what the data shows.

[20-50s] Cut to community voice or B-roll showing the human impact.

[50-70s] Advocate explains what should change and who is responsible.

[70-90s] Call to action + toolkit/EMAT link on screen.

6.5 Template E: Explainer Thread (5-8 posts)

Post 1: Hook question ('Why does a burning flame near your community affect the whole planet?')

Posts 2-3: Explain methane and its sources in plain words (use the Glossary).

Posts 4-5: Introduce the specific data point and why it matters locally.

Posts 6-7: Explain Nigeria's commitments and the gap you found.

Post 8: Call to action and link to the full story or EMAT.

7. Finding and Talking to Community Sources

7.1 Before You Go: Preparation

- Identify who is affected: residents, local leaders, health workers, farmers or fisherfolk near the site in question.
- Research the location in advance – know the company, the facility, and any past reporting on the area.
- Plan your questions ahead of time, but stay flexible and listen.
- Bring a colleague where possible, and let someone know your location and expected return time.

7.2 Simple, Respectful Interview Questions

- “Can you tell me what daily life is like living near [the facility]?”
- “Have you or anyone in your household noticed any health changes you connect to the flare/gas activity?”
- “How long has this been happening, and has anything changed over time?”
- “Has anyone from the company or government spoken with your community about this?”
- “What would you want the company or government to know or do?”

7.3 Plain-Language Communication Tips

- Avoid technical terms like 'fugitive emissions' or 'NDC' when speaking with community members – describe what you mean instead.
- Let the person speak in their own words; don't put words in their mouth or lead the answer.
- Thank people for their time and explain what will happen next (when/where the story will be published).

8. Fairness and Right of Reply

Before you publish any claim naming a company, agency or individual, give them a fair, genuine chance to respond. This protects the people you name, and it protects your own credibility as an advocate.

8.1 A Simple Right-of-Reply Process

- Identify the right contact – an official media, communications or public affairs contact where possible.
- Send your questions in writing (email or official channel) with a clear, reasonable deadline (2-3 working days is standard).
- Ask specific questions related to your findings, not vague ones.
- If you receive no response by your deadline, say so plainly in your story: 'Company X did not respond to requests for comment by the time of publication.'

- If you do receive a response, represent it fairly and accurately, even if it complicates your story.

EXAMPLE REQUEST

“Dear [Company], I am preparing a community report on emissions reporting in [State]. EMAT/NEITI records show no emissions disclosure from your company in the most recent audit cycle. Could you clarify why, and whether this will be addressed in future reporting? I would appreciate a response by [date].”

9. Ethics and Safety Guidelines

Fieldwork in flaring and spill-affected communities carries real risks and sensitivities for both storytellers and interviewees. Community members interviewed about environmental harm are often already dealing with illness, economic loss or trauma, so advocates must prioritise dignity and consent over dramatic footage or quotes.

9.1 Protecting the People You Speak With

- Always obtain informed consent before recording, photographing or naming anyone; explain clearly how the material will be used and where it will be published.
- Never misrepresent yourself, your affiliation, or the purpose of your visit to a community.
- Avoid extractive interviewing: don't take a story and leave. Share published material back with the community where possible.
- Protect vulnerable or at-risk sources; offer anonymity where identification could expose someone to retaliation.
- Avoid images or language that reduce affected people to symbols of suffering without agency; show resilience and response, not only harm.

9.2 Protecting Yourself

- Travel in pairs where possible, and inform a colleague of your location and expected return time.
- Avoid confrontational encounters with company or security personnel; if a situation feels unsafe, leave calmly.
- Keep your Dataphyte/CJID contact informed of any fieldwork plans in advance.
- Trust your instincts – no story is worth compromising your safety.

10. Publishing, Amplifying and Measuring Impact

10.1 Where to Publish

- Share through Dataphyte Foundation or CJID platforms where possible, in addition to your own social media.
- Tag relevant regulators, NEITI, and state government handles where appropriate to prompt a response.
- Use a consistent hashtag across the youth advocate cohort, so all our stories are easy to find together (e.g., #MethaneAccountabilityNG).

10.2 Building Momentum Over Time

- Package strong individual stories into a periodic compilation (thread, newsletter or briefing) to sustain visibility over the life of the project.
- Revisit old stories: if a company responds late, or a budget changes, publish a short follow-up.

10.3 Tracking Your Impact

Keep a simple log for every story you publish. This evidence matters – both to show your own growth as an advocate, and as input for the project's final report.

SIMPLE TRACKING LOG

For each story, record: Date published | Platform | Format used | Views/shares/comments | Any official or company response | Any follow-up action taken.

11. Common Mistakes to Avoid

Common Mistake	Do This Instead
Leading with a big technical number and no human context	Open with a person or place, then bring in the number to explain what it means for them.
Publishing a claim about a company without asking for their side	Always attempt a right of reply, and say so in the story even if they don't respond.
Naming or filming a vulnerable source without clear consent	Explain how the material will be used and get clear, informed agreement first – every time.
Using jargon like 'fugitive emissions' or 'NDC' without explaining it	Define any technical term in plain words the first time you use it (see the Glossary).
Ending a story with no clear ask	Always close with one specific action and who should take it.
Copying data from EMAT without double-checking	Cross-check figures against a second source (a NEITI report, a budget document) where possible.
Treating one dramatic photo as the whole story	Pair strong visuals with at least one data point and one accountability question.

12. Quick-Reference Checklist

Print this page or keep it open on your phone. Go through it before you publish anything.

✓	Before You Publish, Check That...
☐	I have one clear EMAT/NEITI/budget data point, explained in plain language.
☐	I have double-checked that data point against at least one other source, where possible.
☐	I have a named person and a specific place grounding the story.
☐	I have explained the cause and the real-world consequence in everyday terms.

✓ Before You Publish, Check That...		
☐		I have attempted a right of reply from the company or agency involved.
☐		I have obtained informed consent from anyone I've named, quoted, photographed or filmed.
☐		I have protected the identity of any source who could face retaliation.
☐		I have ended with one clear, specific call to action.
☐		I have chosen the format and platform that best fits my intended audience.
☐		I have a plan to track engagement and any official response for our records

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- Additional background: Natural Resource Governance Institute & Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI). Emissions Monitoring and Accountability Tool (EMAT). Available at policy-t.vercel.app/emat.

Dataphyte Products and Key Initiatives

Goloka

Goloka is the real-time hyper-local data collection platform, helps businesses and development organisations gain insights through their network of verified field agents.

Anfani

Anfani is a social accountability platform that provides beneficial ownership data, linking government contracts to contractors. It empowers civic actors and journalists to demand accountability and improved service delivery

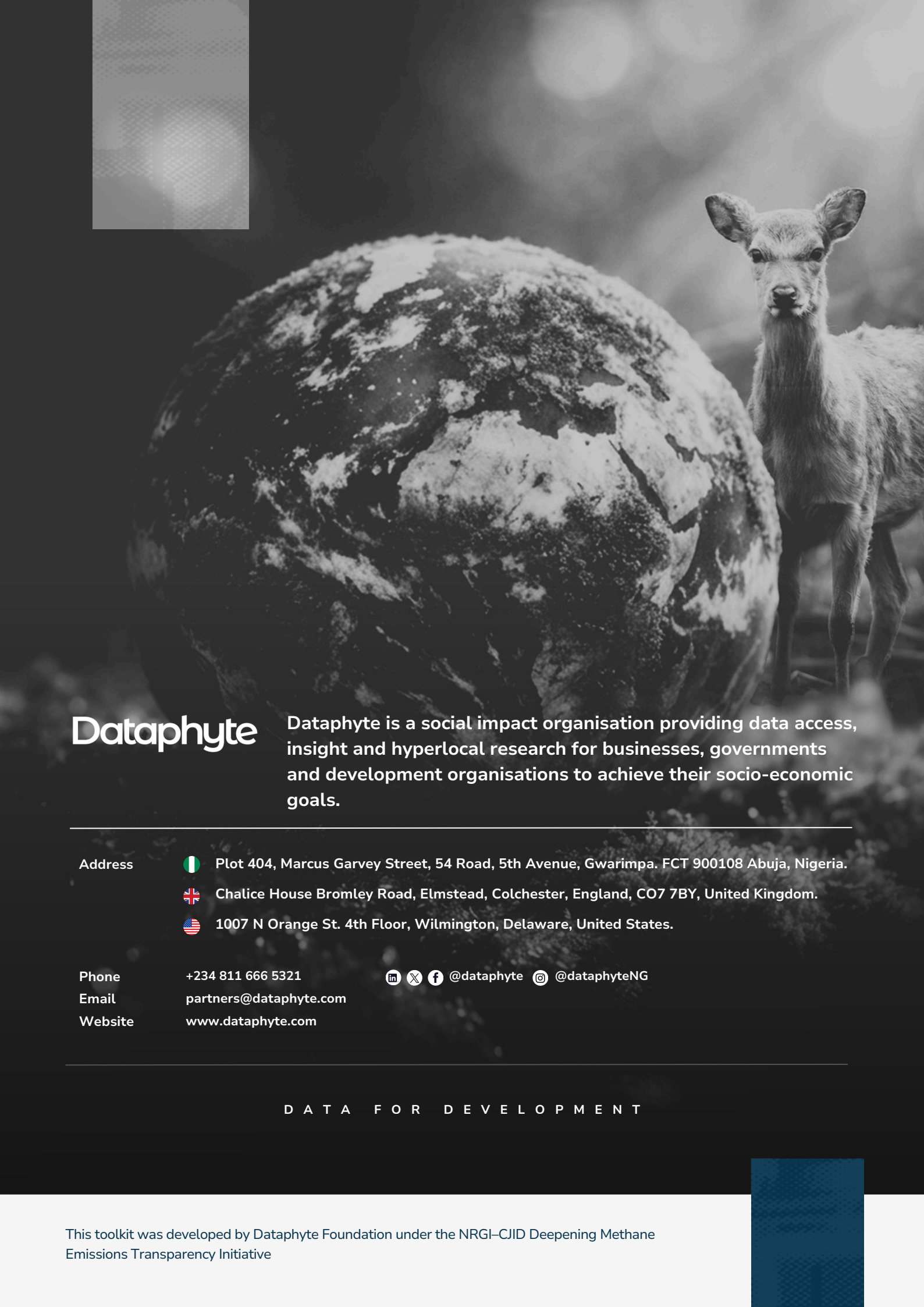
Dataphyte

Dataphyte Hub offers inviting workspaces in a serene environment, featuring high-speed internet, 24/7 power and a professional studio equipped with top-quality sound and video editing facilities for post-shooting services.

DataPLEX provides both free and paid access to exclusive datasets on the economy, education, energy, environment, finance, health and security required for making informed business, policy, and development decisions.

UBIA

Nubia is an AI platform that analyzes data to produce accurate newsroom-quality articles, helping newsrooms better utilize development data for stories they couldn't write before.



Dataphyte

Dataphyte is a social impact organisation providing data access, insight and hyperlocal research for businesses, governments and development organisations to achieve their socio-economic goals.

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