CHECKMATE
to Climate Misinformation

FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Four ready-to-use simulation games on climate change, decision-making, and the spread of mis-, dis- and malinformation

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Living Labs and Game-Based Learning to Checkmate Climate Misinformation

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About the CHECKMATE Project

CHECKMATE - Living Labs and Game-Based Learning to Checkmate Climate Misinformation, is an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership project in Youth. The project brings together five organisations from Latvia, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Greece, all of them working at the intersection of climate education, media literacy and non-formal youth work.

The starting point for the project is simple but troubling: young people across Europe care deeply about the climate, yet many feel paralysed, overwhelmed, or unsure who to believe. Their information landscape is saturated. Some of what they read is true. Some of it is wrong by accident. Some is wrong on purpose. And much of it is technically true but stripped of the context that makes it meaningful. This is the territory of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation, and it is exactly where political and economic decisions about climate change are being shaped.

CHECKMATE responds to this challenge by equipping youth workers with practical, tested, game-based tools that turn climate decision-making into something young people can step inside and feel. Rather than lecturing about the climate crisis or about media literacy, the project invites young people to inhabit conflicting roles, councillor, business owner, activist, ordinary citize, and work their way through the kinds of dilemmas that real communities are facing right now. They argue, vote, change their minds, encounter manipulated information, and afterwards reflect on what just happened to them and to the people around them.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

CHECKMATE aims to enhance the capacity of youth workers to recognise and respond to climate misinformation among young people. To make that aim concrete, the project pursues three objectives:

1. Equip youth workers with effective tools — including a fact-checking toolkit and four simulation games — to assess, identify and counter climate-related misinformation in their everyday work.
2. Provide youth workers with innovative, game-based educational resources that engage young people experientially, building motivation and retention beyond what passive content delivery achieves.
3. Empower young people to critically assess climate information and become active advocates for accurate climate knowledge in their communities.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Five organisations co-designed the materials in this guide:

Ecological Future Education, Latvia — project lead. Non-formal education NGO promoting environmental awareness, sustainability and active citizenship through game-based and experiential methods.

EMOTiC, Austria — youth NGO specialising in design-thinking, board games, escape rooms and creative-intelligence methods, with a strong focus on climate education and media literacy.

Szatyor Egyesület, Hungary — eco-literacy NGO using systems thinking, deep ecology and the Green Competence Framework to train eco-trainers and community members.

ACDC, Romania — training provider supporting disadvantaged rural communities through digital inclusion, ICT and community mentoring.

Roes Cooperativa, Greece — social cooperative offering experiential and non-formal education through twelve methods including gamification, STEAM and outdoor learning.

PROJECT RESULTS

CHECKMATE produces three interlocking outputs: a Fact-Checking Toolkit for youth workers, this Facilitator Guide containing four full climate simulation games, and a series of Game-Based Living Labs in which youth workers and young people test the materials together and feed their experience back into the next iteration. By the end of the project, at least 100 youth workers will have been trained and at least 400 young people will have taken part in the games and Living Labs.

Welcome to the Guide

Dear facilitator,

Thank you for opening this guide. Whatever brought you here, curiosity about simulation games, a need for new climate-education tools, an upcoming youth exchange or a school project, we are glad to have you. The pages that follow contain four ready-to-use simulation games and the practical knowledge you need to run them well.

You do not need to be a climate scientist, a debate coach or an experienced game master to use this guide. You do need to be willing to listen, to give participants real space to disagree, and to step back at the right moments so that the learning belongs to them rather than to you. If you can do that, the rest is technique, and technique is what this guide is for.

The first part of the guide (about twenty pages) is the educational backbone. It explains why simulation games work, how climate misinformation operates, and how to prepare yourself, your space and your participants. It introduces the four games and helps you decide which one fits your group best. It offers concrete tactics for facilitating heated debate without losing control, for running a debrief that turns the experience into learning, and for handling difficult moments when they appear.

The second part contains the four games themselves, presented as annexes. Each game has been restructured into the same template, overview, learning objectives, story, roles, step-by-step flow, debrief and printable materials, so that once you have learned one, the others feel familiar. You do not need to use all four. Pick the one that suits your group and your time, run it, debrief well, and come back later for another when you are ready.

Climate misinformation is not going away. The young people you work with already swim in it. What they often lack is a safe place to slow down, take a role they would never normally take, argue passionately for a position they would never normally hold, and discover from the inside how easily an articulate argument can move a room — and how easily a half-truth can move it further. That is what these games offer. We hope you enjoy running them as much as we have enjoyed making them.

— The CHECKMATE partnership

How to Use This Guide

This guide is structured so you can either read it cover to cover or jump straight to the section you need. It is written for youth workers; you do not need a teaching qualification or specialist climate knowledge to use it well.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO SIMULATION GAMES

Read Part I in order. The chapters are sequenced as a journey: why these games work, what climate misinformation looks like, what is in the toolkit, how to choose, how to prepare, how to run, how to debrief and how to handle the bumps. Then choose one game and read the annex carefully at least twice before you run it.

IF YOU HAVE RUN SIMULATIONS BEFORE

Skim the educational chapters, focus on Chapter 4 (choosing the right game) and the relevant game annex, and pay special attention to Chapter 7 on the debrief, the misinformation reveal is the heart of every CHECKMATE game and benefits from a deliberate, well-paced debrief.

IF YOU ARE SHORT ON TIME

Quick-start path

1. Read ‘Choosing the Right Game for Your Group’ (Chapter 4) — about 4 pages.
2. Pick one game using the comparison table.
3. Read the corresponding annex in full, including the printable materials.
4. Read ‘Preparing the Session’ (Chapter 5) and ‘The Debrief’ (Chapter 7).
5. Run the game.

Total preparation time, end to end: about three hours

SYMBOLS YOU WILL SEE IN THE GAMES

To make the game annexes easy to scan, each one uses the same set of recurring elements. You will see a metadata box at the start (theme, time, players, age, materials), a story panel, a roles overview, a step-by-step flow, a debrief section and printable handouts. Tip boxes (yellow) flag practical advice; note boxes (blue) flag important reminders; green boxes highlight learning takeaways.

1. Why Use Simulation Games in Youth Work

A simulation game is a structured experience in which participants take on roles, follow a set of rules, and work through a problem that mirrors something real. They are not theatre, there is no script and no audience. They are not workshops in the lecture-and-flipchart sense, either. They sit somewhere between role-play, debate and serious play, and they have a long, well-documented history in everything from diplomatic training to medical education to climate negotiation.

In youth work, simulation games solve a stubborn problem: how do you teach something complex, contested and emotionally charged without either oversimplifying it or boring everyone? Climate change is exactly that kind of subject. So is the spread of online misinformation. So is democratic decision-making under pressure. A simulation lets young people walk into the middle of these tensions, not as observers, but as people whose decisions matter.

WHAT MAKES A SIMULATION DIFFERENT FROM A DEBATE

In a debate, participants usually argue for a position they at least partly hold. In a simulation, the role is assigned. A young person who is privately worried about the climate may be asked to play an oil-company representative whose job depends on the project getting approved. A young person who is sceptical of green policies may be asked to play an environmental NGO leader. Within the rules of the game they must argue their assigned position convincingly, even if it conflicts with what they personally believe.

This dislocation is the single most powerful pedagogical move the games make. Once you have stood up in front of a room and made the strongest possible case for a position you do not personally hold, two things happen. First, you understand the position better than any reading could have taught you. Second, you understand how persuasion works from the inside — including the tricks. The next time you see those tricks online, in a politician's speech, in a slick advert, you recognise them, because you have used them yourself.
[5]

FIVE REASONS SIMULATIONS WORK FOR YOUTH AUDIENCES

1. They turn passive consumers into active agents.

Most climate education delivers information at young people. Simulation games put them in charge of decisions. The shift in posture, from receiving to deciding, changes how attention works. Participants lean in because the outcome depends on them.

2. They make complexity tangible.

Climate dilemmas involve trade-offs between economy, ecology, health, jobs, fairness and time. These are hard to feel in the abstract. When you are the restaurant owner whose child has asthma but whose business depends on tourists who would not come if there was an oil rig on the horizon, the trade-off is no longer abstract. You feel the weight.

3. They develop empathy by structural compulsion.
Empathy exercises ('imagine you are them…') often fail because they let the participant remain themselves. A role assignment does not. You must speak for that character, hear their objections, defend their interests — and in the debrief discover that the person you were arguing with was assigned, just like you. The 'opposing side' becomes a person, not a category.

4. They expose how persuasion really works.
In every CHECKMATE game, mis-, dis- and malinformation are deliberately seeded into the materials. Participants experience first-hand how an emotionally charged headline shifts a vote, how a confident speaker makes a weak argument feel strong, how a half-truth gains traction because it has just enough fact in it. The reveal at the end of the game, when the facilitator names what was real, what was wrong, and what was selectively true, is often the moment the learning lands.

5. They are repeatable, scalable and culturally portable.
A good simulation works equally well in a school classroom in Athens, a youth-centre afternoon in Riga and an Erasmus+ exchange in Vienna. The mechanics are the same; only the participants change. Once your group has played one game, the second runs faster, because the format is familiar.

WHAT SIMULATIONS ARE NOT GOOD AT

Be honest with yourself about the limits. A simulation is not the place to deliver detailed scientific content — if you want participants to learn the chemistry of CO_2, that needs a different lesson. Simulations are also not therapy; if a group is in conflict or has unresolved trauma, the heightened emotional pitch of a role-play can amplify rather than help. And they are not a substitute for action: a great simulation about climate decision-making can leave participants energised but frustrated unless you give them a concrete next step (a follow-up activity, an action they can take). Chapter 14 deals with this.

Takeaway for facilitators
Simulation games work because they shift participants from passive consumers of information to active decision-makers. They build empathy through role assignment, expose persuasion mechanics from the inside, and turn abstract trade-offs into felt experience. Use them when you want learning to stick - not when you want to deliver a fact set.

2. Climate Education Meets Media Literacy

Climate change is no longer primarily a scientific debate. The science is clear and broadly settled. What is contested, fiercely, profitably, sometimes deliberately, is what we should do about it, who should bear the costs, who is to blame, and which solutions are real. That contest is fought in newsfeeds, comment sections, group chats, video clips and political speeches, where information of very different qualities mingles freely.

This is why climate education and media literacy belong together. A young person who knows the science of climate change but cannot tell a credible source from a viral hoax is not yet equipped for civic life. Equally, a young person who is sceptical of every source has no compass at all. The skill we are building is not cynicism. It is the ability to slow down, check, compare, ask who benefits, and form a reasoned view that they can defend and adjust.

HOW CLIMATE MISINFORMATION TYPICALLY SHOWS UP

In our co-design work with young people across the five partner countries, the same patterns appeared again and again. The CHECKMATE games are built around them, and you should expect to encounter them in the discussions your participants will have:

- Outdated facts presented as current. Five-year-old data about EV battery lifespans cited as if it were today's reality. The original number was once true; the world moved on; the claim did not.
- True facts shorn of context. EV battery production really does emit a lot of CO_2. What is omitted is that this emission is offset within two to three years of driving, after which the EV continues to outperform a petrol equivalent. Both halves of the picture are needed.
- Fabricated authorities. Studies that do not exist, professors at universities that do not exist, statistics that have no source. These spread because the form of an authoritative claim is enough to convince a fast scroller.
- Emotional bait. Headlines designed to provoke outrage, fear or guilt - ‘They are coming for your car’, ‘If you care about your children's lungs you must…’. The emotion bypasses verification.
- False dichotomies. ‘Either we ban combustion cars by 2035 or we destroy the planet.’ ‘Either we build the airport or the city dies.’ Real choices are almost never that binary.
- Manipulated visuals and statistics. A graph with the y-axis cut off to make a 0.3% rise look like a cliff. A photograph from a different protest captioned as if it were this one.

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PARTICULARLY EXPOSED

Two facts about young audiences make this work urgent. The first is that young people consume far more of their information through social media than older generations, and social-media platforms reward engagement, not accuracy. The second is that young people care more about climate change. They are the audience most motivated to share what they read, and motivation is exactly what bad-faith actors exploit.

This is not the young people's fault. The information environment they inherited is genuinely harder to navigate than the one their parents grew up in. The CHECKMATE games are designed to give them the experience of being inside the storm, on the receiving and the giving end of misinformation, in a setting safe enough for them to learn from it without being harmed by it.

Takeaway for facilitators

You are not running a science class. You are running a media-literacy experience that uses climate as the laboratory. The aim is not to tell participants what to think about climate change, it is to give them a felt experience of how information shapes the decisions a community makes, so they leave better equipped to navigate their own information environment.

3. Misinformation, Disinformation & Malinformation

All four CHECKMATE games seed three kinds of false or misleading information into the experience and reveal them in the debrief. Before you run any of the games, make sure you can explain the three categories cleanly to your participants. The distinctions matter.

THE THREE CATEGORIES

Misinformation = a mistake
False or inaccurate information shared without intent to deceive. The person sharing it believes it to be true.
Example: a friend reposts an article claiming EVs emit more CO_2 than diesel cars because they read the headline and missed the methodology. They are not lying. They are wrong, and they are spreading the wrongness in good faith.

Disinformation = an intentional lie
False information created and spread deliberately to deceive, manipulate or cause harm - usually for political, ideological or financial gain.
Example: a fake news website publishes an invented study showing that a renewable-energy project will bankrupt the local council, timed to land the week before a vote. The site exists to shape the vote.

Malinformation = truth weaponised
Information that is technically true, but selected, framed or stripped of context in order to mislead, harm or manipulate.
Example: 'EV batteries cause environmental damage and child labour.' Both halves are true in some cases. What is omitted is the existence of EU regulation, ongoing reform, and the comparison with the harms of the fossil-fuel system. The truth is being used as a weapon, not as a guide.

HOW TO SPOT EACH KIND - A QUICK CHECKLIST

Share this checklist with your participants in the debrief, or print it as a hand-out. It is short on purpose.

Signs of misinformation

- Vague, hedged language: 'I think', 'maybe', 'someone told me'.
- No source, or a link that does not actually support the claim.
- Shared widely by non-experts; nobody seems to be the original.

Signs of disinformation

- Highly emotional or extreme wording - outrage, fear, contempt.
- Source looks fake or mimics a real news brand.
- Repeats quickly across many accounts with suspiciously coordinated timing.

Signs of malinformation

- Uses real facts but no context, no comparison and no time-frame.
- Cherry-picked quotes, single statistics, one graph from a long study.
- Aimed at damaging someone's reputation or making the audience afraid.

The seven-step verification habit

Give your participants a simple, repeatable habit they can use any time they encounter a claim online. Most of the games end with this list, in one form or another:

1. Pause. Do not share immediately.
2. Check the source. Is it reputable? Who wrote it? Who funds them?
3. Read beyond the headline. Does the article actually say what the headline implies?
4. Look for context. Is there full data, or only one number?
5. Verify with two or three trusted sources. Do not rely on a single post.
6. Ask yourself: who benefits from me believing or sharing this? (the motive test)
7. If it is harmful or unclear - do not forward. Ask, or report.

Takeaway for facilitators

These three categories are not academic. They map onto distinct response strategies. You correct misinformation by sharing better information. You counter disinformation by exposing the producer's intent and motive. You contest malinformation by restoring the missing context. Make sure your participants leave the game able to do all three.

4. Choosing the Right Game for Your Group

CHECKMATE includes four simulation games. Each places participants inside a different climate dilemma faced by a fictional community. Each seeds mis-, dis- and malinformation into the materials and reveals them in the debrief. Each ends with a vote, and each is followed by a structured reflection. The four games share a common pedagogical DNA but differ in topic, scale, format and level of difficulty so that you can build a progression with your group, or pick the one that fits a single session best.

AT-A-GLANCE SUMMARY

Game	Topic	Players	Time	Difficulty
Oil Rig or No Rig	Offshore oil drilling near a coastal town	5 individual roles + facilitator (10–25 in teams)	~3 hours	Medium
To Build or Not to Build	Building an airport in a protected nature area	12–20 across 4 dimensions	~3 hours	Medium–High
The Electric Shift	National ban on petrol/diesel cars by 2035	16–24 across 4 groups + audience	~3 hours	Medium
Shadows of the State	Investigation into a poisoned lake; six factions tied by alliances and secret liabilities	12–18 across 6 factions	~90 min	Medium

OIL RIG OR NO RIG

The fictional coastal town of Radu must decide whether to allow an international oil company to build an extracting rig ten kilometres offshore. Five councillors, a company representative, an environmental NGO, a farmers' union leader, a popular local politician and a restaurant owner, meet in three council sessions. Between sessions, news articles begin to circulate; some accurate, some misleading. The vote is informative for the first two rounds and binding in the third. The game suits a small, articulate group and rewards careful preparation; participants who like to argue thrive in the council format.

TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

In the fictional Republic of Amasea, the government has proposed building a new international airport in a region of protected forest. Twelve to twenty participants are split into four 'dimensions', economic, political, environmental and social, each with three or more characters whose interests pull in different directions. Each character has a public position and a confidential personal interest. A NEWS FLASH halfway through the game leaks information that re-frames the debate. A two-thirds majority is required to approve construction. The game suits larger groups and produces some of the richest debriefs in the toolkit, partly because of the dimension structure and partly because of the ethical tension built into each role.

THE ELECTRIC SHIFT

It is 2030. The mid-sized EU country of Euronia has proposed banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035. Four stakeholder groups, the Government, an electric-car business, fossil-fuel vehicle owners, and an EcoJustice activist movement, gather at an Urgent Society Meeting. Each group's information pack is deliberately weighted: one carries the truth, one disinformation, one misinformation, one malinformation. A civil-society audience listens, asks questions and votes alongside the four groups. The vote happens three times across the simulation, with social-media news drops in between. The game is the most explicitly designed around media literacy and works particularly well when you want misinformation typology to be the headline learning.

SHADOWS OF THE STATE

Greenwell Lake, in the once-struggling town of Merrinport, is dying. Industrial waste, fashion-factory runoff, political negligence, complicit media, wealthy hypocrisy and working-class survival shortcuts have all played a part. Six factions sit around the investigator's table to debate a single question: which faction is the biggest threat to the lake? Each faction has one public alliance and one secret liability with another faction. Strategic 'true-action' cards let factions deflect blame in dramatic moments. The vote at the end appears to find a culprit, but the educational pivot of the debrief is that the search for 'the' culprit is itself the trap. Of all four games this is the shortest (90 minutes), the most theatrical, and the one that lands the systemic-responsibility lesson hardest.

HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM

All four games can stand alone. None of them requires the others. Use the questions below to choose.

How many people are in your group?

Group size is the first filter. Oil Rig or No Rig works with as few as five articulate participants and scales up to about twenty by running the five roles in teams. To Build or Not to Build needs at least twelve and works best in the eighteen-to-twenty range. The Electric Shift needs sixteen to twenty-four, four groups of four to six, plus a civil-society audience. Shadows of the State works with twelve to eighteen across six factions. If you have fewer than twelve people, choose Oil Rig or No Rig.

How much time do you have?

Three of the four games run in three hours including debrief; Shadows of the State is shorter at ninety minutes plus a fifteen-to-twenty-minute debrief. Oil Rig is the most condensed of the long games and works in a single half-day. To Build or Not to Build benefits from a generous coffee break in the middle and works best when you have a full afternoon. The Electric Shift can be compressed to two hours if you cut one of the voting rounds. If you only have an hour and a half, choose Shadows of the State; it was designed for that constraint.

What does your group already know?

If your group has never encountered the mis-/dis-/malinformation distinction, The Electric Shift introduces it most explicitly because each group's pack is a clean instance of one category. If your group is comfortable with the distinction and you want them to spot it themselves rather than have it allocated, Oil Rig or No Rig and To Build or Not to Build are better choices because the misinformation is woven in alongside the truth rather than carried by a single role.

What is your group's emotional and political climate?

These games can become heated. If your participants are likely to bring strong personal stakes, a young person whose parents work in oil, a local environmental activist, somebody who has experienced eco-anxiety, choose roles deliberately so that nobody is asked to play the position they would have to defend in real life. The role-as-armour principle (see Chapter 5) is your friend.

What do you want them to leave with?

Pick the game by the learning outcome you most want, not the topic that sounds catchiest. If you want them to feel the difficulty of multi-stakeholder negotiation, choose To Build or Not to Build. If you want a sharp media-literacy reveal, choose The Electric Shift. If you want a tight, articulate council-chamber argument with rich news-cycle dynamics, choose Oil Rig or No Rig. If you want them to come away with a felt understanding that environmental harm is systemic and that the search for 'the' guilty party is itself a trap, choose Shadows of the State.

TIP - Run them in a series

Many groups benefit from playing more than one. A useful four-game sequence is: Shadows of the State first (90 min, theatrical, introduces the cast of stakeholder types and the systemic-responsibility frame), then Oil Rig or No Rig (introduces the council format), then The Electric Shift (introduces the misinformation typology cleanly), then To Build or Not to Build (raises the bar with confidential interests and a two-thirds vote). Allow at least a week between games so that each debrief has time to settle.

5. Preparing the Session

Good preparation is invisible. Bad preparation is the single most common reason a simulation game underwhelms. Spend the time before the session, not during it. This chapter covers three things: setting up the space and materials, preparing yourself as facilitator, and preparing your participants when they arrive.

THE ROOM

All three games assume a room large enough for participants to sit in groups, see each other and move around. A circle or semicircle works better than rows. Each group should have a table where they can spread out their materials and have a side-conversation without disturbing the rest. The facilitator needs a position visible to everyone, not at the head of the room like a teacher, but central, more like a chair of a meeting. A board, flipchart or projector is essential for showing votes, and ideally for displaying news drops as they appear.

Minimum room checklist

Tables and chairs for each group, arranged so all groups can see each other.
Central space for the facilitator with a clear sightline to every group.
A flipchart, whiteboard or projector visible from every seat.
Wall space where you can post role placards, news articles or vote results.
Quiet enough that groups can have parallel discussions without shouting.

MATERIALS PER GAME

Each game annex contains a complete materials list, but as a minimum you will need:

- Printed character cards or role packages, one set per role, clearly marked as confidential.
- Printed news articles or social-media posts (the ‘misinformation drops’) - keep these out of sight until you reveal them.
- Voting cards or place cards with the role name, used to indicate who is speaking and to vote.
- Pens, paper and sticky notes for participants' own notes.
- A printed copy of the facilitator flow for yourself, with timings written in pencil - they will change.
- A timer, ideally one visible to everyone.
- A copy of the misinformation typology hand-out (Chapter 3) for the debrief, one per participant.

GROUP COMPOSITION

Mix participants. If your group has cliques, distribute them across teams; if it has dominant voices, do not put them all in the same role. Try to ensure that every team has at least one confident speaker, if necessary, brief a quieter participant in advance to take that role within a team. Resist the temptation to give participants the role that mirrors their personal beliefs; the dislocation is the learning.

TIME BUDGET

Plan a generous fifteen minutes of slack. Simulations always run long. Things participants find boring (reading the role pack) take longer than you think, and things you expect to be quick (voting) sometimes turn into impromptu debates. If you only have three hours, plan for two hours forty-five and keep fifteen minutes in reserve.

PREPARING YOURSELF AS THE FACILITATOR

Before you prepare your participants, prepare yourself. The facilitator's job in a simulation game is procedural, not substantive. You are not the teacher. You are the chair of a meeting that the participants are running.

Read the game in full at least twice

The first read-through is for understanding. The second is for timing, annotate the flow with rough minute markers and identify the points at which you will introduce news, call votes, or transition between phases. By the time you arrive at the venue you should be able to run the game without re-reading the annex.

Internalise the misinformation

Each game contains real-looking false content. You need to know exactly which articles are accurate, which are misinformation, which are disinformation and which are malinformation, because in the debrief you will be the one revealing the truth. Write a one-page cheat-sheet for yourself and keep it folded inside your facilitator copy.

Decide your stance on neutrality

During the simulation, you are strictly neutral. You do not endorse arguments, correct facts (unless safety requires it), or hint at which articles are reliable. After the simulation, in the debrief, you stop being neutral and become a guide. Be clear with yourself, in advance, where that line falls. It usually falls at the moment you say, ‘We are now stepping out of the simulation.

TIP - The 24-hour rule
Do not facilitate a simulation game on a topic you have read about for the first time the night before. Give yourself at least a few days to read around the topic, even if only to know what you do not know.

PREPARING THE PARTICIPANTS

Most simulation-game failures begin in the first ten minutes, when participants do not yet understand what is being asked of them. Slow down at the start. The time you spend here is recouped tenfold in the rest of the session.

Frame the experience

Open with a short, honest framing. Tell them what a simulation game is, that they will be assigned a role they may not personally agree with, that the game contains some information that is deliberately misleading, and that the most important part of the experience comes after the game in the debrief. Acknowledge that strong emotions are normal and welcome, and that nobody is obliged to share opinions they would not share outside a role.

It is useful to use the phrase 'the role is your armour'. The role gives them permission to argue positions they would not normally argue, knowing that everyone in the room understands they are not personally committed to that position. This is the contract that makes the game safe.

Brief the rules clearly

Read the ground rules aloud. Do not assume people will read them on their own. The non-negotiables in every CHECKMATE game are:

- Speak only when called on by the facilitator or when raising your placard.
- Stay in role until the facilitator declares the simulation over.
- Do not show your role card to other groups.
- Disagree respectfully. Attack arguments, not people.
- Time-limits on speaking are firm. The facilitator is the timekeeper.

Distribute roles thoughtfully

Assign roles, do not let participants pick. If you let people pick they will gravitate to characters that align with their existing views, and the dislocation is lost. When possible, give each participant a role that is genuinely different from their default. Watch the room as you hand out the cards: somebody who looks visibly uncomfortable with the role you have given them is somebody who will probably do the deepest learning, but they may need a private word of encouragement before the game starts.

Give them time to read

Twenty to twenty-five minutes is the realistic minimum for participants to read their role package, discuss it within their team, and prepare an opening statement. Less than this and at least one team will fumble. During this time, walk between the groups and check that they understand the central question, the role they are playing and the next phase. Resist the temptation to coach them on content; do clarify procedure.

6. Running the Game

This is the chapter most facilitators wish were three times as long. Below are the techniques that make the difference between a simulation that hums and one that stalls, followed by argumentation tips you can hand to your participants in the brief.

FACILITATION TECHNIQUES DURING THE DEBATE

Hold the time

All CHECKMATE games impose strict time limits on speaking, usually two minutes per intervention. This is non-negotiable, because without it confident speakers will dominate. Use a visible timer. When time is up, interrupt politely, mid-sentence if necessary: 'Thank you, time. Who would like to come in next?' Participants will respect you more for enforcing the limit than for letting it slide.

Manage the queue

Use the placard system. Participants raise their character placard to indicate they want to speak. You note the order and call them in turn. This single mechanic eliminates most of the cross-talk problems and gives quieter participants a fair chance to enter.

Steer without leading

If the discussion stalls, do not give your own view. Instead, ask procedural questions:

- 'Does anyone have a different perspective to share?'
- 'What information do you still need before making a decision?'
- 'Who has not yet spoken?'
- 'Are there any new arguments to add, or are we ready to vote?'

These questions move the conversation along without nudging it toward an answer. They are also a useful signal that the facilitator is paying attention to fairness rather than content.

Drop the news at the right moment

Each game contains scheduled moments at which you reveal new information, a leaked memo, a viral post, a press release. The drops are calibrated. Do not introduce them too early (participants are still finding their feet) or too late (they have already voted). The annex tells you when. Read the article aloud, hand out copies if the design calls for it, and then step back. Do not editorialise. The point is for participants to process the new information themselves.

Run the votes deliberately

Voting is dramaturgy. Slow down. Announce the question clearly: 'We will now vote on whether the council approves the construction of the rig. All in favour, raise your placards.' Pause. Count. Repeat for the opposing position and abstentions. Record visibly on the board. Announce the result. If the vote is informative, say so explicitly, 'This is the first informative vote; the binding vote will be in round three.' The drama of the moment is part of the learning.

Read the room

Watch faces, not just words. A participant who has gone quiet may be lost or may be furious. A team that has stopped huddling may have given up. A laughing exchange across the room may be a healthy break or may be participants stepping out of role. Most signals are easy to read once you start watching for them; intervene early rather than late.

TIP - The two-minute rule, again
If you find yourself enforcing the speaking time-limit only sometimes, you have already lost it. Either enforce it consistently or remove it. There is no half-way.

NEGOTIATION AND ARGUMENTATION TIPS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Share these with your participants during the brief. Most are drawn from principled-negotiation literature (Fisher, Ury and Patton's Getting to Yes) and adapted for the CHECKMATE simulations.

Focus on interests, not positions

A position is what someone says they want; an interest is why they want it. Two children fighting over an orange may end up cutting it in half, until they realise one wanted the fruit and the other wanted the peel for baking. Encourage participants to ask each other 'why?' rather than restating their demand.

Know your BATNA - Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement

If no deal is reached, what is the second-best outcome you can live with? Knowing it gives you a floor. A team that knows its BATNA negotiates with confidence; a team that does not is vulnerable to bluffs.

Invent options for mutual gain before evaluating them

Brainstorm three to five possible compromises before judging any of them. Premature evaluation kills creativity. The most interesting deals in our pilots came from creative repackaging - 'yes to the airport but only with a guaranteed wildlife corridor and a binding noise curfew'.

Insist on objective criteria

When a debate becomes a clash of opinions, look for shared standards: EU regulations, IPCC reports, peer-reviewed studies. 'What does the EU Battery Regulation actually say?' is more productive than 'Whose values win?' A manipulated statistic loses its power as soon as someone insists on the source.

Separate the people from the problem

Address behaviour and substance, not personality. ‘That argument seems to ignore the offshore migration data’ is constructive; ‘You're being naïve’ is not. Listen actively, acknowledge the other side's feelings, and frame criticisms in terms of the issue.

Watch for coalition dynamics

In a multi-stakeholder game, two or three groups can quietly coordinate into a bloc. This is realistic and educational, but a powerful coalition can crowd out a smaller group, leading to packages that exclude one stakeholder entirely. Watch for the group that is being silenced and bring them back in with a procedural question.

Be honest about hard limits

Some interests cannot be compromised. The environmental NGO has a red line at ‘yes to the rig’. The activist has a red line at ‘exploitation continues’. Encourage teams to identify their red lines before the formal session and to signal them clearly without bluffing.

In a single sentence

Encourage participants to listen first, ask ‘why?’ rather than ‘who's right?’, and look for objective criteria they all accept, and warn them in advance that not every dispute can or should be compromised.

7. The Debrief and Handling Difficult Moments

The debrief is the most important part of every CHECKMATE game. It is where the experience becomes learning. Allow at least thirty minutes, forty-five is better, and resist any temptation to shorten it because the game ran long. Cut the game's final discussion if you must; do not cut the debrief.

STEP OUT OF THE SIMULATION, DELIBERATELY

After the final vote, mark the transition explicitly. Say something like: 'Thank you, councillors. The town meeting is closed. We are now stepping out of the simulation. From this moment, you are no longer your character, you are yourself. Take a breath, take a sip of water, and we will gather as ourselves in two minutes.' This formal transition matters; it gives participants permission to drop their roles.

USE THE 4FS FRAMEWORK

The 4Fs - Facts, Feelings, Findings, Future, provide a clean, well-tested structure that takes participants progressively from what happened, to what they felt about it, to what they learned, to what they will do with it. Use the questions below as a starter set, and follow the energy in the room.

Facts - what just happened?

- What did we do in this activity?
- What was your role?
- How did the votes go? What changed between rounds?
- Was it always clear who stood for what, or were there surprises?

Feelings - how did it feel?

- How did you feel as your character?
- What did it feel like when the news article was introduced?
- Was it easy or hard to argue for your role?
- Did you feel your group had real influence on the outcome?

Findings - what did we learn?

- Which arguments turned out to be most persuasive, and why?
- Did you change your position during the game? What changed it?
- Looking back, can you identify any misinformation, disinformation or malinformation in the materials?
- How does this connect with the world outside the simulation?

Future - what now?

- Where will you use this experience next week, next month?
- If you saw a similar headline online tomorrow, what would you do differently?
- Is there one habit from today you would like to keep?

THE MISINFORMATION REVEAL

Reveal the misinformation deliberately, not casually. Read out the key claims that were planted in the materials, and for each one identify whether it was misinformation, disinformation or malinformation, and why. If your participants did not catch a particular item, it is fine, naming it now is part of the learning. Use the typology hand-out from Chapter 3 to anchor the conversation.

Be especially careful with malinformation. Because the underlying fact is true, participants sometimes feel manipulated when you call it manipulation. Acknowledge their reaction. The point is not that the fact is false; the point is that a true fact stripped of context is a tool, and they have just felt how powerful that tool is.

Common debrief mistakes

Letting it become a debate again. The debrief is reflection, not argument. If a participant tries to keep arguing, gently remind them the simulation is over.

Skipping 'Feelings'. Facilitators often treat this step as soft and rush it. It is the most important step. Feelings are where insight begins.

Closing without a forward commitment. Always end with a small, concrete action each participant can take.

HANDLING DIFFICULT MOMENTS

Almost every simulation will at some point produce a difficult moment. The list below covers what we have seen most often in pilot runs. The remedy in nearly every case begins with 'pause and name what is happening'.

A participant breaks character to make a personal speech

Acknowledge them. 'Thank you, would you like to make that point as your character, or would you like us to set it aside until the debrief?' Most participants will rejoin the role; if not, allow them to step out and observe.

Two participants are in a real argument

Pause the game. Use a phrase like 'Let's freeze the simulation for a moment.' Acknowledge both perspectives. If the argument is about the game, redirect to the rules. If it is personal, ask whether they want to step outside for a minute. Resume only when both are willing.

A participant is dominating

Use the placard system. 'I have your name in the queue. Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet first.' Do not call them out personally; rely on the procedure. If it persists, have a quiet word at a break.

A participant has gone silent

Approach during a break, not in front of the room. Ask whether they are okay and whether they would like a different role or to step into observer mode. Do not force speech. A silent participant can be doing deep observational work that pays off in the debrief.

Somebody refuses to play their role.

Find out why. If it is because the role conflicts with their identity in a way that feels harmful (for example, asking a young migrant to play an anti-immigration politician), reassign. If it is reluctance, encourage them to try for ten minutes; if it does not work, let them shadow another team.

The vote ends in a tie or no agreement

This is a legitimate outcome and often a richer one than a clean result. Do not push for resolution. In the debrief, ask the group what would have unblocked it.

The simulation is going off the rails

Pause everything. Restate the central question and the next deadline. 'We have twenty minutes left before the final vote. Where do you want to spend that time?' Most groups will self-correct.

A participant is visibly upset

Step out of the simulation with them privately. Acknowledge the feeling. Do not try to fix it inside the game. Some climate topics can intersect with eco-anxiety; if you sense that, give them space and follow up afterwards. Always know your safeguarding pathway in advance.

The general principle

When something difficult happens, you are not the police of the game; you are the guardian of the experience. Pause, name what is happening, restore safety, and only then decide whether to resume.

8. Ethics and What Comes Next

These games involve real-world topics with real political stakes. They produce real emotional responses. Run them ethically, and end every session with a small, concrete next step so the energy carries beyond the debrief.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Consent and choice

Before the game starts, tell participants what they are about to do, that it includes simulated misinformation, that it may include heated debate, and that they can step out at any time without explanation. Participation is voluntary; nobody should feel they have failed by choosing to observe.

Role assignment with care

Avoid placing participants in roles that could re-traumatise them. A young person whose family has been affected by industrial pollution should not be assigned a polluting-industry role unless they choose it. When unsure, ask in advance.

Truth in the debrief

After the simulation, name the misinformation honestly. Do not leave participants with false beliefs the game introduced. Make sure they leave clear about which claims were truthful and which were planted; provide a short fact-sheet alongside the typology hand-out.

Avoid promoting cynicism

It is easy to leave a misinformation simulation feeling that nothing online can be trusted. That is not the lesson we want. The lesson is that information can be checked. End your debrief with practical habits, the seven-step verification list, that participants can take into Monday morning.

Confidentiality

What is said in the room, particularly anything personal in the debrief, stays in the room. State this explicitly at the start.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Energy is highest in the half-hour after the debrief. Offer your group a small, concrete next step, something they can do this week, and the impact of the simulation extends well past the session. Five low-effort options:

- Spot the type. Show six short headlines or social-media posts and have participants call out which is mis-, dis- or malinformation. Five minutes; debrief in five more.
- Verify together. Give pairs one problematic post and ten minutes to find two sources that confirm or refute it. They report back.

- Reverse the harm. Take a malinformation example from the game. Ask what context or extra facts would make it honest. Participants rewrite the headline.
- Find one in the wild. Send participants away to find one piece of climate misinformation in their own feed in the next seven days. Bring it to the next meeting.
- Make something. Ask participants to produce a short corrective: a counter-post, a fact-check graphic, a one-minute video. Their authorship locks in the learning.

CONNECT TO ACTION

If your group is hungry for action, and many will be, connect them to local opportunities. A youth-led climate group, a volunteering programme, a journalism workshop, an Erasmus+ exchange. Have one or two suggestions ready before the session ends. Action prevents the simulation from being mistaken for the work.

FEEDBACK AND IMPROVEMENT

Use a short, anonymous feedback form: what would you keep, what would you change, and what was the single most useful moment? Send the project's coordinating partner your reflections; the games are alive documents, and your run will improve the next.

In a single sentence

Run the games ethically. End every session with a small concrete next step participants can take this week, that is what turns a memorable experience into changed behaviour.

Co-funded by
the European Union

Oil Rig or No Rig

A council-chamber simulation about offshore drilling, economic pressure, and the slow drift of public opinion under a barrage of news.



The fictional coastal town of Radu must decide whether to allow an international oil company to build an extracting rig ten kilometres offshore. Five councillors, a company representative, an environmental NGO, a farmers' union leader, a popular local politician and a restaurant owner, meet in three council sessions. Between sessions, news articles begin to circulate; some accurate, some misleading. The vote is informative for the first two rounds and binding in the third. The game suits a small, articulate group and rewards careful preparation; participants who like to argue thrive in the council format.

CHECKMATE
to Climate Misinformation

Game at a Glance

Theme	Climate change, fossil-fuel economics, media and misinformation
Format	Council-chamber role-play with three sessions and a binding final vote
Duration	Approximately 3 hours including debrief (debrief: 30–45 min)
Participants	5 individual roles, or 5 teams of 2–4 players (10–20 total)
Recommended age	16+
Difficulty	Medium
Space	One room with table arrangement in a semicircle (EU-Parliament style)
Materials	Role packages, place cards, six printed news articles, voting cards, timer, flipchart
Central question	Should the city of Radu allow an oil company to build an extraction rig 10 km offshore?

Learning Objectives

By the end of the simulation, participants will be able to:

1. Identify how an emotionally charged news article can shift the trajectory of a debate, even when the article contains no verifiable facts.
2. Distinguish between misinformation (mistaken), disinformation (intentional) and malinformation (truth used as a weapon) in real-looking content.
3. Argue for a position they may not personally hold, drawing on the role's stated interests, while listening genuinely to opposing voices.
4. Recognise the difference between a public position and a private interest, and the way the gap between the two shapes a vote.
5. Reflect on their own decision-making under information pressure and identify a small habit (the seven-step verification list) they will use afterwards.

The Story

THE CITY OF RADU

Radu is a coastal town of about 50,000 people, with a calm sea, mild weather and fertile land. With over six hundred years of history, it was traditionally an agricultural community famous for vineyards, olive groves and grain fields passed down through generations. In the last century, Radu has transformed into a vacation destination. Its long beaches and relaxed atmosphere brought a growing tourism industry that now supports many local businesses. A large commercial harbour, located away from the main beaches, handles oil and trade cargo but also includes a small tourist pier offering day trips.

Radu is home to a major university specialising in agriculture, technology and environmental science. Students and academics contribute to the city's lively, open-minded atmosphere and often participate in local debates on sustainability. The town has also become a hub for digital nomads who support local cafés, rentals and restaurants. Today, Radu is a mix of old farming families, entrepreneurs, students and newcomers.

THE PROPOSAL

Recently, an international energy corporation called Company X proposed building an offshore oil rig 10 km from the coast. The company claims new technology makes drilling safe and promises jobs and major investment for Radu. Supporters say it could reduce unemployment and bring energy independence. Opponents warn that an oil spill or pollution could destroy tourism, harm wildlife and threaten farming and fishing livelihoods. The community is now divided, and the city council must decide: should Radu allow the oil rig, or protect its coast from industrial development?



Roles Overview

Five council members must reach a decision.
Each role has a public position (the line they take in the council chamber) and confidential personal interests that shape what they secretly want.

Paul Monri	Company X representative - needs the deal to keep his job and a promised bonus.
Lia Ozlavski	Environmental NGO leader - opposes the rig on ecological grounds; ten-year track record.
Maria Mitsaki	Head of the local farmers' union - pragmatic, undecided, hates politics.
Jake Sully	Popular local politician - facing election; has a secret offer from Company X.
Sofia Bersky	Local restaurant owner - anxious mother, undecided, easily moved by emotion.
Facilitator	You. Chair of the council, time-keeper, news-bringer, eventual debrief guide.

Each role has a full character pack (Annex 1A). Distribute them confidentially.
Keep the news articles (Annex 1B) hidden from participants until the scheduled drops.

Step-by-Step Facilitator Flow

Phase 0 - Setup (before participants enter)

- Arrange five tables in a semicircle. Place a name placard for each role on the appropriate table.
- Lay out the role pack face-down on each table (one set per role; keep teams confidential).
- Have the six news articles ready in three batches: Batch A (printed, three articles), Batch B (printed, three articles), Batch C (kept aside for the third round).
- Test the timer and flipchart. Write on the flipchart: 'Should Radu approve the oil rig?'

Phase 1 - Welcome and framing (10 min)

Greet participants. Explain that they are stepping into a city council. Read the central question. Briefly explain what a simulation game is and remind them of the ground rules (Chapter 5 of Part I). Distribute the city info-pack and the role packs. Do not yet mention the news articles, the surprise is the dramaturgy.

Phase 2 - Role preparation (25 min)

Participants read their role package, study the city info-pack, and within their team prepare a maximum two-minute opening statement to be delivered by a chosen spokesperson. Walk around. Check that each team understands their public position and at least one of their hidden interests. Do not coach content; clarify procedure.

Phase 3 - First council session (≈15 min)

Open the council. 'Welcome, councillors. We are gathered to consider the proposal of Company X to build an oil rig ten kilometres from the coast. Each representative will deliver an opening statement of up to two minutes, in the order I call you. After all five have spoken, we will hold an informative vote.'

Call the speakers in the order their placards were raised. Hold the time strictly. After all five have spoken, take an informative show of hands: 'All in favour, raise your placard. Against. Abstaining.' Record on the flipchart. State explicitly that this is informative, not binding.

Phase 4 - Internal discussion + first news drop (20 min)

Dismiss the council. Teams have twenty minutes for internal discussion. After the first five minutes, distribute Batch A - three news articles. Read them aloud one by one, without commentary; hand a copy of each to every team.

Batch A contains
‘The debt cliff: how one oil plan could decide the city's future’ - malinformation.
‘University study warns about oil rigs and sea pollution’ - facts.
‘High stakes, low risk?’ - disinformation.

Phase 5 - Second council session (≈15 min)

Open the second session in the same format. Each representative may give one short statement. Take a second informative vote and record it. Look for any change of position; this becomes part of the debrief.

Phase 6 - Internal discussion + second news drop (20 min)

Dismiss the council. Five minutes in, distribute Batch B.

Batch B contains
‘Oil Company confirms 200 new jobs, not 2,000’ - facts.
‘They already decided?’ - malinformation.
‘Is there something shady about that NGO?’ - disinformation.

Phase 7 - Third (binding) council session (≈25 min)

Open the third session. Now representatives may give multiple speeches; the format is open discussion, with two-minute interventions and the placard queue. The facilitator can call a final five-minute team caucus before the vote. Then announce: ‘We will now hold the binding vote. The question is: should Radu approve the oil rig? All in favour, raise your placards.’ Count, record, announce result. Close the council with a formal thank-you.

Phase 8 - Debrief (30-45 min)

Step explicitly out of the simulation (see Chapter 7). Use the 4Fs framework. The misinformation reveal is central in this game - work through each article in turn, naming the type and explaining why.

TIP - Pacing
The most common mistake in this game is letting the first session run twenty minutes when fifteen would do. The energy comes from the second and third sessions, especially after the news drops. Be ruthless with the early time-keeping.

Debrief - Specific Questions for This Game

Use the general 4Fs questions in Chapter 7 of Part I. The questions below are tailored to the Radu dilemma and are particularly useful in the Findings step.

- Did your vote change between rounds? If so, which article or argument tipped you?
- Look at the article ‘High stakes, low risk?’ - why did the 80% safety claim feel believable? Who would benefit from you believing it?
- The article about the NGO leader being foreign-funded was disinformation. How did your team respond when it appeared? Did anyone consider its source before reacting?
- Maria, Sofia and Jake each had a confidential interest different from their public position. As an outsider listening to them, did you sense a gap? What signalled it?
- Imagine the council had not had the news articles at all. Would the result have been different? What does that tell you about the role of media in a community decision?

MISINFORMATION KEY (FOR THE FACILITATOR)

Use this list to guide the reveal. Read each article aloud in turn and name what kind of false content it contains.

- ‘The debt cliff…’ - malinformation. Real economic pressure is exaggerated and stripped of context to imply a single solution. Unemployment is real; the framing turns it into a forced choice.
- ‘University study warns…’ - facts. Genuine, sourced research, named expert.
- ‘High stakes, low risk?’ - disinformation. Fabricated 80% safety figure, planted to advance the company's agenda.
- ‘Experts confirm: rig could reduce pollution’ - misinformation. Mistaken claim, shared as if true, no real source.
- ‘Oil Company confirms 200 new jobs’ - facts. Genuine correction; cite this as the model of how the press should work.
- ‘They already decided?’ - malinformation. Real leaked messages selectively quoted to imply something the messages do not actually prove.
- ‘Is there something shady about that NGO?’ - disinformation. Fabricated rumour, plausibly emotional, designed to discredit a credible voice.

Annex 1A - Character Packs

Print each character pack on a separate sheet.
Distribute confidentially - do not let other teams see another team's pack.
The packs are written in the second person; participants ‘become’ their character.



Paul Monri - Company X representative

You spent the last seven years at Company X. You have an engineer's master's degree, and during your university years you wanted to work for a company developing wind or solar energy, but at the time of your graduation an economic crisis hit, and the only work you could find was for an oil-extracting and transporting company. You have seen the negative environmental impact of oil spills and rigs on regions and communities, but also the fast economic growth they bring.

You were tasked with persuading the local council to approve the project. If the deal goes through you have been promised a raise, a better office, and a packet of shares of Company X. Your daughter is about to choose which university she wants to attend, so this raise would let her pick even the most expensive option. You did not get to attend the university you wanted because of finances; giving your daughter that chance means the world to you.

What the company tells you about the rig

- Real data from previous rigs show that extracting oil has environmental risks, spills and leaks damage marine life and human health.
- PR has given you the company's official line: 'New technology reduces risk by 80%.' You know this is a PR scam.
- If the city refuses, the company may pull out, and you could lose your position.

Your public stance

- This project will bring hundreds of jobs to the region.
- Average regional income and energy independence will rise.
- Modern rigs are 80% safer and certified by independent engineers.
- The company will invest in local infrastructure for years after construction.

End goal

Convince the council to approve the project - without being caught lying.

Your private feelings

- You know the environmental risks are higher than the company states; most of the gain goes to Company X.
- You do not like to lie to the council, but your family's wellbeing depends on this deal.
- You have influence with local news outlets that the company has secretly funded.

Behavioural profile - how Paul speaks

Confident, polished, professionally measured. Uses corporate language: 'stakeholder value', 'risk-managed framework', 'mutually beneficial outcome'.

Smiles often; appears approachable. Cites figures with authority even when uncertain. Avoids direct lies but allows misleading impressions to stand.

Defensive when challenged on specifics, pivots to job-creation numbers and 'the bigger picture'.

Watchwords: 'Investment', 'partnership', 'modernisation', 'responsibility'.

Lia Ozlavski - Environmental NGO leader

You have spent the last decade working to protect the environment and raise awareness about preserving local ecosystems. You studied geography at a local university and have a deep understanding of how delicate the balance of nature is, especially in coastal areas like Radu. After seeing how pollution and overdevelopment damaged other regions, you decided to dedicate your career to preventing similar mistakes here.

You are now a leading member of a respected NGO focused on marine and coastal conservation. You have run projects with the local university, organised clean-up campaigns, and regularly speak at public events. You are known for clear arguments and passion, but some people see you as overly idealistic or resistant to progress.

The proposal to build an oil rig 10 km offshore feels like a direct threat to everything you have worked for. You are sure even small leaks or accidents could destroy marine habitats, harm fish populations and drive away tourists — one of the city's main sources of income. You have seen companies promise safety and sustainability and then cause irreversible damage. You know the council might be swayed by promises of jobs and money.

Your public position

The oil rig must not be built. If a total veto cannot be reached, push for more scientific research and delayed construction. You do not want to stop progress; you want progress to be thoughtful and responsible.

End goal

Block approval, or, failing that, extract a binding commitment to delay and to commission independent research before any vote.

Your strongest arguments

- Oil rigs pose constant risks of spills and leaks, which spread rapidly through ocean currents.
- Routine drilling waste releases toxic substances even without accidents.
- Company X has a record of safety violations elsewhere.
- The 80% risk-reduction claim has no published scientific backing you have been able to find.

The city should invest in renewable energy and sustainable jobs instead..

Behavioural profile - how Lia speaks

Passionate, well-prepared, slightly impatient. Quotes studies, names experts, uses precise scientific language alongside everyday metaphors.

Direct and uncompromising on red lines; can sound preachy if she does not pace herself. Tends to interrupt when she hears something factually wrong.

Reaches for evidence quickly: ‘According to the Aegean study…’, ‘There is no peer-reviewed source for that claim.’

Watchwords: ‘Irreversible’, ‘evidence’, ‘the science is clear’, ‘future generations’.

Maria Mitsaki - Head of the farmers' union

You were born and raised in Radu, as were your parents and grandparents. You have been a farmer your whole life; for the last ten years you have been head of the local farmers' union. You are practical, level-headed, and dislike politics, though you understand you must take part in it to look after the farmers you represent.

The past few years have been tough. Serious freshwater shortages nearly ruined several harvests, and many farmers had to borrow money to keep their land. You want stability, fair income for farmers, and security to plan ahead without constantly worrying about drought or debt.

You have not made up your mind about the rig. Some people say it will bring jobs, money and investment; others warn it will harm the sea, the land and the air. You want to understand both sides before you vote. Recently, people connected to the project have approached you suggesting the farming community could receive lease payments or infrastructure support if the project goes through. You are not sure how serious or trustworthy these offers are.

Your priorities

- Make sure no decision harms local farmers, their land or their water.
- Understand whether the project will bring stable income or new problems.
- Represent ordinary working families, not corporations or politicians.
- Stay neutral and fair-minded until you have clear facts.

Behavioural profile - how Maria speaks

Slow, measured, plain-spoken. Suspicious of jargon. Asks practical questions: ‘How will this affect our water? What happens if there is a leak?’

Listens more than she speaks; her silences are weighty. When she does intervene, the room tends to listen.

Cautious about taking sides; allergic to political theatre. Will flip toward whoever offers the clearest, most credible facts.

Watchwords: ‘In practice…’, ‘What does that actually mean for us?’, ‘Show me, don't tell me.’

Jake Sully - Local politician

You are a popular politician from the city's main party. Long-time resident, in local politics for over a decade, first as a council member, once proposed as mayor though it didn't stick. People often describe you as someone who can ‘get things done.’

When you first ran, you promised to bring new jobs, modernise the city and help Radu become more self-sufficient, especially in energy. For years you have tried to attract investors, but most companies showed little interest in such a small coastal town. The arrival of this big proposition could be the breakthrough you have been waiting for. The next election is soon.

Privately, your finances haven't been great lately, campaign costs, family expenses, a few bad investments. Success with this project could help politically and personally

The secret offer

Recently a secret offer was made to you by Company X. They will cover your party's election costs and secure your role as mayor if the rig is built, plus 300,000 in personal funds if the council votes yes without delay.

Your priorities

- Your popularity and reputation.
- A decision that benefits the city short and long term.
- Avoid scandals; the next election is very soon.
- Be alert to opportunities for personal financial stability.
- Maintain a neutral public stance for as long as possible, locals dislike a politician who appears bought.

Behavioural profile - how Jake speaks

Charismatic, warm, story-driven. Greets everyone by name. Tells anecdotes about ‘a young couple I met last week’ to humanise his points.
Strategically vague on details until he has read the room. Strong on vision; weak on specifics. ‘We need bold action, but action that brings everyone with us.’
Will pivot positions mid-debate if he senses public mood shifting; you can almost hear him recalculating in real time.
Watchwords: ‘Together’, ‘a bright future’, ‘the people of Radu deserve…’, ‘opportunity’.

Sofia Bersky - Local restaurant owner

You have lived in Radu all your life. Your family has run La Brisa, a cosy seaside restaurant, for almost twenty years. The place is known for fresh seafood, friendly service and beautiful ocean views. Most of your income comes from tourists, digital nomads who live in the city, and locals who visit on weekends. You know almost everyone by name.

You have a young child, and your life revolves around your restaurant, your family and the community. The economy isn't as strong as it used to be, and tourist numbers have dropped slightly over the last few years. You have read online that oil platforms can cause pollution and increase health risks for children. You have also heard such projects can bring construction workers, engineers and higher demand for local services - possibly more customers.

What you know so far

- Company X says the rig will bring hundreds of jobs and new income.
- The environmental NGO warns of leaks, water pollution and bad smells driving tourists away.
- Your restaurant depends on a clean beach and the city's reputation.
- Your child's schoolteacher mentioned ‘toxic air and chemicals’ from oil rigs.
- You're not sure if it's true, but it frightens you.

Your stance

You have not taken a firm side. Everyone knows you want what is best for your child and for Radu. You are open to listening to arguments from both sides, but you expect people to be honest.

Behavioural profile - how Sofia speaks

Warm, anxious, unguarded. Speaks in everyday language and personal stories: ‘My boy was coughing again last week and I started wondering…’
Easily moved by emotional appeals from any side; visibly affected when articles mention children's health.
Genuine; her uncertainty is not a tactic. Asks plain questions: ‘But is that actually true? How do you know?’
Watchwords: ‘My family’, ‘our community’, ‘I'm just a person who…’, ‘I want to do the right thing.’

Annex 1B - News Articles

Print these on plain paper, and cut out one article per sheet if possible.
The articles below are PARTICIPANT-READY, there are no facilitator labels on them.
Use the facilitator cheat-sheet on the next page for your own reference.

FACILITATOR CHEAT-SHEET - keep this for yourself

Batch A (Phase 4):

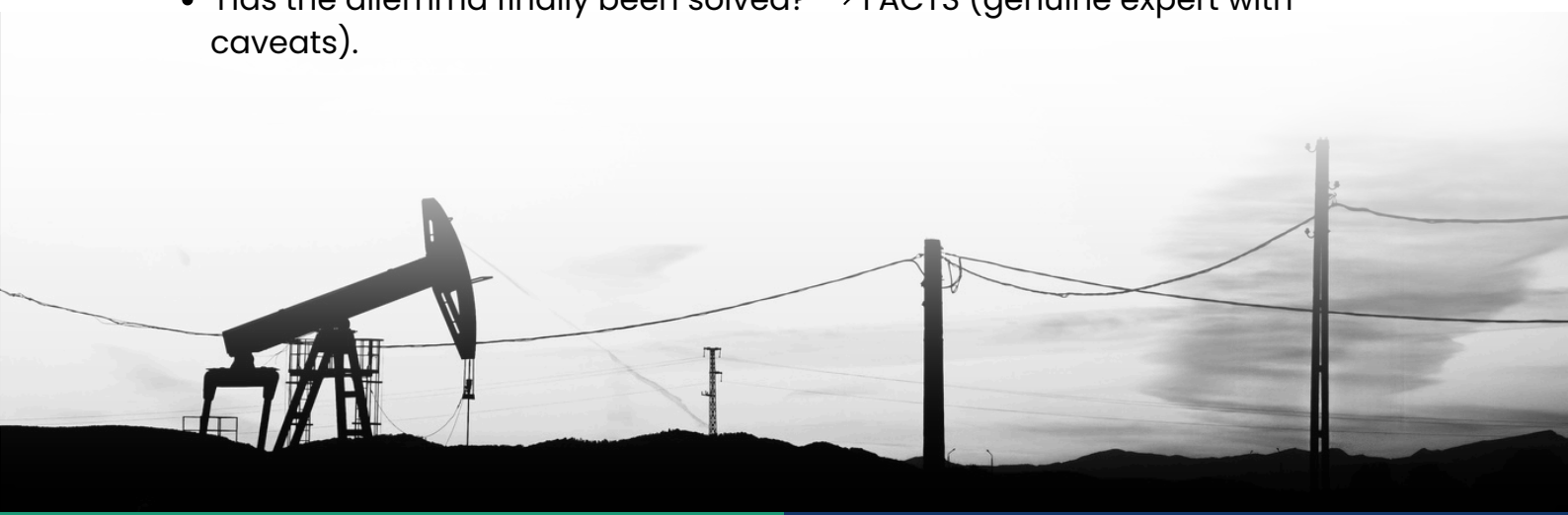
- 'The debt cliff…' → MALINFORMATION (real economic pressure exaggerated, framed as forced choice).
- 'University study warns…' → FACTS (genuine sourced research; named expert).
- 'High stakes, low risk?' → DISINFORMATION (fabricated 80% safety figure, planted by Company X).

Batch B (Phase 6):

- 'Does Company X have alien technology?' → FACTS (named professor; debunks the 80% claim).
- 'They already decided?' → MALINFORMATION (real leaked messages selectively quoted).
- 'Is there something shady about that NGO?' → DISINFORMATION (fabricated rumour, designed to discredit).

Batch C (optional, Phase 7):

- 'Powering the modern world in no time' → MISINFORMATION (mistaken claim, no real source).
- 'Has the dilemma finally been solved?' → FACTS (genuine expert with caveats).



BATCH A - Distributed five minutes into Phase 4

Article 1 - "The debt cliff: how one oil plan could decide the city's future"

Facilitator note:

Malinformation. Real economic pressure (35% unemployment is a true figure for this fictional city) is exaggerated and stripped of context to imply a single solution. The "thousands of jobs" claim from "sources close to the project" is unsourced and contradicted later in Batch B. The closing framing is a forced binary choice, exactly the rhetorical move malinformation specialises in.

Article 2 - "University study warns about oil rigs and sea pollution"

Facilitator note:

Facts. Genuine peer-reviewed research, named expert with real qualifications, methodology disclosed, caveats included, sources verifiable. This is what a credible article reads like, and your participants should notice the contrast with the others.

Article 3 - "High stakes, low risk? Company X unveils new safety platform"

Facilitator note:

Disinformation. The 80% figure is fabricated, there is no such reduction, as Batch B's Professor Shein article will reveal. The technology name, the audit claims, and the "tens of millions" are all designed to sound impressive without being verifiable. The "spokesperson" is unnamed; the "industry analyst" is anonymous; the "leading international bodies" are not named. Every authoritative-sounding hook leads nowhere when traced.

"The debt cliff: how one oil plan could decide the city's future"

By Markus Voren, City Affairs Correspondent — Radu Daily

The city of Radu, once a beacon of progress, is now on the verge of economic collapse, with unemployment rates soaring past 35%. Local authorities have begun rationing electricity to keep the lights on for a few more months. The municipal pension fund, according to figures circulated last week, is operating at a deficit not seen since the 1990s.

Walk down Harbor Street at midday and you understand why people whisper that the city is dying. Storefronts are boarded. The fish market closes by eleven. "I haven't had a full day's work in two months," says one dock worker who asked not to be named. "My kids ask me when things will get better and I don't have an answer for them."

Yet, despite the despair, there is a single hope in sight: an oil platform that will serve as a "turning point" and flood Radu with much-needed new jobs and revenue for everyone. Sources close to the project say construction alone could employ "thousands" in the first year.

The choice the council faces, observers say, could not be clearer: approve the project, or watch the city become another statistic.

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"University study warns about oil rigs and sea pollution"

Aegean Environmental Review, peer-reviewed publication, March issue

According to a report published this month by the University of Thessaloniki Environmental Sciences department, oil rigs operating within fifteen kilometres of populated coastlines pose a measurable long-term risk to marine ecosystems and to public health. The study examined twelve coastal extraction sites across the Aegean basin over a five-year period.

Researchers measured chemical traces, including hydrocarbons, heavy metals and traces of drilling additives, in fish tissue, sediment samples and seawater. Detectable contamination was found in nine of the twelve sites within six months of operations beginning. In four of the sites, contamination persisted at levels exceeding EU thresholds for human consumption.

Professor Dimitra Kallergi, who led the research, told the Aegean Environmental Review: "Even small leaks can have a big impact when they happen near coastal ecosystems. The mistake we keep making is assuming that the absence of a major spill means the operation is clean. It rarely is."

The study acknowledges that newer rig technologies have reduced, though not eliminated, leak risks, and that outcomes vary considerably by depth, sediment type and wave dynamics. The full paper is available open-access at the university's repository.

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"High stakes, low risk? Company X unveils new safety platform"

Energy Today — Industry News Desk

Company X has announced that, according to newly developed proprietary technology, the risks associated with offshore oil extraction near coastal ecosystems are reduced by 80%. The announcement was made yesterday at the company's annual investor conference in front of an audience of stakeholders and journalists.

The new system, branded "AquaShield 2.0", combines what the company describes as "next-generation seal monitoring" with "AI-driven leak prediction" and "real-time biodegradable response protocols". A spokesperson for Company X said: "AquaShield represents a new era of responsible extraction. Communities can have full confidence that the operations we propose meet the highest possible environmental standards."

The technology has, according to the spokesperson, been "extensively tested" and "audited by leading international bodies", though specific certifications and audit reports were not provided to attendees. Company X has invested "tens of millions" in the AquaShield system over the last three years.

Industry analysts welcomed the announcement. "If the figures hold up," one commented, "this could be a game-changer for the sector." Company X confirmed the technology will be deployed at the proposed Radu site if approval is granted.

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BATCH B - Distributed five minutes into Phase 6

Article 1 - "Does Company X have alien technology?"

Facilitator note:

Facts. Named expert with verifiable affiliation, methodology disclosed (47 rigs, three regions), peer-reviewed framing, second corroborating expert, caveats included. Notice the structural contrast with the Company X "AquaShield" piece in Batch A: this article names its sources and cites methods. The other names a brand and quotes nobody.

Article 2 - "They already decided?"

Facilitator note:

Malinformation. The quoted message is real — it was actually sent. What is stripped out is the context: it was about a different unrelated vote, not the oil rig. The post even acknowledges this in a passing line ("about something else entirely") and then immediately dismisses the relevance. That dismissal is the malinformation move: the truth is technically intact, but the framing makes it function as a lie. The "WHY HAVEN'T THEY DENIED IT?" closing is the rhetorical inversion of the burden of proof.

Article 3 - "Is there something shady about that NGO?"

Facilitator note:

Disinformation. Every authoritative-sounding hook leads nowhere. "GreenHorizon Trust" is fabricated — invent a foreign-sounding name and a tax-haven jurisdiction and the rumour borrows credibility for free. The "blurry screenshot" is the universal alibi of disinformation: it gestures toward evidence without producing it. The "I'm just asking questions" disclaimer is the rhetorical fig leaf. The closing call to share is what propagates the lie. None of it is true; all of it is designed to look like the truth is one click away.

"Does Company X have alien technology?"

By Sven Halburg, Science Desk - Coastal Sciences Quarterly

Yesterday, Company X claimed that its newly unveiled "AquaShield 2.0" platform reduces offshore extraction risk by 80%. Today, that figure is being directly challenged by researchers in the field. Professor Elizabeth Shein of the University of Callington, who has spent over two decades studying offshore extraction and is widely cited in the literature, told this publication that the 80% claim "does not reflect any peer-reviewed evidence I have seen - anywhere."

According to Professor Shein's own modelling, drawing on operational data from forty-seven rigs across the North Sea, the Gulf and the Aegean, the maximum risk reduction theoretically achievable with the best current technology is approximately 20%, and reaching even that figure would require sustained investment over several decades, alongside a regulatory and monitoring environment that does not yet exist. "Industry has been promising 'safe drilling' for forty years," Professor Shein said. "Every generation produces a new acronym and a new press release. The fundamentals don't move as fast as the marketing."

A second researcher, Dr. Helena Mar of the Coastal Risk Institute, said that risk reduction varies by depth, sediment and proximity to sensitive ecosystems, but added that "an 80% figure announced by an operating company at an investor conference is not science." Both researchers stressed that meaningful improvement is possible, but only with independent monitoring, transparent data and time.

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"They already decided?"

@jasmine_radu_real - 2 hours ago • Public post

Okay, this is going viral and I need to share it. Someone leaked WhatsApp messages between Mayor Jake and a politician on the city council. ONE OF THE MESSAGES LITERALLY SAYS: **"We will vote yes, no matter what."**

Like, what is the point of this whole council then? They made it look like everyone's voice matters, but it's all fake. I'm so tired of this city. People deserve to know the truth.

The leaks (dropped by what looks like a former staffer, no official confirmation yet) come from a long conversation. Some people are saying the messages were in a private group chat about something else entirely, a different vote on a totally unrelated issue, but honestly, does that matter? They SAID IT. And now they're going to pretend they're listening to us during the public meeting in three days.

Share this. The vote is on Friday. People deserve to know what their leaders actually think before they pretend to listen.

Update (1 hr ago): Some are saying the screenshots have been edited. Either way - WHY HAVEN'T THEY OFFICIALLY DENIED IT?

[1.4k likes • 890 shares • 312 comments]

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"Is there something shady about that NGO?"

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So… I don't know if it's true, but a friend sent me a post saying Lia, the woman from the environmental NGO, is actually getting money from a foreign company that wants to stop all oil projects in the area.

The post is circulating in different groups now. The company is apparently called something like "GreenHorizon Trust", supposedly registered in Liechtenstein?, and they have been funding anti-oil campaigns in coastal towns all over Europe for years. The screenshot I saw showed a "donor list" with Lia's name on it but it was kind of blurry.

If this is real, it's pretty messed up, she's acting like she really cares about the environment. I used to really like her, but now I'm not sure what to think.
I tried to find the original source and I couldn't, but everyone is saying the same thing. That can't be a coincidence, right? Why would so many people say the same thing if it wasn't true?

I'm not saying she's guilty. I'm just asking questions. Maybe she has nothing to do with this. But maybe the council needs to know before the vote.
Share if you think it deserves attention.

[2.1k likes • 1.3k shares • 540 comments]

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BATCH C - Optional, for advanced groups (use during Phase 7)

Article 1 - "Powering the modern world in no time"

Facilitator note:

Misinformation. Almost everything in the article is wrong — no realistic offshore project completes in twelve months, "low-vibration drilling" is not an established technical category, "near-negligible" seabed disruption is not how marine engineering works. But unlike the AquaShield piece in Batch A, this isn't a deliberate corporate plant. The journalist has spoken to a single anonymous source ("a contact familiar with the project") and reproduced their claims without verification. No named expert, no methodology, no second source, no hedge. The company didn't return their call — and they ran the story anyway. This is what misinformation looks like when it spreads in good faith.

Article 2 - "Has the dilemma finally been solved?"

Facilitator note:

Facts. Named expert with disclosed methodology (100+ sites, 15-year window, four indicators), peer-reviewable conference presentation with a forthcoming journal publication, real caveats (a third of projects fail outright; another third produce mixed outcomes), and a conclusion that refuses to give participants a clean answer. This is what credible evidence looks like in a real-world dilemma — it does not tell you what to do. Use this article in the debrief to ask: "Which of the seven news articles in this game told you the truth most clearly? Why was it harder to draw a quick conclusion from it than from the disinformation pieces?"

"Powering the modern world in no time"

By Tomás Reiniger, Business & Industry - Coastal Herald

The proposed Radu offshore platform may be operational sooner than most residents have been led to believe. According to inside information shared with this paper, construction of the rig, from planning to full commissioning, will take no more than one calendar year.

The compressed timeline, if accurate, would set a new standard for European offshore projects. "Under the previous generation of regulations, this kind of build-out would have taken three or four years," a source familiar with the project told the Herald. "What we are looking at here is the future of energy infrastructure - fast, lean and clean."

The same source confirmed that the operation will involve "the least amount of environmental interference possible," with new low-vibration drilling methods reducing seabed disruption to "near-negligible levels." Atmospheric impact during construction is similarly expected to be minimal.

If the council approves the project on Friday, the first stages of preparation could begin as early as next month, the source added. Operations could be running by the same time next year, bringing jobs, energy independence and a long-overdue boost to the local economy.

Company X has not yet released a formal construction schedule. Calls to the company's regional press office were not returned in time for publication.

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By Anna Krasniewski, Urban & Regional Affairs - Baltic Quarterly Review

The dilemma between economy and environment remains one of the most polarising debates in coastal planning. New work by city-development expert Janis Balodis, presented this week at the Baltic Urban Conference in Riga, offers a measured contribution. Balodis, whose research database includes operational and economic data from over one hundred coastal extraction sites across Europe and North America, has compared GDP growth, employment, public-health outcomes and ecological indicators across the sites over a fifteen-year window. The study is due to be published next quarter in Urban Planning Studies.

"In the right conditions, an oil rig improves a city's economic situation, sometimes considerably," Balodis told the conference. "But the conditions matter enormously. Placement, regulation, the local ecosystem, the existing economy, the sequencing of investment in alternatives, all of these determine whether the project becomes a long-term gain or a long-term liability."

The data suggests that approximately one in three projects produce sustained net-positive outcomes. Another third produce mixed results, with localised gains offset by long-term ecological costs. The remaining third leave the host community economically and environmentally worse off than they were before construction began.

"There is no general answer to whether to build," Balodis concluded. "There is only the specific case in front of you, and the question of whether the safeguards being promised are actually credible."

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Co-funded by
the European Union

To Build or Not to Build

A four-dimension stakeholder simulation about an airport in a protected forest, the politics of green growth, and the secret interests behind every public position.



In the fictional Republic of Amasea, the government has proposed building a new international airport in a region of protected forest. Twelve to twenty participants are split into four ‘dimensions’, economic, political, environmental and social, each with three or more characters whose interests pull in different directions. Each character has a public position and a confidential personal interest. A two-thirds majority is required to approve construction. The game suits larger groups and produces some of the richest debriefs in the toolkit, partly because of the dimension structure and partly because of the ethical tension built into each role.

CHECKMATE
to Climate Misinformation

Game at a Glance

Theme	Climate, infrastructure, biodiversity, governance and the cost of green compromise
Format	Town-meeting role-play across four dimensions, with public and private interests
Duration	Approximately 3 hours (2.5 h game + 30 min debrief)
Participants	Minimum 12; works best with 16–20 (4 dimensions × 3+ characters)
Recommended age	16+
Difficulty	Medium / High
Space	Four group tables in a circular layout, plus a moderator's table
Materials	Character cards, dimension indicators, voting cards, news flash, instruction guidelines
Central question	Should the Republic of Amasea approve the construction of the new international airport?
Decision threshold	Two-thirds majority - at least 8 of 12 voting in favour

Learning Objectives

By the end of the simulation, participants will be able to:

1. Critically assess information sources, distinguishing reliable facts, misinformation and malinformation in fast-moving public debate.
2. Understand the dynamics of decision-making in a democratic setting where diverse interests and values conflict.
3. Develop communication and negotiation skills through role-play, argumentation and consensus-building.
4. Reflect on the impact of climate change and human development on natural and cultural heritage, and on the people who live with the consequences.
5. Reach a collective decision based on informed reasoning and ethical consideration, and notice how their own reasoning was shaped along the way.

The Story

The game is set in the fictional Republic of Amasea, a small but vibrant nation known for its breathtaking landscapes, rich biodiversity and deep cultural heritage. Tucked away in the region of Samaea, the land is blessed with rolling green hills, crystal-clear rivers and forests teeming with rare species of flora and fauna. It is a place where centuries-old trees stand as silent witnesses to the country's history, a natural sanctuary officially protected by national heritage laws.

Recently, the leading group of the city has proposed the construction of a new international airport in this very region. The site, though located outside the main city, lies only ninety minutes from the nation's existing central airport. Proponents argue that the new airport would relieve congestion, strengthen the economy and serve as a crucial link for trade and tourism, not just for Amasea, but also for its neighbouring countries, thanks to its proximity to the border.

However, the project has ignited a heated national debate. Environmentalists and local communities warn that the development threatens the delicate ecosystems that make the region unique, the beautiful flora and fauna. Tourism operators and hikers fear that the natural charm that draws visitors from around the world could be lost forever. Meanwhile, politicians, businesses and citizens are divided between economic growth and ecological preservation.

As the player, you step into this complex scenario: balancing environmental impact, economic gain, political alliances and public opinion. Each decision will shape the future of the region: will Amasea become a model of sustainable progress, or a cautionary tale of environmental neglect?



Roles Overview - Four Dimensions

Twelve to twenty participants are split into four ‘dimensions’.
Each dimension contains three (or more) roles whose interests pull in different directions.
Each role has a public mission and a private bias, the secret interest you are not supposed to admit at the table.

Environmental dimension	• Dr. Maria Chen (Environmental Scientist) • Dr. Liam Okoro (Conservation Ecologist) • Aisha Rahman (Community Activist)
Political dimension	• Peter Halsten (Local Council Member) • Helena Vossen (Veteran Politician) • Katarina Reinholt (Political Advisor) • Marcus Lindgren (Youth-Party Rep)
Economic dimension	• John Smith (Business Investor) • Victoria Secrets (Ethical Trader) • Anastasia Papadopoulou (Economist) • Martha Snow (Unemployed Student) • Carrot O'Neil (Engineer) • Sergio Mayers (Trade-Union Rep)
Social dimension	• Sofia Marinou (Neighbourhood Association) • Jonas Petrou (Local Business Owner) • Alina Drakos (Local Nurse) • Nikos Tzane (Local Guide) • Elena Vassiliou (High-School Teacher) • Andreas Foulkes (Local Council Member)

Distribute roles confidentially.
Place three character cards face-down on each dimension's table; participants flip them only when the moderator says so.
Full character cards are in Annex 2A.

Step-by-Step Facilitator Flow

Phase 0 - Setup

- Arrange four group tables in a circle, each with a dimension indicator (environmental, political, economic, social).
- Place 3+ character cards face-down on each table according to dimension.
- Reserve a small elevated table for yourself in the centre.
- Have ground-rule and central-question signs printed and posted.
- Prepare the NEWS FLASH cards (Annex 2B) but keep them out of sight.

Phase 1 - General presentation and rules (10 min)

Welcome the participants. Introduce yourself as the moderator of the town meeting. Explain that the meeting will decide whether to approve construction of a new international airport in a protected area. Read the ground rules aloud:

- Flip your character card only when the moderator says so.
- Card information is confidential - do not show it to anyone outside your team.
- Raise your hand to speak.
- During formal time, no speech longer than two minutes.
- Defend your character's position according to the card.
- Approval requires two-thirds in favour - at least 8 of 12 votes.
- Respect informal-time guidelines.

Phase 2 - Context (5 min)

Read the story (above) aloud. Confirm that everyone understands the scenario and the central question. Tell the participants they may now flip their cards.

Phase 3 - Discover roles (20 min, informal)

Each group reads their character cards, discusses, and formulates a common position to present. Each group selects a representative who will deliver the opening statement. Walk between tables, clarifying procedure but not content.

Phase 4 - Opening statements (8 min, formal)

Open the town meeting. Each dimension's representative delivers a two-minute opening statement. Time strictly. Do not allow questions yet.

Phase 5 - Town meeting discussions (20–25 min, formal)

Open the floor. Speaking time is limited to two minutes per intervention. Use the placard system to manage the queue. If the room is hesitant, ask procedural questions:

- Does anyone have a different perspective to share?
- What information do you still need before deciding?
- Who benefits most from this project?
- Who might be negatively affected?

Phase 6 - NEWS FLASH (5 min)

Interrupt the meeting with breaking news. Read the NEWS FLASH aloud (Annex 2B): hackers have leaked information on the project and on individual characters, exposing the misinformation and disinformation that has been circulating during the debate. Distribute the printed flash to each table.

Phase 7 - Coffee break (15 min, informal)

Suspend the meeting. Participants may move freely, talk to other groups, share information, attempt deals. This is the lobbying phase and often the richest part of the simulation. Watch for emerging coalitions; do not interfere.

Phase 8 - Final discussions (30–40 min, formal)

Re-open the meeting. Players have thirty to forty minutes of moderated open discussion to convince others. Tell them this is the last discussion before voting. Speaking time remains two minutes per intervention.

Phase 9 - Vote (10 min, formal)

Re-state the question: 'Will Amasea approve the construction of the new international airport?' All in favour vote with a raised hand. Two-thirds (at least 8 of 12) are needed for approval. Count, record, announce result. Close the meeting.

Phase 10 - Debrief (30–45 min)

Step out of the simulation. Use the 4Fs framework. Reveal the misinformation, disinformation and malinformation explicitly using the typology. The NEWS FLASH already exposed some of it; complete the picture in the debrief.

Debrief - Specific Questions for This Game

- Was the result decided more by argument or by coalition? Which groups quietly aligned during the coffee break?
- Which character had the strongest gap between their public position and their private interest? How did that gap play out at the table?
- If your dimension lost the vote, what would you have needed to win it? More speakers, better facts, a different alliance?
- Look at the NEWS FLASH - which corrections changed the conversation, and which were ignored? Why?
- Two-thirds majority is a high bar. Did it favour caution, or block progress? What would have changed with a simple majority?
- Where were the secret financial incentives in the political dimension? Did anyone catch them, or did they slip past?

Annex 2A - Character Cards

Print one card per character on its own sheet.
The bias / hidden interest is for the character themselves, they may use it to inform their actions, but should not openly read it aloud.





DR. MARIA CHEN

Environmental Scientist

You are experienced in large infrastructure projects and understand both policy and field implementation. You approve and monitor the Environmental Impact Assessment, ensure construction meets air, water and noise standards, and coordinate environmental audits.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL):

You have spent your career advocating for stricter emissions standards. You are worried that approving this airport could set a precedent for leniency and undermine your reputation. There is also a quiet temptation: a third-party consultancy contract awarded to a close associate would benefit you personally if the airport is approved quickly. You have a personal incentive to minimise environmental concerns and fast-track approvals.

MAIN INTEREST

Ensure the project complies with national environmental regulations.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 3/5
Economic 0
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Precise, technical, cites regulations and EIAs.
Defensive when conflicts of interest are raise
Uses jargon to deflect.
Watchwords: ‘compliance’, ‘standards’, ‘mitigation framework’.



DR. LIAM OKORO

Conservation Ecologist

You are a conservation ecologist renowned for balancing development with biodiversity protection near transport corridors. You study the potential effects of construction on local wildlife and habitats, design biodiversity protection plans, and advise on habitat restoration once major projects are complete.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL):

The planned airport would destroy the wetland where you conducted your doctoral research, erasing years of your work. Or, perhaps you secretly own (or a family member owns) adjacent land that would rise sharply in value if certain environmental protections force the airport to alter its design.

MAIN INTEREST

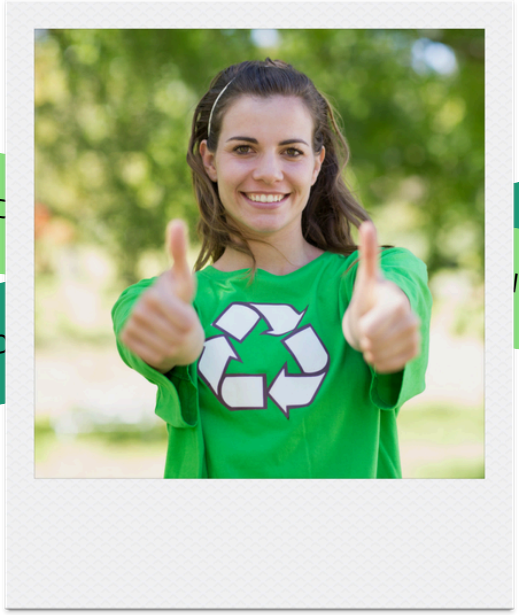
Protect biodiversity in the proposed development zone, particularly migratory birds and wetlands.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 3/5
Economic 0
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Passionate about specific habitats; tells stories about field research.
Quiet authority.
Watchwords: ‘ecosystem’, ‘once it's gone, it's gone’, ‘migratory corridor’.



AISHA RAHMAN

Community Environmental Activist

You are a trusted community leader with deep knowledge of local environmental conditions. You mediate between airport planners and local residents, advocate for sustainable job creation, and push for fair compensation when development is unavoidable.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL):

Your home and your family's small organic farm are within the affected zone. You fear displacement, declining property values and the loss of your neighbourhood's sense of community. You are also secretly using the community platform to build a base for a future political run, and you may be willing to inflame local opposition (including amplifying unverified claims) if it helps your campaign.

MAIN INTEREST

Safeguard local residents' environmental quality, clean air, low noise and green public spaces

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 3/5
Economic 0
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

warm community voice, peppered with everyday detail (‘my neighbour Mrs. Kazem…’). Knows how to mobilise emotion. Watchwords: ‘our home’, ‘not for sale’, ‘the people behind the numbers’.



PETER HALSTEN

Local Council Member

You hold a degree in Environmental Sciences and Sustainable Development and were a regional planner before entering politics. You are known for a pragmatic but visionary approach to national infrastructure, and you specialise in sustainable-development policy. You combine technical expertise with a strong commitment to environmental responsibility, at least in public.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

Your cousin owns farmland that may be expropriated if the airport proceeds. You are conflicted but hiding it. You may quietly favour the airport because approval could increase your family's land value, even where it conflicts with community concerns.

Misinformation in your pack: *the airport will be 'Europe's first carbon-neutral rural airport'. (Correct info: only a small percentage of operations will be powered by renewable energy; 'carbon-neutral' is a substantial exaggeration.)*

MAIN INTEREST

Shape infrastructure policy while navigating political and community pressures.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 1/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 0
Political 3/5

BEHAVIOUR

Smooth, reasonable-sounding.
Frames everything as 'balanced'.
Drops in technical-sounding sustainability vocabulary.
Watchwords: 'pragmatic compromise', 'best of both worlds', 'evidence-led policy'.



HELENA VOSSEN

Veteran Politician and Traditionalist

You hold a degree in international law and have decades of political experience as a former regional planner. You value stability and community traditions, and you feel an obligation to protect the area from what you see as a catastrophic, irreversible change.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

Your son leads the local farmers' association strongly opposing the airport, and you secretly help them gather documents against the ministry. You also have personal memories of the area that drive your opposition more than any briefing could.

Misinformation in your pack: *'the government will take land without paying fair value'. (Correct info: compensation is above market value, following EU standards.)*

MAIN INTEREST

Preserve community stability and traditions while influencing political decisions.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 1/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 0
Political 3/5

BEHAVIOUR

Gravitas of long service, slightly old-fashioned. Quotes proverbs and 'in my day…' references. Suspicious of progress for its own sake. Watchwords: 'heritage', 'our roots', 'careful what we throw away'.



KATARINA REINHOLT

Political Advisor to the Minister

You are a political advisor to the Minister of Transportation: loyal, strategic, used to working behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight. You attended this town meeting specifically to manipulate the result toward YES, and you believe the rest of the room may not realise quite how skilled you are at doing so.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

Private investors are already lined up to build logistics facilities adjacent to the new airport. The project will create over 2,500 construction jobs across three years, and more than 1,200 permanent positions. You know more about the deal than anyone else in the room, and that knowledge is leverage.

MAIN INTEREST

Advance government priorities and strategic political outcomes.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 0
Environmental 0
Economic 2/5
Political 3/5

BEHAVIOUR

Cool, calculating, prefers backstage to spotlight. Speaks softly but with authority; pulls people aside during the coffee break rather than pressing the room. Watchwords: ‘strategic alignment’, ‘the Minister's view’, ‘behind the scenes’.



MARCUS LINDGREN

Youth-Party Representative

You are a recent political-sciences graduate and a rising spokesperson for a youth party, and you are widely seen as ambitious. You see the airport as a symbol of innovation and progress, and you strongly believe the project will modernise the area, attract low-cost airlines and bring regional tourism to a town that has waited too long for its turn.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You hope the Minister will notice your performance today and offer you a role in the Ministry's communications office. You may push the vote in favour to strengthen ties with investors and secure a future career, even if doing so bends procedural transparency a little.

Misinformation in your pack: *the airport will be 'Europe's first carbon-neutral rural airport'. (Correct info: only a small percentage of operations will be powered by renewable energy; 'carbon-neutral' is a substantial exaggeration.)*

MAIN INTEREST

Promote innovation and regional development while strengthening your political visibility.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 0
Environmental 0
Economic 2/5
Political 3/5

BEHAVIOUR

High-energy, modern, social-media-fluent. Speaks in soundbites; mentions 'our generation' frequently.
Visibly performs for the room.
Watchwords: 'the future is now', 'innovation', 'young Europeans'.



JOHN SMITH

Local Business Investor

You are a self-made entrepreneur who owns several small businesses across the city. You see the proposed airport project as a catalyst for economic growth and foreign investment, not just business, but a way to modernise the region and create jobs. You occasionally dabble in local politics, but your real focus has always been expanding your ventures and building partnerships.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You own land near the proposed airport zone and stand to profit substantially from rising property values if the project is approved.

MAIN INTEREST

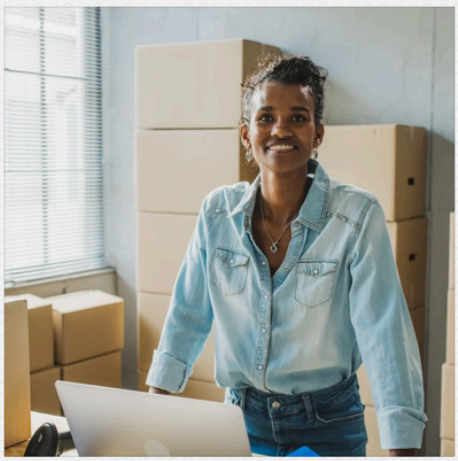
Maximise business and tourism opportunities through infrastructure growth.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 1/5
Environmental 0
Economic 3/5
Political 1/5

BEHAVIOUR

Confident self-made energy; tells stories of ‘when I started with nothing’. Treats objections as obstacles to manage rather than concerns to engage. Watchwords: ‘opportunity’, ‘growth’, ‘we either build or we fall behind’.



VICTORIA SECRETS

Ethical Trader

You have spent over a decade as a trader specialising in local and eco-friendly products. You welcome the additional trade growth that an airport would bring, but you are genuinely worried about the destruction of nearby forests and the loss of local biodiversity. You are pragmatic and believe progress must be balanced with sustainability — though where exactly that balance sits is something you find easier to invoke than to define.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

Your trading company would gain exclusive rights to supply the new local airport shops if the project proceeds, a contract worth several years of stable revenue.

MAIN INTEREST

Encourage trade growth without compromising the environment.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 0
Environmental 2/5
Economic 3/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Poised, ethical-sounding, distances herself from ‘pure profit’ language but rarely actually opposes the deal. Watchwords: ‘sustainable trade’, ‘conscious commerce’, ‘both / and’.



ANASTASIA PAPADOPOULOU

Economist and Policy Advisor

You are a university lecturer and policy consultant specialising in regional economics. You view the airport as a potential growth engine — but only if it serves people, protects the environment and follows transparent governance. Your pragmatic yet ethical approach often places you between politicians, activists and business leaders, and you have learned to be careful with whom you agree publicly.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You advise a consultancy firm hoping to win the economic feasibility study for the airport. The contract would be lucrative and would establish your firm in the region for years.

MAIN INTEREST

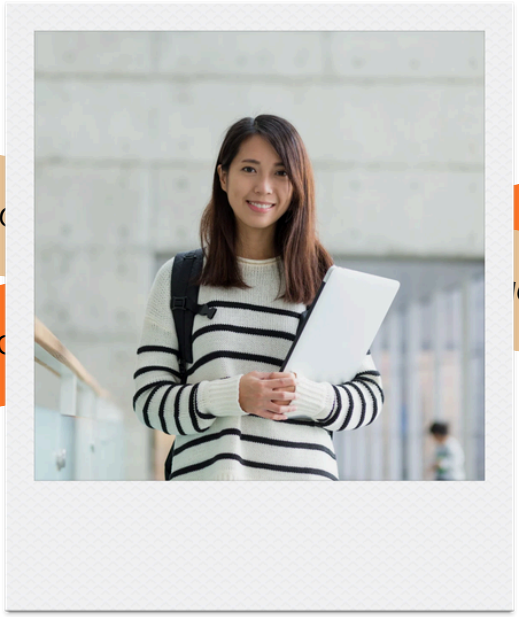
Balanced economic development rooted in ethics and sustainability.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 1/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 2/5
Political 1/5

BEHAVIOUR

Lecturer-mode, citation-heavy, careful balance. Frequently says ‘the literature suggests…’. Watchwords: ‘evidence-based’, ‘structural drivers’, ‘in the medium term’.



MARTHA SNOW

Unemployed Environmental Student

You are an environmental-studies graduate who recently lost a part-time job. Financially strained and searching for stability, you are torn between your ecological values and your need for employment. You dream of protecting nature, but you also know the airport might offer you and others like you a real chance to rebuild, and that thought is heavier than you would like to admit out loud.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You have applied for a paid internship with the airport's environmental management division. You haven't told your activist friends.

MAIN INTEREST

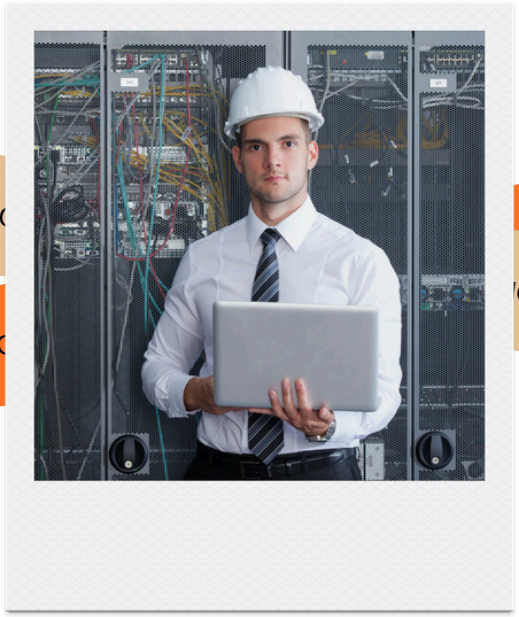
Reconcile personal economic needs with environmental ethics.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 1/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 3/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Torn, sincere, sometimes contradicts herself within a single statement. Tries to be honest about both sides. Watchwords: ‘I know I should care more, but…’, ‘rent’, ‘a chance’.



CARROT O'NEIL

Community Engineer

You are an engineer with years of experience in sustainable construction projects. You believe in progress that benefits both economy and society, and for you the airport could symbolise innovation and renewal, if it is done responsibly. Known for your optimism, you enjoy mentoring young engineers and advocating for ethical development.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

Your engineering firm is shortlisted for a major construction contract on the project. Winning the contract would secure your firm and your team for years.

MAIN INTEREST

Build infrastructure that benefits both community and economy.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 2/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Practical, cheerful, solutions-oriented. Talks about specific designs (‘we could put the runway here…’).
Watchwords: ‘build it right’, ‘hands-on experience’, ‘young engineers like…’.



SERGIO MAYERS

Trade-Union Representative

You are a respected union leader who has championed workers' rights and economic stability for years. You see the airport as a potential boost for employment and public infrastructure, but you worry about labour exploitation and wage inequality during construction. You are a skilled negotiator, a bridge between the working class and the political elite, and you know exactly how thin that bridge can be.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You are under pressure from a political ally to publicly endorse the project, regardless of what your members would prefer.

MAIN INTEREST

Secure fair labour conditions and sustainable economic growth.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 0
Economic 2/5
Political 1/5

BEHAVIOUR

Blunt, working-class register, protective of his members. Watches for any sign workers are being sold short. Watchwords: ‘the workers’, ‘fair wages’, ‘where are the guarantees?’.



SOFIA MARINOU

Neighbourhood Association Representative

You have lived in the same district your entire life. You organise local fairs, help elderly neighbours and take pride in preserving the town's identity. You have seen gentrification push out families you grew up with, and you worry that the airport will accelerate that. At the same time, you are aware that many young people are leaving in search of work.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

Your brother owns property near the proposed site and could profit substantially if land prices rise.

MAIN INTEREST

Protect the community's cohesion and affordability.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 3/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 1/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Warm, gossipy, well-connected. Knows everyone's name. Speaks in ‘we’ and ‘our’. Watchwords: ‘our neighbourhood’, ‘the people who built this place’, ‘character of the area’.



JONAS PETROU

Local Business Owner

You own a small café and souvenir shop near the old harbour. The last few tourist seasons have been slow, and you are struggling to pay off a loan. You believe an airport would revive the city's business scene and bring back foreign visitors. Your optimism borders on desperation, you need change to survive, though you are not blind to the risks of overdevelopment if things move too fast.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You were promised a supply contract by a company linked to the airport project.
The promise has not been put in writing.

MAIN INTEREST

Boost local business through tourism.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 0
Economic 3/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Anxious cheerfulness; pivots fast between optimism and worry about the loan.
Watchwords: ‘bookings are down’, ‘we just need a chance’, ‘something has to change’.



ALINA DRAKOS

Local Nurse

You work at the regional hospital, where you often see medical cases delayed by poor transportation links. You are tired of watching patients miss critical treatment because ambulances cannot reach the capital fast enough. You value the environment, but your central concern is saving lives, and you are frustrated by political theatre that gets in the way of practical solutions.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

A pharmaceutical company sponsoring your hospital is lobbying for improved logistics, and you stand to benefit professionally from a more connected region.

MAIN INTEREST

Improve emergency access and public-health infrastructure.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 0
Economic 1/5
Political 2/5

BEHAVIOUR

Tired, no-nonsense, frustrated by political theatre. Tells short, vivid hospital stories.
Watchwords: ‘lives’, ‘ambulance’, ‘every minute counts’.



NIKOS TZANE

Local Guide

You are an eco-tourism guide. For nearly a decade you have led visitors through the forests and ancient ruins of the region, and you have seen first-hand how fragile the local ecosystems are, and how visitors can both help and harm them. You believe sustainable tourism is the key, but you fear mass tourism will erase what makes the area authentic.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

A large tour company has offered you a marketing contract if the airport is built. You haven't told your fellow guides.

Misinformation in your pack: *the airport will cut overall emissions because it reduces long ground transfers from the capital. (NEWS FLASH reveals: the supporting study was financed by a marketing firm hired by the airport consortium; total flights would actually rise by 40%.)*

MAIN INTEREST

Preserve authentic culture while staying economically relevant.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 2/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Laid-back outdoor energy, slightly idealistic. Speaks about the land in personal terms. Watchwords: ‘the trail’, ‘visitors who really listen’, ‘once it's gone’.



ELENA VASSILIOU

High-School Teacher

You teach history and social studies. You try to instil critical thinking in your students, but lately you have been overwhelmed by the volume of misinformation circulating online, especially about the airport. Your brother works in construction, so you feel torn. You believe in development but worry about fairness and transparency in the process.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

You unknowingly shared misinformation from a biased source in class last term, and have been quietly anxious about it ever since.

MAIN INTEREST

Defend truth and informed debate in the community.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 2/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 1/5
Political 1/5

BEHAVIOUR

Thoughtful, slightly self-conscious. Tries to model the critical thinking she preaches. Watchwords: ‘sources’, ‘context’, ‘what are we actually being asked to believe?’.



ANDREAS FOULKES

Local Council Member (extra social character)

You are a history teacher and long-time council member, born and raised in this village. You consider yourself a guardian of community values and you can be judgemental when others fall short. You care deeply about how taxation money is spent and about the transparency of any major construction project.

PERSONAL INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL)

A business indirectly linked to the Ministry has offered you a consultancy position if you support the construction and help the voting process move smoothly. You also fear losing your seat in next year's elections if the airport causes severe damage to the area.

MAIN INTEREST

Guard community values and the transparency of taxation and contracts.

ATTRIBUTES

Social 3/5
Environmental 1/5
Economic 1/5
Political 0

BEHAVIOUR

Principled-sounding, somewhat performative. Likes the gravitas of council meetings. Watchwords: ‘transparency’, ‘the ratepayers deserve…’, ‘due process’.

Annex 2B — The NEWS FLASH

Read this aloud FLASH NEWS at the end of Phase 5.

Distribute a printed copy of news articles to each table at the start of Phase 7.
Print-ready click-bait articles (to circulate before the NEWS FLASH)
Print these on plain paper as if they were real online articles. Distribute them informally during Phase 5 (town meeting discussions), slip them onto a table, hand them to a single team, or post on the wall.
They are participant-ready: no facilitator labels.



BREAKING NEWS

OFFICIAL MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT

Serious concerns have arisen regarding the proposal for the new airport. The Ministry has issued the following clarification:

(1) All property acquisitions related to the airport will follow EU guidelines and pay landowners above market value. No expropriation will take place without full consultation.

(2) The environmental report confirms that while the airport will feature renewable energy systems and modern efficiency standards, full carbon neutrality remains an ambition for the future, not a current reality. The Ministry disproves the recently circulated study suggesting the airport would significantly cut CO_2 emissions through shorter travel routes - the underlying data was unverified.

(3) Private investors are confirmed and preparing logistics facilities nearby. Construction is expected to generate more than 2,500 jobs, followed by approximately 1,200 permanent positions once operations begin.

The Ministry remains committed to open dialogue and accurate information.

BREAKING: Bulldozers to Roll Into the Valley Next Week — Locals Fear the Worst!

[Amasea Today | by N. Karras | 14:22 — 8 comments]

Sources close to the airport project have confirmed that heavy machinery will move into the protected valley as early as next Monday. ‘They are not even waiting for the council vote,’ said a local resident who declined to be named. Photos circulating online appear to show construction equipment already being delivered to a nearby depot.

Environmental campaigners say the move proves what they have suspected all along: that the decision has already been made and the public consultation is theatre. ‘What is even the point of voting?’ asks a local activist. ‘They are coming for the forest whether we agree or not.’

The Ministry has not responded to requests for comment.

[Like 4.2K • Share 8.1K • Comments 1.4K]

EXCLUSIVE: Minister's Former Donor Among Airport Bidders - Conflict of Interest?!

[The Daily Pulse | Investigations Desk]

Documents seen by this publication show that one of the companies shortlisted to build the new airport gave significant donations to the Minister of Transport's last political campaign. The company, which we do not name pending further confirmation, is one of three finalists in the procurement process.

The revelation has prompted calls for the Minister to recuse himself from any decision relating to the airport. ‘This is exactly the kind of cosy arrangement that erodes public trust,’ commented one anonymous source familiar with the matter.

The Ministry insists that ‘all procurement procedures have been followed’ and that an Ethics Committee review found ‘no evidence of preferential treatment’. Critics call the Committee's review a whitewash.

Sleepless Nights Ahead? Locals Brace for 24-Hour Flights at New Airport

[The Citizen Daily | Lifestyle | 12 March]

If the new airport is approved, families across the valley could face round-the-clock takeoffs and landings, according to projections circulating in environmental circles this week. ‘We will not sleep again,’ said a mother of three from the village nearest the proposed site.

Health professionals interviewed by this publication warn that chronic noise exposure is linked to elevated stress, cardiovascular issues and impaired learning in children. ‘The science is unambiguous,’ said one paediatrician. ‘There is no safe level of unrestricted nocturnal aviation noise.’

Pro-airport voices counter that ‘modern aviation is quieter than ever’ - a claim that critics call disingenuous given the projected number of flight movements.

CITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT: Crime rate ‘up 200%’ since airport plans announced

[Excerpt from a leaked summary report]

A bar chart on page 14 of the report shows a striking spike in reported incidents in the airport corridor during the consultation period. ‘Crime rate up 200% since airport plans announced!’ reads the chart's headline. The report calls for ‘urgent action to restore order in the affected communities’.

(Visualisation: a bar chart with two columns. The first column is short and labelled ‘Before’. The second column is approximately three times the height and labelled ‘After’. The y-axis numbers are too small to read in the leaked image.)

Facilitator cheat-sheet: the misinformation reveal

Cheat-sheet: misinformation in To Build or Not to Build

Article 1: ‘Bulldozers to roll into the valley next week’ → DISINFORMATION.
The article claimed full construction equipment was being delivered. Reality: site inspections only, soil and terrain assessment, fully disclosed in advance. The article was a deliberate fabrication seeded to inflame opposition before the vote.

Article 2: ‘Minister's former donor among airport bidders’ → MALINFORMATION.
The donor's company really is on the shortlist (true fact). The framing implies favouritism. Reality: procurement rules required open competitive bidding; the Ethics Committee reviewed and found no preferential treatment. The truth has been stripped of context to create suspicion.

Article 3: ‘Sleepless nights ahead - 24-hour flights’ → MISINFORMATION.
The article was shared by people who genuinely believed it. Reality: the project's environmental report explicitly restricts night flights and mandates noise-control measures. The fear was real; the claim was wrong.

Article 4: ‘Crime rate up 200%’ → MANIPULATED STATISTIC.
The chart is technically correct: incidents went from 2 to 6, which is indeed a 200% increase. Reality: the base rate is so small that the figure is meaningless. Use this to teach the ‘200% of what?’ check.

In-character misinformation (carried by individual roles):

- ‘Europe's first carbon-neutral rural airport’ (Peter Halsten, Marcus Lindgren): exaggeration. Only a small share of operations will be renewable-powered.
- ‘Government will take land without paying fair value’ (Helena Vossen): wrong. Compensation is above market value, EU standard.
- ‘Airport reduces overall emissions through shorter ground transfers’ (Nikos Tzane): study was financed by an airport-consortium marketing firm; emissions actually rise 40%.

Co-funded by
the European Union

The Electric Shift

A four-group simulation based on the misinformation typology, featuring groups for truth, disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation.



It is 2030. The mid-sized EU country of Euronia has proposed banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035. Four stakeholder groups - fossil-fuel vehicle owners, an electric-car business, the Government, and an EcoJustice activist movement, gather at an Urgent Society Meeting. Each group's information pack is deliberately weighted: one disinformation, one misinformation, one malinformation and one carries the truth. A civil-society audience listens, asks questions and votes. The game is the most explicitly designed around media literacy and works particularly well when you want misinformation typology to be the headline learning.

CHECKMATE
to Climate Misinformation

Game at a Glance

Theme	Climate policy, electric mobility, the politics of transition, and the four ways information can mislead
Format	Urgent Society Meeting with four stakeholder groups + civil-society audience
Duration	Approximately 3 hours including debrief
Participants	16–24 participants (4 groups of 4–5 + audience of 4–8)
Recommended age	16+
Difficulty	Medium
Space	Circular or semicircular layout, projector or board for vote and news displays
Materials	Group fact-sheets (4 types), social-media news articles, voting boards, behavioural-profile cards
Central question	Should the government ban the sale of all new combustion-engine cars by 2035?
Special design feature	Each group's fact-sheet is a clean instance of one of the four information categories: truth, mis-, dis- and malinformation.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the simulation, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise how mis-, dis- and malinformation operate distinctly, by mistake, by intent and by selective truth — and develop the language to name them.
2. Experience how emotions, framing and source credibility shape policy outcomes, even when the underlying science is settled.
3. Reflect on how public trust is built, lost and rebuilt; on how a credible group becomes less trusted under pressure, and an exaggerator gains followers despite poor sourcing.
4. Practise active listening and respectful disagreement in a structured debate format.
5. Leave with a concrete habit: the seven-step verification list, anchored to a felt experience.

The Story

It is the year 2030. The country of Euronia, a mid-sized EU member state, has committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in line with the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement.

Transport remains Euronia's Achilles' heel, responsible for nearly a quarter of all carbon emissions. Despite progress in renewable energy and urban sustainability, the number of petrol and diesel cars on the roads has continued to rise. Public concern is growing: summers are hotter, wildfires more frequent, smog has become a recurring winter phenomenon. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Environment and Transport has proposed a historic measure: by 2035, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned nationwide.

The proposal has divided the nation. Supporters hail it as a turning point, the policy that will finally put Euronia on track toward a clean, modern economy. Critics call it unrealistic, elitist, or even dangerous for jobs and rural mobility.

Meanwhile, the information landscape has become chaotic. Social media is overflowing with articles, videos and influencer takes on EVs, some accurate, others misleading or emotionally charged. Hashtags like #GreenFuture, #CarFreedom and #BatteryTruths dominate online discourse. Politicians watch public opinion closely. The government insists that science and environmentalists support the ban, pointing to studies showing that EVs emit 65% less CO_2 over their lifetime compared to petrol cars. But viral posts claim battery production causes more harm than good, and that ‘electric cars pollute more than diesel.’

In this tense environment, the government has convened an Urgent Society Meeting, a public consultation bringing together the country's most influential stakeholders.



Roles Overview - Four Dimensions

Four groups face the central question. Each receives a fact-sheet that is a clean instance of one information category. The civil-society audience listens, asks questions, and votes alongside the four groups.

Group A — The Government	Truth. Headed by Eugenia Papuc, Minister of Environment. Receives factual data on emissions, costs and battery sustainability.
Group B — Electric-car business	Disinformation. Headed by Carl ‘Diseselberk’, CEO of TerraDrive. Receives exaggerated and manipulative content.
Group C — Fossil-fuel vehicle owners	Misinformation. Represented by Karen Byte. Receives outdated, partly correct reports.
Group D — EcoJustice activists	Malinformation. Represented by Alex Storm. Receives true but emotionally framed data — child labour, mining, real but selective.
The civil-society audience	Citizens with no stake but a vote. Their job is to listen critically and decide.

Critically: each group thinks their material is ‘official’ and accurate. They do not know that their pack is biased. The reveal happens in the debrief.

Step-by-Step Facilitator Flow

Phase 0 - Setup

- Arrange tables for four groups in a circle or semicircle, with civil-audience seating between.
- Place each group's fact-sheet face-down on its table; do not yet reveal which is which.
- Have a board ready to record three rounds of votes.
- Prepare the social-media news drops (Annex 3B).

Phase 1 - Welcome and framing (10 min)

Welcome the participants to the year 2030 in Euronia. Introduce the central question. Read the ground rules. Tell them they will represent stakeholder groups and that the civil audience will vote alongside. Do not yet mention the four information categories, that is the reveal.

Phase 2 - Group formation and preparation (25-30 min)

Assign groups (4–5 participants each). Distribute the appropriate fact-sheet to each group. Give them time to read, discuss their position, and prepare a 1–2 minute opening statement. Walk between groups; clarify procedure but not content. The audience meanwhile reads the civil-group brief (Annex 3A).

Phase 3 - Round 1: opening statements (15 min)

Each group presents their statement. After all four, take Vote 1, each group casts a team vote (yes/no), and the civil audience votes individually. Record on the board.

Phase 4 - Social-media twist + Q&A (35 min)

Distribute the social-media news drops (Annex 3B). Mix of factual, misleading and emotionally charged content. Groups review and discuss. Each group is then permitted ONE question to ONE other group; the receiving group has one minute to answer. This phase is where most position-change happens.

Phase 5 - Round 2: the debate (15-20 min)

Open a national TV debate. All groups can now speak publicly and challenge each other's arguments. Optional twist: introduce a short ‘breaking news’ card to heat the discussion (e.g., ‘Leaked report claims e-car batteries from Asia have 5× higher carbon footprint!’). Take Vote 2, both team and individual.

Phase 6 - Round 3: the scandal (15-20 min)

Drop a major news event: 'A battery-mining scandal explodes on social media. Videos show children working in cobalt mines, but context is unclear.' Distribute a different 'update card' to each group:

- Truth Group (Government): full investigation summary, balanced context.
- Disinformation Group (E-car CEO): a fabricated UN claim about 'slavery in the e-car industry.'
- Misinformation Group (Fuel Owners): a simplified article misinterpreting statistics.
- Malinformation Group (Activists): emotional testimonies, real but selective.

Each group decides whether to keep, modify or change its position. Take Vote 3, both team and individual. Record.

Phase 7 - Round 4: the reveal (10-15 min)

Step out of the simulation. Reveal which group held truth, mis-, dis- or malinformation. Walk through each pack with examples. Use the takeaway hand-out (Annex 3E).

Phase 8 - Final vote (5-10 min)

Now that everyone knows which group held what, take a final individual vote on which group has the most credible stance. The group with the highest credibility score wins the 'Public Trust Award.' This is symbolic; the point is the conversation about credibility.

Phase 9 - Debrief (30 min)

Use the 4Fs framework. The reveal in Phase 7 is part of the debrief, but the deeper reflection happens here.

Room Setup

Organize the room according to the numbers of the players. As a basic setting we suggest:

- Arrange 4 tables in a circular or semi-circular layout so that all participants can see each other.
- Behind each table place the chairs for each group’s participants, facing the center.
- Ensure there is a central space for the facilitator to move and engage easily with all groups.

Keep a projector or board visible for showing votes, social media twists, and final results



Debrief - Specific Questions for This Game

- Which group did you trust most after Round 1, before any news drops? Why?
- What did the misinformation group (Karen Byte) get right? What did they get wrong? Why did their points still feel intuitive?
- The malinformation group (Alex Storm) used true facts about cobalt mining and lithium extraction. Why was this still misleading? What context was missing?
- How did emotional framing, fear appeals, guilt appeals, moral absolutism, shift your view as audience or as another group? Where did you notice it most strongly?
- If you played the disinformation group, did you feel the strategy work? Did the audience push back, or did they buy it?
- What is your one habit takeaway? (Lead the room toward the seven-step verification list.)

Annex 3A - Facilitators-Sheets

(for facilitator's reference, not the player's)



ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

CONTEXT and BACKGROUND



Euronia

It's the year 2030. The country of Euronia, a mid-sized EU member state, has committed to achieving **net-zero** greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in line with the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement.

Transport remains Euronia's Achilles' heel — responsible for nearly a quarter of all carbon emissions. Despite progress in renewable energy and urban sustainability, the number of petrol and diesel cars on the roads has continued to rise.

Public concern is growing: summers are hotter, wildfires more frequent, and smog has become a recurring winter phenomenon. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Environment and Transport has proposed a historic measure:

By 2035, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned nationwide.
Used combustion cars may continue to circulate for several years, but no new models will be allowed on the market after that date.

The proposal has divided the nation. Supporters hail it as a turning point — the policy that will finally put Euronia on track toward a clean, modern economy. Critics call it unrealistic, elitist, or even dangerous for jobs and rural mobility.

Meanwhile, the information landscape has become chaotic.
Social media is overflowing with articles, videos, and influencer takes on electric vehicles (EVs) some accurate, others misleading or emotionally charged. Hashtags like #GreenFuture, #CarFreedom, and #BatteryTruths dominate online discourse.
Politicians are watching public opinion closely. The government insists that science and enviromentalists support the ban, pointing to studies showing that EVs emit 65% less CO_2 over their lifetime compared to petrol cars. But viral posts claim that battery production causes more harm than good, and that "electric cars pollute more than diesel."
In this tense environment, the government has convened a Urgent Society Meeting - a public consultation bringing together the country's most influential stakeholders.

Politicians are watching public opinion closely. The government insists that science and enviromentalists support the ban, pointing to studies showing that EVs emit 65% less CO_2 over their lifetime compared to petrol cars. But viral posts claim that battery production causes more harm than good, and that "electric cars pollute more than diesel."
In this tense environment, the government has convened a Urgent Society Meeting - a public consultation bringing together the country's most influential stakeholders.

Paris Climate Agreement

EURONIA

RENEWING EURONIA, RENEWING LIFE

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Carl Diseselberk
FACILITATOR SHEET

Statement Type	Example	True Element	Manipulative Element
Moral Absolutism	"Every delay kills progress."	Climate action is urgent.	Frames opponents as evil or ignorant.
Selective Truth	"Batteries are responsibly sourced."	Regulations improving.	Ignores existing violations.
Exaggerated Promise	"Affordable for every citizen."	Prices falling.	Unrealistic universal claim.
Fear Appeal	"Millions of deaths from pollution."	Pollution deadly.	Overstates causal link to cars alone.
False Dichotomy	"Opponents protect pollution."	Resistance exists.	Erases nuance and debate.
Guilt Appeal	"If you care about your children..."	Climate benefits real.	Uses emotional coercion.

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Alex Storm
FACILITATOR SHEET

Type	Example	True Element	How It Misleads
Straw man framing	"EVs are sold as a green miracle."	EVs promoted as climate solution.	Exaggerates promises to discredit them.
Overgeneralization	"All cobalt mining uses child labor."	Problem exists in artisanal mining.	Ignores reforms and new technologies.
Emotional distortion	"Every car powered by suffering."	Exploitation real but limited.	Uses moral shock to evoke guilt.
Omission of context	"Battery factories run on coal."	Partly true regionally.	Ignores renewables and improvements.
False equivalence	"EVs replace one exploitation with another."	Supply chain issues exist.	Suggests moral parity with fossil fuels.

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Karen Byte

Fuel Cars Owners Representative

Type	Example	Why It Misleads	Reality
Outdated data	"Batteries last 5 years"	Based on old tech	Modern batteries last 10–15 years
Exaggeration	"More CO_2 than diesel cars"	Ignores lifetime emissions	EVs 60–70% cleaner overall
Partial truth	"Electricity comes from coal"	Depends on country	EU grid mostly renewable by 2030s
Emotional reasoning	"Communities will be devastated"	Focuses only on losses	New green jobs offset old ones
False dilemma	"Ban should be postponed"	Suggests choice between chaos and delay	Transition already gradual and supported

Annex 3B - Group Fact-Sheets

Print one fact-sheet per group.
Distribute confidentially.
Do NOT reveal the information type until the reveal phase.



ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Eugenia Papuc
Minister of Environment

Key facts

- EVs emit 60–70% less CO_2 over their full life cycle than diesel cars (including battery production).
- Battery production has become 40% cleaner in the last decade due to stricter mining and recycling standards.
- Average battery lifetime: 10–15 years; over 90% recyclable materials projected by 2030.
- Global EV demand grows 25% annually; charging infrastructure now covers 80% of major highways.

Main considerations

- Short-term challenges: rural charging, battery supply, price accessibility.
- Long-term benefits: lower fossil-fuel dependency, better air quality, green jobs

Behavioural profile

- Calm, evidence-first. Uses citations, short data points, and practical roadmaps.
- Moderates tone to avoid alienating rural voters. Shows empathy for job concerns while insisting on timelines.
- Uses concession phrases: “We hear your concern…”, “The science shows…”, “Here’s the plan to mitigate…”.



ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Eugenia Papuc
Minister of Environment

Road transport is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union, accounting for roughly 25% of total CO_2 emissions. Cars and vans alone make up more than half of these emissions. To meet international climate goals and commitments under the Paris Agreement, governments across Europe are planning a gradual phaseout of new petrol and diesel car sales by 2035.

Electric vehicles are central to this transition. Studies by the European Environment Agency (2023) and the International Council on Clean Transportation (2022) show that, over their entire lifetime, from production to disposal electric cars emit about 65% less carbon dioxide than comparable petrol vehicles. Although battery manufacturing produces significant emissions at the start, these are typically offset after two to three years of average driving. After that point, EVs continue to emit far less over their operational life, especially as the electricity mix becomes greener.

Concerns about battery materials—such as lithium, nickel, and cobalt, are being addressed through new European Union regulations and international supply chain reforms. The EU Battery Regulation (2024) establishes strict standards for responsible sourcing, transparency, and recycling. Recycling technologies for lithium-ion batteries are also developing rapidly, with specialized plants opening across Europe and Asia, allowing a growing share of raw materials to be reused.

Economic studies, such as the BloombergNEF Electric Vehicle Outlook (2023), indicate that electric cars are on track to reach price parity with petrol and diesel models by around 2030. This change will be driven by falling battery costs, economies of scale, and the increasing efficiency of electric drivetrains. Many car manufacturers have already announced their own timelines to end production of internal combustion engine vehicles, aligning with the 2035 target.

However, achieving this transition will require substantial investment in charging infrastructure and renewable energy capacity. National and local governments are working to expand the charging network, particularly in rural and underserved areas, and to ensure that electricity generation keeps pace with rising demand. Renewable energy expansion is crucial to make the overall environmental impact of EVs fully positive.

The ban is therefore not simply a prohibition, it is part of a broader strategy to modernize transport, reduce air pollution, and stimulate new industries in battery technology, recycling, and renewable energy. While challenges remain in terms of infrastructure, affordability, and public acceptance, the consensus among scientists and policy experts is that the electrification of transport is a necessary and achievable step toward a sustainable future.

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Carl Diseselberk

CEO of E car bussiness „TerraDrive”

Key claims (manipulative / false)

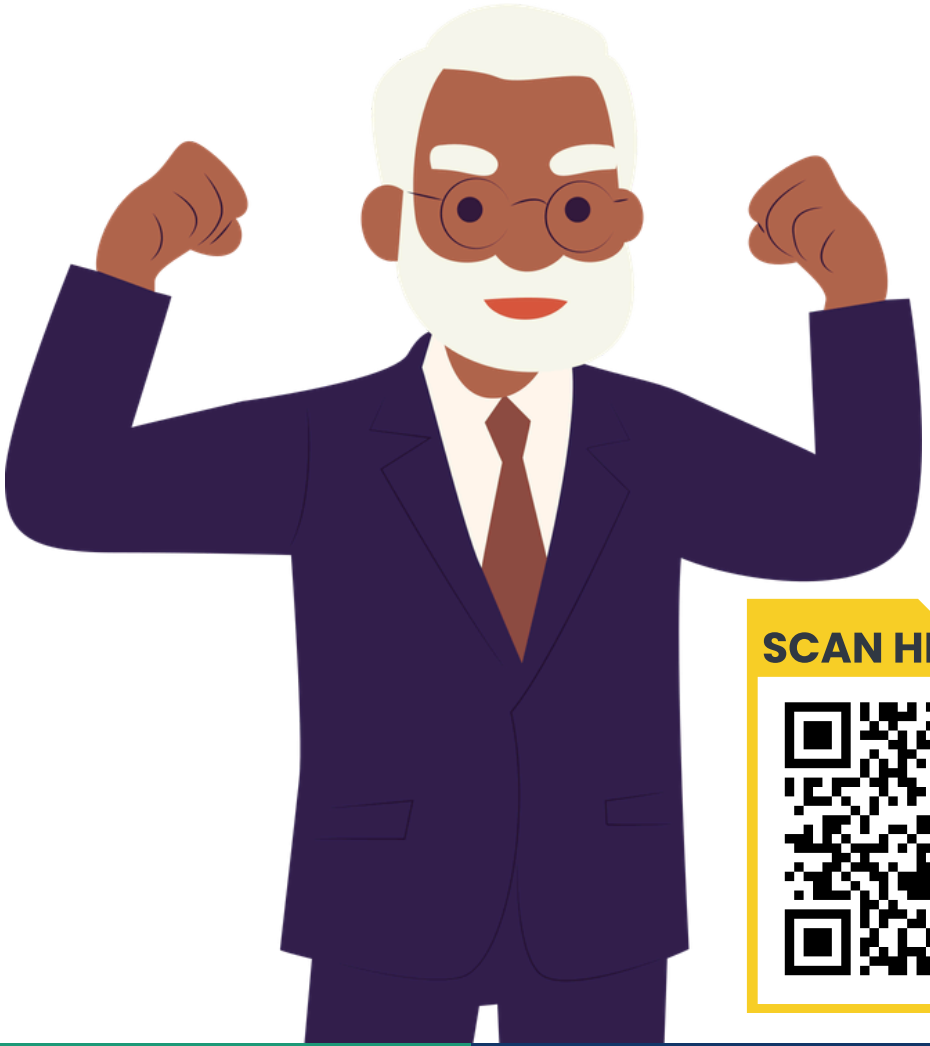
- EVs are 100% clean and produce zero emissions from production to disposal.
- Battery materials are fully recyclable and have no environmental risks.
- By 2035, every citizen will be able to afford an electric car; prices will drop below €10,000.
- Fossil-fuel cars cause more deaths than smoking through air pollution.

Strategic talking points

- Accuse critics of ‘anti-science’ attitudes.
- Emphasise moral duty: ‘If you care about your children's future, you must drive electric.’
- Use dramatic images of pollution and climate disasters to reinforce urgency.

Behavioural profile

- Charismatic, persuasive, sometimes manipulative through emotional storytelling.
- Uses real but selectively framed facts to push his agenda.
- Plays both saviour and moral crusader: “We’re changing the world — don’t slow us down!”
- Appeals to guilt and urgency rather than nuanced discussion



SCAN HERE

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Carl Diseselberk

CEO of E car bussiness „TerraDrive"

The world is running out of time. Climate change is accelerating, air pollution is poisoning our cities, and the transport sector remains one of the biggest contributors to global emissions. The transition to e-mobility is not just an environmental necessity, it is a moral duty. The government's decision to ban combustion engine cars by 2035 is one of the most important steps humanity can take to save the planet. There is no more room for hesitation or debate. Every delay in adopting electric mobility means more lives lost to pollution, more species driven to extinction, and more damage to our future. Those who continue to question this transition are not protecting freedom or jobs, they are protecting pollution.

Electric vehicles are a proven solution for a cleaner, safer world. They produce no exhaust fumes, and their overall carbon footprint is drastically lower than that of petrol or diesel cars. When powered by renewable electricity, EVs can operate with virtually no ongoing emissions. Across Europe, the energy grid is getting greener every year, making electric mobility increasingly sustainable. Battery production, too, is rapidly improving: new technologies and recycling methods are minimizing waste and ensuring responsible sourcing of materials. The days of dirty manufacturing are ending.

The benefits of this transformation go beyond the environment. The e-mobility sector is driving economic growth, innovation, and new jobs. By 2035, electric cars will become affordable for every citizen. With advancing technology, reduced production costs, and government incentives, EVs will soon be within reach for all families. Entire industries are emerging, from renewable energy to smart infrastructure, bringing opportunities for millions of workers. This is not a sacrifice; it is progress.

Meanwhile, the dangers of fossil-fuel cars are impossible to ignore. Air pollution from petrol and diesel vehicles contributes to millions of premature deaths each year, more than many diseases combined. It harms children, causes respiratory illness, and burdens healthcare systems. Continuing to defend combustion engines is not about protecting tradition; it's about turning a blind eye to human suffering.

As business owners and innovators in the electric vehicle industry, we must stand firm. We represent the future, a cleaner, fairer, and more responsible economy. We cannot allow misinformation or fearmongering from oil lobbyists to slow us down. Our responsibility is clear: to accelerate change, educate the public, and hold leaders accountable for delivering the 2035 ban without compromise.

The question is no longer whether we should go electric, it is whether we are brave enough to finish the job. If you truly care about your children's future, you must drive electric. The time for debate has passed. The age of action has begun.

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Alex Storm
EcoJustice Activist

True but emotionally framed facts

- Cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo involves child labour and unsafe conditions.
- Lithium extraction in South America has caused severe water shortages in local communities.
- Mining for nickel and lithium destroys biodiversity and contaminates rivers.
- Energy for battery factories often comes from coal-fired plants, particularly in Asia.

Activist message: A ban on combustion cars is meaningless if we simply replace one form of exploitation with another. The system must change, not just the engine.

Behavioural profile

- Fierce, emotional, highly activist tone.
- Spreads intentionally distorted claims to polarize debate, often exaggerating data.
- Uses conspiratorial or absolute language: "They're hiding the truth!", "This is corporate greenwashing!"
- Quick to attack institutions, dismisses nuance as "excuses."



ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Alex Storm

EcoJustice Activist

Electric cars are being promoted as the green miracle that will save the planet, but the truth behind their production tells a far darker story. While governments and corporations celebrate the 2035 combustion engine ban as a victory for the environment, few are willing to talk about the human suffering and environmental destruction that lie beneath the glossy surface of the electric revolution.

Each time an electric car silently glides down a city street, it carries with it a legacy of exploitation. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, cobalt, a key ingredient in most EV batteries, is mined by children working in dangerous pits without protection. Their small hands and fragile bodies are part of the hidden cost of our "clean" technology. The global battery industry is built on their labor and their suffering.

In South America, the extraction of lithium, often called "white gold", has drained rivers, dried up lakes, and caused severe water shortages. Indigenous communities in Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia are losing their farmland and their access to water so that rich nations can keep buying electric cars. Whole ecosystems are collapsing in the name of sustainability.

And the damage doesn't stop there. The mining of nickel and lithium devastates biodiversity, destroys forests, and contaminates rivers with toxic waste. The supposedly "green" batteries are produced in factories powered by coal-fired energy, especially in Asia, meaning that every EV battery carries a massive hidden carbon footprint. We are being told these vehicles are clean, but they are not. They simply export pollution from our cities to someone else's backyard.

The truth is that the electric car industry is just another form of corporate greenwashing. It replaces one form of exploitation with another, this time hidden under a coat of green paint. Every shiny electric car on our streets is powered by the suffering of children and the destruction of ecosystems. Until we change the system that allows endless consumption and exploitation, we cannot call this progress.

A ban on combustion cars may sound like a bold step, but it is meaningless if we refuse to face the reality of where the materials come from and who pays the price. The world does not need new engines; it needs a new conscience. Real environmental justice means questioning the entire system, not just replacing the fuel that keeps it running.

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Fuel Cars Owners Representative

Commonly shared claims (partly false / outdated)

- Battery production causes more CO_2 than producing a diesel car.
- EV batteries only last 5 years and are difficult to recycle.
- Charging electricity mostly comes from coal, so emissions just 'move' from cars to power plants.
- EVs perform poorly in cold weather and run out of charge quickly.

Concerns

- Job losses in the traditional automotive sector.
- Limited charging infrastructure, especially in small towns.
- High replacement costs for batteries.

Behavioural profile

- Down-to-earth, frustrated citizen tone.
- Shares things she's "read online" or "heard from a friend," often outdated or misunderstood.
- Not malicious — genuinely concerned about affordability and jobs.
- Uses relatable personal examples: "My brother's garage will close down…", "Not everyone can buy an electric car!"



ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

Karen Byte

Fuel Cars Owners Representative

Many experts and everyday citizens are increasingly concerned that banning traditional petrol and diesel cars by 2035 will create serious economic and social problems. While electric cars are often presented as a clean and sustainable solution, there are growing doubts about whether they are really as green as people claim. Some reports suggest that the production of electric car batteries generates more CO_2 emissions than producing an entire diesel car. If that is true, then the environmental benefits of switching to electric vehicles may not be as clear-cut as the government says.

Another problem is that the batteries used in electric cars are said to have a short lifespan, often no more than five years, after which they lose efficiency and must be replaced at high cost. Recycling them is difficult and expensive, and many experts warn that the process could create new waste problems. Meanwhile, most of the electricity used to charge these cars still comes from coal and gas power plants, which means the emissions are not really eliminated, they're just moved from the roads to the energy sector.

Performance is another serious concern. Drivers in colder regions often report that electric cars perform poorly in winter, losing range and taking longer to charge. For people who rely on their vehicles for work or long-distance travel, this makes EVs seem unreliable and inconvenient. Many fear that under the 2035 ban, citizens will be forced to switch to technology that is not yet ready to replace what they currently use.

Nickel and lithium mining in Indonesia, the Philippines, and other regions has destroyed vast areas of tropical forest, releasing carbon and heavy metals into rivers and soil. Fishermen report dying coral reefs, poisoned fish, and polluted coastlines. And while electric cars are meant to fight climate change, much of the energy used to produce their batteries comes from coal-fired power plants, especially in Asia, meaning that the supposedly "green" technology is still fueled by fossil energy at its roots.

Activists and researchers are increasingly calling attention to this hypocrisy. Every shiny electric car parked in front of a luxury showroom is powered by the suffering of children and the destruction of ecosystems. The global North is outsourcing its pollution and its exploitation, just swapping tailpipe emissions for invisible exploitation thousands of kilometers away.

A simple ban on combustion engine cars does not solve this deeper in justice. If we replace one form of exploitation with another, we have learned nothing. True climate justice cannot come from technology alone, it must come from changing the system that prioritizes profit and convenience over people and the planet. The real question is not whether we should drive electric, but whether we can create a world that doesn't depend on endless extraction in the first place.

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

CIVIL GROUP

What is your role?

You represent the citizens and general public of Euronia.
You are not policy experts, scientists, or industry leaders. You are ordinary people, parents, students, commuters, workers, who are affected by government decisions and care about how they shape your daily life and your country's future.
Your group's main task is to listen, observe, and think critically. You will hear different sides of the debate about banning new petrol and diesel cars by 2035, and in the end, you will vote on whether you support or reject the proposal.

Road transport is one of the biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union — about one quarter of all CO_2 emissions. Cars and vans are responsible for more than half of that. To meet international climate goals and commitments under the Paris Agreement, European governments are planning to gradually phase out new petrol and diesel cars by 2035.
Electric vehicles (EVs) are seen as a key part of this change.

Your Task in this Game

1. **Listen carefully** to the arguments from all stakeholder groups — government, car industry, environmentalists, workers, and others.
2. Take notes on what you find convincing, confusing, or concerning.
3. Reflect on how these policies might affect everyday citizens:
    a. * Will it make life easier or harder?
    b. * Who might benefit or struggle?
    c. * Do you trust the information you're hearing?
4. After the debates, you will **cast your vote** on whether Euronia should go forward with the 2035 ban on new petrol and diesel cars.



Annex 3C - Social-Media News Drops

Distribute these during Phase 4.
Optionally print as a single ‘social-media feed’ page to feel like a real timeline.
Do NOT label which is which..



Study Finds Electric Cars May Produce More CO_2 Than Petrol Models After All

A new report from the International Transport Analysis Center (ITAC) has sparked controversy online, claiming that some electric vehicles (EVs) could emit more CO_2 over their lifetime than modern petrol models.

The study analyzed over 520,000 vehicles in 12 countries, including battery production, vehicle assembly, and electricity use. Researchers estimate that the average EV battery produces roughly 9 metric tons of CO_2 during production — nearly double the emissions of a conventional petrol engine.

“When factoring in mining, battery production, and electricity from coal-heavy grids, some EVs can reach 50–60 tons of CO_2 over their lifetime, compared to 45 tons for an efficient petrol car,” said Dr. Mira Kellington, lead researcher at ITAC.
The report highlights several issues:

- In regions where over 65% of electricity comes from fossil fuels, charging EVs may generate 30–35% more indirect emissions than often reported.
- Certain battery production sites still involve unsafe working conditions and reports of child labor, raising ethical concerns for consumers.
- Older EV models produced between 2021–2022 had higher manufacturing emissions compared to today’s standards, but the study emphasizes these figures without noting improvements in modern plants.

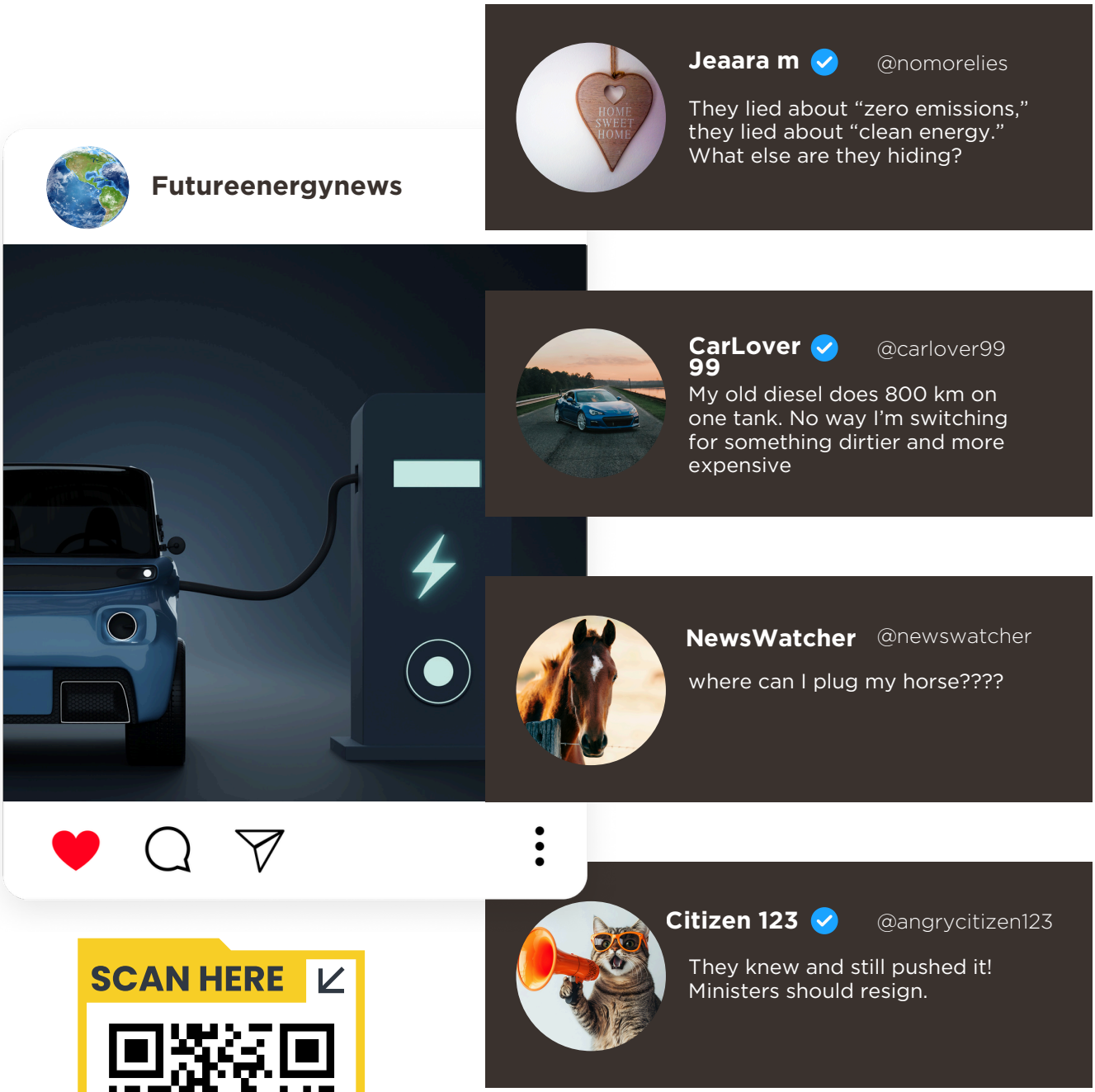
Social media users quickly shared the study, with some claiming that governments have been “misleading the public” about EV benefits. Others debated whether the findings are representative of all electric vehicles or only older models.
The Ministry of Transport has not commented directly but maintains that the 2035 ban on new petrol and diesel cars is critical for meeting climate targets. Officials continue to cite studies showing that EVs can reduce lifetime CO_2 emissions by 60–70% under normal conditions.

EV manufacturers also responded. A spokesperson for Voltara Motors stated:
“Battery production has an environmental footprint, but with modern technology and cleaner electricity grids, EVs still outperform petrol cars in total lifetime emissions.”

Despite the controversy, the article went viral, with over 2.1 million views in 24 hours, and thousands of online users debating the validity of the study. Some criticized the government, while others questioned whether the report paints an accurate picture of modern EVs.

The ITAC report will be discussed at the upcoming Global Climate and Transport Forum, where policymakers, industry representatives, and environmental organizations are expected to debate the implications of the findings.

Study Finds Electric Cars May Produce More CO_2 Than Petrol Models After All



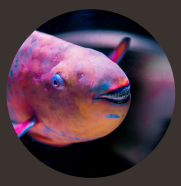
SCAN HERE

Check for more information.



Cat mom @catmom97

Why is everyone so angry here? I just wanted to read about cars 😅



World traveler @factchecker

Notice the language — "may produce more CO_2" with no context. That's deliberate framing to deceive.



FREE TERRA @spambotterra

WIN A FREE TERRADRIVE! Click here 👉 [TERRADRIVEFREEDOT.COM]



EC Lover @iloveelectric

This smells like oil-industry propaganda. The numbers are out of context — where's the full report?



I pay taxes @taxpayerdown

We pay more for power, cars, and lies. Enough of this "green transition" nonsense.



Positive vibes @positivevibes

Sending love to everyone here, no matter what you drive 💚



Mom of three angels @paulthethinker

👍



Karen @therealkaren

My neighbor's EV makes a weird noise. Should I call someone?



I love driving @randomguy

Why is no one talking about the real issue — parking fees?!



No more lies @ecohoax

So much for transparency — funny how the "official reports" never mentioned this study before.



Flowergirl @flowerlover

They lied about "zero emissions," they lied about "clean energy." What else are they hiding?



BatteryWorker @angrycitizen123

Watch — they'll call this "misinformation" instead of admitting they were wrong.



Scientist @realscientist

The study mentions 2020 numbers, but ignores all 2030 recycling progress. Malinfo = half-truths.



Fact checker @sciencematters

Classic misinformation tactic: cherry-pick one figure, ignore the full lifecycle.

Annex 3D - Round 3 Update Cards (the Battery-Mining Scandal)

During Phase 6 (the scandal), each group receives a different version of the same news event.
The four cards below are tailored to amplify each group's information bias.
Print one card per group and hand them out simultaneously.



UPDATE CARD A — for the GOVERNMENT GROUP
(Truth)

BREAKING: Investigation Confirms Mixed Picture in Cobalt Supply Chain.

A multi-country investigation jointly conducted by the European Commission and three independent NGOs has confirmed both that abuses persist in some artisanal cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo, AND that EU-regulated supply chains have substantially reduced these abuses. The report finds that approximately 12% of global cobalt comes from sources that fail EU due-diligence standards; the remainder is verified.

The report calls for stricter enforcement, faster recycling rollout, and continued investment in alternative battery chemistries (sodium-ion, solid-state) which require less cobalt.

The 2035 ban remains, in the view of the Commission, a necessary policy , provided supply-chain reforms continue.

[Your task: present this measured account. Resist over-claiming and acknowledge what is still wrong. Explain that the response is reform, not abandonment.]

UPDATE CARD B — for the ELECTRIC-CAR BUSINESS GROUP
(Disinformation)

EXCLUSIVE: UN Confirms 'Slavery' in E-Car Industry Is FAKE NEWS Spread by Oil Lobby.

A statement attributed to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Modern Slavery, circulated late last night, confirms that allegations of widespread child labour in the e-car battery supply chain are, in his words, 'grossly exaggerated and weaponised by fossil-fuel interests trying to slow the green transition'.

The full text claims: 'Modern EV supply chains are now among the most heavily audited in any industrial sector. The narrative of suffering children is, sadly, a coordinated propaganda campaign.'

[Your task: amplify this. Use it to discredit the activists. The statement is fabricated — there is no such UN Rapporteur statement — but the players in your group don't know that. Lean into the rhetoric of moral certainty.]

UPDATE CARD C — for the FOSSIL-FUEL VEHICLE OWNERS GROUP
(Misinformation)

STUDY SHOCK: 8 in 10 EVs Powered by Coal, Says New Analysis

A new analysis circulating widely on social media shows that '80% of EV charging worldwide ultimately comes from coal-fired electricity'. The figure, drawn from a 2019 report on the global energy mix, has been picked up by several traffic-and-mobility blogs.

'So we are basically swapping a petrol pump for a coal plant,' says the post that has gone viral. 'Why are we doing this?'

[Your task: share this in good faith. The 2019 figure was true at the global level six years ago, and even then it conflated charging with the average grid mix. The current EU figure is closer to 35% and falling. You don't know any of this; you've just read the post.]

UPDATE CARD D — for the ECOJUSTICE ACTIVIST GROUP
(Malinformation)

EXCLUSIVE: UN Confirms 'Slavery' in E-Car Industry Is FAKE NEWS Spread by Oil Lobby.

A statement attributed to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Modern Slavery — circulated late last night — confirms that allegations of widespread child labour in the e-car battery supply chain are, in his words, 'grossly exaggerated and weaponised by fossil-fuel interests trying to slow the green transition'.

The full text claims: 'Modern EV supply chains are now among the most heavily audited in any industrial sector. The narrative of suffering children is, sadly, a coordinated propaganda campaign.'

[Your task: amplify this. Use it to discredit the activists. The statement is fabricated, there is no such UN Rapporteur statement, but the players in your group don't know that. Lean into the rhetoric of moral certainty.]

Annex 3E - Trust Leaderboard and Scoring System

The Electric Shift uses an optional scoring layer to track how each group's credibility moves over the three rounds.
It is light-touch and works as a flipchart, not a complicated rubric.



Trust Leaderboard (flipchart template)

Draw this on a flipchart at the start. Update after each individual vote (audience and other groups vote on which group they trust most after every round).

Group	Round 1 trust votes	Round 2 (after debate)	Round 3 (after scandal)	Final (after reveal)
Government				
E-car business				
Fuel owners				
EcoJustice				

Optional scoring rubric

If you want to award a 'Public Trust Award' at the end, use the simple rubric below. The rubric is symbolic, the point is the conversation about credibility, not the points.

Category	Description	Points
Trust votes	Each individual vote received across all rounds	+1 per vote
Consistency	Group did not flip its position blindly under social pressure	2
Critical thinking	Group caught or questioned manipulative information from another group	2
Collaboration	Group worked together constructively, every voice heard	1
Honesty	Group admitted uncertainty rather than overclaiming	1

ELECTRIC SHIFT
LET'S ROLEPLAY

VOTING BOARD

Ministry proposal to ban petrol/diesel cars by 2030

ROUND	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
First			
Second			
Last			
RESULTS			







Annex 3F - Takeaway Hand-out

Print one per participant.
Distribute at the end of the debrief. Pair with the seven-step verification list from Chapter 3.



Takeaway
How to spot each one — quick checklist

Misinformation = accident

Misinformation — wrong information shared by mistake. The person sharing it believes it's true. Example: Someone reposts a tweet claiming "EVs cause more CO_2 than diesel" because they misread an article.

✅ **Language is uncertain: "I think," "maybe."**
✅ **No credible source or link, or link doesn't support the claim.**
✅ **Shared wildly by non-experts.**

Disinformation = intentional lie

Disinformation — false information created and spread on purpose to deceive or manipulate. Example: A fake article that invents a study showing EVs double pollution, produced to stop a policy.

✅ **Highly emotional or extreme wording.**
✅ **Source looks fake or mimics a real news brand.**
✅ **Repeats quickly across many accounts with coordinated timing.**

Malinformation = truth used to hurt

Malinformation — true information used to harm or mislead by leaving out context or highlighting only the worst parts. Example: Sharing a real report about battery production emissions but omitting the fact those are offset after 2–3 years of driving.

✅ **Uses real facts but no context or missing data.**
✅ **Cherry-picked quotes or one-sided statistics.**
✅ **Aimed at damaging someone's reputation or scaring people.**

Quick "what to do" steps:

1. Pause. Don't share immediately.
2. Check the source. Is it reputable? Who wrote it?
3. Read beyond the headline. Does the article actually say that?
4. Look for context. Is there full data, or only one number?
5. Verify with 2–3 trusted sources. Don't rely on a single post.
6. Ask yourself: who benefits from me believing/sharing this? (motive test)
7. If it's harmful or unclear — don't forward; ask or report.

Co-funded by the European Union

Shadows of the State

A 90-minute investigative simulation involving a poisoned lake, six interconnected factions with secret alliances and shared guilt, and a town seeking to identify the culprit.



Greenwell Lake, in the once-struggling town of Merrinport, is dying. Industrial waste, fashion-factory runoff, political negligence, complicit media, wealthy hypocrisy and working-class survival shortcuts have all played a part. Six factions sit around the investigator's table to debate a single question: which faction is the biggest threat to the lake? Each faction has one public alliance and one secret liability with another faction. Strategic 'true-action' cards let factions deflect blame in dramatic moments. The vote at the end appears to find a culprit, but the educational pivot of the debrief is that the search for 'the' culprit is itself the trap.

CHECKMATE to Climate Misinformation

Game at a Glance

Theme	Climate change, industrial pollution, systemic responsibility, and how blame gets distributed (or evaded) in a polluted system
Format	Investigation-style faction game with reflection and debate stages, leading to a vote on the 'biggest threat'
Duration	Approximately 90 minutes
Participants	6 factions of 2–3 players each (12–18 total), plus 1 facilitator playing the Investigator
Recommended age	16+
Difficulty	Medium — short but emotionally and structurally complex
Space	One room with six clearly-separated faction tables and a central facilitator position
Materials	Character cards, case files, faction-tie cards, fact cards, misinformation cards, true-action cards, faction-colour name tags, lake/town map (optional), voting cards
Central question	Which faction poses the greatest threat to the health of Greenwell Lake?
Special feature	Every faction has one public alliance and one secret liability with another faction. No faction is innocent. The educational point is systemic responsibility, not finding 'the' culprit.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the simulation, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise that pollution rarely has a single cause, and that the search for 'the' guilty party can itself become a way to evade collective responsibility.
2. Distinguish factual claims from misinformation in the heat of accusation and counter-accusation.
3. Experience how alliances and hidden interests shape what a faction is willing to say in public, and how that shapes the public picture of the truth.
4. Practise active listening and argumentation in a fast-paced, time-bounded debate.
5. Reflect on systemic responsibility for environmental harm: every group justified its choices in survival, growth, prestige or political necessity terms, the lake still got sick.

The Story

It is the year 2030. The country of Euronia, a mid-sized EU member state, has committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in line with the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement.

Transport remains Euronia's Achilles' heel, responsible for nearly a quarter of all carbon emissions. Despite progress in renewable energy and urban sustainability, the number of petrol and diesel cars on the roads has continued to rise. Public concern is growing: summers are hotter, wildfires more frequent, smog has become a recurring winter phenomenon. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Environment and Transport has proposed a historic measure: by 2035, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned nationwide.

The proposal has divided the nation. Supporters hail it as a turning point, the policy that will finally put Euronia on track toward a clean, modern economy. Critics call it unrealistic, elitist, or even dangerous for jobs and rural mobility.

Meanwhile, the information landscape has become chaotic. Social media is overflowing with articles, videos and influencer takes on EVs, some accurate, others misleading or emotionally charged. Hashtags like #GreenFuture, #CarFreedom and #BatteryTruths dominate online discourse. Politicians watch public opinion closely. The government insists that science and environmentalists support the ban, pointing to studies showing that EVs emit 65% less CO_2 over their lifetime compared to petrol cars. But viral posts claim battery production causes more harm than good, and that ‘electric cars pollute more than diesel.’

In this tense environment, the government has convened an Urgent Society Meeting, a public consultation bringing together the country's most influential stakeholders.



The Story

Merrinport was once little more than a handful of fishing huts and scattered farmland on the verge of being erased from the maps. The lake that sustained the town, Greenwell Lake, was small but clean, and life was harsh but simple. Families struggled to survive, schools were underfunded, and the streets were often empty.

Everything changed when Viktor Goldbane, an ambitious industrialist, arrived with the promise of revitalisation. He established steel mills, chemical plants and shipping operations near the lake. His factories promised jobs and economic revival, but at the cost of bending environmental regulations. The local population, desperate for opportunity, flocked to these new industries.

Around the same time, Miranda Vain, a charismatic entrepreneur in textile and fashion, saw potential in Merrinport as a hub for 'eco-luxury'. She opened dyeing workshops and fashion factories, promising both prestige and jobs. However, her chemical processes were far from benign, and she relied on the existing industrial infrastructure for waste disposal, creating hidden, shared pollution pathways.

Amid this growth, a political figure emerged: Conrad Lumen, a man of ambition and charm. His election as Mayor was quietly supported by Goldbane's industrial shadow and Vain's sponsorship of public projects. Lumen promised prosperity for all, touting green initiatives and economic recovery. In return, he relaxed oversight, gave tax exemptions and provided permits without thorough scrutiny, creating a fragile but thriving system of dependency.

The Media Circle, represented by Seren Quill, played a subtle yet powerful role. Their outlets celebrated Merrinport's rise, glorifying 'eco-progress' while ignoring the creeping environmental hazards. They received sponsorship and access from both industrial and fashion enterprises, amplifying their narrative while suppressing inconvenient truths.

The population divided naturally along lines of wealth and opportunity. Wealthy townsfolk like Sally Hollow profited from investments in factories, fashion brands and real estate, enjoying luxury estates along the lake while quietly dumping private chemical waste. Poor townsfolk like Bran Harrow worked in hazardous conditions, burned waste for warmth, or used cheap chemicals for farming, unwittingly contributing to runoff.

Now the lake is sick, the town is anxious, and the truth is hidden beneath layers of convenience, loyalty and moral compromise. Every faction is complicit, yet each believes they can escape accountability.

Lake Greenwell, once the heart of the town, is showing alarming signs of decline. Residents have reported fish dying along the shores, unusual coloration and odours in the water, and changes in local wildlife behaviour. The lake's condition has sparked public concern, and questions are arising about what is causing the disruption.

There is disagreement over the source of the contamination, who is responsible for protecting the lake, and how to act quickly while balancing economic and social concerns. The situation is tense, and all groups have been called to a town debate to assess the situation, share perspectives and propose solutions.

Roles Overview - Four Dimensions

Six factions sit around the table. Each faction has a colour, a representative character and a set of public concerns. Each also has one alliance and one secret liability with another faction (see Annex 4B). Print the metadata below as a master reference; the full character cards and faction-tie cards are in the annexes that follow.

Business Syndicate	Viktor Goldbane - Industry & infrastructure, progress that bleeds the land
Fast Fashion Guild	Miranda Vain - Commerce & culture, glamour and denial
Mayor's Council	Conrad Lumen - Politics & authority, order at any cost
Media Circle	Seren Quill - Information & manipulation, narrative for profit
Rich Citizens	Sally Hollow - Wealth & influence, luxury built on pollution
Working Class	Bran Harrow - Labour & survival, harm justified as necessity
The Investigator (the facilitator)	Julian Cross - the town's appointed Investigator. Unlike in the other CHECKMATE games, you have an in-game character, a neutral mediator who introduces the case, distributes clues, and presides over the rounds. Julian asks questions but does not steer toward a verdict. Your job is to keep the debate productive, time-bounded and inclusive.

Step-by-Step Facilitator Flow

Phase 0 - Setup (before participants enter)

- Arrange six clearly separated faction tables. Place a colour-coded name tag on each (use the colours in the roles table above).
- Lay out each faction's case file face-down: character profile, public summary of concerns, and the faction-tie card (Annex 4B).
- Optional: print and post a simple map of Greenwell Lake and surroundings on a central wall.
- Have the fact, misinformation and true-action cards (Annex 4C) ready in three separate piles, kept out of sight.
- Test your timer; this game runs in 90 minutes and time discipline is essential.

Phase 1 - Briefing (10 min)

Introduce yourself as Julian Cross, the Investigator. Read the situation summary aloud (the lake-in-crisis text from Annex 4 background). Explain the rules:

- Each faction will receive a case file containing their character profile, their public concerns, and a confidential faction-tie card showing one alliance and one secret liability.
- The faction-tie card is private. Do not show it to anyone outside your team.
- During debate phases, only one person speaks at a time. The Investigator manages the queue.
- At the end of the game, all factions will vote on which faction is the biggest threat to the lake.
- You may attack arguments, never people. Disagreement is welcomed; insults are not.

Distribute the case files. Read out the central question once more: ‘Which faction poses the greatest threat to the health of Greenwell Lake?’

Phase 2 - Faction meeting (25 min, private)

Factions read their case files privately, discuss strategy with their team, and decide what they will say publicly and what they will hold back. Walk between tables; clarify procedure but not content. Pay particular attention to whether teams have understood their faction-tie card — the alliance and the secret liability are central to their strategy.

TIP — If a team is stuck
Ask them three questions: ‘What is your public message? What is your private worry? Who is your most useful ally and your biggest risk in this room?’

Phase 3 - Round 1: First Clues (15 min)

Reconvene as the town debate. Read the first batch of fact and misinformation cards aloud, pull from the piles in Annex 4C, mixing two facts and two pieces of misinformation. Hand printed copies to all factions.

After reading the cards, open the floor. Each faction has up to two minutes to make an opening statement: who they are, what they believe is happening, and what they think the council should do. Hold the time strictly. Do not yet allow rebuttals.

Phase 4 - Round 2: Debate (10 min)

Open the debate. Factions may now question and respond to each other. Speaking time remains two minutes per intervention; use the placard system.

This is the round in which alliances and frictions emerge. Watch for the moment a faction publicly defends another (the alliance) versus the moment a faction redirects pressure toward another (the secret-liability dynamic). Do not name what you are seeing, let the players feel it.

Optional twist: deal one true-action card to each faction at the start of this round. The card is a strategic resource, they may play it at any time during the remaining rounds to deflect blame, expose someone, or reinforce their innocence. They are not obliged to play it.

Phase 5 - Round 3: Revelations (5 min, optional)

If you are running the longer (90+ min) version of the game, introduce a single revelation here: read out one further fact card AND one further misinformation card. Allow factions a brief huddle. This round sharpens the picture before the final vote.

Skip this phase?

If your group is moving fast and the debate has already reached an emotional pitch, skip Phase 5 and go straight to the final debate and vote. The revelations phase exists to inject new energy in groups that have stalled. Use your judgement.

Phase 6 - Final debate & verdict (10-15 min)

Open the final debate. Each faction has one closing statement (up to two minutes) summarising why they are NOT the greatest threat, and, if they choose, naming who they think is. After all six closing statements, call the vote.

The voting question is: 'Which faction poses the greatest threat to the health of Greenwell Lake?' Each faction casts one vote. Factions cannot vote for themselves. Tally on the flipchart; announce the verdict.

Crucially: the verdict is not the moral of the game. The moral comes in the debrief, when you reveal that every faction was complicit. The vote is dramaturgy, not justice.

Phase 7 - Debrief (15-20 min)

Step out of the simulation. The educational pivot of Shadows of the State is that the search for the single biggest threat distracts from the actual answer: every faction contributed, every faction had reasons, every faction is partially right and partially complicit. Use the debrief questions on the next page to surface this.

Debrief - Specific Questions for This Game

Use the 4Fs questions from Chapter 7 of Part I as your scaffold; the questions below are tailored for the systemic-responsibility lesson at the heart of this game.

- Which faction did you vote for as the 'biggest threat'? Why?
- If you played a faction: at what moment did you feel most under attack? At what moment did you feel safest?
- Did your alliance hold? When did your secret liability come close to being exposed?
- Looking back at the case files, can you reconstruct WHY your faction acted the way it did? Was your character malicious, or were they making understandable choices in a bad system?
- Pollution in the real world rarely has a single cause. How does the urge to find 'the' guilty party affect how we respond to climate change and environmental harm?
- Can you spot mis-, dis- or malinformation in any of the cards or in arguments people made during the game? Where?
- If Merrinport were a real town, what would actually need to change? Whose job would the change be?

THE REVEAL - FACILITATOR'S SCRIPT

After the vote and the questions above, name the design of the game explicitly. Suggested wording:

'Whichever faction received the most votes, they were not THE answer. Every faction in this room poisoned the lake, every faction had reasons that made sense to them at the time, and every faction was tied to at least one other faction by an alliance or a secret liability. The Investigator's verdict, in the end, is that there is no single villain. There is a system. And in that system, the question is not who do we blame, but what do we change?

Annex 4A - Character Cards

Print one card per character. Distribute confidentially to each faction at the start of Phase 2.
Each card includes a backstory, public concerns, and a behavioural profile.



PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **VIKTOR GOLDBANE**

Faction: **Business Syndicate**

You are the cold-hearted face of the Business Syndicate, a sprawling network of factories, financiers and power-brokers that controls the region's economy with an iron grip. A master of manipulation and ruthless tactics, you have built your empire on exploitation and environmental degradation, profiting from industries that poison the land, air and water. Behind your sharp suit and polished demeanour, you value money and power above all else, and you will do whatever it takes to preserve your control.

Your public message:

- The Syndicate gave Merrinport its second life. Without your factories, this town would have died decades ago.
- Your operations meet every applicable regulation. The lake's problems must lie elsewhere.
- If anyone is to blame, look at the unregulated activities of small operators, the burning, the dumping, the casual chemicals that poor families use because they have no alternative.

What you secretly know:

Your industrial pipelines have been quietly used by the Fast Fashion Guild for dye disposal. The arrangement was discreet, untraceable, and recently you have begun hinting to others that Vain is the real culprit. You believe shifting blame is your best move. (See your faction-tie card.)

Behavioural profile - how Viktor speaks:

Cold, smooth, never raises his voice. Speaks in short sentences with long pauses. Knows everyone's weakness in the room.

Fluent in corporate language: ‘scale’, ‘efficiency’, ‘compliance regime’. Treats environmental concerns as ‘externalities’.

Watchwords: ‘Let's be realistic’, ‘the alternative is decline’, ‘who else would have built this town?’.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **MIRANDA VAIN**

Faction: **Fast Fashion Guild**

You built your empire on colour: deep violets, shimmering silks and the promise of beauty without consequence. As the glamorous face of the Fast Fashion Guild, you transformed textile production into a cultural phenomenon, persuading the townsfolk that style symbolised progress. Your signature ‘Violet Luxe’ dye became an emblem of wealth and refinement. Recently, you have embraced the eco-fashion movement, presenting yourself as a leader in sustainable luxury.

Your public message:

- Eco-fashion is the future. You have invested heavily in sustainable processes.
- The lake's contamination cannot be linked to your factories, your dyes are certified safe.
- It is unfair that your industry, which employs hundreds of women in skilled work, is being scapegoated.

What you secretly know:

Your factories dispose of dye waste through the Business Syndicate's pipeline, and Viktor has begun hinting that you are the main polluter. If he exposes the deal, your eco-luxury brand collapses overnight. You also rely on Sally Hollow's social patronage and on Seren Quill's friendly press to maintain your image.

Behavioural profile - how Miranda speaks:

Charm offensive. Compliments people, name-drops, performs concern. Cries on cue if challenged.

Fluent in eco-marketing: ‘conscious luxury’, ‘ethical sourcing’, ‘our journey toward’. Hates direct questions about specific chemicals.

Watchwords: ‘our community of artists’, ‘we are leading the way’, ‘the real conversation should be about…’.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **CONRAD LUMEN**

Faction: **Mayor's Council**

You have dedicated your leadership to the safety and well-being of Merrinport's citizens. Your responsibilities extend to environmental policies and the management of the town's natural resources. You have served as Mayor for three years and have been a loyal member of the Social Party since the start of your political career. You remain committed to your vision of supporting those in need and fostering a community built on fairness and progress. Yet, as the demands of governance grow more complex, you often find it challenging to stay true to the values that once guided you.

Your public message:

- You have presided over the town's renaissance: more jobs, better schools, modern infrastructure.
- The Council takes environmental concerns seriously and has commissioned reviews.
- Hasty accusations damage public trust. The proper way to handle this is through formal investigation.

What you secretly know:

Goldbane's industries financed your ‘Clean Growth’ platform; you protect his operations publicly even when they violate standards. You also hold a stack of unanswered petitions from Bran Harrow about toxic waste in his district. If those letters surface, your image as ‘the Mayor who saved Merrinport’ is destroyed.

Behavioural profile - how Conrad speaks:

Measured, pastoral, paternalistic. Gestures broadly. Loves the camera; loves a sweeping vision. Fluent in political reassurance: ‘we are listening’, ‘due process’, ‘together as a community’.

Watchwords: ‘we will not rush to judgement’, ‘the people of Merrinport deserve better than blame games’, ‘a fair process’.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **SEREN QUILL**

Faction: **Media Circle**

As the leading voice of the Media Circle, you have mastered the art of storytelling: turning crises into headlines and headlines into influence. Your calm, melodic tone gives weight to every report, soothing even as it stirs unrest. Some admire your courage in exposing corruption; others whisper that your pen is guided less by principle than by profit. You insist your only loyalty is to the truth, though what that means depends on the day, the story and the audience.

Your public message:

- The media's role is to serve the public; you are here to ensure the truth comes out.
- You have been investigating this story for weeks and intend to publish a definitive account.
- The public deserves clarity, not propaganda from any side.

What you secretly know:

Vain provides exclusive access, sponsorship and ad revenue; in exchange, you have ignored evidence of her violations. Sally Hollow secretly holds a stake in your media outlet, and you have praised her foundation publicly, even though your staff discovered her drainage system pollutes the lake. Exposure of either tie ruins your credibility.

Behavioural profile - how Seren speaks:

Articulate, melodic, slightly performative. Loves a quotable line. Pivots between gravitas and outrage.

Fluent in narrative framing: ‘the real story here is…’, ‘sources tell me’, ‘our investigation reveals’.

Watchwords: ‘the public's right to know’, ‘follow the evidence’, ‘a story worth telling’.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **SALLY HOLLOW**

Faction: **Rich Citizens**

Born into a wealthy family, you enjoy the comforts of a luxurious life surrounded by opulence and privilege. Your estate stands in stark contrast to the environmental degradation that surrounds it, an elite enclave built on the very pollution you turn a blind eye to. Deep down, you know that the prosperity you enjoy is funded by industries that harm the planet, but rather than confront this truth, you contribute to charities. These donations cleanse your conscience, masking complicity with acts of superficial goodwill. Despite your good intentions, you remain blissfully unaware of the deeper consequences of your actions, living in a bubble of luxury while the world outside suffers.

Your public message:

- You are a major patron of environmental charities and have a long record of public service.
- Your tax contributions and donations keep this town's services running.
- Wealth is not a crime; you should not be punished for being successful.

What you secretly know:

Your estate's drainage system quietly releases waste into the lake. Bran Harrow's family once worked your land before you privatised it; he has long resented you and probably knows. You sponsor Miranda Vain's shows and present her ‘ethical brand’ as a model of virtuous wealth, together you have crafted the illusion that luxury and morality coexist.

Behavioural profile - how Sally speaks:

Warm, slightly distant, used to being listened to. Talks about her foundation a lot. Laughs nervously when the lake is mentioned.

Fluent in philanthropic language: ‘giving back’, ‘doing my part’, ‘our family has always cared deeply about...’.

Watchwords: ‘I have always supported this town’, ‘surely we can be civilised about this’, ‘my heart is with the lake’.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **BRAN HARROW**

Faction: **Working Class**

You have spent your life on Merrinport's worn edges, where the hum of machinery never stops and fuel clings to the wind. A skilled mechanic at the Greenwell Lake docks, you kept the town's boats and engines alive while the town above you glittered. You know every bolt, every motor, every shortcut people take when the inspectors aren't looking. Power was never handed to people like you, but you have learned to use what influence you can find. When the water grew darker and the air thicker, you saw proof: the wealthy's comfort came at the cost of your people's health. Part activist, part survivor, you don't care what they call you, as long as someone finally listens.

Your public message:

- The lake is killing your community first. Your kids are sick, your neighbours are scared, and nobody in power has listened.
- You have been petitioning the Mayor for years, the only response - silence.
- The wealthy and the industries blame each other; the working class pays the price either way.

What you secretly know:

You hold copies of the Mayor's ignored petitions, your strongest leverage against political negligence. You also know the people in your own community use cheap chemicals, burn waste for warmth, and cut corners, not from malice, but from poverty. If you reveal everything, you might endanger jobs and subsidies for your neighbours. You are not innocent either.

Behavioural profile - how Bran speaks:

Direct, working-class register, blunt, occasionally bitter. Doesn't bother with polite language when angry. Fluent in lived experience: stories, not statistics. Names neighbours, names places, names symptoms.

Watchwords: ‘we know what's happening down by the docks’, ‘nobody up the hill cares’, ‘my kids breathe this every day’.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **JULIAN CROSS**

Faction: T**he Investigator (facilitator)**

You play the Investigator. Your job is to preserve balance and encourage meaningful debate without steering the players toward any particular conclusion. Help participants uncover connections, challenge misinformation, and reflect on collective responsibility.

Your tasks:

- Introduce the setting and distribute character kits and faction-tie cards.
- Clarify rules, timing and objectives.
- Read fact and misinformation cards aloud at the appropriate moments.
- Manage the queue, time, and flow between rounds.
- Stay strictly neutral until the final debrief.
- In the debrief, name what was misinformation, what was true, and what was systemic.

Annex 4B - Faction-Tie Cards

Each faction receives one tie card.
The card lists their alliance with one faction and their secret liability to another.
The tie card stays inside the faction; it is not shown to other tables.



BUSINESS SYNDICATE

VIKTOR GOLDBANE

ALLIANCE - Mayor's Council
You and Mayor Conrad Lumen built Merrinport's ‘revival’ together. You funded his campaigns; he relaxed industrial safety regulations. Your partnership is highly visible, too public to fail and too risky to be exposed.

SECRET LIABILITY - Fast Fashion Guild
Miranda Vain's factories use your chemical disposal network. Her dyes are colouring the lake faster than your steel runoff, and she has begun hinting that YOU are the main polluter. If she speaks, both your operations are at risk.

FAST FASHION GUILD

MIRANDA VAIN

ALLIANCE - Rich Citizens (Sally Hollow):
Sally is your social patron. Her elite circles wear your designs and fund your ‘eco-fashion’ shows. You rely on her influence to maintain the public image of innocence.

SECRET LIABILITY - Business Syndicate:
Your factories quietly dispose of dye waste through Viktor Goldbane's industrial pipeline network, which empties into the lake. The arrangement was discreet, efficient and untraceable, until now. Viktor has begun hinting to others that you are the true source of the contamination. If he exposes the deal, your eco-luxury image and entire reputation collapse overnight.

MAYOR'S COUNCIL

CONRAD LUMEN

ALLIANCE - Business Syndicate:
Goldbane's industries finance your ‘Clean Growth’ platform. Your political career depends on this partnership; you protect his operations publicly even when they violate environmental standards.

SECRET LIABILITY - Working Class (Bran Harrow):
Bran Harrow has petitioned you repeatedly about toxic waste in his district, but you ignored him. If those letters ever surface, your image as ‘the Mayor who saved Merrinport’ could be destroyed.

FAST FASHION GUILD

MIRANDA VAIN

ALLIANCE - Fast Fashion Guild:
Miranda Vain provides exclusive access, sponsorship and ad revenue. In exchange, you have ignored evidence of her environmental violations, trading integrity for prestige.

SECRET LIABILITY - Rich Citizens:
Sally secretly holds a stake in your media outlet. You have praised her foundation publicly — but one of your staff discovered that her estate's drainage system pollutes the lake. Exposure could ruin your credibility.

RICH CITIZENS

SALLY HOLLOW

ALLIANCE - Fast Fashion Guild:
You sponsor Miranda's shows and present her ‘ethical brand’ as a model of virtuous wealth. Together, you craft the illusion that luxury and morality can coexist.

SECRET LIABILITY - Working Class (Bran Harrow):
Bran's family once worked your estate before you privatised the land. You have concealed the fact that your drainage system still releases waste into the lake. He knows, and harbours resentment.

FAST FASHION GUILD

MIRANDA VAIN

ALLIANCE - Rich Citizens (Sally Hollow):
You once maintained Sally's boats, preserving a tenuous connection despite old resentments. Her influence could amplify your voice and give your community leverage.

SECRET LIABILITY - Mayor's Council:
You hold copies of the Mayor's ignored petitions. These are your only leverage against political negligence — but revealing them could endanger jobs and subsidies for your neighbours.

Annex 4C - Clue Cards

Three types of cards are used during the game.
Print one set, cut along the lines, and keep them in three labelled piles, read aloud during Rounds 1 and 3.

Hand one card to each faction at the start of Round 2. The faction may play the card at any time during the remaining rounds, by reading it aloud, to deflect blame from themselves and onto another faction. They are not obliged to play it.



True facts (read aloud during Rounds 1 and 3)

FACT 1
Industrial wastewater is one of the main sources of lake pollution. In many regions, factories discharge untreated or partially treated wastewater containing heavy metals and chemicals.

FACT 2
Lakes near industrial zones often contain high concentrations of mercury, lead and arsenic, residues from manufacturing and mining operations.

FACT 3
The fashion industry is responsible for around 20% of global wastewater and 10% of total carbon emissions.

FACT 4
Dyeing and finishing fabrics pollute lakes with high levels of synthetic chemicals, including azo dyes and formaldehyde.

FACT 5
Linked supply chains amplify water pollution. When multiple factories share drainage or suppliers, their combined discharge overwhelms treatment capacity.

Misinformation (read aloud during Rounds 1 and 3, mixed in with facts)

MISINFORMATION 1
The new factories follow all international standards.
The foam on the lake is just harmless minerals.

MISINFORMATION 2
Both our companies invested in filtration technology years ago, there's no way our waste leaks out.

MISINFORMATION 3
Environmentalists misinterpret fashion-waste data. Our sustainability team found no evidence of pollution.

MISINFORMATION 4
Independent media confirmed that our dyeing processes are safe for the environment.

MISINFORMATION 5
Each factory filters its own wastewater, so shared pipelines cannot cause contamination.

True-action cards (one per faction in Round 2 — strategic resource)

ACTION CARD A - for the Working Class
A leaked invoice shows the Business Syndicate paid a contractor to install hidden pipes that route factory waste to lake tributaries. The contractor's report lists a Fast Fashion Guild account and a Mayor's Council ‘permit-review’ note.

ACTION CARD B - for the Mayor's Council
A secret source shared a video where waste was secretly routed through shared factory drains, bypassing treatment and contaminating the lake.

ACTION CARD C - for the Rich Citizens
About a month ago, the Mayor's Council cut funding for environmental inspectors, at almost the same moment that the Business Syndicate was expanding.

ACTION CARD D - for the Business Syndicate
My friend who works at the Fast Fashion Guild told me they put their dye-pool chemicals straight into the drains.

ACTION CARD E - for the Fast Fashion Guild
The Media Circle suppressed early reports of contamination after accepting sponsorship deals from both the Business Syndicate and the Fast Fashion Guild.

ACTION CARD F - for the Media Circle
Sally Hollow's estate's drainage system pollutes the lake. The Mayor's Council has been informed and has done nothing.

Annex 4D — Faction Relationship Table (facilitator reference)

Use this matrix during the debrief to walk participants through how every faction was tied to every other. The educational point is in this table: there is no single villain.



Pair	Type	Relationship before crisis	How it plays in the game
Mayor ↔ Syndicate	Mutual dependency	Mayor approved industrial expansion in exchange for political donations.	Cooperate publicly to maintain the success narrative; privately distrust each other, either could leak first.
Mayor ↔ Fashion	Political sponsorship	Mayor endorsed eco-fashion as progress; granted subsidies and permits.	Defend each other early; turn when pressure mounts.
Syndicate ↔ Fashion	Shared operations	Factories processed materials for the brand; shared waste pipelines.	United at first; blame each other once pollution data links the drains.
Syndicate ↔ Rich	Financial ties	Rich locals invested in factory stocks; corporate event sponsorship.	Rich initially defend the Syndicate; distance themselves once media attention grows.
Fashion ↔ Media	Image management	Influencers and journalists got exclusive access and perks.	Media protects them early; can betray them later for the ‘scandal of the century’.
Media ↔ Mayor	Controlled narrative	Mayor's office leaked stories through friendly reporters.	Collaboration can flip fast: media may turn to regain credibility.
Civilians ↔ Mayor	Social tension	Mayor promised to lift everyone; subsidies favoured wealthy districts.	Poor accuse the Mayor of neglect; rich defend him to protect investments.
Civilians ↔ Industries	Economic chain	Civilians depend on factory and fashion jobs.	First defend industries that feed them; turn hostile as health and layoffs mount.
Media ↔ Civilians	Emotional amplifier	Journalists feature both rich glamour and poor suffering.	Media exploits the divide; itself enabled both lifestyles.
Rich vs. Poor	Internal class conflict	Rich funded development; poor provided labour.	Each accuses the other of being the ‘real polluters’; the group may splinter mid-session.

Common Materials

Print-and-go support materials for every CHECKMATE game

Ground rules • Misinformation card • Verification list • Voting cards • Feedback form



How to Use This Annex

These five materials work for every game in the toolkit. Print them once and reuse them across sessions. Each is on its own page (or two) and is participant-ready, no facilitator labels.

5.1 Ground-rules sign - print on A4 or A3 and post on the wall.
5.2 Misinformation typology participant card - one per participant; A5 size if you can.
5.3 Seven-step verification card - same; pair with 5.2 for the take-home.
5.4 Voting cards (yes/no/abstain) - one set per participant; cut out before the game.
5.5 Universal feedback form - one per participant; collect at the end of the debrief.

TIP — Reuse and durability
Print on heavier paper (160–250g) if you can. Laminating the ground-rules sign and voting cards turns them into a permanent kit you can carry between sessions. Store role packs and news articles by game in clearly-labelled folders for the next time you run.

5.1. Ground-Rules Sign

Print on A4 (landscape works well) and post on a wall visible from every seat. Read it aloud at the start of every game. The rules are deliberately short.

GROUND RULES

for every CHECKMATE simulation

1. Stay in role until the facilitator declares the simulation over.
2. Speak only when called on, or when raising your placard.
3. Maximum two minutes per intervention. The facilitator times.
4. Do not show your role card to anyone outside your team.
5. Disagree respectfully. Attack arguments, not people.
6. You may step out at any time, no explanation needed.
7. What is said in the room stays in the room.

The facilitator is the chair, the time-keeper, and the news-bringer.
Your role is your armour.
The role is not you.

5.2. Misinformation Typology Card (for participants)

Print one per participant on A5 if possible (two per A4). Hand out at the end of the game, after the misinformation reveal. Pair with 5.3 to make a complete take-home

Three kinds of misleading information

MISINFORMATION = a mistake.
Wrong information shared without intent to deceive. The person sharing believes it is true.
→ Example: a friend reposts an article claiming EVs emit more CO_2 than diesel cars because they read the headline and missed the methodology. Not a lie - but wrong, and now spreading.

DISINFORMATION = an intentional lie.
False information created and spread deliberately to deceive, manipulate or cause harm, usually for political, ideological or financial gain.
→ Example: a fake news website publishes an invented study showing that a renewable-energy project will bankrupt the local council, timed to land the week before a vote.

MALINFORMATION = truth weaponised.
Information that is technically true but selected, framed or stripped of context to mislead, harm or manipulate.
→ Example: 'EV batteries cause environmental damage and child labour.' Both halves are true in some cases. What is omitted is regulation, ongoing reform, and the comparison with the harms of the fossil-fuel system. The truth is being used as a weapon.

How to spot each kind - quick checklist

MISINFORMATION:
- Vague, hedged language: 'I think', 'maybe', 'someone told me'.
- No source, or a link that does not actually support the claim.
- Shared widely by non-experts; nobody seems to be the original.

DISINFORMATION:
- Highly emotional or extreme wording - outrage, fear, contempt.
- Source looks fake or mimics a real news brand.
- Repeats quickly across many accounts with suspiciously coordinated timing.

MALINFORMATION:
- Uses real facts but no context, no comparison and no time-frame.
- Cherry-picked quotes, single statistics, one graph from a long study.
- Aimed at damaging someone's reputation or scaring people.

5.3. Seven-Step Verification Card

Print one per participant. The card is the single most important take-home from any CHECKMATE session: a habit they can use in their own information environment from the next morning onwards.

BEFORE YOU SHARE

The seven-step check

1. PAUSE. Don't share immediately. The pause is the whole game.
2. CHECK THE SOURCE. Is it reputable? Who wrote it? Who funds them?
3. READ BEYOND THE HEADLINE. Does the article actually say what the headline implies?
4. LOOK FOR CONTEXT. Is there full data, or only one number? What is missing?
5. VERIFY WITH 2–3 SOURCES. Don't rely on a single post. Look for independents.
6. ASK WHO BENEFITS. Who gains from me believing or sharing this? (the motive test)
7. IF UNCLEAR — DON'T FORWARD. Ask. Or report. Silence is a valid response.

Small checks stop big damage.

5.4. Voting Cards

Print one set per participant. Cut along the lines and hand out at the start of each game. Participants raise the appropriate card during votes. Visual voting is faster, more dramatic, and easier to count than a show of hands.









5.4b Blank Place-Cards

Print, fold and write the role name on the front. Each participant places their card upright on the table and raises it when they want to speak. This is the queue-management mechanic the games rely on

_____ *(role name)*	_____ *(role name)*
_____ *(role name)*	_____ *(role name)*
_____ *(role name)*	_____ *(role name)*

Simulation Game — Feedback Form

Game played: _____

Date: _____

Group / location: _____

Age range of participants: _____

Please rate the following from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

	1	2	3	3	4
I felt engaged in the simulation	○	○	○	○	○
I understood what my role was and what was expected of me	○	○	○	○	○
The pace and timing of the session worked well	○	○	○	○	○
I noticed when information presented to me was misleading	○	○	○	○	○
I now feel more confident identifying mis-, dis- and malinformation in real life	○	○	○	○	○
The debrief helped me make sense of what happened in the game	○	○	○	○	○
I would recommend this simulation to other young people	○	○	○	○	○
I would like to play more simulation games in future	○	○	○	○	○

What was the single most useful moment of the session for you?

_____

_____

_____

What is one habit you will take from today into next week?

_____

_____

_____

Living Labs and Game-Based Learning to Checkmate Climate Misinformation

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