

Appendix A. Interview Guide

“Resilience as a Structural Condition: Mental Health and Safety Challenges in Watchdog Science Journalism”

General Aim

To explore how structural conditions (economic, institutional, and political) shape journalists’ mental health, safety, and capacity to perform a watchdog role in domains involving scientific expertise.

I. Professional background and role perception

- Can you describe your professional trajectory and how you became involved in investigative journalism?
- Have you worked on topics related to science, public health, environment, or academic integrity? If yes, can you give some examples?
- How do you understand the role of journalism when reporting on domains involving scientific expertise?

II. Working conditions and structural context

- How would you describe your working environment (e.g., resources, editorial support, access to information)?
- What kinds of difficulties or challenges (if any) do you encounter when investigating topics related to science or academic institutions?
- To what extent do you see these challenges as related to broader structural conditions (e.g., media system, legislation, funding, institutional practices)?
- In your experience, are there differences between investigating science-related topics and other types of investigative reporting? If yes, how would you describe them?

III. Experiences of pressure, risk, and professional vulnerability

- Have you encountered situations of pressure, criticism, or negative reactions following the publication of an investigation?

- How do newsrooms, colleagues, or media organizations typically respond in such situations?
- How do these experiences influence your sense of professional safety or your willingness to continue working on similar topics?

IV. Psychological impact and coping

- How, if at all, has investigative work affected you at a personal or emotional level over time?
- Are there particular aspects of reporting on science-related topics that you find more demanding or stressful?
- What strategies—individual or professional—do you use to manage these challenges (e.g., routines, peer support, verification practices)?
- To what extent do media organizations provide support for journalists' well-being?

V. Safety

- Have you received any training or support related to digital security or personal safety?
- What types of risks do you perceive in your work (e.g., legal, digital, field-related)?
- Do these risks influence the way you approach or conduct investigations?

VI. Professional networks and support structures

- Are there forms of professional collaboration or support that you rely on (e.g., colleagues, networks, partnerships)?
- How would you describe the role of collaboration in your investigative work (e.g., with other journalists, NGOs, or international networks)?

VII. Resilience as an individual and structural phenomenon

- Do you see resilience primarily as an individual capacity or as something shaped by structural conditions? Why?

- What kinds of structural changes would make it easier for journalists to carry out investigative work, particularly in domains involving scientific expertise?