

A project administered by:



Funded by
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COLLABORATION LAB

*for Bangladeshi media and
civil society*



**Information booklet for participating organisations
(September 2023)**

What is the Collaboration Lab?

The Collaboration Lab is a small grants project for alliances of Bangladeshi media and civil society organisations (CSOs). It aims to promote collaboration on issues that are important and relevant to Bangladeshi citizens, stimulate the development of innovative solutions and facilitate knowledge exchange and (mutual) learning. The Collaboration Lab - as part of the project “**Joining Forces: CSOs and Media for Accountability in Bangladesh**” - is administered by Free Press Unlimited and ARTICLE19 Bangladesh and South Asia, and receives funding from the European Union.

Media and CSOs are invited to form alliances and jointly apply for a **one-year sub-grant**. Each round, the Collaboration Lab is organised around a specific strategy. In the first round, the alliances are asked to submit a proposal to set up an initiative focused on mutual learning. A panel of judges will then assess the proposals and select 5 alliances to receive a grant of a **maximum of 60,000 EUR**. In addition to the financial support, the selected alliances will have access to **tailor-made capacity-building packages** that include training and coaching on digital security, gender and inclusion, internal governance, and internal systems and procedures. Whereas the maximum duration of each sub-grant is one year, successful grantees are encouraged to submit a second proposal for one of the successive rounds of the Collaboration Lab.

Why media and CSOs?

CSOs play an essential role in all societies, as they are an important source of information for citizens and decision makers. They monitor policies and actions that impact civilians and promote accountability. They engage in advocacy and offer recommendations for sustainable solutions. They deliver essential services, defend human rights and work to create social change where it is needed.

The media can promote transparency and accountability by reporting on current events. It can act as a watchdog by exposing corruption and abuse. Journalists who provide accurate, balanced and timely information that is of public interest and relevance make an essential contribution to informed decision making.

Why is collaboration important?

Effective collaboration between the media and civil society sectors is essential to achieve social change. Together, they can build forceful cases for **greater accountability and powerful advocacy**.

CSOs can share important knowledge, research and expertise with the media, and their activities can provide journalists with the opportunity to make abstract issues concrete and newsworthy. Media can generate awareness on CSO topics through its publications, which engage citizens across geographies and political lines.

Joint initiatives for mutual learning

In the first round, the Collaboration Lab seeks to facilitate **knowledge exchange and mutual learning** between media and CSOs in Bangladesh through the creation of professional alliances. Each alliance is encouraged to jointly produce packages focused on e.g. improving knowledge and network sharing, collecting data and sources, conducting investigations, distributing stories, and working towards common goals. For example, CSOs working on gender-based violence could produce press packages with guidelines on how to reach out to victims, while media could initiate a crash course on how CSOs could best pitch their stories.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), the proposed initiative should address at least one of the following five thematic areas:

1. **Accountability:** covering transparency, corruption and illicit finance.

2. **Information:** covering access to information, freedom of expression, right to information.

3. **Inclusion:** covering inclusive participation of women and girls, youth, LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups.

4. **Digital:** covering defending digital and civic spaces, combating disinformation.

5. **Safety:** covering safety of journalists, violence against women and children, human trafficking and extrajudicial killings.

General eligibility requirements

Alliances must consist of **one media organisation and one CSO**. One organisation will apply as the 'lead' organisation, responsible for signing the subgrant with Free Press Unlimited and ARTICLE19 and the overall coordination and management of the subgrant. The other organisation will act as the co-applicant.

Applicants eligible for financial support must be non-profit or profit-making entities that can include media outlets, NGOs, CSOs, media development organisations or social enterprises, and must be **established and registered in Bangladesh**.

How to submit a proposal

- The call for proposals will remain open for **six weeks**: from September 7 to October 19, 2023.
- Proposals must be submitted using the **proposal template** provided. Please follow the instructions in the guidelines document and include ALL requested information and documentation.

- On **September 18**, Free Press Unlimited and ARTICLE19 will organise an **online Q&A session** for all interested parties. We recommend attendance for those who are planning to send in a proposal.
- The **deadline** for submission is **October 19, 2023**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.
- If you submit your proposal before **September 28**, you are entitled to request **written feedback**. After receiving this feedback, you may continue to work on your application (using the feedback received) until the deadline on October 19.
- Applicants will be notified about the status of their application **maximum 2 months** after the closing of the call for proposals.
- For additional information please contact asia@freepressunlimited.org.

Selection procedure and assessment criteria

Proposals should be in line with the Collaboration Lab's first-round objective of facilitating knowledge exchange and (mutual) learning between media outlets and CSOs in Bangladesh through joint initiatives. The proposed initiative can be experimental, but must have **measurable goals**. Applicants must clearly indicate in their proposal which of the five **thematic areas** their initiative contributes to. An **activity timeline** and **detailed budget** of all project costs must also be included in the proposal.

To determine which initiatives are feasible, relevant, and reflect good collaborative potential, a **Selection Committee** will assess the proposals based on the following aspects:

1. **Relevance and innovative nature** of the proposal (out-of-the-box thinking, new ideas, new alliances);

2. **Diversity** and ability to reach under-served audiences and marginalised groups (e.g., women and girls, youth, LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups);

3. **Project design and feasibility** (clear set of success and performance indicators, timeline, risk analysis and safety indicators, financial exit strategy, realistic cost-effective budget and monetisation elements);

4. **Impact and sustainability** (measurable change on civil society, media sector or broader society);

5. **Monitoring and evaluation;**

6. **Management capacity** (to effectively incorporate the proposed initiative) of applying organisations;

We especially invite applications from **new entrants to the sector(s)**, with emphasis on supporting initiatives submitted by **youth, women, and minority group-led organisations**, and pay attention to the region served by the alliances.

What happens if your initiative is selected?

- Initiatives that are selected by the Selection Committee will be awarded a sub-grant and welcomed to the Collaboration Lab.
- In the first week of the sub-grant period, all alliances are invited to a **joint kick-off workshop** in Dhaka. This marks the start of the Collaboration Lab.
- During the sub-grant period, all organisations follow **tailor-made coaching and training sessions**.
- At the end of the year, all participants are invited to share the outcomes of their initiatives at the Collaboration Lab's **annual share fair**.

- Successful alliances are encouraged to submit a second proposal for one of the successive rounds of the Collaboration Lab.

Important dates

September 7

Launch call for proposals (6 weeks).

September 18

Online Q&A session with Free Press Unlimited and ARTICLE19, more information will follow.

September 28

Submission deadline for those wishing to receive written feedback on their proposals.

October 19

Deadline for submission, proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

Contact details

For questions and queries, and to submit your application, please reach out to the project team at asia@freepressunlimited.org.

We will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.