COLLABORATION LAB

for Bangladeshi media and civil society

Information booklet for applying organisations
(March/April 2024 - Round 2)

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 subgrant**. Each round, the Collaboration Lab is organised around a specific strategy. In this second round, the alliances are asked to submit a proposal to set up an initiative focused on producing an innovative product or tool. A selection committee will then assess the proposals and select around 10 alliances to receive a grant of **maximum of 60,000 EUR**. In addition to 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.

Why media and CSOs?

CSOs play an essential role in society, 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 needed.

The media can promote transparency and accountability by reporting on current events. They 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 innovative products

In the second round, the Collaboration Lab seeks to facilitate **knowledge exchange, mutual learning and co-creation** between media and CSOs in Bangladesh through the creation of professional alliances. Each alliance is encouraged to jointly produce innovative products and tools. For example, they could co-create a website that publicly monitors the number of cases of harassment against women and follows the phases in any lawsuit, an app that guides journalists and CSO activists how to file RTI requests most effectively, or the design of a systematic tracking method to monitor SDG16 indicators. Through the creation of actual joint tools or productions, the project encourages longer-lasting, sustainable cooperation.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), the proposed initiative should address at least one of these 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 / indigenous groups.

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

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

Besides this, you are encouraged to engage with any other topics that are relevant to your alliance or your community (climate, health, inflation, worker rights, etc.).

General eligibility requirements

Alliances must consist of **at least 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 management of the subgrant. The other organisation(s) will act as the co-applicant(s).

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 **four weeks**: from March 28 to April 25, 2023.

- Proposals must be submitted using the **concept note template** provided. Please follow the instructions in the guidelines document.

- On **April 4 at 2:00 PM,** 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 concept note.

- The **deadline** for submission of the concept note is **April 25**, 2023. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

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- Applicants will be notified **maximum two weeks** after the closing of the call for proposals if they are invited to submit a **full proposal**.

- Pre-selected applicants then have **3 weeks** to submit their full proposal to the Selection Committee. ARTICLE 19 will offer proposal development support to all applicants.

- For additional information please contact **asia@freepressunlimited.org**.

Selection procedure and assessment criteria

Proposals should be in line with the Collaboration Lab's objective of facilitating knowledge exchange, mutual learning and co-creation between media outlets and CSOs in Bangladesh through joint initiatives. The proposed initiative can be experimental, but must have **measurable goals**. In their concept notes, applicants must clearly indicate the desired outcomes and explain how they envision to achieve these. They should also include a list of the key activities they plan to carry out. Based on this, the project team will make a pre-selection.

After the pre-selected alliances have submitted their full proposal, a **Selection Committee** perform their assessment to determine which initiatives are feasible, relevant, and reflect good collaborative potential 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;

3. **Project design and feasibility** (clear set of success and performance indicators, timeline, risk analysis, realistic cost-effective budget, etc.);

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

6. **Management capacity** (to effectively incorporate the proposed initiative) of applying organisations, including monitoring and evaluation capacity;

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 subgrant and welcomed to the Collaboration Lab.

- In the first week of the subgrant period, all alliances are invited to a **joint kick-off workshop** in Dhaka. This marks the start of the Collaboration Lab.

- During the subgrant period, all organisations are invited to follow **tailor-made coaching and training sessions** and exchange experiences and lessons learned with other participating alliances.

- 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.**

Important dates

March 28
Launch call for proposals (4 weeks).

April 4
Online Q&A session with Free Press Unlimited and ARTICLE19, more information in the call.

April 25
Submission deadline for concept notes.

April 25 - 7 May
Project team assesses concept notes and makes a pre-selection. Pre-selected alliances are invited to submit a full proposal.

May 30
Submission deadline for full proposal
(by pre-selected alliances).

June 17 (tentative)
Applicants are notified on the status of their application, based on the assessment of the Selection Committee.

September 1
Contract start date for selected alliances.

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.