

Terms of Reference

Final project evaluation + session facilitator Collaboration Lab Bangladesh

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BASIC PROJECT DATA

Implementing organisations	Free Press Unlimited and ARTICLE 19 Bangladesh and South Asia
Project title	Joining Forces: CSOs and Media for Accountability in Bangladesh
Expected timeline	May – December 2025
Location	Bangladesh, preferably Dhaka region
Application deadline	May 9, 2025

1) Background:

“Joining Forces: CSOs and Media for Accountability in Bangladesh” is a project implemented by [Free Press Unlimited](#) (FPU) and [ARTICLE 19](#) Bangladesh and South Asia (A19) and funded by the European Union. 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. Effective collaboration between the media and civil society is essential to achieve social change. Together, they can build forceful cases for greater accountability and powerful advocacy. In the course of three years (2023-2025), 21 alliances of civil society and media organisations have been selected to participate in the so-called Collaboration Lab. Participants received grants for their collaborative projects and participate in tailor-made coaching and capacity-sharing sessions.

2) Purpose of the assignment:

The final evaluation is commissioned by FPU and A19 to achieve the following overall objectives:

- to identify, verify and document progress against the Outputs, Outcome and Impact of the action. It will assess how stakeholders, contextual factors, project and resource management have influenced the results.
- to identify key lessons and to propose practical recommendations for follow-up actions.

More specifically, the final evaluation aims to:

- a) measure and document the results and impact achieved by the project—both intended within the project framework and unintended. Where it comes to impact

measurement, the evaluation will specifically investigate whether and how the participants have benefitted from the collaboration efforts;

- b) gain an understanding of what strategies were most effective in achieving the project results and contributing to impact;
- c) measure the sustainability and likelihood of replicability of the project interventions;
- d) provide recommendations for improvement of future similar actions.

3) Questions to be addressed:

A set of central learning questions have been defined (based on the project's logical framework):

- 1) To what extent has the project strengthened civil society and media's ability to engage as actors of good governance and development at country level (to exercise their watchdog role)? (*Impact*)
- 2) To what extent has the project strengthened civil society organisations and media's organizational capacity to work professionally, effectively and sustainably, thereby increasing their transparency and accountability? (*SO Indicator 1.3*)
- 3) To what extent has the project impacted access to trustworthy information products and government data for Bangladeshi citizens, through which they can make informed decisions and exercise their rights? (*Impact Indicator 2*)
- 4) To what extent has the project impacted the levels of trust among Bangladeshi citizens towards the civil society and media sectors? (*Impact Indicator 3*)
- 5) To what extent has the project impacted the level of awareness among civil society organisations and media in Bangladesh to the benefits of collaboration between the two sectors? (*SO Indicator 1.2*)
- 6) Were the proposed strategies (specifically collaboration and capacity-strengthening) the most effective means of achieving the project results and influencing dialogue on social change and domestic policies?
- 7) To what extent has the project successfully addressed the needs and constraints of those involved (civil society organisations, (local) media outlets, journalists, marginalised groups, women, etc.) in terms of influencing social change and domestic policies?

As previously mentioned, this evaluation needs to assess the performance of the project as well as the key lessons and recommendations.

4) Methodology:

The exact methodology and process will be finalised and based on a plan to be developed by the selected consultant, including a detailed work plan. The evaluation needs to be highly participative and seek the views of a broad array of stakeholders.

The consultant will develop a methodology according to the EU standards and guidelines, which will consist of three phases: the desk study phase, the share fairs / data collection phase and the synthesis phase.

Desk Study:

The selected consultant will conduct an elaborated desk study of all project-related documentation: call for proposals, project proposal and financing agreement, project

reports, mid-term assessment, newsletters and other (interim) information materials, contracts and MoUs, training reports and evaluation, training modules etc.

Based on the desk study the consultant will propose a final methodology and develop necessary tools and questionnaires/discussion guides, needed to collect necessary data and that are to be used before and during the share fairs.

Share fairs / Data collection:

To showcase the work produced by each Collaboration Lab-alliance, to encourage cooperation, sharing and learning across alliances and sectors, and to evaluate the participants' experiences in the project at large, three share fairs (Collaboration Lab community-events) will be organized. The selected consultant will (co-)design the programme for and facilitate these events (both in terms of the evaluation as well as of the other purposes mentioned above).

In addition to the share fairs, other forms of data collection (questionnaires, discussions, interviews, etc.) may be introduced. These efforts may target the same or other stakeholder and audience representatives (affected directly by the project activities or results) and incorporate mixed methods (qualitative and/or quantitative, participatory to the extent possible). The consultant is advised to use (whenever / to the extent possible) methodologies such as Outcome Harvesting or Most Significant Change, and case studies to illustrate the results and impact achieved by the project activities or interventions for a specific target group (civil society organisations, media outlets, individual member of a community, community as a whole, government counterparts, etc.).

Synthesis Phase:

During the synthesis phase, the consultant is expected to analyse the collected data, case studies, findings and other materials and prepare the draft and final evaluation report. Before the final report, the consultant is expected to circulate a draft for comments and observations to a reference group. The comments and observations will be incorporated in the final report. Comments requesting methodological quality improvements should be taken into account, except where there is a demonstrated impossibility, in which case justification should be provided by the consultant. Comments on the substance of the report may be either accepted or rejected. In the latter instance, the consultant has to motivate and explain the reasons in writing.

The desk study, share fairs and further data collection with relevant stakeholders and project participants will be facilitated by FPU in coordination with A19.

5) Expected Reports, Deliverables and Time Frame:

The following deliverables are expected to be provided by the consultant:

- a brief technical offer containing methodology approach and work plan by the consultant, as well as the required support by FPU, A19 and local partners. The work plan shall include objective and evaluation questions, approach, methodology, and relevance and justification of proposal. It is accompanied with a draft time line with proposed activities.
- questionnaires, interview/discussion guides and other data collection tools (before share fairs and data collection efforts)
- share fair report after the end of the data collection phase (report describing how the programme was developed, how the events went and were facilitated and what

challenges were faced). The consultant will produce the first draft report before 31 December 2025, which is to be validated by the project partners.

- data collection and case studies
- After consultation and upon receipt of feedback on the draft report by FPU, the evaluator will produce a final evaluation report by the latest 14 February 2026. The final evaluation report will be in English, will address the questions as posed in this Terms of Reference, and will include good practices and learning points / recommendations for the future. The final report shall include the following sections: executive summary, table of project indicators covered, methodology, findings and analysis, recommendations, and the common annexes (template of data collection tools, terms of reference, the evaluation schedule, list of people met (by group) and list of documents consulted etc. The body of the report (excluding annexes) should not exceed 25 pages
- final evaluation summary (in English). The consultant will provide a summary report (approximately five pages) that outlines the key findings of the evaluation. This summary should be appropriate for sharing with all project participants and relevant stakeholders, taking into account the sensitivity of the political and socio-economic context of Bangladesh and highlighting the achievements and weaknesses of the project.

The entire assignment (with all its components) will not last more than a maximum of 34 days (to be spread over a maximum of 10 months). The indicative time frame and deadlines for the deliverables are as follows:

April – May 2025: Selection of consultant & contracting

May – June 2025: Desk study, preparation work plan & development data collection tools (7 days)

June – December 2025: Share fairs (1 in June, 1 in October/November, 1 in November/December), further data collection, debriefing and draft reporting, 20 days

January – February 2026: Final report (incl. Executive summary), feedback and finalisation of report, 7 days

6) Requirements and Profile Consultant:

Profile of the consultant:

- Demonstrable experience of at least 5 years of conducting evaluations in an international development / human rights context, particularly with civil society or social/media/human rights development programmes funded by EU and other donors;
- A very good understanding (based on previous experience) of the main M&E approaches (including the OECD-DAC criteria), methods and tools used to evaluate civil society (and preferably also media-focused) interventions (including approaches used in the international development context) and knowledge of programme design and implementation;
- Experience with applying a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research techniques (preferably participatory), including analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data;
- Experience with developing and facilitating participatory sessions aimed at learning and sharing, ability to manage diverse groups of stakeholder representatives and create an open, safe space conducive to the discussions of sensitive topics and equal sharing of experiences and opinions;

- Sound knowledge of and experience with the civil society and media sectors in Bangladesh, a good understanding of the current socio-political context and its impact on trust between organisations and individuals, on marginalised communities and those working with them, and on freedom of expression;
- Based in Bangladesh (preferably Dhaka), excellent command of both English and Bangla, ability and willingness to conduct sessions in Bangla and translate results to (written) English.
- Good presentation and facilitation skills and overall good command of presentation tools, Excel and Word.

The consultant should meet the following requirements:

1. Adherence to the Code of Conduct for assignments of Free Press Unlimited (will be attached to the contract);
2. Comprehensive and systematic inquiry.
3. Honesty, integrity and respect for the people and projects under this action.

The selection will be based on a competitive analysis of the submitted Expression of Interests, which should come with the CV of proposed Consultant(s) as well as quotation. Interested parties should send their Expression of Interest to teamasia@freepressunlimited.org before May 9, 2025.