



## FAQs <sup>1</sup>

### General Information

#### **1. What is Stars4Media?**

*Stars4Media aims at accelerating media innovation and to increase cross-border coverage in Europe, through the exchange of young media professionals. Young media professionals (2-10 years of experience) across different media professions will apply to carry out joint initiatives in a cross-border, multidisciplinary, cross-media outlets perspective.*

*They will be selected by an independent jury of media experts, invited to attend a training and match-making week (Stars4Media Lab, in Brussels, 30 March - 1 April), and will then implement their joint initiatives via virtual and geographical mobility (during 4 to 12 weeks).*

*Partners of the project are VUB (SMIT-Imec), Fondation EURACTIV, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). The project is co-funded by the EU.*

#### **2. Who can participate?**

*Young media professionals with 2-10 years of media experience across different media professions: journalists, marketing managers, social media managers, graphic designers, developers.*

#### **3. I have only been a media professional for a few months. Can I participate?**

*Only those with 2-10 years of proven media experience can participate.*

#### **4. Is there any age limit?**

*There is no age limit for taking part in the project, what counts is the professional experience. Only those with 2-10 years of proven media experience in the currently occupied position can participate.*

#### **5. Is it open only to journalists or can other media professionals participate as well?**

*Professionals coming from different departments / professional backgrounds (e.g. journalists, data journalists, graphic designers, developers, and managers for social media, products, marketing) are eligible. In fact, cross-disciplinary approaches are privileged, especially if they include business innovation.*

#### **6. Can freelance journalists participate?**

*10% freelance journalists might be accepted (provided they have a VAT number). It should be stressed however that Stars4Media cannot pay for the time of participants, only for expenses incurred during the implementation of the Initiative.*

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<sup>1</sup> Please note this list will be regularly updated.

**7. Can researchers/media policy experts participate?**

*Researchers and media policy experts can take part in the project on their own/company costs. If they submit and implement their idea on behalf of a media organisation, then they would also be eligible for cost reimbursement. We can cover the expenses only of "media professionals" working in media organisations and a small percentage of freelancers with a VAT.*

**8. Is there a minimum language level required to participate?**

*Participants should have a good command of spoken and written English.*

**9. Which language can the applications be submitted in?**

*Applications should be submitted in English.*

**10. Who is the Project Coordinator?**

*The project is coordinated by Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), a university with one of Europe's best media innovation departments (imec-SMIT) and experience with the legal and administrative aspects of exchange programmes, in close cooperation with Fondation EURACTIV, the project Initiator, experienced in cross-border exchanges and media needs.*

**11. What is an "Initiative"?**

*The 'Initiatives' are innovative ideas developed by small cross-border, cross-disciplinary teams of young media professionals, grouped around specific thematic waves (DATA for media and TRUST in media).*

*The type of Initiatives to be developed will be defined as "bottom-up", focusing on the participants' needs. The participants will be able to understand best practices on-the-ground, establish feasibility, clarify needs, and distinguish ideas that require external support. As a result, they will update their initial goals spelling out the specifications of a possible new approach / tool, as well as a prototype (of new content, new business models, new editorial item, new apps, etc.).*

**12. What commitment do I take if I am selected and signed the agreement with VUB to implement my initiative?**

*If you are selected to implement your initiative, you should subscribe to the [Agreement Coordinator - Media Outlet](#).*

**13. How many people from the same media outlet can take part in a team?**

*Stars4Media encourages cross-disciplinary teams to work together on a joint and innovative initiative. The applicants are required to elaborate on the cooperation that they envisage with other colleagues from other media outlets and the respective roles in the initiative.*

*The size of a team should be determined by the roles and responsibilities of each team member. A maximum of 3 people per media outlet are eligible for refunding of expenses. In*

exceptional cases, more people per team can be considered, if their contribution is vital for the implementation of the Initiative.

#### 14. Can a team be composed by only one person?

Yes, a team can be composed of one representative per media outlet. In the ideal case, a team would include several professionals with complementary backgrounds, working together on an initiative. There should be one “lead” professional, who will be mostly engaged in implementing the Initiative, and others offering support on particular dimensions.

### Administrative / Application

#### 15. What is the timeline of the selection process?

- **Propose your initiative:** You have 3 different windows of opportunity to apply, until the following deadlines: 20 February; 20 March and 20 April 2020. There is only a limited number of initiatives that will be co-financed: **applicants for earlier deadlines have more chances** to be selected and receive co-funding! Applicants at later deadlines, even if they present a good initiative, might not see it co-financed. You can submit your Initiative by downloading the [form](#) here, fill-it in, and send it to [info@stars4media.eu](mailto:info@stars4media.eu).
  
- **Guidance, Coaching and Selection:** A Jury made of relevant experts will assess the Proposals for Initiatives by the end of each month following the windows of opportunity above. The best initiatives will be selected and applicants will be able to start their work after the **Stars4Media Lab virtual event** - see point below. Those not selected will receive constructive feedback, and may submit their reworked proposals by the subsequent deadline. All Initiative representatives are welcome to join the Stars4Media Lab event.
  
- **Stars4Media Lab: the Stars4Media Virtual, Training and Presentation Event (30 March - 1 April 2020):** This event will help applicants to know more about Stars4Media, network, receive specific training from academics and practitioners. For interested applicants who did not submit an Initiative yet, this will be the perfect occasion to “test” their idea, fine-tune it with the help of experts, and network to find possible partners amongst peers and colleagues from other media outlets in Europe.
  
- **Development of the initiative and exchange:**
  - **Physical and virtual Mobility:** As soon as possible after their successful selections, and for a period of 4 to 12 weeks, the selected media professionals and their media outlets will carry out their initiative based on physical and virtual mobility.

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** the development of the initiative will be monitored, evaluated, guided and facilitated by the stars4media consortium partners.

**16. What happens after I submit my Expression of Interest and Proposal for Initiative?**

*The applications will be considered on a rolling basis until 20 of April 2020. As soon as it reaches our inbox, it will be processed and you will be provided with feedback.*

**17. Who will evaluate the applications?**

*The applications will be evaluated by an independent jury, representing publishers, journalists, and tech circles. Moreover, the experts will be grouped around the two main thematic waves “Trust in Media” and “Data for Media”.*

**18. What if I have an initiative for both Waves?**

*We welcome initiatives that are cutting cross-waves, should this be well-argued and support the Innovative aspect of your idea.*

*When filling in the application form, please indicate the most appropriate Wave(s) and sub-topic(s) that your idea reflects, and motivate your choice by answering what are the specific needs/challenges that you address.*

**19. What criteria will be used to evaluate applications?**

*Each member of the jury will evaluate the submitted initiatives of the following dimensions: needs, approach, benefits, cooperation, sustainability and business innovation.*

**20. Where will the results of the selection be published? Will I receive a notification?**

*Participants will be informed about the results of every step of the selection process via email.*

**21. What happens if I can't find a media partner? Will my application be considered?**

*We encourage participants to look for a media partner themselves and agree on a joint initiative before submitting their application. However, applications from unpaired candidates will also be accepted. They will be helped to find one among the other “lone stars” during the Stars4Media Lab event .*

**22. What is the programme of the Stars4Media Lab?**

*The programme of the Stars4Media Lab is available [here](#).*

**23. Who can participate in the Lab?**

- *Stars4Media participants who have already applied and been pre-selected for the programme*
- *Stars4Media participants who have applied but are still looking for a media partner*
- *Interested young media professionals who want to know more about the programme before they submit an Initiative*

**24. Who will be reimbursed for the participation in the Lab?**

*Successful, selected participants who presented a Proposal for Initiative can claim the reimbursement of their costs after the Lab (travel and accommodation).*

**25. To what do the media companies commit during the project?**

*Please check [Stars4Media General Conditions for Participation](#).*

**26. What kind of training will be provided? / What training can I attend?**

- *General lectures and workshops provided during the Match-making event called “Stars4Media Lab”: media economics, innovation in media, media technology, and media policy.*
- *The professionals engaged in the target of 20 approved Initiatives will be able to use part of **their financial support** to follow individual training (“getting up to speed” skills-related courses, that will be demand-driven and decentralised). For example: language courses before geographic mobility, or coding before developing an app.*
- *Participants will have the opportunity to participate in the [WAN-IFRA World News Media Congress](#) (Zaragoza, 17-19 June) and in the Media4Europe Summit (Brussels, October 2020).*
- *Furthermore, the participants will be able to freely choose among a variety of accredited training made available during the “mobility” phase by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel on new media economics, media technology and media policy. Participants are advised to follow a course in a field where they want to strengthen their knowledge. Please consult the [VUB webpage](#) for the list of available three-day courses. The project participants will benefit from a 20 % discount when enrolling to a VUB provided course.*

**27. Will I receive a certificate after the training period?**

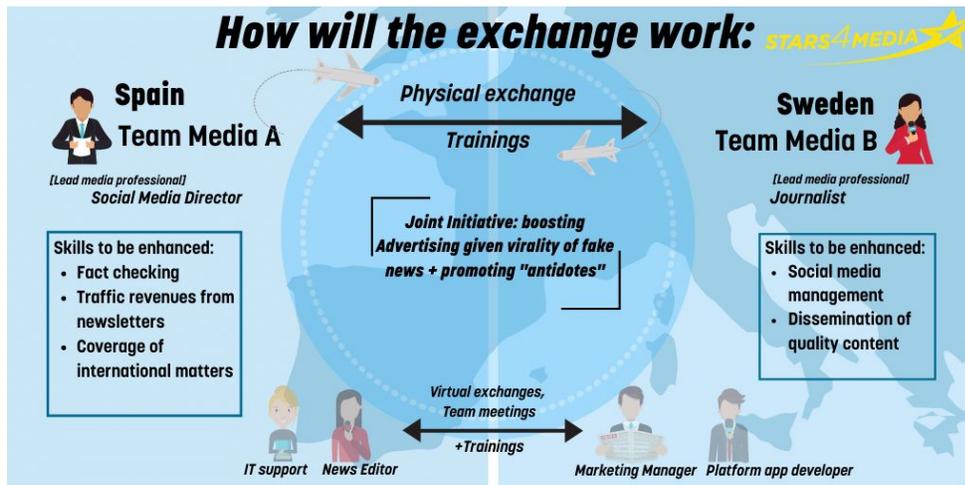
*The participants attending VUB-provided training will receive a university ECTS certificate.*

**Mobility**

**28. Who will organise the exchange?**

*Every person/media has to organise its own mobility experience, in agreement with the media respective media partner and in line with [Stars4Media General Conditions for Participation](#).*

## 29. Can I have an example of how an exchange would look like?



## 30. Will I have a referee of the project to contact during the exchange?

Each participating media outlet will have to appoint a leader to be the contact point with the other media organisations, and with the central project coordinators (VUB and Fondation EURACTIV). This leader will also coordinate internally with the other participants (supporters, often from marketing or IT departments), ensure the reporting on progress, and communicate to the media outlets' senior management ('senior mentors').  
For general inquiries, please refer to Question 40.

## 31. Who decides the length of an exchange/mobility?

The length of the exchange (geographical and virtual) should be determined by the applicant (in agreement with the media partner). The mandatory criteria is that it should last from 4 to 12 weeks.

## Financial aspects

### 32. Who funds Stars4Media? / What will be my costs?

The project is 80% co-funded by the European Commission and 20% by the beneficiaries/participants.

### 33. Will I receive any money? From whom? /

#### How will my expenses be reimbursed? By whom?

The costs incurred during the project will be covered by the media company and then reimbursed in proportion of 80% by the Project Coordinator (VUB University), provided all the requested documents are presented. The total maximum amount of the eligible direct costs that may be reimbursed shall never exceed 6 000 euros per media professional of which 4 800

euros will be covered by the grant and 1 200 euros by the Applicant. The ratio 80/20% also applies for a total of reimbursable costs which is below 6 000 euros.

**34. How often can I ask the Project Coordinator for reimbursement?**

*Media outlets can ask for reimbursement maximum 2 times - at the middle of the exchange period (approximately July 2020) and at the end of the project (October 2020).*

**35. What expenses are eligible and under what conditions?**

*Please check [Stars4Media Specific Rules](#).*

**Coronavirus**

**36. What if I cannot come to the Stars4Media Lab because of Covid-19 travel bans?  
Will my application already submitted still be valid?**

*All applications that reach our inbox remain valid.*

*We are closely following all information and announcements given by Belgium authorities regarding the Covid-19 and are taking into account different scenarios for the organisation of the event. We are strongly advising all those who register to the event to book their travel with cancellation insurance. Given that the situation is ongoing and its impact is difficult to predict, we are preparing a virtual back-up for the event. This will ensure that the workshops are streamed online and that the applicants will be able to interact with the Jury in an online space.*

**37. How is the Covid-19 emergency reshaping the organization of the Lab?**

*There will be the possibility to virtually join all sessions of the Lab.*

**Other questions:**

**38. I am a non-EU citizen working for a non-EU media outlet. Can I apply?**

*The project can involve only EU citizens and residents.*

**39. Can media companies from outside of the EU take part in the programme?**

*Only EU-based companies can benefit from co-funding for taking part in the programme. Non-EU companies will have to provide full coverage of expenses for the professionals that are to take part in the exchange on their behalf.*

**40. I am a non-EU citizen working for an EU media outlet. Can I apply?**

*EU residents can take part in the project.*

**41. I am a UK citizen/working for an UK-based media. Can I apply?**

*As you will be aware, the terms of the UK's departure from the European Union has yet to be determined. This might affect the possibility of participating in the project.*

*If you are a UK citizen residing in another EU country and/or working for an EU based media-outlet, you are eligible for taking part in the project.*

**42. Who will have the ownership of the results of an Initiative?**

*As a general rule, the results are owned by the Party that generates them. The media pairs working on a joint Initiative will have to determine and agree on copyright rights. The Project Coordinator VUB shall be entitled to use the jointly owned Results for non-commercial research activities on a royalty-free basis, and without requiring the prior consent of the other joint owner(s).*

**43. Is there an address for general enquiries?**

*For general enquiries, please contact Catalina Dumbraveanu, Media Innovation Project Manager at [info@stars4media.eu](mailto:info@stars4media.eu), mentioning in the Subject line: "Stars4Media questions".*



Co-funded by  
the European Union