



FAQs ¹

General Information

1. What is Stars4Media?

Stars4Media is a pilot project initiated by Fondation EURACTIV, led by VUB and co-funded by the European Commission. It aims to speed up media innovation and to increase cross-border coverage in Europe, through the exchange of 100 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, and will then implement their joint initiatives via virtual and geographical mobility (4-12 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).

2. Who can participate?

Young media professionals with 2-10 years of experience across different media professions.

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

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

4. It is open only to journalists or other media professionals can 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.

5. Can freelance journalists participate?

10% freelance journalists might be accepted provided they have a VAT number.

6. Can researchers/media policy experts participate?

Researchers and media policy experts can take in the project at own/company cost. If they submit and implement their idea from the 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.

¹ Please note this list will be regularly updated.

7. Is there a minimum language level requirement to participate?

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

8. Which language can the applications be submitted in?

Applications should be submitted in English.

9. 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.

10. 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.

The type of Initiatives to be developed will be defined as "bottom-up", focusing on the participants' needs. The participants, through the pilot project, will be able to understand best practices on-the-ground, establish feasibility, clarify needs, and distinguish ideas that can be developed internally versus those 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.).

11. 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](#).

Administrative / Application

12. What is the timeline of the selection process?

- **Propose your initiative:** *You have now 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 submit it to 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 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 come to the Stars4Media Lab event in Brussels.
- **Stars4Media Lab: the Stars4Media Networking, 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.
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13. What happens after I submit my Expression of Interest?

The Expressions of Interest 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. Further, you might be kindly asked to elaborate on your idea by filling in the above mentioned Proposal for Initiative form. At a later stage, for evaluation purposes, you could be asked to upload your Proposal for Initiative on [Easy Chair](#).

14. Who will evaluate the applications?

The applications will be evaluated by an independent jury (Advisory Committee), composed of about 15 “media experts” from 10 EU countries, representing publishers, journalists, and tech circles, taking into account gender balance (minimum 33% each) and geographical balance (maximum 15% per country). Moreover, experts will be grouped around the two main thematic waves “Trust in Media” and “Data for Media”.

15. What criteria will be used to evaluate applications?

Each member of the Advisory Committee will evaluate the submitted initiatives of the following dimensions: needs, approach, benefits and impact, cooperation and sustainability.

16. 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.

17. 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 Stars4Media Lab - training and match-making event from late March 2020.

18. What is the programme of the Stars4Media Lab?

The exact programme of the Stars4Media Lab will be communicated at least two weeks in advance.

19. To what do the media companies commit during the project?

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

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

- *General lectures provided during the Match-making event called “Stars4Media Lab”.*
- *The professionals engaged in the target of 20 approved Initiatives will be able to use part of **their financial support** to engage, for example, in the VUB certified courses, self-chosen ad-hoc trainings and exchange mobility. Participants are free to follow individual trainings (“getting up to speed” skills-related courses, that will be demand-driven and decentralised). For example: language ‘brush up’ before the geographic mobility, or coding before developing an app (optional certified training modules provided by VUB).*
- *Furthermore, the participants will be able to freely choose among a variety of accredited trainings 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. Each of these training modules are taught by six teachers, three from the academic world and three industry experts. The project participants will benefit from a 20 % discount when enrolling to a VUB provided course.*

21. Will I receive a certificate after the training period?

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

Mobility

22. 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](#).

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

TWO EXAMPLES: WHAT THE INITIATIVES COULD LOOK LIKE
Senior mentors, "rising stars"

Heading "TRUST IN MEDIA"	Heading "DATA FOR MEDIA"
<p>Thematic Wave 2 : "FACT-CHECKING"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who? Two large newspapers, e.g. Spanish Media A, Swedish Media B ● Team: 3 + 3 = 6 people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Spain:</i> Social Media Director, journalist, IT support, community manager ○ <i>Sweden:</i> News Editor, marketing manager, journalist, platform app developer ● Focus: "Boosting advertising given virality of fake-news + promoting 'antidotes'" ● Skills to be enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Media B:</i> fact-checking journalists, traffic and revenues from newsletters, coverage of international matters ○ <i>Media A:</i> social media management, dissemination of quality content ● Deliverables: strategy paper and mutual feedback 	<p>Thematic Wave 3 : "DATA-JOURNALISM"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who? An online media, a media group and a tech supplier, e.g. France legacy media's website Media C, German paper Media D and Finnish trade publication Media E ● Team: 2 + 2 + 2 = 6 people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>France:</i> Publisher, journalist, social media manager ○ <i>Germany:</i> CTO, community manager, developer ○ <i>Finland:</i> Data Director, Data analyst, sales manager ● Focus: "Pre-election data-driven product to increase media revenues while respecting press independence" ● Skills to be enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Media C:</i> localised predictive journalism ○ <i>Media D:</i> monetisation options ○ <i>Media E:</i> data visualisation ● Deliverables: new formats and sustainable models

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

Each participating media outlet will have to appoint a lead participant to be the contact point with the other media organisations, and with the central project coordinators (VUB and Fondation EURACTIV). This lead media professional will also coordinate internally with the other participants, ensure the reporting on progress, and communicate to the media outlets' senior management ('senior mentors').

For general inquiries, please refer to Question 40.

25. Who decides the length of an exchange?

The length of the exchange 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

26. Who funds S4M? / What will be my costs?

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

27. 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, 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.

28. 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).

29. What expenses are eligible and under what conditions?

Please check [Stars4Media Specific Rules](#).

Other questions:

30. 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.

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

EU residents can take part in the project.

32. 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.

33. 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).

34. Is there an address for general enquiries?

For general enquiries, please contact Catalina Dumbraveanu, Media Innovation Project Manager at info@stars4media.eu, mentioning in the Subject line: "Stars4Media Expression of interest".



