

Audience-Engaged Journalism Grants

1. What are Audience-Engaged Journalism Grants?

Run by BIRN, the Audience-Engaged Journalism Grants support media outlets interested in connecting with their audiences and reporting on original stories that will make an impact. BIRN will provide media outlets with training and mentorship in engagement journalism and usage of the audience-engaged tool developed by BIRN.

2. Citizens of which countries can apply for Audience-Engaged Journalism Grants?

Media outlets based in the following countries can apply for **Audience-Engagement Journalism Grants**: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia and Slovakia.

3. How many outlets will be selected for the programme?

The call for applications is open to 10 participants in the first year and 10 participants in the second year (one media outlet per country per training cycle). Individual grants of €4,000 will be awarded to each selected media outlet that wishes to cover national/regional/local topics on its own. Collaborative grants of €5,000 will be awarded to selected media outlets that wish to investigate cross-border topics with a partner.

4. How will the grant improve my news outlet's audience engagement?

Audience-engaged reporting has proven to be a game-changer in the region, as ordinary people's voices are heard and unresolved issues are tackled. You will learn how to listen to these voices and report on essential topics for your community while bringing innovation to your investigative reporting and newsrooms.

The selected grantees will receive training in the use of the audience-engaged tool, which has been developed and tested by BIRN to meet the needs of local

media facing limited capacities and resources. Audience-engaged tool is an online tool that enables two-way communication between journalists and citizens interested in sharing information and individual experiences related to issues they are facing. Through the audience-engaged tool, media outlets reach out to the community for testimonies, information, experiences, data, evidence, expertise, etc. In addition to their own research, it enables journalists to use crowdsourced information that is well-structured and can be easily analysed while reporting on specific problems recognised by communities on a local level.

5. Grantees will be offered an online training program. What topics will the training cover?

Grantees selected by the international jury under the Audience-Engaged Journalism Collaboration scheme will undergo a four-day training programme that will be offered online. The training agenda will cover the following topics:

- Planning an engagement story
- How to select an engaging topic
- How to develop a callout
- What makes a project an engagement project?
- Local and global perspective in engagement journalism
- How to design a callout – technical perspective (intro to the audience-engaged tool)
- Audience-engaged tool implementation
- Callout development based on local examples
- How to design a callout from an editorial perspective
- How to read the results; which topic could have success in your newsroom?
- What do people want to talk about?

6. How secure is the audience-engaged tool?

The audience-engaged tool, based on successful models worldwide, allows media to crowdsource information in a simple, secure and systematic way. Keeping security and anonymity is of utmost importance to citizens who often hesitate to reach out to official institutions or media.

7. What type of content can be produced through this grant scheme?

Content may include news, analysis, investigations, etc. and can be in any form – text, audio, video. Content needs to be promoted through outlets' social media channels.