

OPEN CALL: WOW—Women of the World—Grants

WOW Bangladesh Commissions 2025 Guidelines

Grants of up to £12,000 for artistic projects that connect to diverse people, movements and ideas in the arenas of arts, culture and media who are engaged with the urgent global challenge of gender inequality.

Application deadline: 16 November 2025 (23:59:59 Bangladesh Standard Time)

The British Council invites individual artists, arts collaboratives, and arts institutions based in Bangladesh, or in the UK to apply for a grant to develop, produce and present new works of art, physical exhibitions, live performances, or screening programmes in context of WOW Bangladesh programming in 2026.

Grants of up to £12,000 in equivalent local currency are available. Applications are now open.

What is WOW - Women of the World?

The WOW Foundation exists to build, convene and sustain a global movement that believes a gender equal world is desirable, possible and urgently required.

WOW - Women of the World was founded by Jude Kelly in 2010, when the first WOW Festival took place at Southbank Centre. Since then, WOW Festivals celebrating women and girls, and taking a frank look at the obstacles they face, have taken place across the globe, reaching more than two million people.

Through festivals, events, schools' programmes and more, WOW challenges the belief that gender equality has already been achieved – and hopes to join the dots between people, movements and ideas to change the world.

WOW Programme in South Asia:

The British Council's work in South Asia regarding gender aims to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Raising awareness and changing perceptions: Women, girls, men and boys positively change their perceptions and attitudes towards gender norms.
2. Building capacity and skills: Arts organisations and creative professionals have increased skills and capacity to tackle gender issues.
3. Voice and Platforms: Women and girls are able to contribute to all aspects of life, including civic engagement and artistic expression.
4. Allies and Partnerships: An increased number of organisations work together to promote gender equality.

Applicants are invited to engage with the intricacies, counterarguments, and active questions of the local, discursive traditions of how experiences of society are, should, or should not be determined by gender in Bangladesh through one or more of the following perspectives:

- Film, Moving Image and Media Aesthetics
- Hyperobject meets hyperobject: Gender and the climate emergency
- STE(A)M: Science, Technology, (Arts), Engineering & Maths

Where possible, WOW Commissions may be invited to participate in WOW Chapter events in Bangladesh in 2026.

Guidelines: Information for applicants

Key Dates

- 31 October 2025 – Applications open
- 06 November 2025 – Information webinar (live)
 - Registration link: <https://forms.office.com/e/QYuY64bGhN>
- 16 November 2025 (23:59:59 Bangladesh Standard Time) – Application deadline
- First week of December 2025 – Notification of decisions
- 10 December 2025 – Agreements signed and completed
- After 01 January 2026 – Projects start from
- Before 30 September 2026 – Projects and project reporting completed

What can the grant be used for?

The grants will support the development, production and presentation of works of art, exhibitions, performances, or screening programmes in Bangladesh in 2026.

Where possible, WOW Commission will be included in WOW Chapter events in Chattogram, Dhaka, Rajshahi, or Sylhet in 2026.

Eligibility Criteria

- **Applicants:**
 - Applicants should be individual artists, arts collaboratives, and arts institutions based in Bangladesh, or in the UK.
 - The British Council would expect individuals to have the necessary registration/s needed to comply with legal and/or tax provisions in the country in which they are based e.g. this could be a sole trader or an individual operating as a company with the associated registrations.
 - We welcome applications from both new and returning applicants.
 - The capacity and capability to produce and present work in Bangladesh in 2026 on the subject of gender in society is central to this award.
- **Proposals:**
 - Proposals to produce music albums, or to produce films will not be eligible for this grant.
 - Proposals to conduct research visits, or to develop ideas that will not be produced and presented in Bangladesh before 30 September 2026 will not be eligible for this grant.

Eligible art forms

We welcome proposals for:

- Cross-art form projects, and
- Cross-disciplinary projects (e.g. art + robotics, art + geology, art + botany)

In addition to:

- Architecture
- Design & fashion
- Creative technology (incl. games, extended reality, immersive, mixed, augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence)
- Film (please note that this fund cannot support film production)
- Literature
- Music (please note that this fund cannot support album production)
- Theatre and dance
- Visual arts

For further information on art forms at the British Council, please visit <https://arts.britishcouncil.org/>

How to Apply

- Please complete the ‘*Application Form*’ document.
- Please complete the ‘*Budget and Activity Timeline*’ template
- Once completed, please save both of the above files as PDF versions and email them to Arts.Bangladesh@britishcouncil.org with “Application: WOW Bangladesh Commissions 2025” in the subject-line
- The deadline for applications is 11:59 PM Bangladesh Standard Time on 16 November 2025.

Assessment Criteria:

All applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weighting:

Evaluation criteria	Description	Weighting
Quality and artistic/creative approach	• The project demonstrates strong artistic/creative insight in response to at least one of the following themes: ○ Film, Moving Image and Media Aesthetics. ○ Hyperobject meets hyperobject: Gender and the climate emergency. ○ STE(A)M: Science, Technology, (Arts), Engineering & Maths. • The project demonstrates applicants’ previous track record of delivering and developing high quality work in Bangladesh.	25%
Feasibility and project management	• The project is realistic, well-planned, and achievable within the given timeline. • The budget is clearly justified and equitably distributed between participants. • Roles and responsibilities of participants are clearly defined. • The project has considered risk and has strong risk mitigation plans.	25%

Audience/participant engagement and impact	• The project clearly defines its intended audience and/or participants and outlines strategies to reach them effectively. • The project articulates its intended impact and how success will be achieved assessed, considering engagement, outcomes, and relevance. • The project considers the potential legacy of the project.	15%
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	• The project demonstrates a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and incorporates this into the project's design. • The proposal demonstrates how it understands, values and works with diversity and inclusion to enable inclusive, fair and full participation in activities. • The proposal encourages action that promotes equality, playing a part in removing barriers and redressing imbalance caused by inequality and unjustified discrimination.	25%
Environmental Sustainability	• The proposal demonstrates a commitment to the environment and thinking of ways to minimise the environmental impact of activity, incorporating this into the project's design.	10%
Each application will be scored from 1 to 5 for each criterion, using the following scale: 5 – Excellent: Exceeds expectations; highly relevant and impactful. 4 – Good: Strong alignment and feasibility, with minor areas for improvement. 3 – Satisfactory: Meets the basic requirements but lacks depth or clarity in key areas. 2 – Weak: Falls short in key areas; lacks a clear strategy or justification. 1 – Poor: Does not meet the criteria or is insufficiently developed.		