Introduction to the Academic Transformation Fund (ATF) Sub-project Proposal Writing for the 2nd Round

HEAT Team

University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

Objectives of the workshop

By the end of this workshop, the participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the HEAT Project and the Academic Transformation Fund (ATF)
- Identify suitable ATF sub-project windows and funding opportunities
- Prepare a competitive and compliant ATF sub-project proposal
- Apply ATF proposal evaluation rubrics and submission guidelines

An Overview of the presentation

- An overview of the HEAT project
- Understanding ATF
- Eligibility for Receiving ATF Grants
- Types of Sub-projects under ATF
- Allocation for Individual Sub-projects
- Sub-Project Management
- Indicative Eligible Expenditure
- Preparation of Sub-Project Proposals
- Introduction to ATF Forms and how to fill out the forms
- Sub-project evaluation rubrics

An Overview of the HEAT Project

- Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) Project
- It is a second-generation project as a follow-up of HEQEP to move forward with the transformational activities started under HEQEP.
- The Bangladesh Government and the World Bank fund it.
- UGC is the implementing agency.
- It is a five-year period from July 2023 to June 2028.
- Estimated Cost: 401,657 (Lac in BDT)

Understanding ATF

- A competitive, merit-based grant mechanism
- Operates under the Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) Project
- Supports public and private universities
- Aims to:
  - Enhance research capacity
  - Improve teaching–learning infrastructure
  - Foster innovation and quality enhancement

Eligibility for Receiving ATF Grants

General Requirements (All Universities)

- Commitment to establish a University ATF Secretariat (UATFS) with qualified staff and logistics;

- Minimum 30 students per undergraduate program;

- For graduate/postgraduate-only universities: minimum 20 students per program;

- At least 4 full-time faculty members, including 1 Associate Professor with a PhD

Additional Requirements for Public Universities

- Established by an Act or equivalent

- A permanent campus/establishment owned by the university is a prerequisite for window-2

For Private Universities

- Valid provisional charter under the Private Universities Act
- Permanent campus/establishment owned by the university
- Reserve fund maintained in a scheduled bank
- Conducted at least two convocations
- Audited financial statements (not older than 2 years)
- At least 2% of annual expenditure must be spent on research

Grouping of Universities for ATF Sub-Projects

- **Total Universities:** 171 in Bangladesh (55 public, 116 private)
- **Types of Grouping: A, B, C**
- **Grouping Rationale:**
  - Protect younger/less-resourced universities from direct competition with established ones.
  - Encourage **equitable access** to ATF funds
- **Grouping Criteria:**
  - Full-time PhD faculty count
  - Research publications in Scopus-indexed journals (Academic capacity benchmark, not a ranking)
- **Sub-Project Allocation Logic**
  - Separate allocations for each group
  - Maximum sub-project value differs by group
  - All universities participate in open competition → merit lists prepared separately for each group

Group of Universities

Group	Number of Universities	Name of Universities
A	30	DU, RU, BAU, BUET, CU, JU, SUST, JnU, NSU, DIU, KU, BRACU, IU, KUET, AIUB, BSMRSTU, HSTU, … Independent University, Bangladesh
B	30	IIUC, IUBAT, UIU, PUST, BSMRSTU, UAP, BRU, JKKNIU, CVASU, ULAB, … KYAU
C	102	BSMRSTU Pirojpur, BSMRMU, BAUST Saidpur, BSMRAAU, DIU, EU, BIU, EDU, AUB, … Queens University

Types of Sub-projects under ATF

- Window 1: Pandemic/Epidemic Related Research and Development

- Window 2: Improvement of Teaching-Learning Infrastructure

- Window 3a: Advanced Research

- Window 3b: Collaborative Research

- Window 4: Fab Labs, i-labs, Business incubators

- Window 5: Establishing Research Coordination and Technology Transfer Office (RCTTO)

Window 1: Pandemic/Epidemic Readiness (R&D)

- **Focus:** Research and preparedness for pandemics/epidemics
- **Sub-project Types:**
  - **Biochemical & virological research**
  (genomics, virus origin, mutation, immune response)
  - **Medical & pharmaceutical research**
  (prevention, treatment, and management of viral diseases)
  - **Social adaptation & institutional readiness**
  (response and recovery during/after pandemics)

Window 1: Eligible Disciplines

- Biomedical, biosciences, medical physics, biochemistry, microbiology
- Molecular biology, pharmaceutical chemistry, health sciences, social sciences
- Faculty from **Group-A & Group-B universities**

Window 2: Teaching–Learning Infrastructure Improvement

- **Objective:** Enhance facilities and learning environments
- **Eligible Institutions**: All universities
- **Indicative Areas**
  - Modernization of **teaching tools, devices, and ICT facilities**
  - Upgrading **STEM laboratories, workshops, and machine rooms**
  - Curriculum and learning material modernization
  - Improvement of **childcare facilities, female washrooms, and campus safety**
  - Enhancement of **co-curricular and extra-curricular facilities**
- **Special Feature**
  - All upgraded facilities and STEM labs need to be **climate-resilient** and disaster-resistant

Window 3A: Advanced Research

- **Objective**: Support advanced research in STEM & AHSBL
- **Eligible Institutions**: All universities
- **A. Research Areas**:

Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and Law (AHSBL) disciplines

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Disciplines

Window 3A: Advanced Research

- **Special Provision**
  - Dedicated funding for **junior academics (PhD holders)** to promote innovation
  - Dedicated support for **climate change & resilience research**
  - **Research Areas:**

Arts, Humanities, Social Science, Business, and Law (AHSBL) disciplines

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Disciplines

Window 3B: Collaborative Research

- **University–Industry Collaborative Research**

- **Must focus on** (at least one of the following):
  - Development of **marketable products**
  - Patenting and commercialization
  - Support for **business startups and enterprises**

Window 4: Innovation Support Facilities

- **Objective**: Promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialization in universities
- **Eligibility**: Group A universities; 1 university, 1 project, no duplication
- **The indicative areas are:**
  - Faculty-led **business start-ups**
  - Technical skills and competency training
  - Establishment of **new Fab Labs**
  - Upgrading existing Fab Labs into **Centers of Excellence**
  - Creation of **Innovation Labs (i-Labs)**
  - Business incubators linked with Fab Labs/i-Labs for **commercialization of innovations**

Window 4: Innovation Support Facilities (Cont'd…)

- **Fab Lab Networking**
  - All Fab Labs in Bangladesh to join **Fab Lab Bangladesh Network**
  - Membership in **Fab Lab Asia Network** and **Fab Foundation**
- **Typical Fab Lab Facilities (not limited to the followings)**
  - Rapid prototyping (3D printers)
  - CNC machines (multi-axis milling/turning)
  - PCB milling/etching
  - Microprocessor & digital electronics labs
  - Advanced cutting tools (laser, plasma, water jet, knife)

Window 5: Research Coordination & Technology Transfer Offices (RCTTO)

- **Objective**
  - Establish a **sustainable university–industry linkage system**
  - Strengthen **IP management and commercialization of research**
- **Main Activity**
  - Set up **Research Coordination and Technology Transfer Offices (RCTTOs)**
  - Provide technical assistance for implementation
- **Eligibility**
  - Group A universities, 1 university, 1 project, no duplication

Window 5: Research Coordination & Technology Transfer Offices (RCTTO) (cont'd…)

- **Role of RCTTO**
  - Act as an **interface between university and industry**
  - **Manage, value, protect, and transfer** university intellectual assets (patents, copyrights, trademarks, designs, etc.)
  - Support **commercialization of research outputs**

Window 5: Research Coordination & Technology Transfer Offices (RCTTO) (cont'd...)

- **Key Functions**
  - Develop and implement **University IP Policy**
  - Facilitate **technology transfer & licensing agreements**
  - Support researchers in converting research into **monetizable IP**
  - Protect intellectual assets from misuse or infringement
  - Conduct **techno-commercial evaluation** of IP
  - Promote science-based **startups and businesses**
  - Raise **IP awareness** and conduct **IP literacy training**

Window 5: Research Coordination & Technology Transfer Offices (RCTTO) (cont'd…)

- **Sustainability Requirement**
  - RCTTO must continue as a **permanent university office**
  - University commitment for **staff, space, and funding** after project completion

Allocation for Individual Sub-projects under Five Windows (in BDT Lakh)

Allocation for Window 1

Window 1	Focus / Sub-projects	Eligible entities	Allocation for this type in BDT Lakh	Allocation per SPP, in BDT Lakh
Pandemic/ Epidemic/ Emergency Response/ Readiness Related Research and Development	(i) Biochemical/virological aspects of the virus, such as, genomics, origin, and mutation in human bodies, immune system, (ii) Medical and pharmaceutical research on pandemic causing viruses, antibodies, vaccines, drugs, etc. (iii) Social adaptation and Institutional readiness during/after pandemic/epidemic.	Bio-science, Pharmacy, medical science, Social Science etc. (Group A & B Universities)	6,000	STEM: 200 AHSBL: 65

Allocation for Window 2

Window 2	Focus / Sub-projects	Eligible entities	Allocation for this type, in BDT Lakh	Allocation per SPP, in BDT Lakh
Improvement of Teaching Learning Infrastructure, cocurricular and extracurricular activities	(a) Modern ICT systems for teaching and learning; (b) (b) Upgrading of STEM labs; (c) Updating/modernizing curricula and teaching-learning materials; and (d) Upgradation/renovation of childcare facilities and ensuring campus safety for women. (e) Upgradation of cocurricular and extracurricular facilities.	All Departments/ Institutes/ Halls of eligible public Universities (N.B. Finance of Hall projects will be like AHSBL).	35000	STEM: 300 AHSBL: 150

Allocation for Window 3

Window 3	Focus / Sub-projects	Eligible entities	Allocation for this type, in BDT Lakh	Allocation per SPP, in BDT Lakh
a) Advanced Research	i) Advanced Research in Priority Areas of STEM and AHSBL disciplines	Departments/ Institutes of all eligible Universities	STEM: 39000 AHSBL: 9660	STEM: 300 AHSBL: 65
	ii) Research Proposals led by Junior Researchers	Same as above	10000	STEM: 200 AHSBL: 50
	iii) Climate change related research	Same as above	4000	STEM: 300 AHSBL: 65
b) Collaborative Research with Industries and Research Institutes	University-industry collaborative research targeting patenting and commercialization of research products.	Departments/Institutes of all eligible Universities	10000	500

Allocation for Window 4

Window 4	Focus / Sub-projects	Eligible entities	Allocation for this type, in BDT Lakh	Allocation per SPP, in BDT Lakh
a) Establishing Innovation Support Facilities	Fab Labs, i-labs, Business incubators Establish new Fab Labs, i-labs, business incubator and upgrade existing Fab labs, Business Incubation Centers tagged with Fab labs and i-Labs	Group A Universities	5500	300
	Networking with other Fab Labs Establish Fab Lab Bangladesh Network, become member of Fab Lab Asia Network and Fab Foundation	Same as above	240	100

Allocation for Window 5

Window 5	Focus / Sub-projects	Eligible entities	Allocation for this type, in BDT Lakh	Allocation per SPP, in BDT Lakh
Establishing Research Coordination and Technology Transfer Office	Establishing new Research Coordination Technology Transfer Offices	Group A Universities	3000	100

Sub-Project Management

Implementation Responsibility

- **Public and private universities** implement ATF sub-projects through their Departments/Faculties/Institutes/Centers/ University itself.

- **University Academic Transformation Fund Secretariat (UATFS)** must be established before ATF contract becomes effective.

- **HEATPMU ATF unit**: central management, training, monitoring, promotion, and troubleshooting.

- **UGC Board for ATF (UGCBATF)**: highest authority for all ATF-related decisions.

*HEATPMU= HEAT Project Management Unit

Sub-Project Management (SPM)

- Each sub-project has a **Sub-Project Management Office (SPMO)** headed by a **Sub-Project Manager (SPM)**.
- Supported by:
  - Associate SPM (ASPM)
  - Sub-Project Management Team (SPMT): SPM, ASPM, members (generally faculty/researchers).
  - Office Staff: Office Manager, Accountant/Finance Officer, Data Entry Technician, Support staff (part-time/full-time as needed).

Allocation for ATF Sub-Projects

- **Budget Use**
  - Covers renovation, labs, classrooms, women's facilities, office & teaching equipment, software, stationery
  - Includes training, travel, remuneration for Master's, MPhil, PhD, Post-doc fellows, and contractual staff
  - STEM & Pandemic R&D sub-projects require high-cost, advanced lab equipment → 80% of funds allocated to STEM, 20% to AHBSL disciplines

Allocation for ATF Sub-Projects (Cont'd…)

- **Total Allocation**
  - BDT 122,400 lakh for competitive funding, spent for 1st round 63902.17 BDT, allocated for 2nd round 58497.83 BDT.
- **Distribution by university group:**
  - Group A: 70%
  - Group B: 20%
  - Group C: 10%

Window	Name of Window	University Groups		
		Group A (70%)	Group B (20%)	Group C (10%)
		Institutional ceiling** BDT (In Lakh)	Institutional ceiling BDT (In Lakh)	Institutional ceiling BDT (In Lakh)
1	Pandemic and Epidemic Related Research and Development	864	216	-
2	Improvement of Teaching-Learning Infrastructure	1960	560	280
3	Advanced Research			
	a) i) Advanced Research in Priority Areas	7895	2256	1128
	STEM	4914	1404	702
	AHSBL	1217	348	174
	ii) Research Proposals lead by Junior Researchers	1260	360	180
	iii) Climate change related research	504	144	72
	b) Collaborative Research with Industries and Research Institutes	1260	360	180
4	Innovation Support Facilities	-	-	-
5	Technology Transfer Office	-	-	-

Allocation Principles

1. Ceiling to an individual university in a group will be 8% for Window-2; 18% for research windows (W 1 & 3) and one sub-project for Window 4 & 5 each. The UGCBATF has the right to change the above-mentioned ceiling.

2. A proposal-submitting entity can receive at most one sub-project from Window-2 and up to two research sub-projects from Windows-1 and 3, including any sub-project awarded in Round-1.

3. a. In case of a sub-project jointly submitted by two universities, the cost of sub-project should be shared between the two universities, provided that amount allowed to each participating university does not exceed the ceiling.

   b. The resource sharing principle stated above shall also apply in case of public-private university joint sub-projects. The resource sharing principle should be incorporated in MoU document of the sub-project. The lead university shall disburse the fund according to financing plan

*   Amounts have been mentioned in round figures

** Total group allocation and Institutional ceiling is for round 1 & round-2

NB: Budget allocation for ATF and subsequent implementation period of sub-projects may change subjected to DPP revision.

Eligible Expenditure

Training

- Training for regular faculty on patents, licensing, commercialization (Windows 1, 3, 4 & 5)
- **Foreign training** for operating advanced lab equipment (All Windows; as per rules of government)
  - Not available in Bangladesh
  - Maximum **30 man-days**
  - Up to **4 faculty members**, once per sub-project
  - Prior approval required

Procurement (as per PPR 2025 and World Bank guidelines)

- Teaching–learning equipment (Window 2)
- Research lab equipment, spares, and accessories (Windows 1, 3 & 4)
- Books, journals, ICT, and office equipment
- Chemicals, consumables, furniture, AC, etc.
- Conferences, seminars, workshops (within Bangladesh)
- Travel and transport (occasional hiring)
- Project-specific any other items

Works (Max. 10% of Project Cost)

- Renovation and refurbishment of existing classrooms, labs, washrooms

- Special structures for equipment installation

- Construction of laboratory equipment (not buildings)

Research Support (Windows 1-3)

- Financial support for Master's & PhD students

- Research stay allowances

- Host institute charges

Services

- Travel, hospitality, visiting scholars' remuneration
- Repair and maintenance of equipment
- IP, patent, and licensing payments (Window 3)
- Consultants, experts, patent attorneys (max. 10%; no ceiling for RCTTO)
- Analytical services and collaborative research (MoU required)
- Incentives for SPMT members

Ineligible Expenditure

- Salary of regular/permanent university staff

- Routine operational or recurring expenses

- Large civil works (new buildings, roads, auditoriums, etc.)

- Costs unrelated to approved sub-project plans

- Procurement of motor vehicles

Preparation of Sub-Project Proposals

Sub-Project Proposal (SPP) Preparation

- Proposals must follow prescribed formats in ATFOM (Appendix-2)
- Different formats for different sub-project types
- Partnership Agreement required for Window-3(b) projects
- MS Word & Excel templates provided on HEAT-PMU website

Seven Discipline Clusters (only for evaluation)

- AHSS – Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

- CCDM – Climate Change & Disaster Management

- PCBMSI – Science & ICT disciplines

- ETTCLW – Engineering, Technology & Applied Materials

- MBPPHNS – Medical & Health Sciences

- AG – Agriculture & Allied Fields

- BL – Business & Law

Sub-Project Management Team (SPMT)

- Each sub-project must have an SPMT (3-4 members):
  - Sub-Project Manager (SPM)
  - Associate SPM (ASPM)
  - 1–2 Members (in case of collaborative research, at least 1 member from the collaborative industry.
- Members must be regular/permanent, on-duty faculty
- Proposal requires approval from:
  - Academic Committee of the entity
  - Vice-Chancellor of the university

Eligible Entities for submitting Sub-project Proposal

Sub-project type	Eligible Entity	Eligible SPM	Eligible Members of SPMT
Window 1: Pandemic/Epide mic related Research and Development	Bio-science, microbiology, virology, medical, pharmacy, Social Science and relevant departments of Group A&B universities in collaboration with Research Centers	Permanent Faculty Member of the proposal submitting entity	Relevant Teachers and Research Scientists of the institute(s)/center(s) run by the universities
Window 2: Improving TeachingLearning Infrastructure	Departments/Faculties/Centers /Institutes and Halls of all public universities	Head of entity or a nominated of the proposal submitting entity	Teachers of the entity. In case of Library modernization project librarian may include in SPMT
Window 3: (a) Advanced Research in Priority Areas	Departments/Centers/Institutes of all public and eligible private universities	Permanent Faculty Member of the proposal submitting entity	Teachers of the Department/Center/ Institute
Window 3: (b) Collaborative University-Industry Research	Departments/Centers/Institutes of all public and eligible private universities in collaboration with Research Centers and industries*	Permanent Faculty Member of the proposal submitting entity	Teachers of the Department, Researchers/ Teachers of the/Center/ Institute, and Research personnel of the partner industry or research institute

* MoU is required for any collaboration: with other university, research institute or industry.

Eligible Entities for submitting Sub-project Proposal

Sub-project type	Eligible Entity	Eligible SPM	Eligible Members of SPMT
Window 4: Fab Lab, i-Lab, Business incubator	The eligible public and private universities of Group-A	A Faculty Member nominated by the Vice-Chancellor	Teachers of the University
Window 5: Technology Transfer Office	The eligible public and private universities of Group-A	A Faculty Member nominated by the Vice-Chancellor	Teachers of the University

Sub-Project Management & Eligibility Rules

- One academic can be SPM of only one sub-project

- No faculty can serve in multiple SPMTs simultaneously or in consecutive rounds

- For Window-2, SPM is normally:
  - Dean / Department Head / Institute Director
  - If unavailable → senior faculty nominated by Academic Committee/Governing Body

Proposal Pre-Submission Guidelines

- Ineligible as SPM/SPMT if managing:
  - ≥ BDT 20 lakh (STEM)
  - ≥ BDT 10 lakh (AHSBL) ongoing projects
- SPM & ASPM must have a minimum of 3 years of service remaining
- Academic Committee or equivalent committee approval is **mandatory**

Submission & Endorsement Process

- **Sign in to your account at https://atf.heat.ugc.gov.bd/**

- Online upload by 22nd of February 2026

- **4 hard copies** submitted to UATFS/Planning and Development

- VC endorsement confirms:
  - Administrative support
  - Post-project sustainability

- **3 hard copies** must be received at the ATF Unit, HEAT-PMU by 26 February 2026

Post-Submission Processing

- ATF Unit verifies:
  - Format compliance
  - Budget & annexures
- Assigns **Proposal Identification Number (PIN)**
- Classifies proposals by:
  - University, window, cluster, discipline
- Prepares database & evaluation guidelines for experts

Introduction of ATF Forms and how to fill out the forms

Sections of the forms

- **Section A :**
  - It must be anonymous, otherwise it will be ineligible
  - It includes the project proposal
- **Section B**
  - It includes SPMT profile
  - Institutional information

Generic sections of the forms

- Sub-Project Title
- Indicative Area and Subject (as per section 2.3.1 of ATFOM)
- Please put a tick mark on the category of the proposed research area (Please select any one)
- Implementation Period
- **Total Budget:**   (i) In BDT (Lakh) …………………………….. …..

                       (ii) In words……………………………………………

About the Project

- Abstract/summary of the Proposed (research) Project (Must not be more than 300 words)
- Keywords (3-5 words)
- Background (Must not be more than 700/500 words)
- Research problem/Problem Statement and Research Questions/Hypotheses (Must not be more than 1000 words)
- General Objectives and Specific Objectives
- Expected Outcome(s)
- Literature Review and Research Gaps Identification (Must not be more than 700/500 words)

Cont'd…

- Relevant Theoretical/Conceptual Framework (Must not be more than 500 words): (if any)
- Methodology (Must not be more than 600/500 words)
- Please justify the Innovativeness/uniqueness/novelty of the proposed research project (Must not be more than 150 words)
- SWOT Analysis
- Relevance of the Proposed Project
- Contribution(s)
- List the Major Equipment/Instruments (if any):
- Please Justify the Cost of the Item(s) Exceeding 15% of the Total Budget
- Summary of Estimated Budget

Cont'd…

- Operation & Maintenance of Equipment/Instrument (if necessary):
- Types of Technical Assistance/Consultation Required under the Sub-Project and Its Terms of Reference (ToR) (if any):
- Brief Descriptions of the Probable Impact(s)/effects of the Proposed Sub-Project on 15 areas given in the Table
- Dissemination Strategy of Research Outcome(s)
- Sustainability Plan
- List of References (Using APA 7th Edition):
- Please attach the completed SPP Annexes

SPP Annexes

- SPP Annex 1: Milestones, Performance Indicators, and Logical Framework

- SPP Annex 2: Work/Activities Plan (Excel spreadsheet)

- SPP Annex 3: Financing Plan (Excel spreadsheet)

- SPP Annex 4: Procurement Plan Summary (Table A, Table B, Table C, Table D, and Table E) Excel spreadsheet

- SPP Annex 5: Training visit/ Study Tour Plan vi. SPP Annex 6: Details of estimated Budget (Excel spreadsheet)

Section B

- Sub-Project Title:
- Sub-Project Management Team (Name, Designation, and Entity)
- Project similarity implemented in the past.
- Background data substantiating the strategic analysis
  - Table 1: Data on Academic Staff in Undergraduate and Post-graduate Research Programs
  - Table 2: Research facilities/resources in the entity
- Collaboration
- Please mention the names and addresses of three peers/experts (national) in the proposed research field and development program

SPP Annexes

- SPP Annex 7: Environment and Safety Checklist for Research and Innovation
- SPP Annex 8: Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
- SPP Annex 9: Social Screening Form
- SPP Annex 10: Indicative Organogram of the Sub-project Management Office
- SPP Annex 11: Sub-project Management Team CV of SPM, ASPM, and SPMT members showing research experience and a list of published Scopus-indexed journal articles
- SPP Annex 12: Minutes of the Academic Committee Meeting and Proposal Endorsement by University Management

https://heat.ugc.gov.bd/

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academic

ATF Operation Manual (2nd Edition)

ATF Operation Manual

Published: Jan 19, 2026

VIEW DETAILS →

academic

Call for Proposals: Academic Transformation Fund (ATF) Under the...

The **Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) Project** is an initiative aimed at developing and transforming the...

Published: Jan 18, 2026

VIEW DETAILS →

Let's move to ATF forms and evaluation rubrics

Questions-Answers

Thank you