**COAST Foundation**

Job Description for the position: Head- Research & Advocacy on Intellectual Property and Access to Medicine

**Background**

Bangladesh has been steadily progressing towards graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, marking a significant milestone in its developmental journey. Expected to achieve this status by 2026, Bangladesh may have access to an additional transition period of three years. However, once graduated, it will lose the benefits of being an LDC, and it will have to implement the TRIPS Agreement of the WTO, necessitating the introduction of product patent protection in pharmaceuticals and adherence to other TRIPS requirements.

Distinguished among LDCs by its robust generic pharmaceutical industry, Bangladesh has witnessed remarkable growth since 1982, driven by favourable government policies and domestic competition. Yet, the advent of product patents poses challenges, particularly concerning the affordability and accessibility of crucial medications for ailments like multi-drug resistant TB, AIDS, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases.

Recognizing these concerns, Bangladesh has developed a progressive patent act that incorporates numerous public health safeguards. It is imperative for both civil society and the public to comprehend the patent regime's implications on medicine accessibility and understand how the new Patents Act seeks to mitigate some of its adverse effects.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) hold a pivotal role in advocating for policies that strike a balance between intellectual property rights and public health priorities. Therefore, empowering CSOs to grasp and engage with intellectual property issues related to medicine access is vital for fostering evidence-based advocacy and constructive policy dialogue in Bangladesh.

Equity and Justice Working Group, Bangladesh (In short EquityBD, [www.equitybd.net](http://www.equitybd.net)), a program component of COAST Foundation, has been facilitating a CSO platform for advocacy on different public issues to raise people’s voices and capacity building to understand the policies. EquityBD positively engages with the government to take pro-people positions in different global issues for the interest of the people of Bangladesh.

**Objective of the assignment**

The primary objective of the work of the Head, Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines, with a focus on capacity building for Bangladeshi CSOs, includes:

1. Conducting research and analysis, including preparing policy briefs and other relevant research output, on the intersection of intellectual property rights and access to medicines in Bangladesh, with particular emphasis on policy implications and public health outcomes.
2. Facilitating capacity-building activities, workshops, and training sessions for CSOs to enhance their understanding of intellectual property laws, policies, and strategies related to access to medicines.
3. Supporting CSOs in developing advocacy campaigns and evidence-based interventions aimed at promoting equitable access to affordable medicines while respecting intellectual property rights.
4. Collaborating with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, academia, healthcare professionals, and international organizations, to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus-building on intellectual property and access to medicines issues.

**Specific Tasks**

* Increasing capacity on technical understanding of the implementation of TRIPS Agreement across the globe and its impacts; the implementation of TRIPS in Bangladesh in particular through its national law, rules and other applications, the opportunities for using TRIPS flexibilities, in the background of a right to health;
* Analysing relevant policy issues; collecting relevant data, statistics, and information; preparing research briefs, leaflets and other publications; disseminating research outcomes; providing technical assistance and support to relevant government agencies; developing recommendations on drafting and implementing relevant policies; provide and organise translation services as needed.
* Supporting to arrange and mobilize events organized by Coast Foundation on this issue;
* Attending training and workshops on this issue in Bangladesh and outside; and supporting cascading the training workshops at national and local levels as necessary.
* Following up on other forms of engagement as relevant to this issue e.g. by monitoring events, policies, and laws affecting access to medicines, prices, and intellectual property.

**Reporting**

The incumbent reports to the Director- Partnerships and Development Communication.

**Required Profile**

* A law graduate or MPH, preferably with LLM in intellectual property. Those with exposure to training in public health law or patents and access to medicines or human rights law may also apply.
* Demonstrated expertise in conducting research on intellectual property rights, access to medicines, and public health issues.
* Strong research, analytical, writing and communication skills, with the ability to translate complex technical information into accessible formats for diverse audiences.
* Familiarity with the legal and policy framework governing intellectual property and access to medicines in Bangladesh, as well as relevant international agreements and guidelines will be preferred. Those with familiarity with legal aspects of public health policies in general may also be considered.
* Excellent command of English and Bangla languages is required.
* Good project management skills and experience working in development organizations.

**Duration and payment**

One year with a probation period of six months. The salary will be BDT 100,000.00 (consolidated) or negotiable for the deserving candidates.