Global Grants 2025 - Individual Grantee Reports

Amdad Hossan

Position: Deputy Station Engineer

Organisation: Bangladesh Betar

Activity: Digital transformation

Location: Radio Television Malaysia (RTM)

Date: 28 – 30 April 2025

Inside the Master Control Room of rtm Radio, where engineers ensure every broadcast is flawless, and transmitter power is perfectly monitored in real-time. Credit: Amdad Hossan

Objective

The primary objective of this visit was to gain practical knowledge and hands-on experience in digital transformation by studying RTM's implementation of the IDEAL archiving system.

This opportunity aimed to facilitate knowledge transfer, allowing me to acquire practical technical and managerial knowledge essential for leading a similar transformation at BB. I focused on comparing RTM's digital transformation process, particularly their implementation of the IDEAL archiving system, against the current practices at BB. This involved observing and learning from RTM's best practices, technical solutions, workflow designs, management strategies, and problem-solving approaches that are directly relevant to addressing challenges at BB, such as workflow automation, content integration, infrastructure upgrades, and organisational adaptation.

The visit was also intended to foster strategic partnerships, enabling long-term collaboration between BB and RTM, as well as with regional bodies such as PMA, ABU, and AIBD. By engaging directly with professionals at RTM, the experience supported professional development, sparked creative approaches to modernisation, and encouraged future knowledge-sharing initiatives. Ultimately, the visit was designed to lay the foundation for a tailored digital transformation framework for BB and promote innovation in public service broadcasting.

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Experience

The three-day professional visit to RTM provided an enriching and immersive learning experience that fully aligned with the objectives I had set out in my grant proposal. The visit was designed to explore RTM's successful digital transformation, particularly their adoption and implementation of the IDEAL system for content archiving. My intention was to gain hands-on experience, understand the technical and managerial framework of the IDEAL system integration with RTM's existing infrastructure, and translate these insights into a policy framework for BB, where I serve as a Deputy Station Engineer.

The visit consisted of structured activities, including technical meetings and walkthroughs, observation sessions, interviews, and formal consultations with RTM personnel across departments. I visited key locations including the digital archive facility, QC unit, studio control rooms, and the radio broadcasting section. On the first day, I was received by Encik Amiruddin bin Jemaat (Chief Assistant Director), Puan Noorzihidayah binti Md Noor (Assistant Director, International Relations), and other members of the Seksyen Kejuruteraan Digital Interaktif team. I was also privileged to meet and engage with Mr. Shak Rani Abidin, the Project Director of the IDEAL system.

To facilitate and maximise the utilisation of my time at RTM, a detailed schedule was prepared by RTM and provided to me weeks before the scheduled visit. The visit formally began with a presentation of the objectives of my project, along with the specific information and experience I aimed to gain, as requested by RTM. This early demonstration of preparedness, cooperation, and openness from RTM ensured a smooth and highly productive experience.

Inside the heart of RTM's digital infrastructure — Mr. Shak Rani Abidin, the IDEAL Project Director, passionately explains the hardware architecture and system workflow, offering valuable insights into the IDEAL system's backbone. Credit: Amdad Hossan

I worked closely with both technical and managerial staff involved in the implementation of the IDEAL system. I gained detailed insights into system integration, workflow automation, metadata management, and archiving protocols by Mr. Shak Rani Abidin. The IDEAL system's hardware was supplied by the system provider, while RTM deployed six trained staff to support the integration. The full implementation took one year: six months for training and six months for deployment. Prior to the training and implementation stage, nearly two years were dedicated to need assessment and implementation planning. I also learned about their change management strategies, including extensive internal consultations, proof-of-concept testing, and iterative "handholding" sessions between RTM and the IDEAL team.

In the radio broadcasting section, I was guided by Encik Mohd Aziziee bin Ahmad, Encik Mohd Suhaimi bin Zambri, and others. I observed how RTM uses CGI DIRA radio solutions for media asset

management, editing, and playout. This system is integrated with the IDEAL system through Disk Archive ALTO, allowing central access to archived content from any RTM broadcasting station. I also

discovered how RTM is migrating legacy audio from tapes and CDs into rich digital formats and enhancing quality using advanced tools. Importantly, RTM's digital files are first stored in a temporary server and then transferred to the archive twice a day, at 12:00 PM and 12:00 AM, ensuring a stable and secure ingestion process.

One of the most fascinating aspects was observing the harmony between technology and organisational culture at RTM. Staff operated under clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and demonstrated high levels of job satisfaction, openness to change, and a shared vision for positioning RTM as a regional leader in media digitisation.

What initially seemed challenging was the scale and advancement of the IDEAL system. I was uncertain whether such a transformation would be replicable at Bangladesh Betar, given resource and capacity constraints. However, Mr. Amiruddin explained that rather than copying another system, BB should begin with stakeholder consultations to identify its specific needs, just as RTM had done. This insight, along with the detailed explanation of their Public-Private Partnership (PPP) funding model was instrumental in shifting my perspective from doubt to possibility.

This experience has had a significant impact on my personal and professional development. It enhanced my understanding of digital archiving systems and has equipped me to lead BB's digital transformation with greater confidence and clarity. The technical and managerial knowledge gained will directly contribute to the development of a tailored policy framework and SOPs for BB's digital archiving system.

As a regular instructor at the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC), I plan to integrate these learnings into training modules for media professionals. This will ensure that the benefits of the grant extend beyond my immediate role and contribute to broader institutional capacity-building. Additionally, I plan to document these insights into a detailed report and policy paper, which will be submitted to BB and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, contributing to strategic planning and reform in public service broadcasting.

The outcomes of this project are closely aligned with SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. By supporting the development of modern, efficient, and accessible media archiving systems, the project contributes to infrastructural modernisation and digital innovation in public media. Furthermore, improving access to archived content strengthens freedom of expression and public access to information, aligning with SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

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Thumbs up for an inspiring visit at RTM Wisma Radio — where tradition meets innovation in broadcasting. Credit: Amdad Hossan

My presence at RTM was not only beneficial for my own learning but also provided RTM staff with valuable insights into the challenges and contexts faced by BB. I shared key aspects of my PhD research on public broadcasting and my practical experience at BB. Our final-day discussions led to a mutual agreement that BB should pursue strategic collaborations with RTM, the Public Media Alliance (PMA), the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), and the Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU). This exchange fostered regional knowledge-sharing and laid the groundwork for future partnerships in areas such as policy development, co-production, and training. RTM appreciated the opportunity to showcase their work and mentor a peer organisation, reinforcing their role as a regional leader in digital transformation.

Conclusion

The most rewarding aspect of my visit to RTM was gaining a comprehensive understanding of how digital transformation can be effectively planned, managed, and implemented within a public service broadcaster. Observing RTM's integration of the IDEAL system - particularly their structured workflow, stakeholder engagement, and commitment to capacity building were deeply insightful. Their approach to problem-solving through handholding sessions and continuous collaboration demonstrated a practical model that can be adapted to the context of BB.

In the short term, I plan to implement my learning by conducting knowledge transfer sessions within BB, focusing on workflow automation, metadata handling, and archiving protocols. I will also submit a detailed report and propose a policy paper outlining a framework for BB's digital transformation. As an instructor at the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC), I will share this experience with participants for wider dissemination. In the long term, this project is expected to shape BB's modernisation journey, supporting the development of a centralised digital archive, enhancing institutional efficiency, and aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 9 and 16). It also opens pathways for strategic collaboration between BB, RTM, and regional media bodies.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Public Media Alliance (PMA) and the Grace Wyndham Goldie (BBC) Trust Global Grant for supporting this invaluable opportunity. Special thanks to RTM's leadership and staff, especially Mr. Shak Rani Abidin, Encik Amiruddin bin Jemaat, and Puan Noorzihidayah binti Md Noor, for their generous cooperation, warm hospitality, and knowledge sharing throughout the visit.