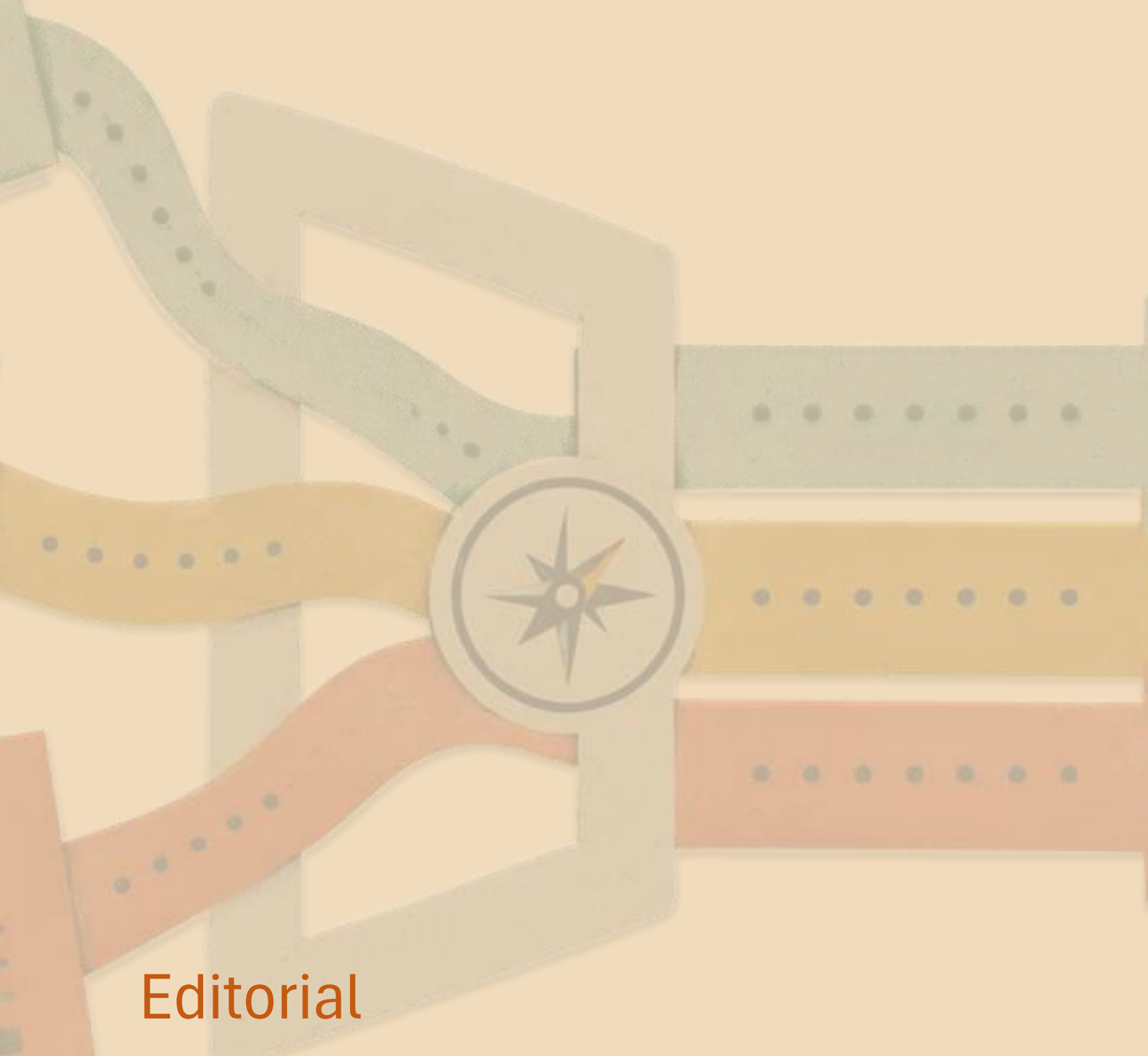




Editorial Coordination for Cross-Border Investigations

A Practical Workflow and Toolkit for Collaborative Newsrooms

Table of contents

Chapter

1. Purpose and use	3
2. The coordination cycle	4
3. First editorial meeting	6
4. Roles and decision-making	8
5. Shared editorial plan	10
6. Editorial checkpoints	12
7. Verification and risk escalation	14
8. Publication protocol	16
9. Troubleshooting	18
10. Ready-to-use templates	20



Co-funded by
the European Union

This material is developed under the project Collaborative Journalism Europe in a Global Context (CJEGC) and supported by European Commission through CREA-CROSS-2025-JOURPART Programme. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

1. Purpose and How to Use This Toolkit

Cross-border investigations need more than shared information and good intentions. They need an agreed way of making editorial decisions, allocating work, checking findings and preparing publication across different newsrooms. This toolkit provides that working structure.

It is designed for editors, reporters, data journalists and project coordinators involved in a joint investigation spanning two or more countries. It does not replace the editorial standards, legal review procedures or security protocols of participating newsrooms. Instead, it helps partners apply those standards consistently while working as one distributed investigative team.

Use the toolkit from the moment a collaboration is agreed and return to it at each key stage of the investigation. Its purpose is to ensure that:

- all partners work towards the same reporting objective;
- responsibilities, deadlines and decision-making authority are clear;
- findings are recorded, verified and assessed in a consistent way;
- legal, ethical and security issues are identified early;
- national stories contribute to a coherent common narrative; and
- publication is coordinated without limiting the editorial independence of individual partners.

The coordination cycle

The collaboration should follow a simple, repeatable cycle:

1. **Set up the team** – agree the purpose, participants, roles, security requirements and working rules.
2. **Plan the reporting** – define the central hypothesis, country angles, priority questions, tasks and deadlines.
3. **Coordinate reporting** – maintain regular editorial contact, track progress and share relevant findings.
4. **Review and verify** – test evidence, identify gaps, update the reporting plan and escalate legal or security concerns when needed.
5. **Prepare publication** – align the central narrative, national outputs, publication timing, right-of-reply process and credits.
6. **Follow up** – monitor reaction, share results, preserve documentation and identify lessons for the next collaboration.

The cycle is not strictly linear. New evidence may require the team to return to planning, amend responsibilities or postpone publication. What matters is that such decisions are taken collectively, recorded clearly and communicated to everyone affected.



2. The Coordination Cycle

Cross-border collaboration works best when all partners understand the full editorial process from the outset. The coordination cycle provides a common route from the first idea to publication and follow-up. It helps the team identify what needs to happen at each stage, who is responsible and when decisions must be made together.

The cycle is designed to be flexible. Investigations rarely develop in a straight line: new evidence may broaden the story, a source may require additional protection, or legal review may require a change of approach. The team may return to an earlier stage whenever necessary. However, no major transition should take place without a recorded editorial decision.

Stage 1 – Set up the collaboration

Objective: establish a shared basis for working together.

The partners agree on the preliminary reporting objective, participating newsrooms, key contacts, communication arrangements and basic rules for confidentiality and publication. A lead editor or coordinator is designated, along with responsibility for recording decisions and maintaining the workplan.

Key output: a short collaboration note listing the team, purpose, roles, communication channel and first deadline.

Stage 2 – Develop the editorial plan

Objective: turn the initial idea into a realistic joint reporting plan. The team defines the central hypothesis, maps the countries and actors involved, identifies what each partner can investigate, and agrees on tasks, dependencies and timelines. The plan should distinguish between common reporting questions and national angles.

Key output: a shared editorial workplan with named task owners and deadlines.

Stage 3 – Coordinate reporting

Objective: keep reporting connected while allowing partners to work independently. Partners report in their own jurisdictions and share findings relevant to the common investigation. Regular editorial meetings are used to assess progress, prevent duplication, identify emerging links and revise priorities.

Key output: updated workplan, shared decision log and evidence record.



Stage 4 – Review, verify and manage risk

Objective: ensure that findings are accurate, sufficiently supported and safe to use. The team reviews the evidence behind key claims, identifies missing corroboration and agrees which findings require additional reporting. Legal, ethical, security and source-protection issues are raised early, not only at the final stage.

Key output: verified key findings, a list of unresolved issues and agreed risk-mitigation measures.

Stage 5 – Prepare coordinated publication

Objective: turn the reporting into a coherent, accurate and publishable package. Partners agree on the central narrative, national stories, publication date, embargo rules, right-of-reply procedure, shared messages and crediting. Each newsroom retains responsibility for its final editorial and legal decisions, while respecting the common publication agreement.

Key output: publication plan and final readiness checklist.

Stage 6 – Follow up and learn

Objective: preserve the value of the collaboration after publication. The team monitors public, institutional and legal responses; shares relevant follow-up reporting; and records practical lessons for future projects. It also confirms how documents, data and communication records will be retained or securely closed.

Key output: short post-publication review and agreed follow-up actions.

Coordination principle: At each stage, the team should know three things: what has been decided, who is responsible for the next action and when the decision will be reviewed.

Practical example: [The Panama Papers](#) began with more than 11.5 million leaked records connected to over 200 countries and territories. A project of that scale could not be managed as a single reporting task. The collaboration required a common cycle: secure set-up, allocation of country-based reporting, shared analysis of documents, verification of local findings and coordinated release. The practical lesson is that teams should agree on the next editorial stage before starting the current current one; otherwise, material accumulates faster than it can be turned into reporting.



3. The First Editorial Meeting

The first editorial meeting establishes how the collaboration will work in practice. It should take place before substantial reporting begins and include, at a minimum, the editorial coordinator and one responsible journalist or editor from each participating newsroom.

The meeting is not intended to resolve every reporting question. Its purpose is to provide enough clarity for the team to start work with common expectations, clear responsibilities and an agreed way of communicating.

What the team should decide?

By the end of the first meeting, the team should have agreed on:

- the preliminary reporting question or central hypothesis;
- why the story requires cross-border cooperation;
- the expected contribution of each participating newsroom;
- the geographic and thematic scope of the investigation;
- matters that are outside the scope at this stage;
- the working language and primary communication channel;
- the editorial coordinator and other core responsibilities;
- rules for handling confidential material, sources and unpublished findings;
- the initial reporting tasks, owners and deadlines; and
- the date, format and agenda of the next editorial check-in.



These decisions should be recorded in a brief meeting note and circulated promptly to all participants. A shared written record prevents misunderstandings and ensures that colleagues who could not attend can follow the agreed process.

Suggested agenda

1. Define the story

What is already known? What does the team need to establish? Which connection, transaction, company, public official, network or decision requires investigation across borders?

The team should aim to formulate one preliminary central question. It may change during reporting, but it provides a common reference point for all partners.

2. Map the contribution of each partner

Each newsroom should identify what it can contribute: local knowledge, documents, sources, access-to-information requests, company records, data analysis, language skills, visual reporting or legal expertise.

The aim is not to divide the story into isolated national parts, but to identify how each contribution helps answer the shared reporting question.

3. Agree how the team will work

The team should decide who coordinates editorial communication, where workplans and records will be kept, how often the group will meet and how urgent issues will be escalated between meetings.

One primary communication channel should be used for coordination. Important decisions should not remain scattered across private messages or informal exchanges.

4. Identify immediate risks

Before reporting starts, the team should identify any issues that may affect the work: confidentiality, source protection, legal exposure, digital security, language barriers, unequal access to records or differing newsroom deadlines.

This is not a full risk assessment. It is an early warning exercise that allows the team to adapt the reporting plan before problems become urgent.

5. Confirm the first workplan

The meeting should end with a small, realistic set of first tasks. Each task should have one named owner, a deadline and a clear expected result. The coordinator then circulates the meeting note and schedules the next editorial check-in.

Practical rule: Do not leave the first meeting with only general agreement. Leave with a written record, named responsibilities and a fixed next deadline.



4. Roles and Decision-Making

A cross-border team does not need a complex hierarchy, but it does need clear ownership of essential tasks. Partners may hold more than one role in a small collaboration; in a larger project, responsibilities may be distributed among several people. In every case, the team should know who is responsible for moving the investigation forward, who can make which decision and when consultation is required.

Core roles

Editorial coordinator

The editorial coordinator keeps the collaboration aligned with the agreed reporting objective. This role is not about controlling the work of other newsrooms. It is about ensuring that the team has a functioning process.

The coordinator:

- convenes editorial meetings and circulates agendas;
- maintains the workplan, decision log and key deadlines;
- follows up on agreed tasks and identifies delays or dependencies;
- ensures relevant findings are shared with the team;
- flags issues requiring collective discussion; and
- coordinates the transition between reporting, verification and publication stages.

The coordinator should not become the sole holder of information. Records, decisions and relevant materials must remain accessible to the appropriate members of the team.

Lead reporter or country lead

Each participating newsroom should designate one person responsible for its contribution. The lead reporter or country lead manages local reporting, keeps the team informed about relevant progress and ensures that national findings are understood in the common editorial context.

This person should raise early warning when a task cannot be completed, a finding changes the reporting hypothesis or an issue requires editorial, legal or security guidance.

Participating editor

The editor within each newsroom ensures that its contribution meets the outlet's editorial standards and that the collaboration remains compatible with local publication plans, resources and legal procedures.

Each participating newsroom retains final editorial and legal responsibility for its own published content. This must be clear from the beginning.

Data, security and legal focal points

Where the investigation requires it, the team should identify focal points for data management, digital and operational security, and legal review. These roles may be filled by specialists from one of the partner newsrooms or by external advisers.

Their purpose is to give timely guidance and ensure that risks are addressed as part of the reporting process, rather than only immediately before publication.

Decision-making rules

The team should agree on a simple decision-making model at the start of the collaboration.

Routine coordination decisions — such as meeting dates, task tracking, document organisation and minor workplan adjustments — can be made by the editorial coordinator, who records and communicates them.

Editorial decisions affecting the common investigation — such as a significant change to the central hypothesis, the use of sensitive material, a decision to approach a key subject, or a change to the joint publication timetable — should be discussed with all affected partners.

Newsroom-specific decisions — such as final wording, headline, format, publication platform and local legal clearance — remain with each participating newsroom. Partners should communicate such decisions early where they affect the common narrative, timing or safety of the collaboration.

When consensus is not possible, the team should first clarify the factual or risk-related issue behind the disagreement. The coordinator should record the different positions, propose a practical way forward and, where necessary, refer the matter to the responsible editors of the affected newsrooms.

Practical rule: Decisions do not need to be complicated, but they should be visible. Record the decision, its rationale, the responsible person and any agreed next step.

Practical example: [OCCRP's Azerbaijani Laundromat investigation](#) brought together reporting partners in numerous countries after Danish newspaper Berlingske shared leaked banking records with OCCRP. The published project credits identify separate coordination, reporting, research, data-analysis, editing, fact-checking, translation and promotion functions. This shows why a cross-border team should assign responsibilities by function as well as by country: local reporting is essential, but it must be supported by clear editorial, data and verification roles.





5. The Shared Editorial Plan

The shared editorial plan is the team's central working document. It turns the initial reporting idea into a coordinated investigation by connecting the common story with the work of each partner.

It should be concise enough to use in every editorial meeting and detailed enough to show what has been agreed, what remains uncertain and who is responsible for the next step. The coordinator should update it after each substantive meeting and make sure all partners can access the current version.

Start with a common reporting question

The plan should begin with a clear central question or hypothesis. It should describe the suspected connection or issue the team is trying to establish, not assume the conclusion. For example:

How did the same individuals, companies or financial arrangements operate across several jurisdictions, and what evidence shows the connection?

This common question provides the frame for national reporting. It helps prevent the team from accumulating interesting but unrelated findings.

Define the common narrative and national angles

A coordinated investigation needs both a shared narrative and meaningful local stories. The **common narrative** identifies the cross-border structure: the key actors, entities, transactions, decisions or methods that link the jurisdictions involved.

The **national angle** explains what each partner will investigate and why it matters to audiences in that country. It may focus on local public officials, companies, assets, procurement, regulation, victims, oversight failures or access to information.

National angles should complement one another. They should not simply repeat the same facts in different languages or develop competing versions of the story.

Set out the reporting tasks

Each task in the workplan should include:

- the reporting question to be answered;
- the person or newsroom responsible;
- the expected source, document, dataset or method;
- any dependency on another partner's work;

- the deadline;
- the current status; and
- the next editorial decision required.

Tasks should be specific and achievable. “Investigate Company X” is too broad. “Obtain Company X’s ownership filings in Country A and verify whether its director is connected to the contract recipient in Country B” gives the team a usable assignment.

Keep an evidence record

For every potentially important finding, the team should record:

- the claim or fact to be established;
- the supporting source or document;
- the date and place where it was obtained;
- the partner responsible for verification;
- the status of verification; and
- any limitation, contradiction or outstanding question.

The evidence record does not need to contain sensitive source identities where this would create risk. It should, however, allow the responsible editor to understand the basis of each key factual assertion.

Review and revise the plan

The editorial plan is a living document. At every check-in, the team should ask:

- What has been established since the previous meeting?
- What remains unverified or unclear?
- Has the central hypothesis changed?
- Are tasks still realistic and properly assigned?
- Does any finding require legal, security or editorial escalation?
- What is the next decision the team must take together?

Practical rule: If a finding cannot be linked to the common reporting question, explain why it matters before investing more time in it.

Practical example: In the [Implant Files investigation](#), ICIJ and its partners examined medical-device regulation and safety information across jurisdictions where the same products could be treated very differently. The collaboration combined a global pattern with country-specific reporting and developed an international medical-devices database. For a team working on a similar cross-border issue, the shared plan should therefore separate the common question — for example, whether the same company, product or practice appears across countries — from the national task of explaining the local records, regulator and affected institutions.

6. Editorial Checkpoints

Regular editorial checkpoints keep the investigation connected. They are not status updates for their own sake; they are the moments when partners compare findings, make decisions and adjust the reporting plan before problems become harder to resolve.

The frequency should reflect the pace and sensitivity of the investigation. For most collaborations, a weekly meeting is sufficient during the reporting phase. More frequent meetings may be needed shortly before publication, following a major new finding or where risks are increasing.

A focused recurring agenda

Each checkpoint should address five questions:

1. **What has changed?**
Partners briefly report new findings, documents, sources, access problems or developments that affect the common investigation.
2. **What does the evidence show?**
The team distinguishes between confirmed facts, credible leads requiring further work and information that should not yet be relied upon.
3. **What is missing?**
The team identifies gaps in documents, corroboration, context, right of reply, legal understanding or reporting capacity.
4. **What needs a decision?**
The coordinator brings forward issues that cannot be resolved by one partner alone: changes to the hypothesis, reallocation of tasks, use of sensitive material, contact with key subjects or adjustment of the timetable.
5. **What happens next?**
Every meeting ends with confirmed tasks, named owners, deadlines and the date of the next checkpoint.

Record decisions, not every conversation

The coordinator should maintain a short decision log. It is not a transcript of the meeting. Its purpose is to preserve the outcome of discussions that affect the reporting or publication process.

Each entry should record:

- the date;
- the issue discussed;
- the decision taken;
- the responsible person or newsroom;
- any required follow-up; and
- the deadline for review or completion.

A decision log is particularly useful when the collaboration involves several time zones, changing participants or long reporting periods. It prevents the team from reopening settled issues simply because the earlier decision was not visible.

Recognise warning signs early

Editorial checkpoints should also identify problems that require action:

- a partner repeatedly misses deadlines or stops responding;
- a key finding relies on one unverified source;
- national reporting is moving away from the common story;
- a document, dataset or source is being shared without clear access rules;
- a legal or security concern has been raised but not assigned;
- partners have different expectations about timing, exclusivity or credit.

These issues are normal in a demanding investigation. The risk lies in leaving them unaddressed.

Practical rule: A useful editorial meeting ends with fewer uncertainties than it began with. If the team cannot agree on a decision, record the issue, identify who must resolve it and set a deadline.



7. Verification and Risk Escalation

Cross-border reporting produces information from different legal systems, languages and journalistic contexts. A finding that is clear to one partner may require further explanation, documentation or corroboration before another newsroom can rely on it. Verification must therefore be a shared editorial responsibility, not a final-stage technical task.

Verify the claim, not only the document

A document may be authentic and still not prove the conclusion being drawn from it. For each key finding, the team should ask:

- What exactly are we claiming?
- What evidence supports that claim?
- Does the evidence establish the relevant date, actor, ownership, payment, decision or connection?
- Has the document been interpreted correctly in its national legal or institutional context?
- Is independent corroboration available?
- What information could challenge or qualify the finding?

The responsible partner should explain relevant local context, including the meaning of company records, public registers, administrative acts, court documents or financial information. Other partners should be able to understand the evidentiary basis of a claim without having to rely solely on informal assurance.

Use a shared verification standard

Before drafting begins, the team should agree that every major factual assertion requires:

- a clearly identified source or document;
- confirmation of authenticity and relevance;
- appropriate context and, where possible, independent corroboration;
- a record of limitations or uncertainties; and
- editorial review by the newsroom responsible for publication.

The team does not need to apply identical legal standards in every country. It should, however, ensure that a weakly supported claim in one jurisdiction does not compromise the credibility or safety of the common investigation.

Escalate risks early

Some issues should not wait for the next regular editorial meeting. They should be raised immediately with the coordinator and the relevant editor, legal adviser or security focal point.

Examples include:

- a credible threat to a source, reporter or partner newsroom;
- possible exposure of confidential information or source identity;
- suspected unauthorized access to shared material or communication;
- a significant legal concern involving a key allegation or proposed publication;
- a request for information or comment that could alert subjects and compromise further reporting;
- a major contradiction in evidence supporting the common narrative; or
- a partner's intention to publish material before the agreed joint process.

Early escalation is not a sign that reporting has failed. It allows the team to pause, verify, adapt the plan or obtain specialist advice before the risk affects everyone involved.

Keep sensitive information need-to-know

Not every partner needs access to every document, source detail or operational plan. Access should be based on reporting need and the agreed security arrangements. When sensitive material is shared, the team should know:

- who can access it;
- where it is stored;
- whether it can be downloaded, copied or shared further;
- how long it will be retained; and
- what action is required if access is compromised.

Practical rule: When a key finding raises doubt, risk or disagreement, slow down before moving forward. A delayed story can be corrected; a weak, unsafe or premature publication is much harder to repair.



8. Publication Protocol

Coordinated publication is where separate reporting efforts become a single cross-border investigation. It requires planning well before the final drafts are ready. The aim is not to make every partner publish the same story in the same format, but to ensure that national outputs are accurate, mutually consistent and released in a way that protects the reporting and strengthens its impact.

Agree the publication framework early

As the investigation develops, the team should agree on:

- the central findings that all partners can support;
- the national stories, formats and audiences of each newsroom;
- the intended publication date and time;
- any embargo arrangements;
- the process for contacting subjects and seeking a right of reply;
- key facts, dates and terminology that must remain consistent;
- the use of shared visual elements, data or explanatory material, where appropriate;
- crediting of partner organisations and contributors; and
- communication arrangements for the period immediately before and after publication.

A publication date should remain provisional until the key reporting, verification, legal review and right-of-reply processes are sufficiently advanced.

Prepare a common factual base

The coordinator should ensure that partners have access to a short common factual base before final editing begins. It should include the agreed central narrative, verified key facts, important dates, names and entities, links between jurisdictions, and any language requiring careful or consistent formulation.

This does not replace each newsroom's own reporting and editorial process. It helps avoid avoidable inconsistencies, such as different descriptions of the same company relationship, conflicting timelines or uncoordinated use of sensitive allegations.

Manage right of reply together

Where a person or organisation is asked to respond to a significant allegation, partners should coordinate the approach. The team should agree:

- who will contact the subject;
- what factual issues or allegations require a response;
- when the request will be sent;
- how much time will be offered for a reply;
- how responses will be shared and assessed; and
- whether a response affects the work of more than one partner.

Partners must retain the ability to meet their own legal and editorial obligations. However, uncoordinated contact with a key subject can alert others, undermine ongoing reporting or create inconsistent accounts of the investigation.

Confirm readiness before publication

Before the agreed release, each participating newsroom should confirm that:

- its key factual claims have been verified and appropriately sourced;
- sensitive allegations have received editorial and, where required, legal review;
- the subject's response has been sought and fairly reflected;
- confidential information and source identities are protected;
- publication timing and embargo arrangements are understood;
- partner credits are accurate; and
- the newsroom has identified a responsible editor for any immediate correction, response or follow-up.

Preserve editorial independence

Each newsroom is ultimately responsible for its own publication decisions, legal clearance and editorial presentation. A coordinated investigation does not remove this responsibility. If a partner cannot publish on the agreed date or must significantly change its story, it should inform the coordinator and affected partners as early as possible. The team can then assess whether the common timetable, narrative or security arrangements need to change.

Practical rule: Coordinate early, but do not rush publication to protect a date. The strongest joint release is one in which every partner can stand behind its findings.

Practical example: [The Panama Papers](#) did not produce one identical international article. Instead, the release connected a common investigation into the offshore system with locally reported stories involving national political figures, companies and financial institutions. This is the model to follow: before publication, partners should agree the common factual base and release arrangements, while each newsroom retains responsibility for the national angle, language, legal review and format of its own story.



9. Managing Disagreements and Unexpected Developments

Disagreement is normal in cross-border collaboration. Partners may have different assessments of evidence, different legal constraints, different newsroom priorities or different expectations about timing and credit. Unexpected developments are also common: a source withdraws, a document contradicts earlier reporting, an institution responds late, or publication must be postponed.

The purpose of coordination is not to eliminate these problems. It is to address them early, fairly and without damaging the investigation or the working relationship.

Separate the issue from the relationship

When disagreement arises, the team should first identify its nature:

- Is there a factual disagreement about what the evidence proves?
- Is the issue legal, ethical or security-related?
- Does it concern workload, deadlines or access to information?
- Does it concern publication timing, exclusivity or credit?
- Is it a disagreement between individuals, or between the editorial positions of their newsrooms?

This distinction matters. A factual question may need additional reporting; a legal concern may require specialist advice; a resource issue may require reallocation of tasks; and a publication dispute may need a decision by responsible editors.

The coordinator should ensure that the discussion remains focused on the issue, the evidence and the agreed rules, rather than on assumptions about a partner's motives.

Use a simple resolution process

When a problem cannot be resolved informally, the team should:

1. state the issue clearly and record the relevant facts;
2. identify which partners are affected and who has authority to decide;
3. consider practical options, including further reporting, a revised timetable or a narrower claim;
4. agree the next step and deadline; and
5. record the outcome in the decision log.

Where consensus cannot be reached, the affected newsrooms should make their own editorial decisions while informing partners of any consequences for the common investigation. A disagreement should never be allowed to result in surprise publication, withholding of material or public criticism of a partner without prior effort to resolve it.

Respond to common challenges

Delays or uneven contributions

If a partner cannot complete a task, this should be raised early. The team can revise the workplan, transfer a task, reduce the scope or postpone a decision. Silence creates more damage than a delayed result.

New evidence changes the story

New information may weaken, expand or redirect the central hypothesis. The team should pause long enough to reassess the evidence and decide whether the common narrative, tasks or publication plan must change.

A source or document becomes unavailable

The responsible partner should explain what has changed without disclosing protected details unnecessarily. The team can then assess whether corroboration is available or whether the relevant claim must be narrowed, delayed or removed.

Confidential material may have been exposed

The issue should be escalated immediately to the coordinator and relevant security focal point. The team should limit further access, assess what may have been exposed and agree necessary protective measures.

A partner wants to publish early

The coordinator should promptly clarify the reasons, the material involved and the implications for the other partners. If the common publication plan cannot be maintained, the team should agree revised timing and safeguards as quickly as possible.

Practical rule: Do not allow uncertainty to become silence. Raise concerns early, document the agreed response and keep affected partners informed.

Practical example: [The Azerbaijani Laundromat](#) began with leaked banking records covering roughly 16,000 transactions and led to reporting across many countries. In such a project, the first apparent connection is not automatically a publishable conclusion: a payment may require clarification from the local partner, further documentation or a narrower formulation. The practical response to a disagreement over what a record proves is therefore not to vote on the conclusion, but to record the uncertainty, assign the missing verification and decide when the claim will be reviewed again. [OCCRP's Azerbaijani Laundromat project page](#)



10. Ready-to-Use Templates

The following templates can be copied into a shared document, spreadsheet or secure workspace and adapted to the needs of each investigation. They are intentionally simple: their purpose is to create a reliable routine, not additional administration.

A. Collaboration Set-Up Note

Item	Agreed information
Investigation title / working title	
Central reporting question	
Participating newsrooms and countries	
Editorial coordinator	
Country leads / responsible reporters	
Data, security and legal focal points	
Working language	
Primary communication channel	
Location of shared workplan and decision log	
Confidentiality and sharing rules	
Preliminary publication window	
Date of first editorial checkpoint	

B. Shared Editorial Workplan

Reporting question / task	Owner	Expected source or method	Dependency	Deadline	Status	Next decision

Use one row for each specific reporting task. Update the status after every editorial checkpoint.

C. Decision Log

Date	Issue	Decision	Responsible person / newsroom	Follow-up action	Deadline

Record decisions that affect the shared investigation, including changes to the reporting plan, task allocation, use of sensitive material, legal or security escalation, and publication timing.

D. Publication Readiness Checklist

Before publication, confirm that:

- the central findings are supported by verified evidence;
- national stories are consistent with the agreed common factual base;
- each significant allegation has received appropriate editorial review;
- legal and security concerns have been addressed by the responsible newsroom;
- the subject's response has been sought and fairly reflected;
- confidential information and source identities are protected;
- publication date, time and embargo arrangements are understood;
- credits to partner newsrooms and contributors are accurate;
- a responsible editor is available to address corrections and immediate responses; and
- follow-up reporting and monitoring responsibilities have been agreed.

E. Post-Publication Review

Within two weeks of publication, the team should briefly discuss:

- What worked well in the coordination process?
- What created delays, confusion or unnecessary risk?
- Were roles, communication channels and decision-making rules clear?
- Did the publication plan work as intended?
- What follow-up reporting, monitoring or protection measures are needed?
- What should be changed before the next collaboration?

Final reminder: Good coordination is not about making every newsroom work in the same way. It is about creating enough structure for different teams to contribute their strengths to one investigation, while protecting accuracy, independence and trust.

