Occupational Standards Framework

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> This resource was originally created by ISDM's Centre for Good Governance. We're thankful for the time and care they've put into making this information accessible.

Under the Catalysing Good Governance and Accountability Systems Initiative

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Objective of the Framework

Early Stage Professionals, Middle Management Professionals and Senior Management Professionals within Social Purpose Organisations (SPOs) often operate in complex environments where role clarity and alignment are critical to achieving impact. The objectives of the framework are to:

1. Standardise roles and responsibilities to foster consistency across organisations
2. Ensure that competencies and skills across all roles and functions are aligned with the overall goals of the SPO
3. Enable SPOs to operate with transparency, accountability, and efficiency

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How is the Framework Being Developed?

The development of the Occupational Standards Framework followed a collaborative and methodological process.

Incorporating Learnings from Needs Assessment Report

A landscape needs assessment study on compliance and governance in India, undertaken by ISDM, highlighted the challenges of role ambiguity for multiple positions and functions across SPOs, leading to development of Occupational Standards Framework.

Role Analysis

In-depth secondary research of multiple framework and job descriptions and consultations with sector experts to identify multiple roles and their associated responsibilities.

Competency Mapping

Defining the required knowledge, skills, and duties for each role, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and sectoral challenges.

Validation

Sector experts and thought leaders at ISDM were engaged to validate the framework and ensure its relevance and applicability across diverse organisational contexts.

Outcome of the Framework

Two key outcomes envisioned from the framework include:

1. Curriculum Framework for SPO : The framework will inform the design and development of structured training programs at leadership, mid-management and entry-level roles.

2. Repository of Tools and Resources : A comprehensive repository of practical tools, handbooks and guidebooks will be developed to support the adoption and implementation of the framework.

Guide to Using this Document

SPO Leaders: Review competencies for recruitment planning and performance management

HR Leaders: Conduct training needs analysis, recommend Learning & Organisational Development for key roles, and design capacity building programs

Employees: Gain role clarity and identify development needs using this competency framework

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Early Stage Professionals They oversee execution and operations (1 to 5 years of Experience)

Middle Management Professionals They oversee teams, manage projects and contribute to strategy (6 to 15 years of Experience)

Senior Management Professionals They drive organisational vision, policy, and strategy (15 + years of Experience)

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The Occupational Standards (OS) Framework focuses on the domain of compliance and governance within Social Purpose Organisations (SPOs). This document outlines relevant roles and responsibilities across different organisational levels and defines key duties associated with governance and compliance, further presenting them across various functions. These duties are detailed in subsequent sections along with knowledge and skills required for senior, middle and early stage professionals. The below mentioned index contains roles across various domains and multiple levels.

Senior Management Professionals	
Function	**Description**
Finance & Accounting	Strategises, envisions and ensures financial integrity, regulatory compliance, and transparent reporting to strengthen organisational accountability and sustainability.
Fundraising and Donor Management	Strategises and secures compliant and sustainable funding while building donor trust and long-term financial resilience
Human Resources (HR)	Envisions and builds a compliant, transparent and ethical workplace that supports employee well-being, legal adherence, and organisational effectiveness

Senior Management Professionals	
Function	**Description**
Information Technology (IT) and Digital	Strategises and safeguards digital infrastructure and ensures secure, compliant data and technology systems that support organisational operations.
Program Operations	Strategises impact-aligned, compliant programs through program implementation, knowledge systems, and stakeholder trust.

Middle Management Professionals	
Function	**Description**
Finance & Accounting	**Finance** - Ensures financial compliance, transparent reporting, and efficient grant and payroll management to uphold funder and statutory accountability. **Accounting** - Maintains accurate financial records and ensures statutory compliance through timely audits and GST adherence.
Fundraising and Donor Management	Drives ethical fundraising, donor stewardship, and regulatory-aligned campaigns to ensure sustained and compliant resource mobilisation.
Human Resources (HR)	Ensures legally compliant recruitment, onboarding, and workforce management while integrating technology for streamlined HR operations.
Information Technology (IT) and Digital	Maintains secure, compliant digital infrastructure and integrates systems that support finance and donor reporting needs.
Program Operations	Executes and monitors programs for impact, compliance, and efficiency, while enabling stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing.

Early Stage Professionals	
Function	**Description**
Finance & Accounting	Ensures accuracy and compliance in day-to-day financial documentation, statutory filings, and vendor management to support audit readiness and smooth financial operations.
Fundraising and Donor Management	Maintains donor records, supports fundraising communication, and ensures timely compliance reporting to strengthen donor trust and regulatory adherence.
Human Resources (HR)	Supports compliant recruitment and onboarding processes by maintaining documentation and educating new hires on key employment regulations.
Information Technology (IT) and Digital	Provides technical support to maintain compliance-related systems and tools, ensuring uninterrupted digital operations.
Program Operations	Facilitates data collection, reporting, and logistical coordination to ensure program activities meet compliance and operational standards.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

Finance & Accounting

Roles: Director / Associate Director / Chief Financial Officer

Key Duties

- Oversee and approve comprehensive annual budgets aligned with organisational goals and strategic plans
- Ensure regulatory compliance with FCRA, GST, TDS, Income Tax, and state-specific regulations
- Oversee the acquisition and renewal of certificates (12A, 80G, FCRA, CSR-1, etc.)

- Oversee internal audits to ensure donor and statutory compliance
- Ensure ethical financial practices and transparent reporting

Core Knowledge

- Budgeting principles and resource allocation techniques
- In-depth understanding of statutory and compliance regulations (FCRA, GST, TDS, income tax)
- Expertise in financial and donor compliance standards

Key Skills

- Strategic financial planning
- Analytical skills for forecasting and budgeting
- Auditing and legal documentation
- Detail-oriented compliance tracking
- Expertise in financial reporting and tools like Tally

Fundraising and Donor Management

Roles: Director / Associate Director of Fundraising

Key Duties

- Ensure all fundraising activities comply with legal, regulatory, and donor requirements (e.g., FCRA, CSR, Income Tax, GDPR)
- Establish internal controls for transparent donor transactions and timely reporting
- Adhere to donor agreements on fund utilization, reporting, and impact assessment.
- Promote ethical donor engagement and transparency
- Build a sustainable corpus for long-term organisational resilience.

Core Knowledge

- Understanding of fundraising laws and donor compliance frameworks
- Familiarity with ethical fundraising and international standards

Key Skills

- Lead strategic planning for compliance-integrated fundraising
- Donor risk assessment and mitigation
- Proficiency in documentation and negotiation
- Stakeholder engagement and communication

Human Resource

Roles: Director / Associate Director of Human Resources

Key Duties

- Lead strategic recruitment and workforce planning
- Ensure ethical HR practices and employee well-being
- Ensure compliance with labour laws and organisational policies

Core Knowledge

- Knowledge of labour laws and workforce planning strategies
- Understanding of legal hiring practices and employee benefits compliance

Key Skills

- Strategic recruitment
- Workforce planning
- Policy implementation
- Conflict resolution and employee engagement

Information Technology (IT)

Roles: Director / Associate Director of IT / Chief Technical officer

Key Duties

- Oversee IT strategy aligned with organisational goals and compliance
- Ensure proper data management and protection
- Formulate policies for secure infrastructure, tools, and platforms

Core Knowledge

- IT compliance frameworks and cybersecurity regulations
- Licensing standards and acceptable use policies
- Knowledge of data protection laws

Key Skills

- IT strategy development
- Data governance and cybersecurity
- Digital tools implementation

Program Operations (Strategic Operations)

Roles: Program Director / Knowledge Manager / Stakeholder Management Specialist

Key Duties

- Design and monitor programs aligned with organisational goals
- Oversee documentation and knowledge sharing
- Facilitate stakeholder management and capacity building

Core Knowledge

- Program management frameworks (e.g., RBM, PMBOK)
- Donor agreements and compliance standards
- Knowledge Management Systems (KMS)

Key Skills

- Project management and M&E
- Strategic planning and documentation
- Facilitation and stakeholder engagement

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

Finance

Roles: Finance Manager / Compliance Officer

Key Duties

- Conduct internal audits for FCRA, GST, and donor requirements.
- Manage grant budgets, compliance, and documentation.
- Prepare financial reports for internal and external stakeholders.
- Monitor changes in legal and regulatory frameworks and communicate updates.
- Oversee payroll management and statutory deductions.
- Manage creation and compliance of utilisation certificates.

Core Knowledge

- In-depth knowledge of FCRA, GST, and donor compliance.
- Understanding of donor agreements, funding cycles.
- Familiarity with financial reporting and regulatory formats.
- Knowledge of Income Tax laws and payroll compliance.

Key Skills

- Analytical thinking and discrepancy identification.
- Budget forecasting and financial monitoring.
- Use of financial reporting software.
- Strong research, communication, and payroll accuracy.

Accounting

Roles: Senior Accountant / Accounting Manager

Key Duties

- Manage daily accounting transactions and accuracy.

- Ensure GST compliance and timely filing.
- Coordinate internal audits for FCRA and tax compliance.

Core Knowledge

- Accounting software and principles.
- GST processes and turnover thresholds.
- Audit practices and compliance standards.

Key Skills

- Detail orientation and multitasking.
- Expertise in tax filing and compliance systems.
- Analytical and excel skills.

Fundraising

Roles: (Fundraising Manager / Officer)

Key Duties

- Design and run fundraising campaigns (online/events).
- Donor engagement, reporting, and visibility.
- Manage donor audits and documentation.
- Ensure ethical compliance with permissions and records.
- Maintain transparent donor communication.

Core Knowledge

- FCRA, donor guidelines, grant tax implications.
- Impact reporting and regulatory audits.
- Compliance tools and M&E frameworks.

Key Skills

- Proposal writing and donor negotiation.
- Event planning and interpersonal communication.

- Donor data management and digital tool use.

HR / Recruitment

Roles: HR manager / Recruitment Manager

Key Duties

- Oversee the recruitment process with a compliance focus.
- Coordinate employee onboarding and legal training (POSH, EPF).
- Adopt HR software for payroll processing and compliance tracking.

Core Knowledge

- Labor laws, EPF, ESIC, Minimum Wage Act.
- Compliance policies and training methods.
- HRMS systems and payroll software.

Key Skills

- Interviewing and recruitment platforms.
- Training delivery and documentation.
- Tech-savvy and process optimization.

IT and Digital

Roles: IT and Digital Manager

Key Duties

- Oversee IT operations and infrastructure.
- Conduct regular IT audits to ensure compliance with regulatory standards.
- Manage integration and updates of compliance software.

Core Knowledge

- IT systems, cybersecurity, compliance frameworks.

- Donor regulations and financial software integration.
- IT audit protocols and updates.

Key Skills

- Project and systems management.
- Analytical and audit skills.
- Data migration and software integration.

Program Manager (Operations) / M&E

Roles: Program Manager / Project Lead

Key Duties

- Plan and implement programs aligned with compliance standards.
- Monitor program outcomes and ensure impact tracking.
- Engage with stakeholders and build transparent communication.
- Manage budgets and donor financial requirements.
- Design and implement effective knowledge management strategies.

Core Knowledge

- Program design, budgeting, compliance frameworks.
- Operational workflows and M&E tools.
- Donor reporting and stakeholder engagement.
- Knowledge management systems and content curation.

Key Skills

- Strategic planning and team leadership.
- Problem-solving and multitasking.
- Analytical thinking and data interpretation.
- Financial management and forecasting.
- Digital literacy and documentation.

EARLY STAGE PROFESSIONALS

Accounts

Roles: Account Associate

Key Duties

- Handle day-to-day statutory filings and renewals (e.g., GST, FCRA, 12A, 80G, DARPAN, TDS, income tax).
- Maintain updated financial documentation including receipts, invoices, and ledgers.
- Accurately enter financial transactions into accounting systems.
- Ensure accurate financial records for programs including invoices and transaction details.
- Coordinate with banks for payment processing and operational transactions.
- Manage vendor documentation, PO management using Tally, and payment processing.
- Collaborate with program, IT, and HR teams for compliance-related tasks.

Core Knowledge

- Basic knowledge of FCRA, GST, income tax, and donor regulations.
- Understanding of bookkeeping and ledger maintenance.
- Familiarity with accounting principles, payroll basics, and data entry procedures.

Key Skills

- Attention to detail and time management.
- Strong organizational skills and data accuracy.
- Typing speed and numerical accuracy.

Fundraising

Roles: Fundraising Assistant / Coordinator

Key Duties

- Maintain and update donor records in CRM systems.
- Handle donor communication and engagement.
- Conduct basic research on funding opportunities.
- Coordinate document gathering for audits and compliance reporting.
- Compile compliance-related reports and ensure timely submission of ITRs and audit reports.

Core Knowledge

- Basic CRM and donor data organization.
- Familiarity with running programs and performance indicators (KPIs).

Key Skills

- Data entry and organizational skills.
- Donor communication and stakeholder writing skills.

Human Resources

Roles: HR Assistant / Recruitment Coordinator

Key Duties

- Assist in job postings and screening candidates for compliance.
- Support onboarding including preparation of contracts, benefits, and training materials on policies (EPF, ESIC, POSH, CPP).

Core Knowledge

- Basic labor laws and recruitment compliance.
- Understanding of onboarding processes and compliance frameworks.

Key Skills

- Organizational and communication skills.
- Interpersonal skills, documentation, and presentation abilities.

Information Technology (IT)

Roles: IT Support Specialist

Key Duties

- Provide day-to-day technical support for compliance tools (e.g. tax filing, regulatory update tools).

Core Knowledge

- Basic IT troubleshooting and system update knowledge.

Key Skills

- Problem-solving and communication skills.
- Effective time management.

Program Operations

Roles: Program Operations Assistant

Key Duties

- Coordinate logistics and support for program activities.
- Organise data for monitoring and reporting aligned with program objectives.
- Assist in tracking inventory and ensuring timely availability of materials

Core Knowledge

- Basic understanding of program goals and operations.
- Familiarity with M&E basics and inventory management procedures.

Key Skills

- Coordination, time management, and communication.
- Analytical thinking, documentation, and data analysis.
- Organisational skills and adaptability.

For detailed information on the Occupational Standards Framework:

http://dx.doi.org/10.58178/257.1064