

SAFETY MATTERS FOUNDATION

Gurukul for Safety

OPERATING SETUP & TEAM PLAN

People, Governance, and Infrastructure to Run the Safer Skies India Programme

Companion to the CSR Performance Report & Partnership Proposal • April 2026

1. Purpose & Operating Model

Safety Matters Foundation is today run by its founder, with a three-director board and no full-time staff. That model has produced extraordinary output on a ₹1 lakh capital base — but it cannot carry a ₹11.50 crore, three-year, twelve-workstream programme. This companion document sets out the people, governance structures, policies, and physical infrastructure required to turn the Foundation into an institution that can absorb, spend, and account for CSR capital at scale.

Operating principle

Lean core team in India, senior specialists on retainer, fellows for research depth, and outsourced production partners where a programme module requires industrial capability (Skyward Dreams broadcast; Chakshu Yan hardware). The founder stays close to editorial and strategy; a professional Executive Director runs day-to-day operations.

The transition in one sentence

From “founder-led with good intentions” in FY 2025-26 → to “founder-chaired, ED-run, audited, policy-complete, and 80G / 12A / CSR-1 registered” by end of FY 2026-27.

2. Three-Layer Organisational Model

The Foundation will operate in three interlocking layers. Each has a distinct accountability — and each is costed separately so a CSR partner can see exactly where their money goes.

Layer 1 — Governance

Board of Directors, Advisory Council, statutory auditor, company secretary, legal counsel. Sets strategy, holds the executive accountable, and guards editorial and research independence.

Layer 2 — Executive / Core Team (full-time in India)

An Executive Director and a small, senior core of functional heads — Programmes, Research, Education, Communications, Finance & Compliance, Technology — plus Office Manager. Approximately 8 full-time employees by end of Year 1, growing to ~10 by Year 3.

Layer 3 — Programme Teams & Specialists

Per-module project leads, fellows, researchers, editors, producers, and external retainers. Scaled up or down with the module's programme year and paid from that module's budget.

At-a-glance headcount

Layer	Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1 — Governance	Board + Advisory	7 + 5	7 + 7	7 + 8
2 — Core team	FTE (India)	5 FTE	8 FTE	10 FTE
3 — Programme	Leads + specialists (mix FTE + retainer)	6	11	13
3 — Fellows + interns	Stipended / time-bound	3 + 2	3 + 3	3 + 3
Outsourced	Production / hardware / legal	2 firms	4 firms	4 firms

3. Governance — Board, Committees, Advisory Council

Board of Directors — expand to seven

The current three-director board (Capt. Amit Singh FRAeS, Kavita Singh, Kalindi Singh) will be expanded to seven members within the first six months of the partnership. The goal is a board that is majority-independent, gender-diverse, and combines aviation, legal, financial, and non-profit-governance competence.

Proposed composition:

- **1. Founder-Chair — Capt. Amit Singh FRAeS.** Chief Strategy Officer, editorial anchor, public face of the Foundation.
- **2. Existing director — Kavita Singh.** Continuity; operational discipline; governance experience.
- **3. Independent Director — Aviation Regulation / Safety Veteran.** Retired DGCA senior, ex-AAIB investigator, or ICAO alumnus.
- **4. Independent Director — Academic / Research.** Aviation human-factors, psychology, or management professor.
- **5. Independent Director — Legal.** Senior advocate with public-interest litigation and constitutional-law experience.
- **6. Independent Director — Finance / Audit.** Qualified Chartered Accountant with Section 8 / non-profit experience.
- **7. Independent Director — Non-profit Governance.** CEO or senior leader of a respected Indian foundation (GiveIndia, Dasra, or similar).

Standing Board Committees

- **Audit & Compliance Committee.** Chaired by the Finance Independent Director. Oversees statutory audit, MCA filings, internal financial controls, 80G/12A/CSR-1 compliance.
- **Programme & Impact Committee.** Chaired by the Academic Independent Director. Oversees programme design, M&E, and impact reporting.
- **Editorial Independence & Research Ethics Committee.** Chaired by the Academic Independent Director. Guards against donor influence on editorial output; clears research protocols (especially Chakshu Yan's human-subjects work).
- **Nominations & Governance Committee.** Chaired by the Non-profit Governance Independent Director. Handles board renewal, policy review, CEO/ED succession.

Advisory Council — external experts

A non-fiduciary Advisory Council will be constituted alongside the board. Council members advise on programme direction and open doors in their fields; they do not vote on finances or governance.

- Aviation regulation — a retired senior from DGCA, BCAS, or MoCA.
- International safety — a serving or retired officer from the Royal Aeronautical Society, Flight Safety Foundation, ISASI, or Cambridge Aeronautical Journal editorial board.
- Indian Armed Forces — a retired flag officer from the Indian Navy or the Indian Air Force (linked to the Civil-Military CRM module).
- Gender and empowerment — a senior practitioner from a women-in-STEM or women-in-aviation organisation (for Skyward Dreams).
- Technology & research — a neuro-ergonomics or HCI academic (for Chakshu Yan).
- Media and broadcast — a senior executive from Indian broadcast or streaming (for Skyward Dreams production partnerships).
- Corporate CSR — a Head of Sustainability / CSR from a major Indian CSR-active firm.

4. Executive / Core Team

The core team is the Foundation's permanent operational spine. All roles are full-time, India-based, on written offer letters, with PF, gratuity, and statutory benefits. Compensation bands below reflect FY 2026-27 market rates for Gurgaon / NCR non-profit salaries at comparable mid-sized Section 8 companies and research foundations; actual offers will be made within band and reviewed annually.

Role	Mandate	Annual Cost (₹ Lakh)
Executive Director (ED)	Runs the Foundation day-to-day. Reports to the board. Owns the Safer Skies India programme, donor relationships, and staff management. Founder retains Chief Strategy & editorial; ED owns execution. The single most important hire.	28-35
Head of Programmes	Portfolio lead for the nine core modules + two flagships. Sets quarterly milestones, runs the programme review cadence, owns module budgets, and is the point of contact for programme-sponsor CSR partners.	20-26
Head of Research	Owns the National Safety Culture Surveys, mindFly Research Fellowships, peer-reviewed publications, and research ethics protocols. Oversees Chakshu Yan's research design.	20-26
Head of Education	Owns mindFly Academy LMS, all free courses, the DGCA Question Bank, Hindi-language localisation, and the Civil-Military CRM curriculum. Works with the Academic Independent Director and the Armed Forces advisor on the Navy/IAF programme.	18-24
Head of Communications	Owns the mindFly blog, Katha podcast, media relations, annual report production, CSR-partner reporting, and all external communications. Manages the Managing Editor (blog) and Podcast Producer.	15-22
Head of Finance, Compliance & HR	Chartered Accountant by qualification. Owns MCA compliance, 80G/12A/CSR-1 filings, statutory audit, internal controls, donor receipt/tax	20-26

Role	Mandate	Annual Cost (₹ Lakh)
	compliance, HR policies, payroll, and office administration.	
Technology Lead	Owns the RASE anonymous-reporting portal (security-audited), the mindFly Academy LMS, the Foundation website, internal tooling, and the Chakshu Yan hardware-software integration with simulator partners.	20-26
Office Manager / EA to ED	Scheduling, travel, vendor management, office administration, board-meeting coordination. Grows into a small admin function by Year 3.	7-10
TOTAL — Core team run-rate (mid-band)	8 full-time roles at full steady state (Year 3). Year 1 hires 5 of these; Year 2 adds the remaining Heads.	₹ 170 - 195 / yr

Note on bands. These are all-in people costs — gross CTC plus 13-16% statutory overhead (PF, gratuity, ESIC where applicable, insurance). They assume Gurgaon / NCR location with one senior hire (ED) compensated at the top of the band. Remote-first hires outside NCR will come in 10-15% lower.

5. Programme Teams — Module-Level Staffing

Each of the eleven programme workstreams has an identified owner (an existing Core Head) and a delivery team. Delivery staff are a mix of Foundation employees, fellows, and external retainers — chosen to keep the core lean while giving each module real execution capacity.

M1 — 4th National Safety Culture Survey (2026)

- **Owned by:** Head of Research.
- **Delivery team:** Survey Director (project-based retainer, 9 months); Data Analyst (retainer); Survey Platform Admin (fractional); Peer-review editor (retainer).
- **External:** Sampling-methodology advisor (single-engagement); survey-platform licence (LimeSurvey / Qualtrics-lite).

M2 — mindFly Academy (LMS + courses)

- **Owned by:** Head of Education.
- **Delivery team:** Instructional Designer (full-time, Year 1-3); Video / Motion Producer (retainer); Hindi Translator & Localiser (retainer); Learner Support Associate (fractional).
- **External:** LMS platform (Moodle managed host or LearnDash) + captioning service.

M3 — RASE Anonymous Reporting Portal

- **Owned by:** Technology Lead.
- **Delivery team:** Portal Admin (fractional, internal); Safety-Reports Analyst (retainer); External Security Auditor (annual engagement).

M4 — Civil-Military CRM & Human Factors (Navy / IAF)

- **Owned by:** Head of Education, in partnership with the founder and the Armed Forces advisor.
- **Delivery team:** 2-3 Training Faculty on retainer (drawn from retired / serving safety officers); Curriculum Designer (one-time engagement); Admin coordinator inside the Core team.
- **External:** MoU with Southern Naval Command and an Indian Air Force Air Command; published reference — indiannavy.gov.in/content/two-day-safety-workshop-snc-kochi.

M5 — mindFly Research Fellowships

- **Owned by:** Head of Research.
- **Delivery team:** Three stipended Research Fellows per year (one-year terms); Research Coordinator (fractional); Peer-review and open-access-publication pipeline managed by the Head of Research.

M6 — Accident Re-investigation & Legal Transparency

- **Owned by:** Executive Director, in partnership with the Founder.
- **Delivery team:** External Senior Counsel (PIL retainer, Delhi High Court); Junior Counsel (retainer); Technical Analyst (retainer for accident reconstructions); RTI coordinator (fractional, internal).

M7 — mindFly Blog & Podcast Expansion

- **Owned by:** Head of Communications.
- **Delivery team:** Managing Editor (full-time); Research Assistant (full-time); Podcast Producer (retainer); Audio / Video Editor (retainer); Hindi Translator (shared with M2).

M8 — Governance, Compliance & Institutional Build

- **Owned by:** Head of Finance, Compliance & HR.
- **Delivery team:** Company Secretary (retainer); Statutory Auditor (annual engagement); External HR consultant (Year-1 policy drafting).

M9 — Monitoring, Evaluation, Public Reporting

- **Owned by:** Head of Programmes.
- **Delivery team:** M&E Associate (fractional, internal); External Programme Evaluator (single engagement in Year 3); Annual Report Designer (retainer).

F1 — FLAGSHIP: Perceptiva Chakshu Yan

- **Owned by:** Head of Research, working with the Technology Lead.
- **Delivery team:** Principal Investigator / Research Scientist (full-time hire, Year 2-3, PhD-level); Hardware Engineer (retainer); University research partner (MoU); Research Ethics Advisor (retainer).

F2 — FLAGSHIP: Skyward Dreams

- **Owned by:** Executive Director, with a dedicated Programme Director.
- **Delivery team:** Programme Director (full-time for Season 1, then retainer); Broadcast Production House (outsourced — single anchor partner); Casting & Outreach (agency); Training Coordinator (internal); Mentor network (volunteer panel of serving female aviators).

F3 — FLAGSHIP: Yatra Sarathi + Travel with Dignity

- **Owned by:** Head of Communications (Education strand) in partnership with the Executive Director (Travel with Dignity advocacy strand).
- **Delivery team — Education strand:** Yatra Sarathi Programme Director (full-time); Content Manager (full-time); 8 regional-language editors (retainers); Video Production House (outsourced);

Poster/brochure design agency (retainer); Digital Portal developer (initial build + maintenance retainer).

- **Delivery team — Travel with Dignity strand:** Policy & Advocacy Associate (full-time, Year 2 onward); External Senior Counsel (shared retainer with M6); Passenger-Rights Research Analyst (fractional); Annual Passenger-Service Disruption Report editorial panel (external, honorarium-based).
- **External:** MoUs with airport operators, airlines, CISF, DigiYatra Foundation, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Research partnership with a business school or policy think tank for the annual disruption report.

6. Hiring Sequence — Who Joins When

Hiring is deliberately sequenced so that compliance, finance, and programme management arrive first — the capabilities that protect the CSR partner's money — and delivery specialists arrive as each module comes online.

When	Hires	Trigger / rationale
Month 1-3	1. Executive Director 2. Head of Finance, Compliance & HR 3. Office Manager	CSR tranche 1 received. Protects money, sets up MCA filings (80G, 12A, CSR-1), establishes HR spine.
Month 3-6	4. Head of Programmes 5. Technology Lead	Programme kick-off; RASE portal upgrade; Chakshu Yan hardware scoping begins.
Month 6-9	6. Skyward Dreams Programme Director 7. Managing Editor (blog) 8. Instructional Designer (LMS)	Skyward Dreams broadcast partner onboarding; content pipeline scaled; LMS build starts.
Month 9-12	9. Head of Research 10. Research Coordinator + 3 Fellows 11. Survey Director (retainer)	4th Survey fielding window opens; Fellowships launched; research ethics framework live.
Year 2 (Q1)	12. Head of Education 13. Head of Communications 14. Podcast Producer 15. Data Analyst	Education and Communications functions broken out of early ED span-of-control; survey analysis underway.
Year 2 (Q3)	16. Principal Investigator — Chakshu Yan 17. Learner Support Associate 18. Hardware Engineer (retainer)	Chakshu Yan prototype build; Academy LMS at public scale.
Year 3	19. Research Scientist (2nd) 20. Skyward Dreams Season-2 Director 21. External Programme Evaluator	Replication and endowment. Founder steps into the chair role; ED takes full day-to-day authority.

7. People-Cost Roll-Up

The table below rolls the core team and programme-team costs up to a three-year total and reconciles against the Safer Skies India programme budget in the Performance Report. Figures are at mid-band and round to lakh.

Cost bucket	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Core team (FTE) — salaries + benefits	₹70 L	₹140 L	₹170 L
Programme staff — module-based FTE & retainers	₹40 L	₹75 L	₹85 L
Fellowships — 3 @ stipend + travel	₹12 L	₹12 L	₹12 L
External retainers — CS, auditor, legal, ethics	₹10 L	₹10 L	₹10 L
Outsourced production — Skyward Dreams	₹20 L	₹65 L	₹35 L
Infrastructure — office, IT, software, insurance	₹10 L	₹15 L	₹15 L
Annual sub-total	₹162 L	₹317 L	₹327 L
3-YEAR PEOPLE + INFRA TOTAL			₹8.06 Cr indicative; ~₹6 Cr reconciles inside Safer Skies India

Reconciliation to the ₹ 11.50 Cr Safer Skies India programme. Most people cost is already embedded inside the twelve programme workstreams (for example, the Survey Director, Data Analyst, and Peer-review editor are paid from M1's ₹40 L; the Instructional Designer and Translator from M2's ₹65 L; the broadcast production pass-through from F2's ₹1.5 Cr; the Yatra Sarathi Programme Director and Content Manager from F3's ₹4.00 Cr). The Governance & Compliance module (M8) and the M&E module (M9) explicitly carry finance, compliance, audit, and evaluation costs. The 12% overhead cap inside the programme covers the residual core-team run-rate and shared infrastructure. A conservative reading puts total people + infrastructure at approximately ₹ 8–9 Cr over three years — i.e., roughly 75–80% of the programme goes into people, and the balance is hardware, media production, legal filings, and scholarships.

8. Policies & Compliance Infrastructure

A Section 8 company running ₹ crore-scale CSR money needs a codified policy set. The Foundation will adopt, publish, and board-approve the following documents within the first six months of the partnership.

Statutory & regulatory

- **80G registration.** Filed in Month 1; expected in Months 4–6. Enables tax-deductible donations.
- **12A registration.** Filed in parallel with 80G; preserves the Foundation's tax-exempt status as a Section 8 non-profit.
- **CSR-1 (Form CSR-1).** Filed in Month 1; expected in Months 2–3. Mandatory for the Foundation to receive CSR contributions on partners' books.
- **Statutory audit.** Independent CA firm with Section 8 experience appointed by Month 2; first independently-audited accounts for FY 2025-26.
- **Income Tax + GST filings.** Handled by the Head of Finance with the external CA.
- **FCRA registration.** Deferred until domestic programme is stable. Flagged here so partners know the Foundation is currently domestic-donation-only.

Governance & HR policies

- Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) at the Workplace — Act 2013 compliance, Internal Committee constituted.
- Whistleblower policy — protects staff and external complainants.
- Data Privacy & Protection policy — critical for RASE anonymous reports and Chakshu Yan physiological data.
- Editorial Independence policy — publicly codifies that donors do not pre-read, approve, or alter research output.
- Conflict of Interest policy — for directors, staff, and external advisors.
- Research Ethics policy — governs human-subjects research (especially Chakshu Yan and the surveys).
- Donor Recognition & Acknowledgement policy — caps any single donor at 40% of annual income.
- Travel & Expense policy — standard for a Section 8 company.
- HR manual — offer letters, leave, gratuity, PF, ESIC (where applicable), performance review, termination, grievance.
- Board Charter — roles, responsibilities, committee remits, meeting cadence.

9. Technology, Tools & Office Infrastructure

Digital tooling

Productivity	Google Workspace for Nonprofits (free for qualifying NGOs) — email, docs, drive, meet, calendars.
Accounting / Finance	Zoho Books or QuickBooks for day-to-day; external CA firm for statutory.
HR & Payroll	Zoho People or Keka for HRIS + payroll.
Project management	Notion or Asana for programme tracking; weekly stand-up cadence.
Donor management	Salesforce for Nonprofits (free 10 seats via Salesforce.org) or Zoho CRM.
LMS (Academy)	Moodle managed host, LearnDash on WordPress, or Teachable depending on scale.
Survey platform	LimeSurvey self-hosted or Qualtrics Academic Edition.
Podcast / video	Riverside.fm or Squadcast for recording; Adobe Premiere / DaVinci Resolve for post-production.
Website / blog	Existing WordPress stack; upgraded managed hosting; security hardening.
RASE portal	Hardened custom build on WordPress with tokenised anonymisation; annual external security audit.
Video conferencing	Google Meet / Zoom Pro; recording discipline for board and programme reviews.
Document signing	DocuSign or Zoho Sign for offer letters, contracts, MoUs.

Physical space

Year 1: continue to use the registered office at Gurgaon Sector 46 for statutory correspondence, and take 4–6 co-working hot-desks at a nearby WeWork / Awfis to host the founding team. Capacity to host board meetings and small donor visits on-demand.

Year 2: move to a dedicated 10–12 person workspace in Gurgaon or adjacent NCR, with a small meeting room, a quiet room for research calls, and a secure cabinet for compliance records and signed documents. Budgeted at ₹ 6–8 L per year.

Year 3: maintain the core workspace; open a remote-first hiring window for roles that do not require physical presence (Managing Editor, Podcast Producer, Instructional Designer, some analysts).

10. Risks & Mitigations

Founder dependence	Mitigation: empowered Executive Director with written authority delegation; documented SOPs for every programme module; board-approved succession plan; Founder moves into a chair role by end of Year 2.
Skyward Dreams execution	Mitigation: single anchor broadcast-production partner engaged on a written contract with milestone-based payments; Programme Director dedicated full-time for Season 1; fallback to a slimmer digital-first Season 1 if broadcast partnership slips.
Chakshu Yan technical risk	Mitigation: research partnership with a university lab (IIT / IISc / reputed medical school) de-risks hardware and ethics; ideation-stage budget first; scale only after prototype and first cohort study succeed.
Research integrity & donor capture	Mitigation: Editorial Independence policy; Research Ethics Committee; no single donor > 40% of annual income; donor acknowledgement without editorial review; public disclosure of all funders.
Regulatory delay on 80G / CSR-1	Mitigation: filings initiated Month 1 with external CA; CSR partners able to sign letters-of-intent with tranches released on CSR-1 receipt; interim work started from Founding Supporter tier contributions.
Legal exposure (PIL costs)	Mitigation: PIL budget ring-fenced inside M6; External Senior Counsel on retainer; pro-bono support sought for high-visibility cases; indemnity insurance for directors.
Staff attrition	Mitigation: competitive mid-band compensation; written offer letters; four-day quarterly board reviews of staff engagement; a formal succession plan for each Head role.
Office / city dependency	Mitigation: Gurgaon as anchor, but remote hiring for roles that don't need presence; cloud-first tooling; geographically-distributed fellowship cohort.

11. Reporting & Operating Cadence

Internal

- **Weekly.** ED holds a 45-minute stand-up with Heads — blockers, asks, risks.
- **Monthly.** Programme review — each module lead presents milestones, spend, risk flags, stakeholder updates.
- **Quarterly.** Board meeting (in-person or hybrid). Audit & Compliance, Programme & Impact, Editorial & Research Ethics committees submit memos.
- **Annually.** Board strategy offsite; AGM; Annual Report; independent auditor sign-off.

External

- **To CSR partners.** Quarterly written update and a spend report per module; semi-annual founder briefing for Principal/Lead tier; co-hosted annual event.
- **To the public.** Annual Report published on the Transparency page; ongoing mindFly blog and Katha podcast; annual impact dashboard; survey findings published.
- **To the regulator.** Statutory MCA filings; income-tax and CSR reporting; any grievance-process communication with DGCA / MoCA as required.

12. The First 90 Days

The critical first quarter after a CSR partnership is signed. Everything hinges on getting the ED hired, the finance function audited-ready, and the regulatory filings in train.

Days 1-30

- Engage the external CA firm; begin 80G, 12A, and CSR-1 filings.
- Launch the Executive Director search (agency or network); release the Foundation's first formal job description set.
- Open a dedicated project bank account and publish the details on the Donate page.
- Brief the existing board on the partnership; initiate independent-director outreach.
- Establish Google Workspace for Nonprofits, Zoho Books, HR tooling.

Days 31-60

- Close on the Executive Director; onboard Head of Finance, Compliance & HR and Office Manager.
- Sign the Company Secretary and Senior Counsel retainers.
- Begin POSH, whistleblower, data-privacy, editorial-independence policy drafting.
- First working-group meeting of the Advisory Council.
- Announce the partnership publicly (joint press release with the CSR partner, with partner approval).

Days 61-90

- First board review of the partnership work-plan; committee assignments finalised.
- Onboard the Head of Programmes and Technology Lead.
- RASE portal security audit scoped; Skyward Dreams broadcast-partner RFP issued.
- 4th National Safety Culture Survey design approved by the Research Ethics Committee.
- First quarterly programme report delivered to the CSR partner.

13. Headline Answer

If the question is, “what people do we need?” — the short, honest answer is:

- **One Executive Director to run the organisation day-to-day.** This is the single most important hire. A professional ED — not a promoted volunteer — with non-profit leadership experience, based in India, reporting to the board.
- **Seven functional Heads who own the core disciplines.** Programmes, Research, Education, Communications, Finance & Compliance, Technology, and an Office Manager / EA. Hired in two waves over 12 months.
- **Project leads for each of the eleven programme modules.** Some are Core Heads wearing two hats (e.g., Head of Research owns the 4th Survey and the Fellowships). Some are dedicated hires (Skyward Dreams Programme Director; Chakshu Yan Principal Investigator). The rest are retainers and fellows.
- **An expanded, majority-independent board of seven.** Plus a five-to-eight-person Advisory Council drawn from aviation, academia, the armed forces, gender empowerment, technology, media, and corporate CSR.
- **A standard Section 8 policy stack.** 80G, 12A, CSR-1, audited accounts, POSH, whistleblower, data privacy, editorial independence, conflict of interest, research ethics.
- **Standard cloud tooling and a modest physical office.** Workspace in Gurgaon to start; dedicated space by Year 2. Everything cloud-first.

Costed end-to-end, this is roughly ₹ 8–9 crore of people and infrastructure spend across three years — embedded inside the ₹ 11.50 crore Safer Skies India programme, not on top of it. The rest of the programme goes to scholarships, research hardware, broadcast production, regional-language publishing, legal fees, and the corpus endowment.

The Foundation today is a founder. To absorb the ambition already laid out in the Performance Report, it needs to become a small, disciplined institution. This document is the blueprint for that transition — and the single largest force-multiplier a CSR partner can fund in Year 1.