

Vacancy Announcement for Chief Operating Officer (COO)

EU Citizenship or valid work permit required. Visa/Single permit sponsorship not available for this role.

Philea is seeking a Chief Operating Officer (COO) responsible for organisational effectiveness, operational systems, and digital transformation. This is a senior leadership role that combines active operational engagement with strategic responsibility. The role will begin with a hands-on focus on strengthening Philea's internal foundations and will progressively expand to provide coordination and oversight across finance, IT, HR, risk and compliance, organisational systems, and grants management¹.

Following a period of rapid growth since its establishment in 2022, this new position is created to strengthen Philea's internal consolidation and organisational robustness. The COO will play a central role in this phase, supporting and guiding operational teams while shaping, refining, and implementing systems, policies, and routines to support long-term stability.

Working closely with the CEO, the Head of Finance and IT, the HR Manager, the Senior Grants Manager and in regular connection with Philea's programmatic leadership, the COO will lead Philea's organisational effectiveness agenda. This includes ensuring coherent, efficient, and compliant operations, strengthening internal coordination, and supporting a high-performing, well-resourced staff team across the organisation.

The role calls for a servant leadership mindset: empowering and coaching colleagues, fostering collaboration and shared ownership, and contributing to collective progress—while also being ready to provide practical, hands-on support where needed.

¹ Grants management in this role refers to overseeing grants received by Philea and ensuring compliance with funder requirements



Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

People oversight: Head of Finance and IT, HR Manager and Senior Grants Manager – and skip manager responsibility over Administrative and Financial Manager and Administrative and Financial Officer, enabling teams to work cohesively and effectively by providing clarity, guidance, strategic direction and a supportive framework for decision-making and accountability.

Duration:

Permanent Contract (CDI), full-time (80% FTE can be considered)

Starting date: ASAP

Profile:

Required

- Minimum **10 years of professional experience** with at least **7 years in senior operational, financial, or organisational leadership roles.**
- Experience leading multi-disciplinary operational teams in organisations of at least 30 FTEs and an annual budget of €5M+.
- Demonstrated experience managing finance, HR, IT, grants, and/or administrative functions.
- Familiarity with IT strategy development, digital transformation (including AI), and ERP/CRM systems
- Strong knowledge of risk management, GDPR, and regulatory compliance.
- Experience in the mission-driven or membership-based sector is an advantage.
- Strategic thinker with strong implementation skills
- Excellent leadership, team development and cross-organisational coordination abilities
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- High integrity and discretion in handling sensitive matters
- Proactive problem-solver able to manage competing priorities
- Comfortable driving change and establishing new organisational routines

Desired

- Experience working in philanthropic or non-profit sector

Asset

- Experience with working with Odoo
- Experience in a membership association.
- Servant leadership mindset and collaborative spirit.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Organisational Efficiency, Processes & Systems

- Review, streamline, and scale existing policies and procedures and systems across operational areas, with a particular focus on finance, administration and IT.
- Ensure organisation-wide understanding and consistent adherence to operational policies.
- Build and maintain comprehensive documentation, guidance materials, and operational manuals.

Planning, Budgeting & Resourcing

- Jointly with the CEO, Head of Finance & IT and Grants Manager, strengthen Philea's planning, budgeting, KPI, and reforecasting cycles.
- Work with the CEO and senior leadership to align planning timelines, processes, and organisational priorities.
- Develop and maintain a strategic resourcing approach, including mapping time and financial investments.
- Support multi-year financial and operational planning to enable sustainable organisational growth.

IT Strategy & Digital Transformation

- In collaboration with the Head of Finance and IT, lead the design and execution of Philea's IT and digital transformation strategy.
- In collaboration with the Head of Finance and IT, oversee the finalisation and rollout of the implementation plan for the newly adopted Odoo ERP.
- Ensure strong alignment with the Knowledge Management strategy and its embedding into the digital ecosystem.
- Evaluate and manage relationships with IT partners and external consultants.

- Define sustainable arrangements for day-to-day IT support (hardware, accounts, helpdesk, security, etc.), recommending internal or outsourced solutions as appropriate.
- Based on initial steps taken, promote responsible integration of AI tools and digital solutions across teams.
- If needed, develop plan for further development of IT resourcing to support the team with evolving needs.

Executive Leadership & Team Management

- Assess the current workforce structure across all back-office functions and propose an optimised organisational setup that ensures efficiency, clarity of responsibilities, and effective support to the organisation's strategic goals
- Lead inclusive alignment across the operations team that bring clarity to roles, responsibilities, and workflows, ensuring colleagues feel supported and able to collaborate effectively.
- Provide strategic leadership for all internal operations, ensuring Philea's systems, policies, and procedures are robust, coherent, and aligned with organisational priorities and support coordination between operations and programmes.
- Provide high-level coordination and support across finance, HR, administration, grants management, and IT/digital systems to ensure smooth and effective day-to-day operations.
- Shape positive and reliable back-office routines and governance structures that underpin a constructive team culture and operational consistency.
- Provide coaching, support performance management, team development, workload oversight, and creating a positive, accountable team culture for colleagues across finance and IT, HR and grants management

Financial Model & Operating Model Development

- In support of the 2028–2032 strategic framework, work with the CEO and team to ensure the sustainability of Philea's operating and financial model.
- Contribute to scenario planning and long-term financial risk analysis.

Risk Management & Compliance

- Develop and maintain a robust organisational risk management framework.
- Oversee legal and regulatory compliance across the organisation, including GDPR.

- Work with external legal experts where needed to ensure compliance and mitigate risk exposure.
- Ensure policies are up to date, accessible, and operationally embedded.

Our offer:

Based in Brussels, Belgium this role requires residence in Belgium and offers you the opportunity to live and work in the heart of Europe.

Please note, we cannot sponsor work visas for non-EU nationalities.

Benefits include:

- Gross monthly salary ranges from €7,000– €9,500 commensurate with experience in a similar position or function (13th salary, holiday pay)
- Home office allowance
- Meal vouchers
- Flexible working schedules and possibility to telework from home and abroad
- Additional holidays
- Training and personal development opportunities
- Group health, pension and private trips insurance
- A friendly, open working environment

How to Apply

Please send the following to Odoo email by coo@philea.odoo.com, quoting the reference “COO” in the subject line:

- CV in English (no cover letter required).
- Two professional references who can confirm the information provided in your answers.
- Your earliest possible start date

The first round of interviews is tentatively planned between 6 and 10 August.

Applications will be treated confidentially. We value diversity and inclusion and encourage candidates from historically underrepresented or marginalised groups to apply.

About Philea - Philanthropy Europe Association

Philea, the Philanthropy Europe Association, nurtures a diverse and inclusive ecosystem of foundations, philanthropic organisations and networks working for the common good.

With individual philanthropies and national-level infrastructure organisations in over 30 countries as members, we unite almost 9000 public-benefit foundations that seek to improve life for people and communities in Europe and around the world.

Our vision is for philanthropy to use its full potential to co-shape and support a pluralistic, just and resilient society that centres people and planet. To achieve this, our mission is to enable, encourage and empower the philanthropic community to build a better today and tomorrow. We work towards this vision by focusing our resources on 5 priorities:

philea.eu