

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Level: Senior Leadership / CXO

Location: Delhi NCR, Lucknow, UP, or other in North India (relocation required; negotiable)

Contract: Full-time, Permanent

Reports to: Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer

About Oorja

Oorja (www.oorjasolutions.org) is an award-winning social enterprise on a mission to empower **1 million** people globally by **2035** with the agricultural solutions they need to sustainably increase their income and quality of life.

We are a **Farming-as-a-Service** company working at the intersection of sustainable agriculture and renewable energy. Around 90% of marginal farmers cannot afford to invest in solar technology for their farms, Oorja exists to close that gap. We finance, install and maintain decentralised solar irrigation systems for community use, delivering irrigation services on a pay-per-use basis to smallholder farmers, with no upfront cost. We also offer offline and digital farm advisory services to strengthen climate resilience.

We operate in rural northern India where farmers remain dependent on polluting and expensive diesel motors. With two field offices in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, a team of 50+ staff, a tested and commercially validated model, and an ambitious scale-up roadmap, we are at a defining inflection point, preparing for Series A fundraising and expansion into new geographies. We are seeking a Chief Operating Officer to lead that journey.

The Role

Oorja is looking for a hands-on **Chief Operating Officer** who combines strategic leadership with genuine operational depth. You will be a core member of the CXO team, shaping company strategy, leading institutional fundraising efforts, and preparing the organisation for Series A while owning the operational performance that makes that growth story credible.

Working closely with the **Field Operations Manager**, who oversees day-to-day site management, you will focus on building the systems, structures, and partnerships needed to scale Oorja's proven model into new geographies. You will be responsible for the company's operational revenue (direct P&L responsibility), new business model variations, and ensuring the organisation has the people, processes, and operational discipline required to grow without compromising quality or mission alignment.

Critically, you will be deeply present in field operations. **Not micromanaging but genuinely engaged and in touch with the realities of ground operations.** You will know your team, understand the realities of deploying and managing Decentralised Renewable Energy projects in rural India, and be the kind of leader who builds trust by showing up. **We will not consider candidates who prefer to lead from headquarters.** The COO at Oorja needs to understand what it takes to deliver services in some of the most remote and challenging rural environments in India, and be energised by that challenge.

This is a highly intrapreneurial role requiring adaptability, persistence, outstanding problem-solving, and a healthy sense of humour.

Key Responsibilities

1. Field Operations & Team Leadership

- Take overall responsibility for Oorja's Pay-Per-Use (PPU) field operations model across all current districts (Bahraich, Barabanki, Sitapur, Hardoi, Lakhimpur, Lucknow) and new locations as the company expands across Eastern and Western Uttar Pradesh and beyond; serve as the primary operational bridge between the remote Head Office and field teams, working in close partnership with the Field Operations Manager.
- Directly line-manage team leaders across Business Development, Customer Success, Engineering, and Farmer Advisory; hold each function accountable to clear performance targets while investing actively in the development of your direct reports and the wider field team.
- Conduct regular site visits across all operational districts; build and maintain a genuine, hands-on understanding of field realities: solar asset performance, customer behaviour, team dynamics, and local partnership health.
- **Business Development:** Lead site identification and demand analysis; set and track annual deployment targets; manage risk to ensure assets are deployed in high-demand, financially viable locations that generate strong recurring revenues; design and oversee community outreach and customer acquisition campaigns; use field data to push underperforming sites to target utilisation levels; lead expansion into new districts, states and, in time, new countries.
- **Customer Success:** Own the customer engagement, retention, and revenue cycle; ensure payment collections are timely and accurate, payment pendency is actively managed and minimised, and that asset utilisation rates meet targets; ensure customer complaints and technical faults are logged, escalated, and resolved promptly; use customer feedback systematically to drive service improvement and reduce churn.
- **Engineering:**
 - Hardware: Oversee procurement of solar equipment and components; manage vendor partnerships, negotiate rates, payment terms, and warranties; plan procurement cycles in alignment with deployment targets; ensure accurate warehouse management and inventory reporting; oversee routine and preventative maintenance, fault resolution, and warranty claim management to maximise asset uptime.
 - Software & Digitisation: Drive the digitisation of field operations, including app-based payment collection, digital billing and reporting systems, and the integration of remote monitoring infrastructure for pump performance tracking, preventive maintenance, and carbon credit (D-REC) reporting; ensure software tools are adopted by field teams and that data generated is used for operational decision-making.
- **Farmer Advisory:** Oversee the delivery of Climate-Smart Farm Advisory services across lower performing sites; ensure training and field workshops are delivered as planned; develop new strategies and interventions to increase third-season crop adoption, promote crop diversification, and further reduce farmers' input costs; liaise with local government agencies, research institutions, and market partners to design and implement a market linkage strategy that increases farmer income and deepens engagement with Oorja's services.
- Ensure all company assets: solar equipment, field offices, premises, and warehouses are maintained to high standards; enforce insurance, risk management, and asset protection protocols consistently across all sites; take prompt, appropriate action in the event of theft, vandalism, or equipment failure.
- Establish, standardise, and enforce Standard Operating Procedures across all field offices to maintain efficiency, safety, and quality as the organisation scales into new and more diverse operational contexts.
- Champion cross-functional collaboration across Business Development, Customer Success, Engineering, and Farmer Advisory, ensuring all teams operate as a cohesive unit working toward shared targets.

2. Business Model Innovation & Revenue Diversification

- Take ownership of Oorja's business model evolution; design, resource, and run structured pilots to test variations of the Pay-Per-Use model that improve its economics, broaden its customer base, and make it deployable in new geographies; including full-time operator models, equipment rental models, and tariff flexibility structures tailored to different cropping patterns, water table conditions, and farmer income profiles.
- Translate pilot learnings into scalable operational frameworks; establish clear evaluation criteria for each model variant and use data to decide what to standardise, iterate, or discontinue.
- Identify and develop add-on service opportunities, such as preventive maintenance contracts, input supply linkages, and training programmes, that deepen farmer engagement, strengthen recurring revenues, and improve the overall unit economics of deployed assets.
- Build and maintain relationships with consumer financing institutions and implementation partners whose involvement can expand access to Oorja's services and de-risk adoption in new markets.
- Monitor unit economics rigorously across all model variants and geographies; use this data to make informed decisions about where and how to scale.

3. Strategy & Institutional Fundraising

- Serve as a genuine and active member of Oorja's CXO team; contribute to long-term strategic planning, organisational direction-setting, and board-level governance alongside the CEO , bringing operational intelligence and external perspective in equal measure.
- Co-develop and execute Oorja's fundraising strategy, with a specific focus on blended capital structures, combining grant funding, concessional debt, and equity to support both operations and scale; cultivate and manage relationships with development finance institutions, impact investors, foundations, and government funding bodies.
- Represent Oorja authoritatively at national and international forums, including those focused on renewable energy, the agri-energy nexus, rural livelihoods, and inclusive finance, positioning the organisation as a thought leader and sector innovator; contribute to published research, panel discussions, and policy dialogues as relevant.
- Build and sustain Oorja's external ecosystem: develop meaningful, long-term partnerships with government agencies (central and state), agricultural research institutions, MFIs, corporate partners, and civil society organisations that strengthen both the company's operational reach and its strategic positioning.
- Engage the Board of Directors proactively with timely, data-driven reporting, strategic options analysis, and candid assessment of risks and opportunities; ensure the board has what it needs to govern effectively and support the company's growth.
- Contribute to the development of grant proposals, investor materials, and donor reports; ensure Oorja's external communications accurately and compellingly reflect the depth and ambition of its work.

4. P&L & Financial Oversight

- Hold full P&L responsibility across Oorja's field operations; set and manage budgets, monitor revenue and expenditure across all districts and business lines, and maintain a healthy OPEX/revenue ratio as the organisation scales.
- Ensure timely, accurate financial and performance reporting from field teams; use this data actively — not just for governance but as a live operational tool for identifying risks, reallocating resources, and accelerating what is working.
- Define, track, and deliver against the organisation's core operational KPIs: asset deployment volumes, pump utilisation rates, revenue collection efficiency, payment pendency levels, customer satisfaction, and geographic expansion milestones.
- Ensure all company resources — financial, human, and physical — are allocated with transparency, discipline, and clear accountability at every level of the organisation.

Qualifications & Experience

Essential

- Minimum 15 years of progressive leadership experience, with significant time in senior roles such as Country Head, Regional Head, Director of Operations, or COO.
- Demonstrated experience leading large, geographically distributed field teams in operationally complex environments; preferably in rural India, with strong preference for candidates with northern India experience.
- A proven track record of scaling operations in a relevant sector: infrastructure, energy, agriculture, FMCG, microfinance, rural services, or a comparable field.
- Full P&L ownership experience in a previous organisation.
- Meaningful exposure to institutional fundraising, investor relations, or partnership development; whether in a social enterprise, DFI-backed organisation, or impact-driven company.
- Fluency in English and Hindi (both written and spoken) is mandatory.
- Willingness to be based in or relocate to Delhi NCR or Lucknow, UP; this is a requirement of the role and is negotiable in terms of timeline and support.
- Willingness and ability to travel extensively across rural Uttar Pradesh and other project locations.
- A capable and persistent problem-solver with a track record of resolving complex operational challenges under pressure.

Desirable

- Experience in renewable energy, agriculture, agritech, water, climate, or the decentralised renewable energy (DRE) sector.
- Familiarity with the operational, cultural, and regulatory context of rural Uttar Pradesh.
- Experience working in or alongside the development sector; with donors, DFIs, impact funds, or grant-making institutions.
- Post-graduate degree in a relevant field (management, development, engineering, agri-business, or similar).
- Prior involvement in Series A or growth-stage fundraising processes.

Leadership Profile

Beyond formal qualifications, we are looking for a specific kind of leader. The right candidate will be:

- Genuinely hands-on: you build trust with your team by being present, accessible, and engaged in the work, not just the reporting.
- Able to hold strategic vision and operational detail simultaneously: as invested in the Series A narrative as in why a pump in Bahraich has been down for three days.
- A systems thinker who identifies root causes, designs scalable solutions, and follows through on execution.
- A people developer who leads with accountability, high standards, and genuine care for their team.
- Energised, not daunted, by the complexity of scaling infrastructure in remote, resource-constrained environments.
- A strong communicator with the ability to inspire confidence across diverse stakeholders: farmers, field staff, funders, board members, and government officials alike.
- Driven by results and efficiency; able to deliver in a fast-paced, rapidly growing organisation.
- Strong integrity and a healthy sense of humour.

What We Offer

- A competitive remuneration package and ESOPs, commensurate with experience.
- Performance-based variable compensation linked to clearly defined operational and strategic KPIs.
- Individual health and accident insurance, and full reimbursement of business travel expenses.
- A senior leadership role with genuine strategic influence at an award-winning, mission-driven organisation at a pivotal moment in its growth.
- A diverse and driven team (development professionals, engineers, agronomists, researchers, and community mobilisers) united by a shared commitment to sustainable development.
- The opportunity to shape how Oorja scales, fundraises, and deepens its impact across rural India and beyond.
- A flat, open work culture where your leadership will be seen, valued, and consequential.

How to Apply

Please send your **CV** and a brief **cover letter** explaining your interest in the role and your relevant experience to audrey.fillon@oorjasolutions.org . We strongly encourage applications from candidates with direct experience of field operations in rural India.

Equal Opportunities Statement: Oorja Development Solutions India Private Limited is an equal opportunity employer that values and respects the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce. It is the policy of the company to recruit, hire, train and promote persons in all job titles without regard to religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, sexual orientation, marital status or disability status. Oorja endeavours to provide a safe, diverse and comfortable workplace. If you can contribute to our organisation, you are welcome, regardless of your roots, religion, age or gender.

Brief History

Co-founders Clementine Chambon and Amit Saraogi met at a **Climate-KIC** summer school in 2014. After two years of market research in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, they raised ~\$200K in pre-seed grants (including an **Echoing Green Climate Fellowship**) and launched pilot solar pump projects in 2017. The company raised equity through a pre-Seed round from Schneider Electric Energy Access Asia (\$450K, 2021) and thereafter from Acumen Fund, elea Foundation and Artha Impact among others (\$1.2m, 2024), scaling to 200+ pumps by 2025. As of March 2026, Oorja operates 350 pumps serving 44,000 beneficiaries, with \$3.5M+ raised in blended finance.

Key Awards

- 2019 Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenge Grand Prize (\$100K)
- 2020 Keeling Curve Prize for Energy (\$25K)
- 2021 UN Best Small Business "Good Food for All"
- 2022 National Agri Startup Award (MANAGE-Samunnati)
- 2023 SET Award for Quality Energy & SDG-7, German energy agency dena
- 2024 60_Decibels Top Energy Impact Award and MIT Solve Global Climate Challenge
- 2025: Bayer Foundation Women Entrepreneur Prize and Seeding The Future Global Food System Challenge Grand Prize
- Leadership: Forbes 30Under30, MIT Social Innovator, Echoing Green Fellowship



Apply at:
audrey.fillon@oorjasolutions.org