



Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs

Concept paper

Imam standardization and development framework (ISDF)

Proposed framework for the recognition and continuous professional development of Imams in Sri Lanka.

CONCEPT PAPER

IMAM STANDARDIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (ISDF)

Proposed framework for the recognition and continuous professional development of Imams in Sri Lanka.

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this paper is to seek consent of the Wakfs board of Sri Lanka in principle to proceed to next steps of the development of the Imam Standardization and Development Framework (ISDF) based on the outline provided in this concept paper.

An 'Imam' in the context of this paper is any Moulavi, Katheeb, preachers, teacher of Islamic sciences, faith leaders who maybe an employee of a mosque or a madrasa or carry out their services or activities in an independent manner.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Imams play an important role in providing the Sri Lankan Muslim community with sound religious guidance amidst an increasingly diverse and vibrant socio-religious landscape.

For many years there have been discussions within the Muslim community in Sri Lanka, and amongst non-Muslim observers, about the roles, standardization (recognition), training and career development of Imams.

This Framework aims to address that need and to enhance the standing of Imams and serve as a credible source of reference for the Sri Lankan Muslim community.

The Wakfs act empowers the trustees with regard to recruitment and termination of services of Imams, Khatheeb and Muazzins. But the act does not specify the details of other procedure about the roles, standardization (recognition), training and career development of Imams.

Imams need to play an important role in providing the Sri Lankan Muslim community with sound religious guidance amidst an increasingly diverse and vibrant socio-religious landscape and standardization and training plays a crucial role in this regard.

Therefore, Wakfs board as the appointing authority of trustees has a responsibility to issue necessary directives on standardization (recognition), training and career development of Imams.

Thus it is only appropriate that it issues a guidance and make it mandatory for Mosques to follow either the Wakfs board guidelines or any other suitable ordinance with regard to the Human Resource Management (HRM) aspect of Mosque employees.

GOALS OF THE ISDF

- i. Standardization and recognition of Imams
- ii. Recognize and acknowledge the credibility of religious preachers and teachers
- iii. Encourage continuous professional developments of Imams
- iv. Capacity building in Imams to play the important role of providing the Sri Lankan Muslim community with sound religious guidance amidst an increasingly diverse and vibrant socio-religious landscape

THE ISDF - COUNCIL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK (ISDFC)

- a. The ISDFC shall be entrusted with the duty of overall supervision of the ISDF operations via the **Accreditation Committee (ISDF- AC)** and the **Training & Development Committee (ISDF- TDC)**
- b. The ISDF – AC (Accreditation committee) shall oversee all Accreditation related functions under the ISDF.
- c. The ISDF -TDC (Training & Development Committee) shall oversee all CPD related functions under the ISDF.
- d. The Accreditation Committee (ISDF- AC) and the Training & Development Committee (ISDF- TDC) shall be and operate independent of each other.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ISDFC

- a. Formulate and promulgate accreditation & Training/Development policy that is informed by input from review panels, the annual ISDF Assembly, and the field in general.
- b. Make final program accreditation and Training & Development decisions, taking into account the recommendations received from review panels.
- c. Manage, staff, and participate in the panel review process.
- d. Organize and convene the annual Accreditation and Training & Development Assemblies.
- e. Maintain and assure quality of the panel review process and training development process.
- f. Develop and maintain inter-organizational relationships across the full spectrum of Imam education and training entities.
- g. Engage in timely and relevant self-studies and self-evaluations for the purpose of enhancing the quality and credibility of the accreditation and training process.
- h. Hear and adjudicate complaints from individuals.
- i. Participate as prescribed in the accreditation decision appeal process.
- j. Assure openness and periodic review of policies and procedures to ensure that innovation is supported.
- k. Provide appropriate consultative guidance and general information about the accreditation and training process.
- l. Conduct evaluative and developmental research appropriate to accreditation and training of Imams.
- m. Appoint program review panels, consultants, and task forces as needed, within policy and fiscal constraints.

COMPOSITION OF THE ISDFC

- a. There shall be 13 persons appointed to the ISDF - AC.
- b. The Chairman of the Wakfs board and the director of the DMRCA shall be ex officio members of the ISDFC (non-voting)

- c. To achieve appropriate balance between diverse areas of focus and attention, appointments to the ISDF - AC shall represent the following domains, each of which is essential to the balance of viewpoints expected in accrediting bodies and their activities:
 - I. Shari’ah experts
 - II. Experts in the discipline of Psychology
 - III. Professional development and Training
 - IV. Leadership
 - V. Training and Assessing Learning (virtual & technology based as well)
 - VI. Law
 - VII. Accounting & Finance
 - VIII. Experts in the field of peace building, social harmony and inter religious understanding
 - IX. PVE & CVE experts
 - X. Experts in the field of community building & community development
- d. The Chairman of ISDFC shall be appointed by the Wakfs Board of Sri Lanka. The two committees under the ISDFC, namely the *Accreditation Committee* and the *Training & Development Committee* will comprise of individuals appointed by the ISDFC and their respective chairs will be appointed by the chairman of the ISDFC.
- e. Two thirds of the membership shall comprise the quorum.
- f. The ISDFC shall be an independent body and answerable to the Wakfs Board through its chairman.

POLICY AND PROCEDURAL AUTHORITY

- a. The ISDFC, having full power and authority over the affairs of the ISDF, has overall authority for Accreditation and Training & Development policy.
- b. The Council exercises this authority directly when broad or major policies are concerned.
- c. On other matters, Council delegates authority to the Accreditation Committee and the Training & Development Committee for approval and implementation of practices consistent with ISDFC policy.

MEETINGS

- a. The ISDF – AC and ISDF TDC shall meet on a monthly basis.
- b. The ISDFC shall meet on a Quarterly basis for the review of ISDF operations. Urgent and extraordinary meetings may be convened if such is deemed necessary.
- c. The ISDFC shall invite to its meetings any experts or advisors to clarify any details/ information or to seek expert advice.

TOR – ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

- a. Develop the accreditation process related operational SOPs
- b. Formulate accreditation criteria
- c. Formulate assessment mechanism and process
- d. Carry out assessments for accreditation
- e. Formulate registration and membership process and guidelines
- f. Carry out any other directives and resolutions issued by the ISDF council with regard to accreditations

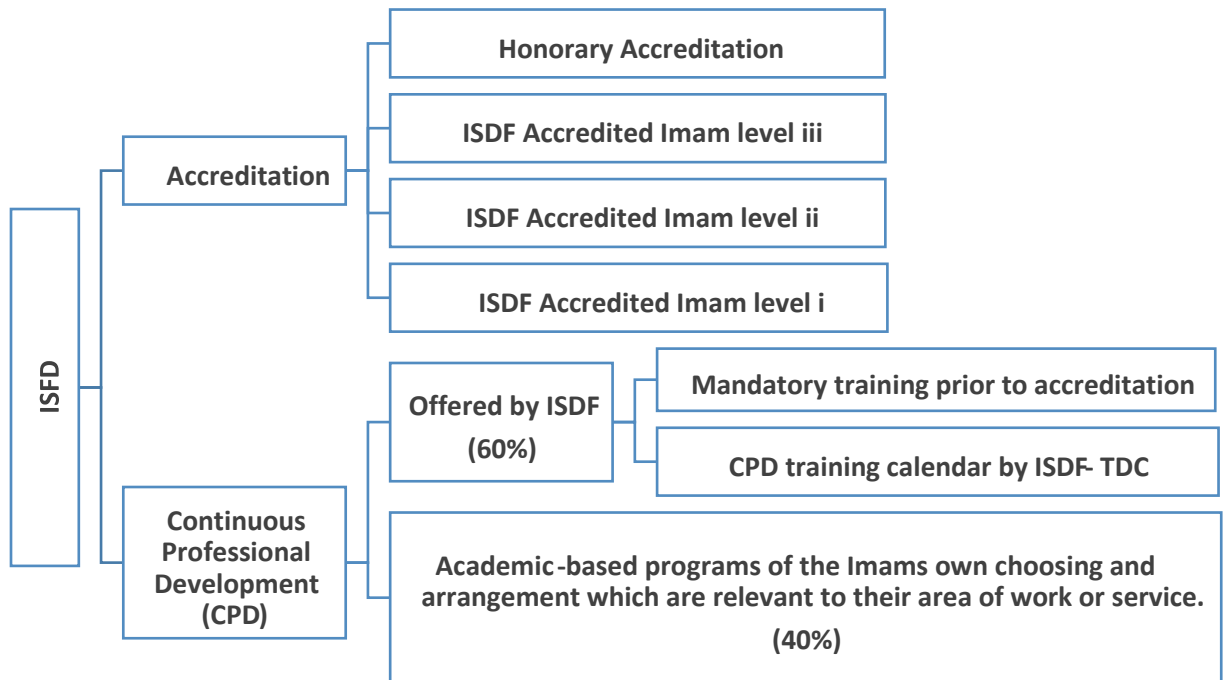
TOR – TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- a. Design & develop training modules
- b. Development necessary training material and content
- c. Develop the training and development framework
- d. Develop training manuals
- e. Develop the training calendar
- f. Implement and manage the training process
- g. Monitoring & Evaluation of the Training and development initiatives

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



THE IMAM STANDARDIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

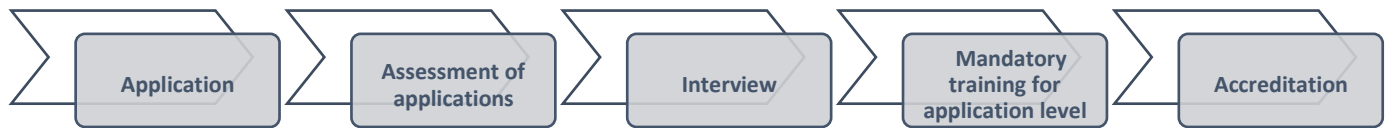
Grade	Criteria	CPD Requirements	Scope of work
Honorary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By nomination only based on Contribution & Experience. PhD in any discipline of Islamic Sciences and contribution to the science in the relevant area 	Participation at workshops and conferences	All areas covered in level I,ii & iii
ISDF Accredited Imam Level iii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level ii accredited Master’s degree or equivalent in any discipline of Islamic studies. Completed the mandatory level ii training modules 	Successful attainment of CPD criteria for level iii (60% ISDF training, 30% Academic programs, 10% skills development training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of level ii Hold position of Chief Imam of a District Representation at consultative session at policy/ national level
ISDF Accredited Imam Level ii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level I accredited Degree or equivalent in any discipline of Islamic studies. Completed the mandatory level 	Successful attainment of CPD criteria for level ii (60% ISDF training, 30% Academic programs, 10% skills development training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of level I Hold position of Chief Imam of a masjid Public teaching of Islamic Sciences

	ii training modules		
ISDF Accredited Imam Level i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alim certification from a recognized Madrasa • GCE O/L & GEC A/L Diploma or equivalent in any discipline of Islamic studies. • Completed the mandatory level I training modules 	Successful attainment of CPD criteria for level i (60% ISDF training, 30% Academic programs, 10% skills development training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching of Islamic Sciences in Madrasas • Delivery of Kuthba • Delivery of public talks at any event

TRANSPARENCY IN ASSESSMENT FOR ACCREDITATION

A transparent assessment mechanism and process based on the above criteria to be developed prior to commencement of the accreditation process.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS



- Application to be accredited under ISDF can be made via post or handed in personally to the Wakfs board - ISDF Secretariat office.
- Applicants may be called for an interview by ISDF where necessary to complete the assessment process.
- Applicants who have been successfully registered will receive an Invitation to mandatory training (IMT)
- Once the necessary mandatory training and relevant assessments are completed and the applicant is successfully registered with the ISDF, the applicant receives an ISDF Accreditation Certificate.
- Imams who are successfully accredited and registered under ISDF will be listed on the ISDF website.
- There will be a 're application mechanism put in place for those who do not meet the necessary accreditation criteria through the first attempt.
- There will be a right of appeal (to Wakfs Board) process put in place for the applicants.

APPLICATION

Applicants are required to submit the following together with the registration form:

- Latest passport-sized photo
- Copy of NIC/passport

- Service letter from serving Madrasa or Masjid if employed full time at Madrasa or Masjid
- Relevant certificates and transcripts of all religious and other qualifications
- Conformation of residence by Gramasevaka of the area

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

A comprehensive and contextual training curriculum that will equip Imams with the necessary competencies in providing the Sri Lankan Muslim community with sound religious guidance amidst an increasingly diverse and vibrant socio-religious landscape will be developed for the continuous professional development (CPD) program based on a consultative process with input from review panels, subject experts, and the field in general.

ISDF SOPS & OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Standard Operating Procedures and Operating guidelines to be developed for the different aspects of the ISDF prior to launch of the framework to ensure transparent, effective and systematic process and operations flow.

CONCLUSION

This Framework aims to bring clarity to the role of Muslim faith leaders in Sri Lankan society – commonly referred to as Moulavis or Imams, their recognition (standardization), their training and continuous professional development to enhance the standing of Imams or Moulavis and serve as a credible source of reference for the Sri Lankan Muslim community.

Agreement in principle is sought of the Wakfs board of Sri Lanka to proceed to next steps of the development of the Imam Development and Standardization Framework (ISDF) based on the outline provided in this concept paper.