ESG4GLAM

ESG COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

for GLAM Professionals and Institutions

Deliverable component: Competency Framework
Developed under the ESG4GLAM project
Grant Agreement No. 2025-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000364271 — Erasmus+ Programme

Written by: UNS (Doc. dr Danijela Ćirić Lalić, Milena Savković, Bojana Savić)
Revised by: ESG4GLAM Steering Committee

Agreement n° 2025-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000364271
CUP G81B25000690006

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Agreement n° 2025-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000364271
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Document Control Information

Field	Detail
Document Title	ESG Competency Framework for GLAM Professionals and Institutions
Project Acronym	ESG4GLAM
Scope of this document	This document presents exclusively the ESG Competency Framework component of the ESG4GLAM project.
Evidence base	Grounded in the ESG4GLAM ESG Competency Needs Analysis Report (online survey, n = 120; six cross-country focus groups; 34 expert interviews across partner and associated countries).
Sector scope	Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM), including public, non-profit, hybrid and privately/corporately affiliated institutions of all sizes.
Status	Draft for consortium review

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Contents

Document Control Information ... 2
Executive Summary ... 6
1 Introduction ... 9
1.1 Aim of this document ... 9
1.2 Core objectives of the Framework ... 10
2. Methodology ... 11
2.1 Evidence base ... 11
2.2 Development logic ... 11
2.3 Alignment with sector-relevant standards ... 12
3 Structure of the Competency Framework ... 13
3.1 Levels of competency and EQF alignment ... 13
3.2 Competency composition ... 14
3.3 Competency matrix ... 14
4 How to Use the Framework ... 22
4.1 Intended users ... 22
4.2 Adapting the Framework to institutional size and resources ... 22
4.3 Supporting career progression ... 25
4.4 Competency development and learning design ... 26
I. CROSS-CUTTING ESG COMPETENCIES ... 27
I.1 Basic ESG literacy in the GLAM context ... 27
I.2 Understanding interconnections between environmental, social and governance dimensions ... 28
I.3 Organisational learning and change management for ESG ... 29
I.4 Moving beyond a "checkbox" approach to ESG ... 30
I.5 Using basic ESG data and indicators ... 31
I.6 Digital sustainability and responsible use of AI and data ... 32
Career Progression Pathway — Cross-Cutting ESG Competencies ... 34
Assessment Criteria — Cross-Cutting ESG Competencies ... 34

II. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPETENCIES 36
II.1 Environmental awareness and regulatory compliance 36
II.2 Energy and climate control management 37
II.3 Sustainable production of exhibitions and public programmes 38
II.4 Ecologically informed preventive conservation 39
II.5 Sustainable procurement 40
II.6 Waste reduction and circular practices 41
II.7 Preparedness for environmental emergencies 42
II.8 Monitoring of environmental indicators 43
Career Progression Pathway — Environmental Competencies 44
Assessment Criteria — Environmental Competencies 45
III. SOCIAL COMPETENCIES 46
III.1 Inclusive access and participation 46
III.2 Community engagement and co-creation 47
III.3 Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) 48
III.4 Social impact assessment 49
III.5 Safeguarding and ethical participation 50
III.6 Clear and accessible communication 51
III.7 Partnerships for social value 52
III.8 Feedback and complaint mechanisms 53
III.9 Staff wellbeing and fair working conditions 54
Career Progression Pathway — Social Competencies 55
Assessment Criteria — Social Competencies 56
IV. GOVERNANCE COMPETENCIES 57
IV.1 Ethics and integrity in cultural stewardship 57
IV.2 Transparency and accountability 58
IV.3 Risk management and internal control 59
IV.4 Integration of ESG into planning and management 60
IV.5 Stakeholder communication and ESG reporting 61

IV.6 Data protection and privacy (GDPR) 62
IV.7 Data management for ESG purposes 63
IV.8 Governance of partners and suppliers 64
Career Progression Pathway — Governance Competencies 65
Assessment Criteria — Governance Competencies 66
5 Ways Forward 67
5.1 Embedding the Framework in education and training 67
5.2 Supporting institutional capacity-building under real resource constraints 68
5.3 Informing funding and policy alignment 69
5.4 Fostering cross-sub-sector and cross-border collaboration 69
5.5 Ensuring accessibility, credibility and proportionality of recognition 70
6. Conclusion 72
Appendix A: Terminology Glossary 74

Agreement n° 2025-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000364271
CUP G81B25000690006

Executive Summary

The ESG4GLAM Competency Framework provides a structured, evidence-based model of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) competencies needed by professionals and institutions working in galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM). It translates the findings of the ESG4GLAM ESG Competency Needs Analysis — an online survey of 120 respondents, six cross-country focus groups, and 34 expert interviews — into a practical, actionable competency architecture that GLAM institutions of any size, sub-sector, legal status and funding model can use.

The Framework is organised into four interconnected domains — Cross-Cutting, Environmental, Social and Governance ESG Competencies — comprising 31 competencies in total, each mapped across five progressive levels (L1–L5) aligned with European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 3 to 8. This structure allows the Framework to describe competency development from entry-level staff and volunteers through to institutional directors and sector leaders.

Unlike generic corporate ESG or project-management competency models, this Framework is built specifically around the evidence, language and operating realities of the GLAM sector: mission-driven, often publicly funded, frequently resource-constrained, and responsible for the stewardship of collections and public knowledge across generations. It reflects the needs-analysis finding that GLAM professionals do not need to be persuaded that ESG matters — importance scores exceed 4.2 out of 5 in every domain — but need practical competencies, tools and institutional structures that translate that recognition into everyday practice.

Key features of the Framework include:

- A four-domain, 31-competency architecture directly grounded in the ESG4GLAM needs-analysis data, including the highest-priority gap areas identified by the sector itself (environmental emergency preparedness, cross-cutting ESG literacy, ESG integration into planning and reporting, social impact assessment).
- Five EQF-aligned progression levels (L1–L5) with GLAM-specific descriptors, examples, career-pathway illustrations and assessment criteria.
- Explicit guidance for adapting the Framework to institutions of different sizes, sub-sectors (libraries, museums, archives, galleries) and resourcing levels, reflecting the sector's structural reality of frequent multi-role staffing and constrained professional-development budgets.
- Alignment references to sector-relevant standards and instruments (ICOM, IFLA, ICA codes of ethics, the Bizot Green Protocol, the Faro Convention, GDPR, EU accessibility

legislation, GRI Standards, CSRD/ESRS and the EU Taxonomy) rather than generic corporate ESG disclosure frameworks alone.

- A design philosophy, validated directly by GLAM practitioners in the needs analysis, of naming and structuring existing good practice rather than imposing an external corporate agenda.

This document is confined to the Competency Framework itself. Professional profiles, role descriptions, occupational standards and other career-related deliverables developed under ESG4GLAM are presented separately.

1 Introduction

Galleries, libraries, archives and museums occupy a distinctive position in the sustainability landscape. They are not simply organisations that must adapt to ESG expectations from the outside; their public mission, safeguarding cultural heritage, enabling access to knowledge, supporting education and creating shared social value across generations, is intrinsically connected to long-term environmental, social and governance responsibility. As one expert interviewee in the ESG4GLAM needs analysis put it, museums and archives are "memory institutions" and "institutions of hope", whose very capacity to protect collections and sustain continuity is itself a sustainability function.

At the same time, the ESG4GLAM ESG Competency Needs Analysis found that GLAM institutions face a consistent and structurally significant gap: ESG principles are recognised as highly important across every domain (average importance scores above 4.2 out of 5), while current organisational and individual capacity to act on this recognition remains considerably lower. This is not primarily an attitude problem. It is a capability and infrastructure problem, a lack of practical tools, defined competencies, institutional structures and resourcing needed to move from informal, fragmented, individually driven ESG practice to systematic, resourced and accountable institutional practice.

The ESG4GLAM Competency Framework responds directly to this evidence. It identifies and structures the specific ESG-related knowledge, skills and attitudes required by GLAM professionals and institutions, expressed in language and examples native to the sector's own practice, cataloguing, conservation, curation, exhibition-making, community programming, collection storage, digitisation, procurement and public accountability, rather than translated from generic corporate or project-management vocabularies.

1.1 Aim of this document

This document presents the ESG Competency Framework component developed under the ESG4GLAM project. Its purpose is to provide a common reference for identifying, developing and assessing the ESG-related competencies of GLAM professionals and institutions, and to serve as the structural foundation for the ESG4GLAM training course, self-assessment tools and Knowledge Box.

This document deliberately does not include professional profiles, job/role descriptions, career-profile mapping to specific occupations, or labour-market analysis. These elements are addressed separately within the ESG4GLAM project. The scope here is limited strictly to the Competency Framework: the domains, competencies, progression levels, descriptors and assessment logic that define ESG capability in the GLAM sector.

1.2 Core objectives of the Framework

- To provide a structured, evidence-based model of ESG competencies specific to the GLAM sector, grounded directly in the ESG4GLAM Competency Needs Analysis rather than adapted from unrelated sectors.
- To organise these competencies into domains and progression levels that reflect the realities of GLAM institutions, including their public mission, historic buildings, sensitive collections, mixed funding models and predominantly small-to-medium staffing structures.
- To define five levels of competency progression (L1–L5), aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 3 to 8, supporting recognition of prior learning, targeted upskilling and lifelong learning pathways for GLAM professionals at every career stage.
- To support the design of practical, modular training, self-assessment tools and the ESG4GLAM Knowledge Box, in direct response to the sector's stated preference for actionable tools over abstract frameworks.
- To help institutions of all sizes and sub-sectors, libraries, museums, archives and galleries alike, move from fragmented, individually driven ESG activity toward structured, resourced and accountable institutional practice.
- To offer a shared language that GLAM professionals recognise as naming and structuring what they already do, rather than an externally imposed corporate agenda, a design principle validated directly by focus-group and interview participants.

2. Methodology

The ESG4GLAM Competency Framework is derived directly from the ESG4GLAM ESG Competency Needs Analysis, a three-part, mixed-methods study combining quantitative and qualitative evidence from across the GLAM sector in Europe and beyond.

2.1 Evidence base

- An online survey of 120 valid responses from professionals in 16 countries (with Latvia, Italy, Serbia and Finland as the largest contributing partner countries), measuring the perceived importance and current organisational level of 29 ESG-related competencies across cross-cutting, environmental, social and governance domains.
- Six cross-country focus groups with GLAM practitioners in Italy, Finland, Latvia and Serbia, providing a qualitative, discussion-based account of how ESG competency needs are experienced in daily institutional practice across libraries, museums, archives, galleries and corporate-affiliated cultural institutions.
- Thirty-four expert interviews with sector specialists, sustainability professionals, workers'-union representatives, national training bodies and institutional leaders, adding national context, occupational-conditions data and strategic perspective.

Each of the 29 quantitatively assessed competencies was rated by respondents on two five-point scales, importance in the GLAM institutional context, and current organisational level, with the gap between the two scores used to identify development priorities. This Framework organises those 29 competencies into 31, adding two competencies (digital sustainability and responsible AI use; staff wellbeing and fair working conditions) that emerged strongly and consistently from the qualitative focus-group and interview data as forward-looking or under-represented priorities not fully captured by the original quantitative item set.

2.2 Development logic

The Framework's structure follows directly from the pattern of findings in the needs analysis: the four ESG competency domains used in the survey (cross-cutting, environmental, social, governance) are retained as the Framework's four domains, each competency's descriptors and examples are built from the specific institutional contexts, gaps and illustrative practices described by survey respondents, focus-group participants and interviewees, and the EQF-aligned progression logic mirrors approaches used in related European sectoral competency frameworks, adapted to reflect GLAM career structures, from entry-level and

volunteer roles through specialist, managerial and directorial levels, up to sector and policy leadership.

2.3 Alignment with sector-relevant standards

Because GLAM institutions operate under professional, ethical and regulatory frameworks distinct from those of the corporate sector, each competency in this Framework is aligned, where applicable, with instruments recognized within cultural heritage and public-interest practice, rather than exclusively with corporate ESG disclosure regimes. These include the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers, the ICA Code of Ethics for archivists, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention), the Bizot Green Protocol on sustainable collection care and loans, the EU Web Accessibility Directive and European Accessibility Act, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and, where relevant to larger, publicly listed or corporate-affiliated institutions, the GRI Standards, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and its European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), and the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities.

3 Structure of the Competency Framework

The ESG4GLAM Competency Framework is organised into four interconnected domains, comprising a total of 31 competencies:

- Cross-Cutting ESG Competencies (6 competencies) — the foundational, enabling literacy and organisational capacities without which environmental, social and governance action risks remain isolated or superficial.
- Environmental Competencies (8 competencies) — the knowledge and practices needed to manage the ecological footprint of collections, buildings, exhibitions and operations, and to prepare for climate-related risk.
- Social Competencies (9 competencies) — the capacities needed to deliver inclusive, participatory and socially accountable institutional practice, encompassing both audience-facing and staff-facing responsibilities.
- Governance Competencies (8 competencies) — the ethical, legal and managerial capacities needed to embed ESG into institutional strategy, accountability and reporting.

3.1 Levels of competency and EQF alignment

Each competency is described across five progressive levels of mastery, aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), to reflect the wide range of roles found across GLAM institutions of different sizes and sub-sectors — from a volunteer at a small municipal library or a trainee at a regional archive, to the director of a national museum or gallery network.

Level	EQF	Typical GLAM profiles	Typical responsibility / autonomy
L1 – Associate	3–4	Trainee, volunteer, library/museum/gallery assistant, front-of-house or visitor-services assistant	Performs defined tasks under supervision; follows established institutional procedures.
L2 – Professional	5–6	Librarian, curator, archivist, conservator, documentalist, education/outreach officer, exhibition officer	Applies competencies independently within own role; contributes to team and project delivery.
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	6–7	Senior curator/librarian/archivist, head of collections, department head, branch or site manager	Leads a team, department or function; adapts

			practice to institutional complexity.
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	7–8	Deputy director, head of institution (small/medium organisation), director of programmes, chief librarian/archivist	Sets institutional policy and strategy; holds accountability across departments.
L5 – Principal	8	Director/chief executive of a large or national institution, sector-network coordinator, heritage/library-policy adviser	Shapes sector standards, policy and cross-institutional practice; mentors and represents the field.

3.2 Competency composition

Each competency in this Framework is described using the following elements, consistent across all 31 competencies:

- Sub-Level Competency Descriptors — level-specific statements defining what a person at each of the five levels is expected to know and do.
- Competency Examples — concrete, GLAM-specific illustrations of the competency in practice at each level (e.g., in cataloguing, conservation, exhibition-making, community programming, procurement or reporting).
- Overall Description — a concise statement of what the competency covers and why it matters for ESG-aligned GLAM practice.
- GLAM-Relevant Alignment — references to the professional, ethical and regulatory instruments most relevant to the competency, spanning sector-specific codes of ethics, cultural-heritage conventions and, where applicable, EU sustainability and reporting standards.

3.3 Competency matrix

The following matrix provides a consolidated overview of the 31 ESG competencies included in the ESG4GLAM Competency Framework. It shows how each competency is positioned within the four ESG domains, how it connects to GLAM practice, and how it can inform the development of training modules, self-assessment tools and Knowledge Box resources. All competencies are structured across five progression levels, from L1 Associate to L5 Principal, aligned with EQF levels 3–8.

Table 2 Competency Overview Matrix of the ESG4GLAM Competency Framework

Code	Competency title	Domain	EQF range	Main application in GLAM practice	Link to training / Knowledge Box
CC-01	Basic ESG literacy in the GLAM context	Cross-Cutting	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Understanding ESG concepts through cultural heritage, collections, public value and institutional mission	Introductory ESG module; basic ESG glossary; self-assessment checklist
CC-02	Understanding interconnections between environmental, social and governance dimensions	Cross-Cutting	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Recognising how environmental decisions affect access, ethics, communities, governance and long-term stewardship	Integrated ESG thinking module; case-based exercises
CC-03	Organisational learning and change management for ESG	Cross-Cutting	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Supporting staff learning, internal change and institutional movement from isolated ESG activities to embedded practice	Change-management tools; internal learning templates
CC-04	Moving beyond a “checkbox” approach to ESG	Cross-Cutting	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Preventing superficial ESG compliance and linking ESG actions to real institutional improvement	Ethical ESG practice module; reflection exercises; greenwashing prevention tools

CC-05	Using basic ESG data and indicators	Cross-Cutting	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Collecting and using simple indicators on energy, waste, accessibility, participation, procurement and reporting	ESG indicator dashboard; data collection templates
CC-06	Digital sustainability and responsible use of AI and data	Cross-Cutting	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Managing digital tools, digitisation, AI, data storage and online services in environmentally and ethically responsible ways	Digital sustainability module; AI governance checklist
ENV-01	Environmental awareness and regulatory compliance	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Understanding environmental obligations relevant to buildings, collections, exhibitions, storage and daily operations	Environmental basics module; compliance checklist
ENV-02	Energy and climate control management	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Balancing energy use, conservation requirements, visitor comfort and climate control in GLAM facilities	Energy management tools; climate-control case studies
ENV-03	Sustainable production of exhibitions and public programmes	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Designing exhibitions, events and programmes with reduced material use, waste and	Sustainable exhibition planning template

				environmental footprint	
ENV-04	Ecologically informed preventive conservation	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Connecting collection care, preventive conservation and environmental sustainability	Conservation and sustainability module; practical examples
ENV-05	Sustainable procurement	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Applying sustainability criteria in purchasing materials, services, equipment and exhibition supplies	Sustainable procurement checklist; supplier criteria template
ENV-06	Waste reduction and circular practices	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Reducing waste, reusing materials and introducing circular practices in exhibitions, offices and public programmes	Circular practice guide; waste monitoring tool
ENV-07	Preparedness for environmental emergencies	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Preparing for floods, fires, heatwaves, humidity risks and other environmental threats to collections, staff and visitors	Emergency preparedness module; risk-assessment template
ENV-08	Monitoring of environmental indicators	Environmental	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Tracking energy, water, waste, emissions, indoor climate and other environmental performance indicators	Environmental monitoring dashboard; reporting template

SOC-01	Inclusive access and participation	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Ensuring that GLAM services, spaces, programmes and collections are accessible to diverse publics	Accessibility module; inclusion checklist
SOC-02	Community engagement and co-creation	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Working with communities as active participants in programming, interpretation, collecting and decision-making	Co-creation toolkit; community engagement case studies
SOC-03	Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Embedding DEI principles in staffing, collections, interpretation, programming and audience engagement	DEI training module; institutional DEI self-assessment
SOC-04	Social impact assessment	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Measuring and communicating the social value of GLAM activities for communities, learners and stakeholders	Social impact indicators; evaluation templates
SOC-05	Safeguarding and ethical participation	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Protecting participants, vulnerable groups and communities in participatory, educational and public-facing activities	Safeguarding checklist; ethical participation guidelines

SOC-06	Clear and accessible communication	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Communicating information in accessible, inclusive and understandable ways across physical and digital channels	Accessible communication guide; plain-language tools
SOC-07	Partnerships for social value	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Building partnerships with schools, NGOs, communities, public bodies and cultural networks to increase social value	Partnership planning template; stakeholder mapping tool
SOC-08	Feedback and complaint mechanisms	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Creating accessible systems for collecting, responding to and learning from visitor, staff and community feedback	Feedback form templates; complaint-handling workflow
SOC-09	Staff wellbeing and fair working conditions	Social	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Supporting fair, safe and sustainable working conditions for staff, volunteers and cultural workers	Staff wellbeing checklist; organisational reflection tool
GOV-01	Ethics and integrity in cultural stewardship	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Applying ethical principles in collection management, access, interpretation, loans,	Ethics module; stewardship case studies

				partnerships and public trust	
GOV-02	Transparency and accountability	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Making institutional decisions, priorities and responsibilities clear to staff, funders, communities and the public	Accountability checklist; governance transparency template
GOV-03	Risk management and internal control	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Identifying, managing and documenting risks related to collections, operations, ESG, finance, data and reputation	ESG risk register; internal control template
GOV-04	Integration of ESG into planning and management	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Embedding ESG priorities into strategies, annual plans, project planning, budgets and management routines	ESG planning module; strategy integration template
GOV-05	Stakeholder communication and ESG reporting	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Communicating ESG priorities, actions, indicators and results to funders, boards, communities and wider stakeholders	Sustainability reporting module; reporting template
GOV-06	Data protection and privacy (GDPR)	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Protecting personal data in visitor services, digital platforms, archives, research, education and	GDPR checklist; data protection scenarios

				community activities	
GOV-07	Data management for ESG purposes	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Organising ESG-related data so that it can support planning, monitoring, reporting and institutional learning	ESG data management guide; evidence collection template
GOV-08	Governance of partners and suppliers	Governance	L1–L5 / EQF 3–8	Applying ethical, environmental and social criteria in partnerships, procurement, outsourcing and supplier relations	Supplier governance checklist; partner assessment template

The matrix demonstrates that the Framework is not a generic ESG model, but a sector-specific competency architecture designed to support GLAM institutions in training design, professional development, self-assessment, institutional planning and the development of practical ESG tools.

4 How to Use the Framework

4.1 Intended users

- GLAM professionals and volunteers — to self-assess current competency levels, identify development priorities and plan career progression.
- Institutional managers and directors — to map staff competencies, identify institutional capacity gaps, and plan resourcing and training investment.
- Training providers and higher-education institutions — to design ESG-related curricula, short courses and micro-credentials for the cultural heritage and library/information sectors.

- Funders, ministries and heritage/library authorities — to inform funding criteria, national qualification standards and sector-level ESG capacity-building strategies.
- Networks, associations and certification bodies (e.g., ICOM national committees, library associations, archive networks, existing environmental-certification schemes) — to align recognition and credentialing mechanisms with a shared, sector-specific competency language.

4.2 Adapting the Framework to institutional size and resources

The needs analysis confirms that the GLAM sector is dominated by small and medium-sized organisations (69.1% of surveyed institutions have 50 or fewer employees), that a majority are publicly funded (50.8% through core public budgets) or operate as non-profit or hybrid entities, and that ESG-related work is frequently carried out by staff holding multiple roles rather than by dedicated ESG specialists. The Framework is designed to remain usable under these conditions:

- Micro and small institutions (including volunteer-run libraries, single-person archives and small local museums): the Framework can be applied selectively, prioritising the highest-need competencies identified in Section 3 and Domains I–IV (notably environmental emergency preparedness, basic ESG literacy and data use, and social impact evidence), rather than requiring simultaneous development across all 31 competencies.
- Medium-sized institutions: competencies can be distributed across existing roles (collections, education, operations, administration) rather than requiring a new dedicated ESG function, with a small number of staff developing L3-level integrative competencies (cc3, gov4) to coordinate institution-wide practice.
- Large and national institutions, and corporate-affiliated cultural institutions: the Framework supports the development of dedicated ESG governance roles (L4–L5), formal reporting structures (IV.4, IV.5), and alignment with group-level or statutory ESG obligations such as CSRD/ESRS, while guarding explicitly against the "checkbox" or greenwashing risk identified by respondents from corporate-affiliated museums in the needs analysis.
- Cross-sub-sector differences: environmental competencies (Domain II) are typically most urgent for museums and archives with climate-sensitive collections and historic buildings; social competencies (Domain III) are typically most embedded in libraries, given their frontline, universal-access public mission; governance competencies (Domain IV) require particular attention in galleries

and smaller non-profits, which the needs analysis found to have less-developed formal governance structures than larger public institutions.

To further support proportionate and context-sensitive implementation, the table 3 below illustrates how different types of GLAM institutions may prioritise the Framework according to their specific mission, operational risks, professional capacities and stakeholder responsibilities.

Table 3 Priority use of the ESG4GLAM Competency Framework across different GLAM institutional settings

Institutional setting	**Priority use of the Framework**	**Most relevant competency areas**	**Possible practical outputs**
Museum	Prioritise environmental emergency preparedness, basic ESG literacy and simple indicators, without requiring full implementation of all competencies at once.	Basic ESG literacy; environmental emergency preparedness; preventive conservation; basic ESG data and indicators.	Emergency preparedness checklist; basic ESG self-assessment; simple environmental monitoring log.
Public library	Prioritise inclusion, accessibility, community engagement and social impact, reflecting the library's public-service and universal-access mission.	Inclusive access and participation; community engagement and co-creation; clear and accessible communication; social impact assessment; feedback mechanisms.	Accessibility checklist; community engagement plan; user feedback form; social impact evidence template.
Archive	Prioritise preventive conservation, climate control, data protection and risk management, given the long-term stewardship of records, collections and sensitive information.	Ecologically informed preventive conservation; energy and climate control management; data protection and privacy; data management for ESG purposes; risk management.	Climate-control monitoring sheet; archive risk register; GDPR checklist; preservation and sustainability action plan.

Gallery	Prioritise sustainable exhibition production, procurement and stakeholder communication, particularly where exhibitions, events, partnerships and material use are central to operations.	Sustainable production of exhibitions and public programmes; sustainable procurement; waste reduction and circular practices; stakeholder communication and ESG reporting; governance of partners and suppliers.	Sustainable exhibition brief; supplier criteria template; materials reuse plan; ESG communication note.
Large or national institution	Prioritise ESG governance, reporting, supplier criteria and sector leadership, including strategic planning and accountability across departments.	Integration of ESG into planning and management; transparency and accountability; stakeholder communication and ESG reporting; governance of partners and suppliers; sector-level L4–L5 competencies.	ESG strategy; sustainability report; supplier ESG criteria; institutional ESG dashboard; sector guidance or mentoring activities.

This differentiated approach demonstrates that the Framework is not a generic ESG model transferred from the corporate sector, but a sector-specific and proportionate tool designed for the operational realities of galleries, libraries, archives and museums. It allows each institution to start from its own mission, risks, capacities and stakeholder responsibilities, while still using a shared European competency language. In this way, the Framework supports both comparability and flexibility: it creates a common structure for ESG competency development, while allowing implementation to remain realistic, resource-sensitive and adapted to different cultural settings.

4.3 Supporting career progression

The Framework's five-level structure (L1–L5) is designed to do more than classify competencies in the abstract: it provides a practical scaffold that individuals and institutions can use to plan how ESG capability should grow across an entire career, in step with growing seniority, responsibility and scope of influence. Because the levels are aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF 3–8), they connect naturally to the qualification

systems, job grades and recruitment structures already familiar to GLAM professionals and human-resources functions, rather than requiring institutions to build a parallel, ESG-specific career structure from scratch.

For individual professionals, this means the Framework can be used as a personal development map. A new library assistant, museum volunteer or trainee archivist can use the L1 descriptors to understand what basic ESG awareness looks like in their day-to-day tasks, and can see concretely what is expected of them as they progress toward L2, where ESG thinking becomes an integrated part of independent professional practice — whether in cataloguing, conservation, exhibition-making, education or front-of-house services. As individuals move into specialist or supervisory roles at L3, the Framework clarifies the shift from applying ESG competencies in one's own work to coordinating and leading their application across a team or department. At L4 and L5, the descriptors reflect the transition from operational and departmental responsibility to institutional and, eventually, sector-level leadership — shaping strategy, policy and standards rather than only implementing them. This progression logic allows professionals at every career stage, and in every GLAM sub-sector, to identify where they currently stand, what the next step in their development would involve, and how ESG competency growth fits within their broader professional trajectory, rather than existing as a separate, disconnected add-on to their "real" career path.

For institutions, the same structure can be used to design coherent internal progression routes that embed ESG development at every stage rather than treating it as an optional extra reserved for specialists or enthusiasts. A typical pathway might run from library, museum, archive or gallery assistant (L1), through professional or specialist roles such as librarian, curator, archivist or conservator (L2), to department head or senior manager positions (L3), deputy director or head-of-institution roles (L4), and ultimately to director-level or sector-leadership positions (L5). By mapping ESG competency expectations onto each of these stages, institutions can ensure that ESG capability is built cumulatively and progressively throughout a person's career — reinforced at induction, developed through specialist practice, exercised through departmental leadership, and ultimately shaped and championed at the most senior levels — rather than introduced only sporadically through occasional training sessions disconnected from actual promotion and development structures.

This approach is particularly valuable for addressing a pattern identified repeatedly in the ESG4GLAM needs analysis: the fragility of ESG initiatives that depend entirely on the motivation of one committed individual, which collapse when that person changes role or leaves the institution. By embedding ESG competency expectations into the career-progression structure itself — so that moving from one level or role to the next is understood to include a corresponding growth in ESG capability — institutions can reduce their dependence on individual champions and instead build ESG capacity into the normal,

expected development of staff at every level. It also supports succession planning and internal mobility, since managers can identify more easily which staff are ready to take on greater ESG-related responsibility as they move into more senior roles, and can plan targeted development accordingly. In this way, the Framework's level structure functions simultaneously as a tool for individual career development and as an instrument of institutional resilience, ensuring that ESG competence grows with the organisation's people rather than residing precariously in any single post or person.

4.4 Competency development and learning design

In line with the strong preference expressed by GLAM practitioners in the focus groups and interviews, the Framework is designed to support practical, modular and flexible learning formats: short courses, thematic sector events, peer-learning exchanges between institutions, embedded specialist mentoring, and e-learning for foundational knowledge, rather than relying solely on lengthy in-person programmes. Learning design based on this Framework should prioritise concrete institutional tasks (e.g., producing a sustainable exhibition brief, setting up a simple ESG indicator dashboard, drafting a safeguarding protocol) over abstract theoretical instruction.

I. CROSS-CUTTING ESG COMPETENCIES

Cross-cutting competencies form the foundational, enabling layer of the ESG4GLAM Competency Framework. They determine whether ESG is understood and applied as an integrated, strategic way of working, or reduced to isolated activities, borrowed terminology, or funding-driven reporting exercises.

The ESG4GLAM needs analysis identified this domain as the area of highest average competency gap across the entire dataset (importance 4.23, current level 2.55, gap 1.68 – High), with a near-uniform gap across all items. This indicates that the deficit in foundational ESG literacy in the GLAM sector is broad and systemic rather than concentrated in a single area, and that effective capacity-building must address this foundational layer before – or alongside – domain-specific (environmental, social, governance) development.

I.1 Basic ESG literacy in the GLAM context

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands basic ESG terminology and its general relevance to GLAM work.	Applies ESG concepts within own professional tasks (cataloguing, programming, conservation, front-of-house work).	Guides colleagues in applying ESG thinking consistently across departmental activities.	Embeds ESG literacy across the institution's induction, training and strategic priorities.	Shapes sector-wide understanding of ESG in cultural heritage practice.
Competency Examples	Recognises everyday ESG-related tasks (e.g., recycling, accessibility support) as	Adjusts an exhibition or programme plan to take environmental and social	Leads a department-level ESG orientation session for staff and volunteers.	Establishes institution-wide ESG induction training for all new staff	Advises national heritage or library authorities on ESG literacy standards for

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	part of daily routine.	impact into account.		and volunteers.	GLAM professionals.
Description	Ability to understand core ESG concepts and terminology and to translate them into the specific mission, values, collections and everyday practice of galleries, libraries, archives and museums, rather than importing generic corporate framing.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums; IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians; ICA Code of Ethics; UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); EQF				

I.2 Understanding interconnections between environmental, social and governance dimensions

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Recognises that environmental, social and governance issues are frequently connected in daily work.	Applies integrated E–S–G thinking when planning a specific task or project.	Coordinates colleagues across functions to address interlinked ESG issues.	Aligns institutional strategy to reflect ESG interdependencies rather than parallel work streams.	Champions systemic, integrated ESG thinking across the GLAM sector.
Competency Examples	Notices that reducing printed materials affects both	Designs a public programme that weighs both	Leads a working group linking conservatio	Integrates E–S–G considerations jointly into the institution's	Publishes or presents sector guidance

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	environmental footprint and information accessibility.	environmental cost and community access together.	n, procurement and community engagement on a single project.	multi-year strategic plan.	on integrated ESG decision-making for cultural institutions.
Description	Capacity to recognise and manage the interdependencies between environmental, social and governance considerations in cultural heritage practice, avoiding fragmented, single-issue initiatives that treat ESG as three unrelated agendas.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	UN SDGs; GRI Standards; EQF				

I.3 Organisational learning and change management for ESG

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Participates constructively in ESG-related changes introduced by the institution.	Contributes ideas and feedback that support ESG-related organisational change.	Leads change processes within a team or department.	Drives institution-wide ESG transformation and manages resistance to change.	Establishes sector models for ESG-driven organisational transformation.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Competency Examples	Adopts new recycling, energy-saving or accessibility procedures once introduced.	Proposes a concrete improvement to a programme based on ESG-related feedback.	Manages the rollout of a new sustainable-procurement procedure within a department.	Leads a multi-year organisational change programme embedding ESG into core operations.	Advises several institutions or a national network on ESG change-management strategy.
Description	Ability to support, lead and sustain organisational change processes that embed ESG principles into institutional culture and routines, so that progress does not depend solely on the motivation of individual staff members.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	EQF; OECD governance principles (adapted to public/non-profit cultural institutions)				

I.4 Moving beyond a "checkbox" approach to ESG

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Recognises the difference between genuine	Applies ESG principles meaningfully in own work rather	Reviews team practices to identify and correct superficial ESG	Establishes institutional safeguards against greenwashing	Sets sector norms for authentic, non-formulaic

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	ESG practice and symbolic compliance.	than only to satisfy funder requirements.	implementation.	and box-ticking.	ESG practice.
Competency Examples	Asks questions when an ESG-labelled activity appears to be purely formal.	Designs a funded project so that ESG outcomes are real and evidenced, not only reported.	Audits a department's ESG-labelled activities for substantive, not only rhetorical, impact.	Introduces an internal review step for ESG-related claims before public communication.	Contributes to sector guidance distinguishing meaningful ESG action from compliance exercises.
Description	Ability to ensure that ESG engagement produces genuine institutional change rather than becoming a superficial, funding-driven or reputational exercise – identified by respondents as the single highest-importance cross-cutting competency in the needs analysis.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI Standards (reporting integrity); ICOM Code of Ethics				

I.5 Using basic ESG data and indicators

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Descriptor	Records simple ESG-related data when requested (e.g., energy readings, visitor numbers).	Uses basic indicators to inform decisions in own area of work.	Establishes simple indicator sets for a department or function.	Integrates ESG data into institutional planning and external reporting.	Shapes sector-wide approaches to ESG data and indicator standards.
Competency Examples	Logs monthly energy-meter or footfall readings as part of routine duties.	Uses accessibility feedback data to adjust a public programme.	Designs a basic dashboard tracking waste, energy and participation data.	Uses ESG indicators to inform annual institutional reporting to funders or governing bodies.	Contributes to development of a shared national or sectoral GLAM ESG indicator set.
Description	Ability to collect, interpret and use simple, practical ESG-related data (energy, waste, accessibility, participation, procurement) to support institutional decision-making, without requiring advanced technical infrastructure or specialist data teams.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI Standards; CSRD/ESRS (for larger or corporate-affiliated institutions)				

I.6 Digital sustainability and responsible use of AI and data

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Is aware that digital tools, online services and AI applications carry environmental and social costs.	Applies basic digital sustainability practices in own digital work.	Evaluates the environmental and ethical implications of digital tools and AI use within a department.	Establishes institutional guidance on responsible digital infrastructure and AI use.	Shapes sector-level standards for digital sustainability and AI governance in memory institutions.
Competency Examples	Understands that large digitised collections require energy-intensive, ongoing data storage.	Optimises file formats and storage choices when digitising or managing collection records.	Assesses an AI cataloguing or description tool for accuracy, bias, and energy use before adoption.	Develops an institutional policy on verifying and correcting AI-generated content and on sustainable digital storage.	Advises national or international bodies on AI governance and trustworthiness for archives, libraries and museums.
Description	Ability to understand and manage the environmental footprint of digital infrastructure, and the ethical, social and trust-related implications of AI tools used in collections management, cataloguing, digitisation and public engagement. Identified by both focus-group participants and expert interviewees as the most rapidly emerging ESG competency need for the sector.				

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GDPR; GRI 302 (energy); emerging EU AI governance principles				

Career Progression Pathway — Cross-Cutting ESG Competencies

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L1 – Associate	Trainee, volunteer, new staff member	Recognises ESG-related tasks in daily routine.
L2 – Professional	Librarian, curator, archivist, education officer	Applies ESG thinking within own programmes and tasks.
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Department head, senior specialist	Leads departmental ESG literacy and integrated E–S–G thinking.
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Deputy director, head of institution	Embeds ESG literacy and data use institution-wide.
L5 – Principal	Director, sector-network coordinator	Shapes sector-wide ESG literacy and digital-sustainability standards.

Assessment Criteria — Cross-Cutting ESG Competencies

Level	Assessment focus	Example evidence
L1 – Associate	Awareness of ESG concepts in own tasks	Completion of ESG induction; examples of applying ESG-related instructions

Level	Assessment focus	Example evidence
L2 – Professional	Application of ESG thinking in own programmes	Programme or project plans reflecting integrated E–S–G considerations
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Departmental ESG coordination and data use	Departmental ESG indicator set; evidence of change-management leadership
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Institution-wide ESG literacy and digital-sustainability practice	Institutional induction programme; AI/digital-sustainability guidance documents
L5 – Principal	Sector-level ESG literacy leadership	Contributions to sector guidance, standards or policy advice

II. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPETENCIES

Environmental competencies address the ecological footprint of GLAM institutions and their capacity to respond to climate-related risks. GLAM organisations face environmental challenges that are distinctive compared with other sectors: many operate from historic buildings, hold irreplaceable and climate-sensitive collections, and produce exhibitions, loans and public programmes that consume materials, energy and transport.

The needs analysis found this domain to have the second-highest overall gap (importance 4.28, current level 2.77, gap 1.51 – High), with the single largest gap recorded anywhere in the survey concerning preparedness for environmental emergencies (Δ 1.88). Environmental competence in GLAM institutions cannot be the responsibility of a single specialist role: it affects curators, conservators, facility managers, procurement officers, educators, exhibition designers and leadership teams alike.

II.1 Environmental awareness and regulatory compliance

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands basic environmental rules and their relevance to the institution.	Applies environmental regulations in own professional activities.	Monitors departmental compliance with environmental regulation.	Establishes institution-wide environmental compliance systems.	Shapes environmental policy and compliance standards affecting the sector.
Competency Examples	Follows building energy-saving and waste-handling instructions.	Ensures an exhibition or event complies with local waste-disposal rules.	Reviews a department's compliance with local environmental permits.	Develops an environmental compliance checklist applied across all	Advises ministries or heritage authorities on environmental regulation

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
				institutional activities.	for cultural institutions.
Description	Understanding of, and compliance with, environmental laws, regulations and heritage-sector guidance affecting GLAM buildings, operations and collections.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	EU environmental legislation; national heritage and building codes; GRI 300 series				

II.2 Energy and climate control management

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands the link between climate control and energy use.	Applies energy-conscious practices in daily collection care and building use.	Manages climate-control systems and energy budgets for a department or building.	Leads institutional strategy for energy efficiency and climate-control modernisation.	Shapes sector standards for sustainable climate control in collection storage.
Competency Examples	Reports malfunctioning heating, cooling or humidity-	Adjusts lighting and display conditions to reduce unnecessar	Oversees a revision of storage climate parameters to reduce	Directs a building-wide retrofit towards more energy-efficient	Contributes to revised European guidance on collection-

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	control equipment.	y energy use.	energy consumption.	climate systems.	storage climate parameters.
Description	Ability to manage energy use and climate-control systems in a way that balances collection-preservation needs with environmental sustainability, including adopting updated, less energy-intensive storage standards.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	Bizot Green Protocol; European Green Deal; GRI 302				

II.3 Sustainable production of exhibitions and public programmes

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Is aware of the environmental footprint of exhibition and event materials.	Applies sustainable choices when producing exhibitions, programmes or events.	Plans exhibitions and programmes against defined environmental criteria.	Establishes institutional standards for sustainable exhibition and programme production.	Sets sector benchmarks for low-impact exhibition and event production.
Competency Examples	Separates waste generated	Selects reusable or recyclable	Sets a materials- and	Introduces an internal sustainable	Leads development of sector

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	during a public event.	materials for a display.	transport-sustainability brief for an exhibition or touring loan.	-exhibition design guide.	guidelines for sustainable touring exhibitions and loans.
Description	Ability to design and deliver exhibitions, public programmes, events and touring loans that minimise material, energy and transport-related environmental impact.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	Bizot Green Protocol; GRI 305, 306; EU Taxonomy (circular economy)				

II.4 Ecologically informed preventive conservation

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands basic ecological considerations in collection care.	Applies ecologically informed methods in preventive conservation tasks.	Reviews and updates conservation protocols to reduce ecological impact.	Establishes institutional preventive-conservation policy balancing preservation and sustainability.	Shapes professional standards for ecologically informed conservation practice.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Competency Examples	Uses non-toxic cleaning and handling materials as instructed.	Selects lower-impact packing and storage materials for collections.	Revises a department's pest-management protocol to reduce chemical use.	Approves updated storage climate and materials standards across all collections.	Contributes to national or international conservation guidelines integrating ecological criteria.
Description	Ability to apply preventive conservation practices that safeguard collections while minimising resource use, chemical impact and energy consumption.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	Bizot Green Protocol; ICOM-CC professional guidance; GRI 301				

II.5 Sustainable procurement

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands the basic concept of sustainable procurement.	Applies sustainability criteria when selecting suppliers or	Sets sustainable procurement criteria for departmental purchasing.	Establishes institution-wide sustainable procurement policy.	Shapes sector-wide sustainable procurement standards and supplier networks.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
		materials for own tasks.			
Competency Examples	Notices eco-labels on office or exhibition supplies.	Chooses a supplier offering recycled or lower-impact exhibition materials.	Introduces a supplier checklist including environmental and social criteria.	Approves a sustainable procurement policy covering major institutional contracts.	Leads a cross-institutional initiative for shared, vetted sustainable suppliers.
Description	Ability to integrate environmental and social criteria into the selection of suppliers, contractors and materials used by GLAM institutions.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI 308, 414; EU public-procurement directives				

II.6 Waste reduction and circular practices

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Follows basic waste-sorting and reduction procedures.	Applies circular practices such as reuse and repair in own work.	Introduces circular-economy practices at department level.	Embeds circular-economy principles into institutional operations and design.	Promotes circular-economy models across the GLAM sector.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Competency Examples	Separates recyclable materials at own workstation or gallery space.	Reuses exhibition display materials for a subsequent project.	Establishes a materials-reuse system for exhibition or programme production.	Redesigns exhibition workflows around reuse and take-back schemes.	Leads a sector network for sharing reusable exhibition and display materials.
Description	Ability to reduce waste and apply circular-economy principles (reuse, repair, sharing) across institutional operations, exhibitions and events.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	EU Circular Economy Action Plan; GRI 306; EU Taxonomy				

II.7 Preparedness for environmental emergencies

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Is aware of basic emergency procedures for fire, flood or extreme climate events.	Applies emergency-preparedness measures in own area of work.	Coordinates departmental emergency response and risk assessment.	Establishes institutional emergency-preparedness and disaster-response plans.	Shapes sector-level standards and networks for climate-related emergency preparedness.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Competency Examples	Knows evacuation routes and basic collection-protection steps.	Maintains an emergency supply kit for a storage or display area.	Conducts a flood- or fire-risk assessment for a collection store.	Develops and tests an institution-wide collection emergency-response plan.	Leads a national or regional disaster-preparedness network for cultural heritage institutions.
Description	Ability to prepare for, and respond to, environmental emergencies (floods, fires, heatwaves, humidity fluctuations, pollution) that threaten collections, buildings, staff and visitors. Identified as the single highest-priority competency gap across the entire needs analysis.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	UNESCO/ICCROM disaster-risk guidance; ICOM Code of Ethics; national civil-protection frameworks				

II.8 Monitoring of environmental indicators

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Records basic environmental data when instructed.	Uses simple environmental indicators to inform own work.	Establishes an environmental monitoring system for a	Integrates environmental monitoring into institutional planning	Shapes sector standards for environmental performance

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
			department or building.	and reporting.	monitoring in GLAM institutions.
Competency Examples	Notes daily temperature and humidity readings in a storage area.	Adjusts display conditions based on monitored humidity levels.	Introduces a simple dashboard tracking energy, water and waste data.	Uses environmental data trends to inform capital investment decisions.	Contributes to a national framework for environmental indicators in cultural heritage.
Description	Ability to systematically track environmental performance data (energy, water, waste, emissions, climate conditions) to support evidence-based environmental management and reporting.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI 302, 303, 305, 306; CSRD/ESRS E1–E5 (for larger institutions)				

Career Progression Pathway — Environmental Competencies

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L1 – Associate	Collections/facilities assistant, volunteer	Follows environmental and emergency procedures.
L2 – Professional	Conservator, curator, exhibition officer, facilities officer	Applies sustainable practice in conservation, procurement and exhibition production.
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Head of conservation/collections, facilities manager	Manages departmental environmental risk, monitoring and procurement standards.

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Deputy director, head of estates/operations	Establishes institution-wide environmental and emergency-preparedness policy.
L5 – Principal	Director, national heritage/climate-control adviser	Shapes sector standards for climate control, conservation and emergency preparedness.

Assessment Criteria — Environmental Competencies

Level	Assessment focus	Example evidence
L1 – Associate	Compliance with basic environmental and emergency procedures	Evidence of following building, waste and emergency protocols
L2 – Professional	Application of sustainable practice in conservation/exhibitions	Examples of sustainable materials, procurement or conservation choices
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Departmental environmental risk and monitoring	Risk assessments; environmental indicator dashboards
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Institutional environmental and emergency-preparedness policy	Approved institutional environmental/emergency-response plans
L5 – Principal	Sector standard-setting for environmental practice	Contribution to sector or national environmental guidance

III. SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

Social competencies reflect the long-standing public mission of galleries, libraries, archives and museums: access, education, cultural participation and community value. The needs analysis confirms this is the strongest domain overall, recording both the highest average importance score (4.47) and the highest average current level (3.21) of all four domains, with a moderate average gap of 1.26.

At the same time, the analysis – enriched by focus-group and expert-interview findings – shows that this traditional strength is not yet matched by systematic methods for assessing social impact, implementing DEI, or evaluating audience feedback, and that the social dimension of ESG must also encompass the working conditions and wellbeing of GLAM staff, not only external-facing services.

III.1 Inclusive access and participation

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands basic principles of inclusive access.	Applies inclusive-access practices in own programmes or services.	Coordinates inclusive-access initiatives across a department.	Establishes institution-wide inclusive-access strategy.	Shapes sector standards and policy on inclusive access in cultural institutions.
Competency Examples	Assists visitors or users with accessibility needs, following institutional guidance.	Adapts a programme for visitors with sensory or mobility needs.	Leads development of an accessible exhibition trail or library service.	Approves a multi-year accessibility improvement plan for the institution.	Advises national bodies on accessibility standards for GLAM institutions.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to design and deliver institutional spaces, services and programmes that are genuinely accessible to, and inclusive of, diverse audiences, including people with disabilities, older adults and marginalised or non-traditional visitor groups. Recorded as the single highest-importance competency across the entire needs analysis.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	EU Web Accessibility Directive (2016/2102); European Accessibility Act; UN CRPD; IFLA Public Library Manifesto				

III.2 Community engagement and co-creation

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Participates in community-facing activities as directed.	Applies co-creation methods in own programmes.	Leads community-engagement initiatives for a department.	Establishes institutional strategy for community engagement and partnership.	Shapes sector models for community engagement and co-creation.
Competency Examples	Supports a community event or workshop.	Involves a local community group in designing a programme.	Manages a co-creation project with a specific community group.	Develops a long-term community co-creation programme spanning departments.	Leads a national or international network on participatory cultural practice.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to engage communities as active partners in the design, delivery and evaluation of institutional activities, moving from serving communities to working with them.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	Faro Convention (Council of Europe); ICOM Code of Ethics; UN SDG 11				

III.3 Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Recognises basic DEI principles relevant to the workplace and audiences.	Applies DEI principles in own programming, communication or recruitment input.	Leads DEI initiatives within a team or department.	Establishes institutional DEI policy and monitors progress.	Shapes sector-wide DEI standards and advocacy.
Competency Examples	Understands why diverse representation in programming and collections matters.	Ensures a programme reflects diverse perspectives and voices.	Reviews a department's displays or collections for representational balance.	Approves a DEI action plan with measurable targets.	Contributes to national guidance on DEI in cultural heritage institutions.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to promote fair treatment, equal opportunity and genuine representation of diverse identities and perspectives among staff, audiences and collections.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	ICOM Code of Ethics; UN SDG 10; EU equality and non-discrimination legislation				

III.4 Social impact assessment

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands that institutional activities create social value that can be observed.	Uses simple methods to gather evidence of social impact in own programmes.	Designs social-impact assessment methods for departmental activities.	Establishes institutional systems for measuring and reporting social impact.	Shapes sector methodologies for assessing social value in GLAM institutions.
Competency Examples	Notes visitor or user feedback suggesting learning or wellbeing outcomes.	Collects participant feedback after an education or outreach activity.	Develops a simple evaluation framework for a community programme.	Introduces an institution-wide social-impact reporting framework.	Contributes to development of a sector-recognised social-impact assessment method.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to define, collect evidence for, and communicate the social outcomes (learning, wellbeing, belonging, trust) generated by GLAM institutional activities – identified as one of the two highest-priority social competency gaps.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI 413; CSRD/ESRS S (for larger institutions); Social Value principles (adapted)				

III.5 Safeguarding and ethical participation

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Follows institutional safeguarding procedures.	Applies ethical-participation principles when working with communities and vulnerable groups.	Oversees safeguarding and ethical-participation practices within a department.	Establishes institutional safeguarding policy and training.	Shapes sector standards for safeguarding and ethical participation.
Competency Examples	Reports a safeguarding concern following institutional protocol.	Obtains appropriate, informed consent when working with	Reviews consent and safeguarding procedures for an oral-	Approves an institution-wide safeguarding policy for community	Contributes to national safeguarding guidance for cultural

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
		community contributors.	history or outreach project.	and education work.	and heritage institutions.
Description	Ability to protect the wellbeing, dignity and rights of participants, contributors, staff and vulnerable audiences engaged in institutional activities.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	ICOM Code of Ethics; GDPR (personal data of participants); relevant national child- and adult-safeguarding legislation				

III.6 Clear and accessible communication

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Uses plain, accessible language in routine communication.	Adapts communication formats to diverse audience needs.	Establishes communication standards for a department.	Sets institution-wide accessible-communication policy.	Shapes sector standards for accessible and inclusive communication.
Competency Examples	Writes a simple visitor or user information notice in plain language.	Produces exhibition or catalogue text in an easy-to-read format.	Reviews programme materials for accessibility and clarity.	Approves a multi-format, multilingual communication strategy.	Contributes to national accessible-communication guidelines for cultural institutions.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to communicate institutional information, collections and programmes in ways that are clear, accessible and relevant to diverse audiences, including people with disabilities and non-native speakers.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	EU Web Accessibility Directive; European Accessibility Act; IFLA communication guidelines				

III.7 Partnerships for social value

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Participates in partnership activities as directed.	Contributes to developing partnerships that create social value.	Manages partnerships for a department or programme area.	Establishes institutional partnership strategy for social-value creation.	Leads sector-wide or cross-institutional partnership networks.
Competency Examples	Supports a joint programme with a partner organisation.	Proposes a partnership with a local social-service or community organisation.	Coordinates a multi-partner community-outreach initiative.	Develops a framework for evaluating and selecting strategic partners.	Establishes a national network linking GLAM institutions and social-sector partners.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to build and sustain partnerships with public, private and community actors that extend the social value and reach of GLAM institutions.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	UN SDG 17; Faro Convention; GRI 413				

III.8 Feedback and complaint mechanisms

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands the purpose of feedback and complaint channels.	Uses feedback data to improve own programmes or services.	Manages feedback and complaint processes for a department.	Establishes institution-wide feedback and complaint-handling systems.	Shapes sector standards for feedback, complaints and accountability to audiences.
Competency Examples	Directs a visitor or user to the correct feedback channel.	Adjusts a programme based on visitor or user feedback.	Reviews recurring complaint themes and proposes service changes.	Introduces a structured feedback and complaints policy with response targets.	Contributes to sector guidance on user and community accountability mechanisms.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Description	Ability to establish and use structured mechanisms for collecting, addressing and learning from feedback and complaints from visitors, users and communities.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI 102 (stakeholder engagement, adapted); ISO 10002 (complaints handling, adapted)				

III.9 Staff wellbeing and fair working conditions

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands basic principles of staff wellbeing and workplace safety.	Applies fair working practices in own role and team interactions.	Monitors staff wellbeing and working conditions within a department.	Establishes institutional policy on staff wellbeing, workload and fair working conditions.	Shapes sector standards for fair working conditions in cultural heritage institutions.
Competency Examples	Follows workplace health-and-safety guidance.	Raises workload concerns through appropriate institutional channels.	Reviews departmental workload distribution and staff feedback.	Approves a staff wellbeing and workload-management policy.	Engages professional associations and unions to advance sector-wide working-

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
					condition standards.
Description	Ability to recognise and address staff wellbeing, workload, safety and fair treatment as a core social-sustainability responsibility of GLAM institutions, alongside external-facing social commitments. Grounded in sector-specific evidence (including workers'-union and occupational-health data) showing that inward-facing working conditions are as central to the Social dimension of ESG as visitor-facing accessibility and inclusion.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	ILO core labour standards; GRI 401, 403; national occupational health and safety frameworks				

Career Progression Pathway — Social Competencies

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L1 – Associate	Front-of-house assistant, volunteer, outreach assistant	Supports inclusive, accessible visitor and user services.
L2 – Professional	Education/outreach officer, community librarian, access officer	Delivers inclusive programming, DEI practice and feedback handling.
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Head of learning/engagement, department manager	Leads community engagement, DEI and impact-assessment initiatives.
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Deputy director, head of audiences/communities	Establishes institutional social-value, DEI and staff-wellbeing strategy.

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L5 – Principal	Director, sector policy adviser	Shapes sector standards for inclusion, safeguarding and fair working conditions.

Assessment Criteria — Social Competencies

Level	Assessment focus	Example evidence
L1 – Associate	Support for inclusive, accessible services	Examples of accessibility or inclusion support provided to users/visitors
L2 – Professional	Delivery of inclusive and DEI-aware programming	Programme materials reflecting accessibility, DEI and feedback practice
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Departmental social-impact and DEI leadership	Impact-assessment frameworks; DEI review outcomes
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Institutional social-value and staff-wellbeing strategy	Approved DEI, social-impact and wellbeing policies
L5 – Principal	Sector leadership on inclusion and fair working conditions	Contribution to national/sector standards or advocacy outcomes

IV. GOVERNANCE COMPETENCIES

Governance competencies address the ethical, legal and managerial dimensions through which ESG commitments are formalised, resourced and made accountable within GLAM institutions. The needs analysis found this domain to present the most polarised profile of all four domains: traditional professional strengths in ethics, integrity and data protection coexist with high-intensity gaps in precisely the competencies needed to institutionalise ESG – integration into planning and management, and stakeholder communication and reporting.

This pattern indicates that GLAM institutions already possess strong normative foundations for responsible governance (long-standing codes of ethics, public accountability duties, professional standards) but often lack the institutional architecture needed to translate those values into systematic, resourced and reported ESG practice.

IV.1 Ethics and integrity in cultural stewardship

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Follows institutional codes of ethics and conduct.	Applies ethical principles in professional decisions (acquisitions, loans, deaccessioning, user privacy).	Oversees ethical decision-making within a department.	Establishes institutional ethics policy and oversight structures.	Shapes sector-wide ethical standards for cultural heritage stewardship.
Competency Examples	Applies the institution's code of ethics in daily collection or user-	Raises an ethical concern about a proposed acquisition or disposal.	Chairs a departmental ethics review for a contested object or case.	Approves an institutional ethics committee and its	Contributes to national or international codes of ethics for GLAM

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	service handling.			terms of reference.	professionals.
Description	Ability to uphold ethical standards, integrity and professional codes of conduct in the stewardship of collections, resources and public trust. Recorded as the lowest-gap competency across the entire needs analysis, reflecting decades of professional norm-setting in the sector.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums; ICA Code of Ethics; IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians				

IV.2 Transparency and accountability

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands the importance of transparency in institutional work.	Applies transparency principles in own reporting and communication.	Ensures transparent decision-making processes within a department.	Establishes institution-wide transparency and accountability mechanisms.	Shapes sector standards for transparency and public accountability.
Competency Examples	Provides accurate information when requested	Documents decisions clearly for institutional records.	Introduces clear documentation procedures	Approves public reporting on institutional performanc	Advises on national transparency standards for publicly

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	by a visitor, user or auditor.		for departmental decisions.	e and decisions.	funded cultural institutions.
Description	Ability to ensure open, honest and accountable institutional decision-making and reporting toward funders, governing bodies, communities and the public.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	OECD governance principles (adapted); national public-sector transparency frameworks				

IV.3 Risk management and internal control

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Follows basic institutional risk procedures.	Applies risk-management practices in own area of work.	Manages departmental risk registers and internal controls.	Establishes institution-wide risk-management and internal-control systems.	Shapes sector approaches to risk governance in cultural heritage institutions.
Competency Examples	Reports a potential risk (e.g., security, safety, environmental) through the	Identifies and flags risks in a project or programme plan.	Maintains a risk register for a collection, building or	Approves an institutional risk-management framework	Contributes to sector guidance on integrated ESG risk

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	correct channel.		programme area.	covering ESG-related risks.	management.
Description	Ability to identify, assess and manage risks – including ESG-related risks – and to maintain internal controls that protect collections, resources, staff and institutional reputation.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	ISO 31000 (adapted); GRI 102; CSRD/ESRS (for larger institutions)				

IV.4 Integration of ESG into planning and management

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Is aware that ESG considerations can be part of institutional planning.	Incorporates ESG considerations into own project or programme planning.	Integrates ESG objectives into departmental plans and budgets.	Embeds ESG into institutional strategy, budgeting and management systems.	Shapes sector and policy frameworks for ESG integration into cultural-institution management.
Competency Examples	Notices ESG references in an institutional	Includes explicit ESG objectives in	Sets ESG-related targets in a department'	Approves a strategic plan with defined ESG	Advises funders or ministries on requiring

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	plan or funding application.	a project proposal.	s annual plan.	objectives and dedicated resourcing.	ESG integration in cultural-sector funding.
Description	Ability to move ESG from isolated projects and individual motivation into formal institutional strategy, planning, budgeting and management systems. Identified as one of the two highest-priority governance gaps in the needs analysis.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	CSRD/ESRS G1 (adapted); OECD governance principles; EQF				

IV.5 Stakeholder communication and ESG reporting

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands the purpose of reporting to funders and stakeholders.	Contributes ESG-relevant information to reports and communications.	Coordinates departmental input into institutional ESG reporting.	Establishes institutional ESG communication and reporting frameworks.	Shapes sector standards for ESG reporting by cultural institutions.
Competency Examples	Provides basic activity	Prepares a summary of a programme's	Compiles ESG-relevant	Approves a structured annual ESG	Contributes to a shared

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	data for an institutional report.	environmental or social results.	data from multiple projects for an annual report.	report for funders and stakeholders.	sector ESG reporting template for GLAM institutions.
Description	Ability to communicate institutional ESG performance clearly and credibly to funders, governing bodies, communities and the public. Identified as the second-highest-priority governance gap in the needs analysis.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI 102-45 to 56; CSRD/ESRS (for larger or corporate-affiliated institutions)				

IV.6 Data protection and privacy (GDPR)

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands basic principles of data protection.	Applies GDPR-compliant procedures in own work.	Oversees data-protection practices within a department.	Establishes institution-wide data-protection policy and governance.	Shapes sector standards for data protection in cultural institutions.
Competency Examples	Handles visitor or user data according to	Follows correct consent procedures	Reviews a department's data-handling	Approves an institutional GDPR compliance	Advises on national data-protection

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
	institutional guidance.	when collecting visitor or donor data.	procedures for GDPR compliance.	and data-governance policy.	guidance for GLAM institutions handling sensitive collections and visitor data.
Description	Ability to ensure that personal data relating to visitors, users, staff, donors and community contributors is collected, stored and used in compliance with data protection law. Recorded as the second-lowest-gap competency across the entire needs analysis.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GDPR; national data-protection authorities' guidance				

IV.7 Data management for ESG purposes

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Records basic ESG-related data when requested.	Organises ESG-related data for use in own reporting.	Establishes data-management processes for ESG purposes within a department.	Integrates ESG data management into institutional information systems.	Shapes sector approaches to ESG data management and interoperability.

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
Competency Examples	Enters energy or participation data into an institutional spreadsheet.	Maintains a simple record of a programme's ESG-relevant indicators.	Sets up a shared system for tracking departmental ESG data.	Approves adoption of a digital tool for institution-wide ESG data management.	Contributes to a shared sector data standard for ESG indicators in GLAM institutions.
Description	Ability to organise, maintain and use data specifically for ESG monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes, distinct from general data-protection compliance.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI Standards; CSRD/ESRS (for larger institutions)				

IV.8 Governance of partners and suppliers

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
EQF Level	EQF 3–4	EQF 5–6	EQF 6–7	EQF 7–8	EQF 8
Descriptor	Understands that partners and suppliers should meet basic ethical and environmental standards.	Applies ESG criteria when selecting or working with partners and suppliers.	Manages partner and supplier relationships against ESG criteria for a department.	Establishes institutional policy for governing partners and suppliers on	Shapes sector-wide standards for ESG governance of the cultural-

Sub-Level Competencies	L1 – Associate	L2 – Professional	L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	L5 – Principal
				ESG grounds.	heritage value chain.
Competency Examples	Checks a supplier's basic credentials before a purchase.	Prefers a supplier with recognised environmental or social credentials.	Reviews a supplier's performance against agreed ESG criteria.	Approves an institutional supplier code of conduct covering ESG criteria.	Leads a cross-institutional initiative setting shared ESG criteria for suppliers and partners.
Description	Ability to select, monitor and hold accountable external partners, suppliers and contractors against environmental, social and governance criteria.				
GLAM-Relevant Alignment	GRI 308, 414; EU public-procurement directives				

Career Progression Pathway — Governance Competencies

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L1 – Associate	New staff member, volunteer	Follows codes of ethics, data-protection and risk procedures.
L2 – Professional	Curator/librarian/archivist, registrar	Applies ethical, data-protection and risk practices in own decisions.
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Department head, compliance/registrar lead	Oversees departmental ethics, risk and ESG data practices.

Level	Illustrative GLAM roles	Focus within this domain
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Deputy director, head of governance/administration	Embeds ESG into institutional strategy, budgeting and reporting.
L5 – Principal	Director, board member, sector governance adviser	Shapes sector standards for ESG governance, transparency and reporting.

Assessment Criteria — Governance Competencies

Level	Assessment focus	Example evidence
L1 – Associate	Compliance with ethics, data-protection and risk procedures	Evidence of following institutional codes and GDPR procedures
L2 – Professional	Application of ethical and risk-aware decision-making	Documented decisions reflecting ethical and risk considerations
L3 – Senior Professional / Manager	Departmental governance and ESG data oversight	Departmental risk registers; ESG data-management processes
L4 – Lead Professional / Senior Manager	Institutional ESG governance, planning and reporting	Approved ESG-integrated strategic plans and reports
L5 – Principal	Sector governance standard-setting	Contribution to sector/policy guidance on ESG governance and reporting

5 Ways Forward

The ESG4GLAM Competency Framework is not conceived as a finished or static product, but as a living reference designed to be applied, tested, challenged and refined through real use across the GLAM sector over time. Because it is built directly on the ESG4GLAM Competency Needs Analysis, its future development should remain equally evidence-based: as institutions apply the Framework, their experience should feed back into revisions of the domains, competencies, levels and assessment criteria it contains. The needs analysis itself points to five priority directions along which this future application should be organised.

5.1 Embedding the Framework in education and training

The needs analysis shows that ESG-relevant content is already present in many higher-education and vocational curricula relevant to the GLAM sector — cultural heritage management, library and information science, museum studies, cultural tourism, conservation and archival studies — but that this content is embedded implicitly and unevenly, distributed across disciplinary subjects rather than organised as a defined, assessable competency area. As a result, graduates may absorb elements of environmental, social or governance thinking without ever encountering them labelled or structured as ESG competencies, and institutions have no common reference point for what a "sustainability-literate" GLAM professional should know and be able to do.

Higher-education institutions, vocational-training providers and professional-development bodies can use this Framework to close that gap: by mapping existing modules, courses and placements against the Framework's domains and levels, they can identify where ESG content already exists, where it is missing, and where it needs to be made explicit through defined learning outcomes. This includes translating fragmented disciplinary content into structured curricula, developing dedicated modules or micro-credentials for specific competencies (for example, environmental emergency preparedness, social impact assessment, or ESG data use), and embedding assessment methods — practical assignments, portfolios, placements — that test demonstrated competency rather than only theoretical knowledge. Over time, this should allow the Framework to function as a shared reference point connecting formal education, vocational training and continuing professional development for the sector.

5.2 Supporting institutional capacity-building under real resource constraints

The needs analysis is unambiguous that the primary obstacle to ESG competency development in the GLAM sector is structural rather than attitudinal: insufficient working time, chronically underfunded professional development budgets, short-term project-based

funding cycles, and the absence of dedicated ESG roles or resourcing in the majority of institutions, particularly smaller and medium-sized ones. Respondents across the survey, focus groups and interviews consistently reported that they understand what ESG requires, but lack the time, staffing, budget and institutional mandate to act on that understanding systematically.

This has a direct implication for how the Framework should be applied: it must be introduced together with practical tools that reduce, rather than add to, the administrative burden on institutions. Checklists, templates, self-assessment instruments and simple decision-support resources — designed so that they can be used without extensive prior ESG expertise — should accompany the Framework's competency descriptions, allowing institutions to identify priorities and take action directly, rather than first commissioning external expertise to interpret the Framework. Equally importantly, any future reporting, certification or monitoring mechanisms built on the Framework must be calibrated so that they remain achievable for micro and small institutions, including volunteer-run libraries and single-person archives, rather than inadvertently rewarding only those organisations that already have the staff and budget to produce extensive documentation. Capacity-building efforts should therefore prioritise time-efficient, low-overhead formats — short courses, peer exchange, embedded mentoring — over resource-intensive training programmes that only well-funded institutions can afford to release staff to attend.

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5.3 Informing funding and policy alignment

Because a large share of GLAM institutions operate under public funding, project-based grants, or mixed public/non-profit models, the conditions attached to funding and policy frameworks have a decisive influence on whether ESG competency development is prioritised or left to individual initiative. The needs analysis shows that where ESG is embedded in funding criteria, evaluation requirements or institutional strategy, it becomes an operational priority; where it remains optional, it is consistently outcompeted by more immediate operational demands.

Funders, ministries, heritage authorities and library and archive networks can use this Framework as a reference point for embedding ESG competency requirements into grant programmes, funding calls and institutional evaluation criteria, giving these commitments practical teeth rather than leaving them as general aspirations. At the same time, aligning the Framework's five progression levels with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) allows national qualification authorities, professional bodies and training providers to position GLAM-specific ESG competencies within broader qualification systems, supporting the recognition, comparability and portability of ESG competencies across countries, institution types and professional pathways. This alignment should function as a structural reference point rather than a rigid constraint, ensuring that funding and policy instruments reflect the genuine operating conditions of the GLAM sector rather than generic corporate ESG expectations.

5.4 Fostering cross-sub-sector and cross-border collaboration

A recurring finding across the focus groups and interviews is that the GLAM sector remains internally divided: libraries, museums, archives and galleries frequently operate within separate professional associations, networks, conferences and knowledge-sharing circles, even though they face closely related ESG challenges and could learn a great deal from one another's practice. Participants identified this fragmentation as a significant missing

resource, particularly for smaller institutions that lack the scale to develop ESG expertise internally and would benefit substantially from access to peers who have already addressed similar problems.

The Framework's shared structure and common language — applicable across all four GLAM sub-sectors — are intended to provide the connective infrastructure for this kind of exchange. It can support the creation of peer-learning networks that bring together practitioners from different sub-sectors and countries around specific competencies (for example, environmental emergency preparedness for collection-holding institutions, or social impact assessment across all four sub-sectors); structured institutional exchanges, in which staff visit partner organisations to observe practice directly and identify transferable approaches; and embedded specialist mentoring models, in which a sustainability expert works alongside institutional staff over time rather than delivering a one-off external lecture. Cross-border application of the Framework can further support the exchange of practice between countries at different stages of ESG maturity, while national or linguistic adaptation ensures that this exchange remains genuinely accessible rather than dominated by better-resourced institutions or English-language networks.

5.5 Ensuring accessibility, credibility and proportionality of recognition

Finally, the needs analysis found that no formal, standardised or sector-specific system for recognising or assessing ESG competencies currently exists in the GLAM sector, and that where recognition does occur, it tends to be indirect — linked to project outputs, institutional awards, or adjacent professional qualifications rather than to ESG competency as such. When asked what future validation mechanisms should look like, respondents converged on a consistent set of principles that should guide the development of any recognition system built on this Framework.

Validation should be grounded in evidence of practical, demonstrated application of a competency, rather than in mere attendance at a course or completion of a module, so that credentials genuinely reflect capability rather than participation. It should be delivered through flexible, modular formats accessible to working professionals who cannot commit to lengthy in-person programmes, and it should be available in national languages, since materials offered only in English were repeatedly identified as a barrier to uptake in several partner countries. Any credentials or certifications issued should carry the backing of a credible, recognised body, since institutions — particularly those wary of reputational risk or accusations of greenwashing — are unlikely to endorse recognition mechanisms that lack institutional legitimacy. At the same time, recognition mechanisms must remain proportionate to the resourcing realities of institutions of every size: validation processes that

assume the administrative capacity of a large national museum will simply exclude the volunteer-run library or single-person archive that most needs support. Wherever possible, future recognition mechanisms should also be designed to interoperate with existing sector-specific certification schemes — such as environmental certification programmes already used by some cultural institutions, or established sector quality seals and awards — so that the Framework strengthens and connects existing recognition infrastructure rather than competing with or duplicating it.

6. Conclusion

The ESG4GLAM Competency Framework translates a robust, sector-specific evidence base — an online survey of 120 respondents, six cross-country focus groups, and 34 expert interviews spanning multiple GLAM sub-sectors, institution sizes and national contexts — into a practical, actionable structure for developing ESG capability across galleries, libraries, archives and museums. It is not a theoretical construct imported from another sector and adapted after the fact; every domain, competency, descriptor and priority ranking in the Framework can be traced directly back to what GLAM professionals themselves identified as important, as lacking, and as needed for their own institutions to move forward.

Organised into four interconnected domains — Cross-Cutting, Environmental, Social and Governance ESG Competencies — and comprising 31 distinct competencies, each mapped across five progressive levels aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF 3–8), the Framework is deliberately designed to accommodate the full diversity of the sector it serves. It is equally usable by a single-person archive and a national museum network, by a volunteer-run public library and a corporate-affiliated gallery, by a long-established public institution and a newly founded cultural organisation. This flexibility is not incidental: it responds directly to the needs-analysis finding that the GLAM sector is overwhelmingly composed of small and medium-sized, often publicly funded or non-profit institutions, for which any competency model that assumes dedicated ESG staff, generous budgets or extensive administrative capacity would simply fail to be adopted. Just as importantly, the Framework is built to be recognisable to GLAM professionals as a structure for what they already value and, in large part, already do — naming, organising and making visible the sustainability, inclusion and ethical commitments that are frequently already embedded in daily practice, rather than presenting ESG as an external agenda imposed on the sector from outside.

By making ESG competencies explicit, level-differentiated and assessable — while remaining firmly grounded in the ethical codes, professional standards and public-interest mission that are already central to GLAM practice, rather than in generic corporate ESG or compliance frameworks — the Framework directly addresses the central gap identified throughout the needs analysis: not a lack of awareness, since importance scores exceeded 4.2 out of 5 in every single domain, but a persistent shortfall in the operational tools, institutional structures, data practices and resourcing needed to translate that awareness into systematic, resourced and accountable action. Where GLAM institutions already possess strong ethical foundations, as in codes of conduct or data protection, the Framework builds directly on that strength; where the sector's own evidence points to critical gaps — environmental emergency preparedness, cross-cutting ESG literacy and data use, integration of ESG into

institutional planning and reporting, social impact assessment, and staff wellbeing — the Framework gives these priorities a defined place, a progression logic, and a shared vocabulary for addressing them.

In this sense, the Framework should be understood as more than a descriptive taxonomy of skills. It is intended as the connective infrastructure that allows the wider ambitions of the ESG4GLAM project to function as a coherent whole: it provides the competency foundation on which the ESG4GLAM training course, self-assessment tools and Knowledge Box are built, ensuring that everything the project subsequently develops — learning content, practical checklists, recognition mechanisms, peer-learning formats — refers back to the same evidence-based structure rather than to disconnected, ad hoc definitions of what ESG means for cultural heritage work. As the Framework is applied, tested and used across institutions of different sizes, sub-sectors and countries, it is expected to evolve; but its founding purpose will remain constant — to help the GLAM sector move from broad, already-strong awareness of why ESG matters, to the systematic, resourced and accountable practice that safeguards collections, serves communities and sustains the long-term public mission of galleries, libraries, archives and museums.

Appendix A: Terminology Glossary

Term	Definition
GLAM	Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums — the four core sub-sectors addressed by this Framework, alongside related multi-functional cultural institutions.
Bizot Green Protocol	A set of sector-endorsed guidelines promoting environmentally sustainable practice in loans, exhibitions and collection climate control among major museums and galleries.
Faro Convention	The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, which frames heritage as a shared resource requiring participatory governance.
Preventive conservation	Measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimising future deterioration or loss of collections, rather than treating damage after it occurs.
Deaccessioning	The formal, ethically governed process of permanently removing an object from a collection.
Checkbox approach	A superficial, compliance-driven mode of ESG engagement in which institutions adopt sustainability language or isolated activities without substantive change to practice or decision-making.
Cross-cutting ESG competencies	Foundational, enabling competencies (ESG literacy, integrated E–S–G thinking, organisational change, data use, digital sustainability) that underpin effective environmental, social and governance practice.
EQF	The European Qualifications Framework, a reference structure linking national qualifications systems across Europe on the basis of learning outcomes.
GDPR	The EU General Data Protection Regulation, governing the collection, storage and use of personal data, including visitor, user, donor and staff data held by GLAM institutions.
CSRD / ESRS	The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and its European Sustainability Reporting Standards, relevant to larger or corporate-affiliated GLAM institutions with formal sustainability-reporting obligations.

Term	Definition
Knowledge Box	The practical toolkit (checklists, templates, self-assessment instruments and resources) developed under the ESG4GLAM project to support application of this Competency Framework.