

Software Engineer Career Framework

Explanatory Notes:

- The intention is to use this framework for all developers. For this reason, we've used the term *Software Engineer* (instead of *Full Stack Developer* or *Cloud API Developer*).
- Our existing probation/performance review questions are a flat list. This framework provides more detailed expectations, relative to each level. In time, the review process will migrate to using this framework.
- In most cases, a level builds on the expectations from the preceding levels: someone at level SE2 must also meet the level SE1 expectations.
- It's important to understand that what is listed in the level descriptions are example behaviours, and not checkboxes for promotion. Doing everything listed there is neither necessary nor sufficient for a promotion. The expectation is that you demonstrate a level of impact consistent with each of the axis descriptions for your level. The magnitude of your impact is ultimately the measure of your career growth.
- Promotions from one level to another are considered in our twice-yearly performance review.
- You must be consistently meeting the expectations (typically for at least 6 months) of the level above before being considered for a promotion
- An in-band compensation increase (while staying at the same level) can follow a performance review, in recognition of exceeding expectations in your current level without having yet met the expectations of the next level
- These are the expectations for software engineers after they have completed their onboarding. Some of these expectations (such as around communication) would start on day 1, but others (such as expertise in the codebase) would not be expected until they are fully ramped up.
- Salary bands are indicative only and based on the current Dublin market (as of Q4 2023).
- Additional benefits such as pension, healthcare, equity and bonuses are not included in these figures.

References:

We didn't start from scratch on this framework. We researched what other software companies are doing and adjusted to suit our own needs. The best starting point we found was Sourcegraph:

- <https://handbook.sourcegraph.com/departments/engineering/dev/career-development/framework/>
- <https://about.sourcegraph.com/blog/software-engineer-career-ladder>
- <https://about.sourcegraph.com/blog/software-engineer-career-paths>

Software Engineer Levels	Axes				
SE1 <i>From €███k</i>	Technical	Execution	Teamwork	Communication	Vision
<p>An engineer focused on learning, growth, and establishing themselves as a contributing team member.</p> <p>Develops features with supervision, support and direction.</p> <p>Typically has a relevant Bachelor's degree (or equivalent practical experience).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes technical solutions to well-scoped tasks, with guidance. • Demonstrates the essentials needed to do work in their domain. • Increases their technical knowledge through reading, observing, and doing. • Familiar with our SDLC and documentation and knows how to efficiently acquire knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages their own time and wellbeing, meeting commitments while finding balance between work and rest. • Recognizes when they're blocked and asks for support. • Is flexible to change and occasional context switching. • Eager to learn and solve problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews code for their team members by asking questions and applying what they learned. • Integrates feedback from team members to deliver high-quality solutions. • Follows team processes and helps keep documentation & tickets up-to-date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates empathetically. • Actively asks team members questions to seek feedback and clarifications, including cross-functionally (e.g. Design and Product). • Participates and demonstrates curiosity in team meetings. • Reacts well to feedback and is able to quickly learn from it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands how CoolPlanet works at the highest level. • Exercises user empathy, whether their users are internal or external. • Ability to see the bigger picture
SE2 <i>From €███k</i>	Technical	Execution	Teamwork	Communication	Vision
<p>A solid and autonomous contributor, executor, and collaborator.</p> <p>Completes assignments which have clear, near-term objectives independently while still requiring guidance for more complex tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient in core technical skills of their primary focus area, while continuing to develop proficiency in some aspects. • Writes maintainable, well-tested code that aligns with the style and practices of the team/codebase. • Invests in their own productivity; willingly explores new tools, skills, and areas of the codebase. • Takes ownership of their tickets, including QA and deployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not scared of foreign code and embraces it as a learning moment. • Breaks down tasks and cuts scope as appropriate to deliver results reliably and on time. • When faced with roadblocks, identifies appropriate courses of action, engaging others or unblocking themselves as appropriate. • Self-sufficient and able to deliver without much guidance including being able to seek and lead smaller projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides helpful, timely code reviews. • Prioritises their own work in alignment with team goals. • Participates in identifying problems, suggesting improvements, and helping with solutions. • Proactively adds documentation to help others. • Gives timely, helpful feedback to others and trusts them to decide to what extent to incorporate it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can explain the reasoning and trade-offs behind their technical decisions. • Detects problems in requirements and actively engages to resolve them. • Communicates clearly (in meetings and asynchronously), sharing assumptions and context. • Is learning to present internally and externally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has understanding of how users interact with their product/infrastructure. • Contributes ideas for enhancements to existing features

SE3 <i>From €███k</i>	Technical	Execution	Teamwork	Communication	Vision
<p>An experienced, strong individual contributor.</p> <p>Independently resolves complex problems and requires minimal direction</p> <p>Contributes to cross-cutting concerns.</p> <p>Trains others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert in their domain with a deep understanding of the code. • Efficiently debugs complex issues and is able to determine the root cause. • Finds technical solutions to open-ended, potentially ambiguously defined problems. • Exposed to and comfortable in leading larger technical tasks • Proactive about potential issues without overengineering. • Identifies areas for improvement and enhances common code, balancing new feature development with refactoring, upgrades, cleanups, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingly dives into unfamiliar areas of the codebase. • When finding solutions, identifies the core problems that need to be solved, as well as goals, risks, trade-offs, customer impact, technical debt, non-technical factors, etc. • Contributes to estimates and helps to set realistic deadlines, cutting scope appropriately. • Accountable end-to-end, through planning, shipping, cleanup, and maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in the hiring process where possible, conducting interviews and writing helpful feedback. • Helps onboarding and orienting new team members; mentors more junior team members where possible. • Gives feedback on higher-level aspects (architecture, scalability, UX, security, etc.) in code reviews, holding team members to the same high standard they set for themselves. • Routinely drives improvements in team/company processes • Actively unblocks team members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates progress and status updates to stakeholders. • Communicates technical issues and decisions clearly, brings clarity to discussions and helps drive them forward. • Represents the team well in discussions with other teams, customers, and stakeholders. • Helps retain user relationships and incorporates solutions/suggestions from them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains awareness of approaches outside of CoolPlanet that we're not using, and uses this to help define best practices for the team/domain. • Proposes additions and changes to the product roadmap within their areas of expertise.
SE4 <i>From €███k</i>	Technical	Execution	Teamwork	Communication	Vision
<p>A particularly experienced, impactful contributor.</p> <p>Brings domain expertise to complex projects.</p> <p>Contributes outside their direct area of responsibility.</p> <p>Leads medium-to-large features, multi-person efforts that often cross team boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality technical decision making, leading team-sized tasks that affect one or more complex systems / areas. • Consistently incorporates non-technical factors (e.g. team abilities, cost, deadlines) into technical decisions and weights them appropriately. • Proficiency beyond their domain: broad understanding of our architecture, debugs expertly across the broader codebase, advises on broader technical issues, etc. • Invests in technology, tools, processes and reusable patterns that benefit their entire team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable for the team's quality of work and professionalism • Independently scopes and implements solutions to complex problems. • Works closely with all stakeholders to validate technical feasibility of the product roadmap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifts team members through feedback and mentorship. • Supports the product owners in ensuring that the dev team is always working on the right problems with the right scope so that the team can reliably deliver on time. • Ability to delegate projects and tasks and clearly communicate capacity needed to work on them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident in ambiguous or challenging situations and those involving multiple stakeholders. • Effectively able to convince and challenge team members and other stakeholders using valid expertise and respectful communication. • Actively seeks dissenting opinions, disconfirming evidence, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines their deep technical, domain and user knowledge to propose new or improved platform capabilities • Shares a long-term vision that influences the product roadmap and technical platform.
<p>TBC</p>					