

E-PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR DEITY

I. Preamble

- i. Participation of citizens in governance and decision making process of government is the basic tenet of democracy. Use of ICT enabled media, devices and processes for participation in government and governance is referred to as e-Participation. There is a need to institutionalise e-participation in policy making and decision making to formulate ways to balance wider participation and expertise.
- ii. With the increased pervasiveness of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) it is now possible to interact with various stakeholders at an individual level and even in real time. This provides opportunity to government agencies to interact more closely with citizens and enables citizens to provide input into decisions that impact their lives. The advent of social media has given impetus to consideration for innovative application of ICTs for more broad based participation and opportunities to deepen such engagements. It is therefore necessary that new tools and approaches are developed and deployed to meet increasing request for public participation and democratic decision making. The increased connectivity of citizens and businesses creates increased expectations with respect to quality, transparency and efficiency of public services as well as access to government and its institutions. Government and public institutions need to adapt to transformation happening in society and keep up with innovations in ICTs.
- iii. Government of India in 2012 notified the Citizen Engagement Framework for e Government Projects and Framework and Guidelines for Use of Social Media by Government Agencies.
- iv. Department of Electronics & Information Technology (DeitY), in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology is *inter alia* responsible for formulation, implementation and review of national policies in the field of Information Technology, Electronics and Internet (all matters other than licensing of Internet Service Provider). Mission of DeitY is e-Development of India through multi pronged strategy of e-Infrastructure creation to facilitate and promote e-governance, promotion of Electronics & Information Technology-Information Technology Enabled Services (IT-ITeS) Industry, promotion of e-inclusion, enabling creation of Innovation / Research & Development (R&D) infrastructure in ICT&E, building Knowledge network and securing India's cyber space.
- v. DeitY works in the critical domain of e-Development and policies formulated by decisions taken at DeitY have direct and indirect implications on accessibility to, deployment and use of ICTs across the country.

- vi. There is a need to enhance e-participation initiatives and address challenges related to trust and process transparency and create a collaborative environment which supports all stakeholders to work in partnership.
- vii. There is also a need to empower and enable citizens and civil society organisations engaged in policy-making processes as well as to provide policy-makers with the decision support tools to unpack information, opinion, perception and collective knowledge that accumulate as a result of e-participation.
- viii. There is therefore a need to put in place an e-Participation Policy for DeitY.

II. Vision

“To build partnership in policy & project formulation and implementation and make decision making more transparent and inclusive”

III. Mission

To create enabling environment and provide access to e-participation tools and technology leading to more effective implementation of policies and project formulation and implementation

IV. Objectives

- i. Collaboration: To ensure that all public policy formulation and decision making is undertaken in a collaborative environment by undertaking meaningful engagement with relevant stakeholders
- ii. Representation: To encourage and enable all relevant stakeholders especially those from the marginalised, vulnerable and under-represented groups to participate using various ICTs
- iii. Accessibility: To make all consultations accessible to all stakeholders through use of local language and also make all consultations accessible to differently abled stakeholders through appropriate use of ICTs
- iv. Information provisioning: To ensure that all relevant information is made available proactively on the DeitY website
- v. Crowd sourcing: To crowd source ideas, expertise and feedback on upcoming technologies and ongoing projects

V. Consultation Domains

- i. To cover policy and project formulation as well as other critical schemes and initiatives
 - a. Consultation mandatory for all draft policy papers

- b. Decision regarding individual subjects/domains/issues/schemes/projects may be by Group/organisation heads based on size, potential impact, criticality, importance, size etc.

VI. Strategy

- i. Creating multi-channel, multi-lingual access to information
 - a. To enable access to information through multiple channels such as website, mobile devices, social media platforms etc.
 - b. To make information available in at least two languages and provide translation tools for all official Indian Languages
 - c. To enable and promote technology to enable access for people with disabilities
- ii. Creating new and leveraging existing platforms for e-Participation
 - a. To leverage DeitY and other relevant websites by strengthening it with e-Participation tools to obtain public opinion (polls, surveys, bulletin boards, chat room, blogs, web casting, and discussion forums, etc.)
 - b. To leverage existing social media platforms such as FaceBook, Twitter etc. for seeking feedback and improving service
 - c. To create new public participation platform such as Citizen Engagement Portal that may be leveraged by other departments and ministries
 - d. To establish feedback mechanisms for queries, comments and complaints regarding quality of service for DeitY implemented projects through email, onsite service feedback kiosk/app, mobile surveys,
- iii. Defining Framework for Participation
 - a. To create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each group/organisation
 - b. To notify nodal officer for each division responsible for provisioning of information
 - c. To publish a calendar of upcoming e-participation activities To set turnaround time for government to respond to submitted forms/e-mails
 - d. To provision for publishing the results of consultation
 - e. To define archival policy for e-participation on responses by government to stakeholder consultation, queries and inputs

iv. Developing effective partnerships

- a. To facilitate collaboration and partnership amongst various stakeholders including civil society, academia and private sector, in areas of ICTs for inputs and feedback related to projects and policies
- b. To create models for multi-stakeholder collaboration to increase no. of products from Lab to Market
- c. To develop an inclusive network of academia, private sector and implementers working in domains relevant to DeitY and leverage their collective intellect

v. Institutionalising e-Participation

- a. To mandate e-Consultation on all matter related to public policy and documents
- b. To promote awareness amongst all DeitY employees and its organisations
- c. To build and enhance capacities within DeitY and its organisations through internal and/or external resources
- d. To undertake training programmes for relevant DeitY nodal officers
- e. To promote e-Participation by incentivising internal as well as external stakeholders
- f. To establish official DeitY presence on relevant social networking platforms

VII. Operationalisation of the Policy

This Policy shall be operationalised by way of guidelines and detailed plans of action at levels of each individual division and organisation.