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Punjab State e-Participation Policy

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE REFORMS & PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

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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 institutionalize 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. 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.

iv. There is also a need to empower and enable citizens and civil society organizations 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.

v.   **NeSDA (National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment) framework**, launched in August **2018**, was conceptualized with an overall

objective to measure the depth and effectiveness of existing e-Governance service delivery mechanisms. **NeSDA framework 2021** introduced new assessment parameters to evaluate e-Governance service delivery. The additional 6 parameters, viz., Open Government Data, **e-Participation**, Alignment to IndEA (India Enterprise Architecture), Alignment to SDG (UN's Sustainability Development Goals), Leveraging Emerging Technologies, and Cyber Resilience are included in NeSDA framework 2021. These policies shall play a key role in strengthening the ranking of the State in the NeSDA assessment.

vi. **The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), GoI** have already implemented and notified **e-Participation Policy**.

vii. Therefore, there is a need to put in place an **e-Participation Policy** for the **State of Punjab**.

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 marginalized, 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 websites of State Government.

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/organization 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 Government 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 state ministries.

   d.   To establish feedback mechanisms for queries, comments and complaints regarding quality of service for Government implemented projects through email, onsite service feedback kiosk/app, mobile surveys, etc.

iii.   **Defining Framework for Participation**

   a.   To create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each group/organization.

   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 Government and leverage their collective intellect.

  v. **Institutionalizing e-Participation**

   a. To mandate e-Consultation on all matter related to public policy and documents.

   b. To promote awareness amongst all Government employees and its organizations.

   c. To build and enhance capacities within Government and its organizations through internal and/or external resources.

   d. To undertake training programme for relevant Government nodal officers.

   e. To promote e-Participation by incentivizing internal as well as external stakeholders.

   f. To establish official Government presence on relevant social networking platforms.

VII. *Role & Responsibility*

Following are the roles & responsibilities of the Department of Governance Reforms & Public Grievances (DoGR&PG) for e-Participation policy in the State:

  i. To update the e-Participation Policy from time to time and to address new or emerging needs and best practices.

  ii. To issue procedures, guidelines and best practices to support the e-Participation Policy.

  iii. To provide instructions or advise any action that Government departments should undertake to support effective implementation of this policy.

iv. To monitor progress of implementation of this policy at Government departments.

VIII. *MyGov e-Participation Platform*

i. MyGov has been established as Government of India's Citizen Engagement Platform which collaborates with multiple Government bodies/ Ministries to engage with citizens for policy formulation and seeks the opinion of people on issues/ topics of public interest and welfare.

ii. MyGov has adopted multiple engagement methodologies like discussions, tasks, polls, surveys, blogs, talks, pledges, quizzes and on-ground activities by innovatively using internet, mobile apps, IVRS, SMS and outbound dialing (OBD) technologies.

iii. MyGov has also launched State instances in 14 States. Punjab State instance of MyGov can also be launched to increase citizen engagement and contribution to enhance the quality of the services provided by the Government, and to ensure customer satisfaction.

IX. *General Guidelines for the use of e-Participation Platform*

i. Any statement that reflecting bias, discrimination, racism and politics are strictly prohibited.

ii. Abusive language, personal attacks, defamatory statements and vulgarity are strictly prohibited.

iii. Avoid using inappropriate language or offensive language.

iv. Comments that are irrelevant or out of context not allowed.

v. Topics and web link connecting to pornography websites is strictly prohibited.

vi. No permit comments that violate any legal right or intellectual property right.

vii. Commercial advertisements are strictly prohibited such as competition, pyramid schemes, get-rich-quick schemes, prize or free offers and junk e-mail on the web.

viii. The information provided does not contain any viruses, Trojan horses, worms, time bombs, cancel boots or other computer programming routines that are intended to damage, detrimentally interfere with, surreptitiously intercept or expropriate any system, data or information.

   ix.   The administrator of e-Participation does not endorse, support, represent or guarantee the truthfulness, accuracy, or reliability of any communications posted by other users or endorses any opinions expressed by users. You acknowledge that any reliance or material posted by other users will be at your own risk.

   x.   The administrator of e-Participation may change or delete Content or features at any time, in any way, for any or no reason.

   xi.   The administrator of e-Participation will review and update or amend this policy or Guideline from time to time without prior announcement/notice.

   xii.   Users shall be subject to terms and conditions of e-Participation policies or guidelines.

X.   *Operationalization of the Policy*

This policy shall be operationalized by way of guidelines and detailed plans of action at levels of each individual division and organization.