

**Department of Information Technology**

**Framework  
for  
Citizen Engagement in e-Governance**



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# Framework for Citizen Engagement in NeGP

## 1. Introduction

India is a democratic republic and the philosophy of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity are enshrined in its constitution. The democratic principles of the country flow from the Preamble of the Constitution itself. Democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Effectively this means that the Government is elected by the people, it is responsible and accountable to the people. One of the ways of ensuring responsibility and accountability is by actively engaging with the public while making policies that impact them directly. However, since independence public participation in policy making has been minimal. Governance was process and procedure centric and generally a top down approach was used for policy making. In addition, given the vast size of the country, federal structure of governance with over 240,000+ local governance institutions and large population coupled with its other complexities viz multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual society, did not make itself amenable to large scale public participation in policy making. Efforts were however made at several levels including by creation of Panchayati Raj institutions, seeking civil society inputs in implementation of large projects, legislation of RTI Act etc. but it was very difficult to consult all stakeholders in any given project.

In the early 1990s, two changes swept across the world – the focus on good governance with increasing private sector participation in delivery of public services and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and internet – technologies that potentially could connect any and everyone in real time. The concept of e-Government or e-Governance was born through the amalgamation of these two. E-Governance marked a paradigm shift in the philosophy of governance – citizen centricity instead of process centricity and large scale public participation through ICTs enablement.

India also did not remain untouched from the changes sweeping across the world. Several e-Governance projects across the country were being implemented that focussed on improving public service delivery, bringing greater transparency in government processes and ensuring more effective accountability. The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), based on the learning from these projects was approved in May 2006 and comprises of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 8 Components with a vision to “make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man”. The cornerstones of NeGP are citizen centricity, identification of services & service levels, centralised planning & decentralised implementation and Public Private Partnership (PPP).

As more and more projects are getting implemented, an increasing need has been felt for wider and deeper participation of and engagement with all stakeholders especially public at large to ensure that citizen centricity is maintained in all projects. To enable and support this goal, a Citizen Engagement Framework for e-Governance Projects has been developed for ministries and departments.

## **2. Need for Citizen Engagement Framework**

There is now a greater consensus that citizen participation and civic engagement are the building blocks for good governance and e-Governance is a critical component of good governance. Also, as the government is considering enacting the Electronic Service Delivery Law, the possibility of e-Government projects becoming pervasive in all domains of public services is increasingly becoming a reality.

It marks a paradigm shift in delivery of public and essential services – from human to technology based interfaces. The use of a technology interface for delivery of services throws up many challenges especially those related to management of change from human interface to technology interface, adoption of a particular technology, differential access to such services etc.

To make this a success, this essentially means creating awareness in, training of and continuous engagement with both the service provider as well as the service seeker to use new tools for better service and more effective interaction with public.

For undertaking such an engagement, it was therefore felt that a Citizen Engagement Framework was required which would enable project owners/implementers to identify

- Objectives
- Opportunities
- Techniques
- Outcomes

## **3. Target Audience**

The Framework has been developed for all e-Governance projects currently under National e-Governance Plan, whether being implemented at Central or State level. In addition, it will be applicable to all new e-Governance Projects being developed by any Department or Line Ministry of Central Government. All other government agencies including Public Sector Undertakings may also find it useful while conceptualising their own projects. It is expected that the utility of this framework will transcend NeGP and will be used for all projects that use ICT-enabled service delivery model.

## 4. Citizen Engagement

### 4.1 What is Citizen Engagement

Unlike traditional types of engagement – Communication and Consultation, Citizen Engagement is an interactive two way process that encourages participation, exchange of ideas and flow of conversation. It reflects willingness on part of government to share information and make citizens a partner in decision making.

Ideally, citizen engagement requires governments to

- Permit participation in agenda-setting, and
- Ensure that policy or project proposals that are generated as a result of this engagement are taken into account while making a final decision

Citizen engagement may be undertaken at all stages of the policy or project development process and is an iterative process that continually infuses citizens' priorities in policy making/project implementation.

In processes of citizen engagement, citizens may be represented themselves as individuals and sometimes through interest groups such as civil society organisations.

Engagement has been understood and explained in a variety of ways. Engagement as

- Contributor
- Organisation builder
- Empowering process
- Combination of all the above

Politically, the meaning is inevitably linked to the relationship between the citizens and the state institutions.

However, mostly, citizens are often considered either as beneficiaries of government welfare programmes or in PPP terminology referred to as customers, neither of which truly reflects the government-citizen relationship.

Active engagement gives the right to hold others accountable, and accountability is the process of engaging in participation. It seeks greater accountability from the service providers through increased dialogue, consultation and by monitoring and assessing performance externally and mutually.

Citizen engagement goes beyond conventional public consultation by enabling citizens to do more than simply voice an opinion – it also allows them to participate in the deliberation process leading to decisions.

## **4.2 Need for Citizen Engagement**

As the government is incorporating ICTs into the delivery of G2C services, there are hardly any embedded mechanisms to facilitate the voice and space for citizen participation in e-governance. This is especially true for the weakest and the most marginalised sections of society for whom the e-Governance projects are created to serve the most.

The problem is compounded by

- High Rural Population – making outreach and determination of service access point difficult
- Low Literacy Rates – necessitating Assisted Access model of service delivery
- Low Rural Tele-density – lowering the outreach of services in rural areas
- Multi-Lingual Population – necessitating delivery of services in local languages, however, there is limited support available for Indian languages in ICT domain

One of the reasons cited for the high failure rate of e-Governance projects across the world, is poor understanding of user needs. It is therefore believed that Citizen Engagement would result in

- Improved Project Conceptualisation & Decision Making including
  - Identification of services
  - Definition of service levels
  - Identification of preference for Channels of service access
  - Appropriate Process re-engineering
- Increased Awareness leading to
  - Increased uptake of services
  - Avoidance of conflicts
  - Increased Sustainability
  - Increased transparency & Accountability
- Community Empowerment leading to
  - Better monitoring
  - Capacity Building

In addition, Public participation also enhances

- Citizens' recognition of their responsibility to take action to improve their lives and the provision of basic social services
- Citizen ownership of development processes
- Implementation of development programs

By participating in policy making, citizens help ensure that their needs and interests are taken into account in decision-making processes that affect their lives at both the national and local levels. Furthermore, public engagement improves the political position of marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and minorities that are often not taken into consideration.

### **4.3 Ways of Citizen Engagement**

A variety of mechanism may be adopted to incorporate and promote citizen engagement in e-Governance Projects.

a) **Information sharing:** In order to generate awareness and to prepare the citizens, elected representatives and other stakeholders, wide range of information should disseminated. It includes display of citizen's Charter with Listing services and service levels, roles and responsibilities of officials and escalation mechanism, roles & responsibilities of citizens etc. In addition, regular meetings and interfaces may also used to share information. For many departments and services, mobile based voice or text services and web based presence also serves as an additional channel for information sharing.

b) **Consultation:** Consultative meetings with the stakeholders are to be undertaken at different stages of project cycle at regular intervals. Each intervention should be discussed with the citizens, elected representatives, local civil society groups and other stakeholders to get their perspectives included in the designing of the interventions, and thereby increasing the chances of ownership among various stakeholders. Such consultations may be undertaken both online as well as face to face.

c) **Joint assessment:** Participatory assessment and monitoring with the stakeholders, particularly the identified service seekers, are used as tools for enhancing citizen engagement. These include use of a variety of techniques such as joint citizen monitoring, meetings with the elected representatives etc.

d) **Shared decision-making and collaboration:** A range of participatory planning techniques including participatory urban planning at the ward level, comprehensive zonal planning as well sectoral plans like Solid Waste Management (SWM) at the city level may be used for collaborative or shared decision making. It involves engagement of various stakeholders at every stage of the planning process. The most often quoted example of this technique is from Porto Alegre, Brazil.

**Some examples of citizen engagement in India and other countries is placed at Annexure I**

#### ***4.4 Core Values for the Practice of Citizen Engagement***

It is important to note that if care is not taken while identifying the groups and mechanisms for interaction, citizen involvement can lead to a sense of disempowerment and a reduced sense of agency, and participation can be perceived as meaningless, tokenistic or manipulated. Therefore, following must be kept in mind while undertaking citizen engagement:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

(Source: <http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/CoreValues.pdf> IAP2. (c) 2007 International Association for Public Participation)

#### ***4.5 Challenges in Citizen Engagement***

- a) **Limited Trust in Government:** The primary challenge to initiating consultation is trust building. It is seen that generally, government actions are often low on public trust due to many reasons such as not fulfilling promises that have been made publicly; perception of high corruption and nepotism; not taking into consideration community ideas on priority areas for development etc. There is also scepticism towards the reason why participation is being encouraged. Often, it is viewed as a way of showcasing of political strength, or as a token form of consultation and not really to obtain input to improve government priorities.

- b) **Political Reluctance:** Public participation is essentially a political process and is often not formalised or conducted in a structured manner. As such, people are often reluctant to participate. Furthermore, it is often difficult to relate engagement to positive change in everyday life.
- c) **Limited capacity to engage:** In order to engage meaningfully in public policy debates, it is essential that the participants have knowledge about issues at hand and policy-making processes. However, given the limited availability of knowledge and sometimes requirement of specialised skill sets viz. Legal, technical etc. most people believe that their capacity to engage in such processes is limited.
- d) **Lack of Commitment:** Engagement in policy making processes is a long drawn process and often requires individuals to make long term commitments about time and other resources. These are usually limited, thereby limiting the type and continuity of participation.
- e) **Exclusion:** Consultative processes may also be seen as a way of legitimising the view of the dominant groups. In addition, the manner of consultation – time, location, mechanism of participation, language etc. may also result in exclusion of most marginalized and vulnerable groups.

## 5. Citizen Engagement Framework for e-Governance Projects

e-Governance projects are characterised by large outlays and often implemented through Public Private Partnerships. Given the limited penetration of PCs and broadband, challenges of basic literacy, computer literacy and English literacy – the current currency of internet, it is important to engage with citizens and other stakeholders of e-Governance projects. In order to meaningfully engage with citizens, a detailed study of need, stakeholders and frequency must be undertaken. This section elaborates on the essential elements of the Citizen Engagement Framework for e-Government projects.

### 5.1 Engagement Framework

In order to ensure a meaningful engagement with citizens, all interactions must be undertaken in a well thought out and planned manner, wherein all stakeholders must be able to voice their inputs/concerns, due consideration to all must be given and a proper feedback mechanism must be put in place to inform all those participated about the decisions and the reasons thereof.

To help department implement such an engagement, a Framework for Citizen Engagement has been defined. The Framework illustrates critical elements necessary to ensure smooth and meaningful engagement and provides a brief description of each element. Diagrammatically, the Framework can be represented as under:

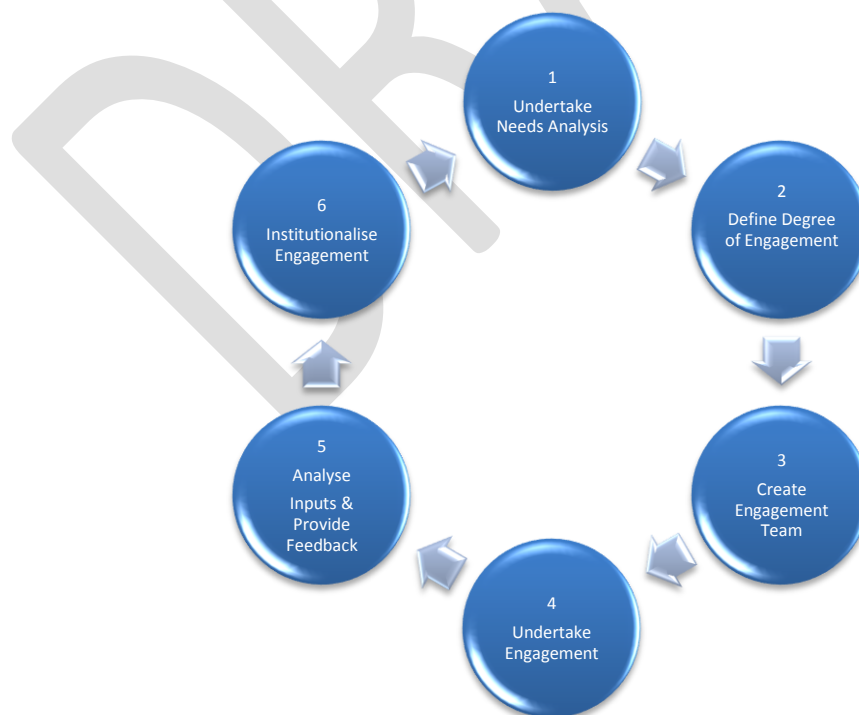


Diagram 1: Framework of Citizen Engagement

### 5.1.1. Undertaking Need Analysis

The first step in citizen engagement process is the identification of need or objective for which such an engagement is being proposed. Some of the objectives, based on project stage may be as under:

- **Conceptualisation & DPR Preparation:** to ensure that the scheme is need-based and drawn up in consultation with community, serving especially the poor and the disadvantaged
- **Implementation - Pilot & Roll Out:** to ensure that envisaged services are being delivered, properly and to right people
- **Post Implementation stage:** to ensure that type & quality of work is in tune with initial identified requirement.
- **Project Enhancement - After the completion of work:** to ensure continuous improvement in the project deliverables

It is easy to identify need for engagement for a new project. However, for ongoing projects, it is often difficult to determine such points of interventions. However, opportunities to engage with citizens exist at all stages of the project. For the purposes of this framework, a project life cycle has been broadly demarcated into 4 stages namely Conceptualisation and DPR preparation, Pilot & Roll Out, Post Implementation and Project Enhancement. For e-Governance Projects some of the needs for citizen engagement in e-Governance projects are mapped below against the stages of the project.

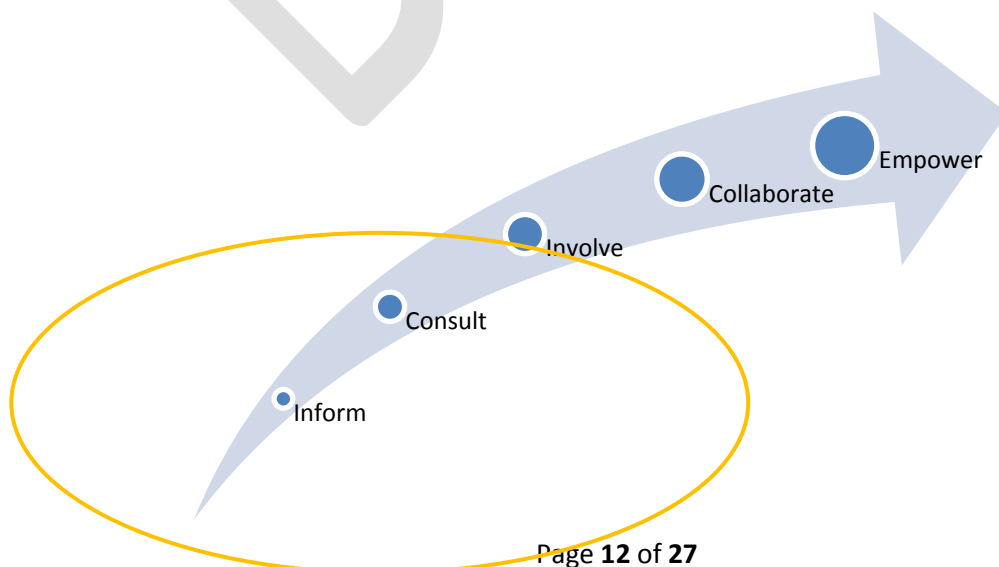
S No	Project Stage	Needs Analysis
1	Conceptualisation & DPR Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To define scope of project</li> <li>• To identify Services to be included</li> <li>• To identify existing &amp; desired Service Levels</li> <li>• To identify access points and channels</li> <li>• To determine ability and willingness to pay for delivery of service through alternate channel/s</li> <li>• To identify current pain points &amp; opportunities for process re-engineering</li> <li>• To identify synergies/dependencies with other departments/processes/institutions</li> </ul>
2	Pilot & Roll Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To seek feedback new channels of service delivery</li> <li>• To measure adherence to service levels</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To measure satisfaction of service delivery</li> <li>• To understand bottlenecks/challenges in service delivery</li> <li>• To identify areas of improvement in the re-engineered process</li> </ul>
3	Post Implementation (Operations & Maintenance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To undertake impact assessment of project</li> <li>• To determine quality of service rendered</li> <li>• To determine impact on overall governance parameters viz. Transparency, accountability, corruption etc.</li> </ul>
4	Project Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To seek inputs for Project Enhancement from the perspective of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New services to be added</li> <li>▪ Adequacy of service levels</li> <li>▪ Adequacy of process re-engineering</li> <li>▪ Enhance quality of service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 1: Needs Analysis vis-a-vis Project Stage

### 5.1.2. Defining Degree of Engagement

In an ideal scenario, the citizens may collaborate from conceptualisation to implementation of the project and may even be empowered to reject or alter the project design at a later stage of the project. The spectrum of citizen engagement can be represented visually as under:



**Diagram 2: Public Participation Spectrum (Source: IAP2 IAP2. (c) 2007 International Association for Public Participation)**

However, in real life, project managers must define the intervention points and degree of engagement. It is recommended that as a first step in engagement, for e-Governance projects, the implementers may seek engagement only in the first three levels of the spectrum i.e. Inform, Consult & Involve. However, as the engagement process matures, the final goal should be collaboration and empowerment.

The engagement must be part of the primary plan of the project implementation cycle and it is also necessary to define the frequency and stage of the engagement at the project planning stage. Some of the key questions that may inform degree and depth such an engagement include:

- Goals & Objectives (long term/short term engagement, establishing baseline, feedback on service etc.)
- Project stage (Conceptualisation, Implementation etc.)
- Stakeholders involved (individuals, citizen groups, elected representatives etc.); and
- Legal and administrative imperatives (legal requirements for undertaking such an activity)

### **5.1.3. Creating Citizen Engagement team**

Since the process of citizen engagement is ongoing, it is recommended a citizen engagement team may be created for the project. This team ideally should consist of

- Internal stakeholders - decision makers, service providers, service/process influencers
- External stakeholder – beneficiaries, civil society organisations, elected representatives

The diversity of team would depend upon the breadth of the project. For example, if the project is on Panchayats or Municipalities, then members of Gram Panchayats or Municipal Corporation may be included in the team, while for projects related to business services may includes members of business associations. The team would be entrusted with the following responsibilities:

- Developing background information
- Publicizing the effort
- Designing benchmarks and criteria for evaluation

- Identifying and recruiting participants
- Selecting tools for citizen participation
- Reporting the outcomes of the process
- Making recommendations based on the outcomes

#### 5.1.4. Undertaking Engagement

The process of citizen engagement is cyclical and can broadly be divided based on the stage of project development. A pictorial depiction of citizen engagement based on project life cycle and possible tools and techniques that may be used in each stage is given below:

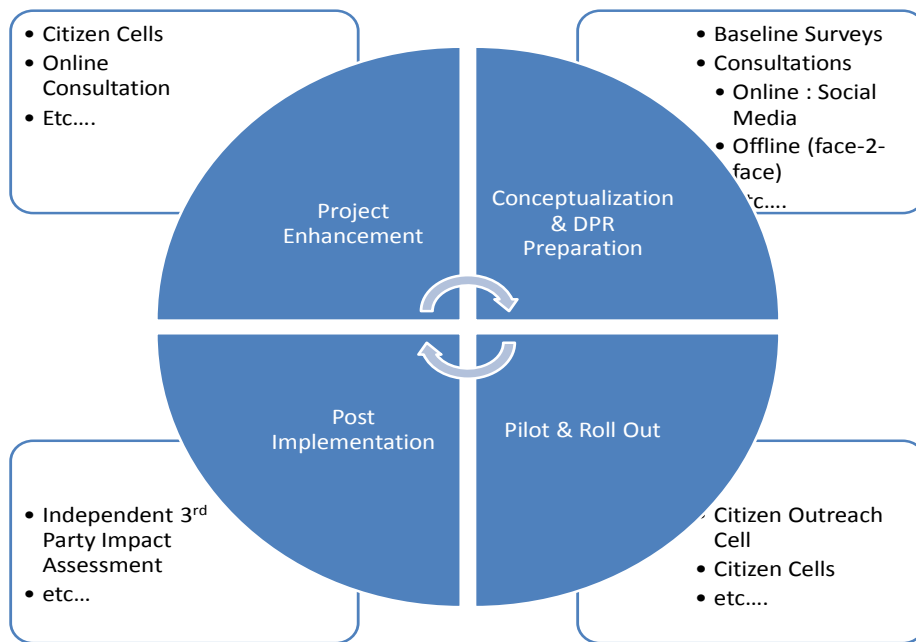


Diagram 3: Citizen Engagement Methods vis-a-vis Project Stages

#### 5.1.5. Techniques of Engagement

There is no one right way of undertaking Citizen Engagement. It will always be context specific and the outcome will depend upon planning, commitment and capacities of involved stakeholders. Given below are some of the techniques that may be used for Citizen Engagement:

S N o	Purpose	Technique	Methods		Advantages	Limitation	Stage of Project Implementation
			Off-line	On-line			
1	Inform	Mass Media – Print, TV, Radio, Community Radio	√		Wide Spread Reach Multi-Lingual Messaging Quick Messaging	Huge Costs Many citizens live in 'Media Dark' areas i.e. where no mass media reaches Specific message targeting not possible Often highlights only negative aspects	All
		Citizen Charter, Bulletin Boards, newsletters	√	√	Transparent way of communicating about services & Service levels Manages service expectations Can also be displayed over internet	Often located in places where it cannot be seen in rural areas Low literacy rates especially limits its use Availability of internet is very low	Pilot & Roll -Out
		New Media – Websites, Portals, Social Media sites, Mobile access devices		√	Viral nature ensure explosive communication Both internet and mobile based communication can be used	Specific interest based targeting possible Excellent for short messaging Limited availability of internet Not amenable for long messages and most users in rural areas have basic phones thereby limiting type of messaging	All
		Face to Face Meetings	√		Detailed discussions can be held	Logistical and managerial issues Trust issues	Pilot & Roll – Out; Project Enhancement
2	Consult	Focus Groups	√	√	Facilitates discussions on specific issues Provides insights into perceived priorities	Logistical, Time and managerial constraints Trust issues Can lead to further	All

					<p>Highlights key issues which need to be addressed</p> <p>Perspective of specific target groups can be discussed</p> <p>Different groups can discuss different aspects of projects based on level of expertise, potential impact etc.</p>	<p>marginalisation of under-representative groups</p> <p>Difficult to comprise perspectives of divergent groups</p> <p>Difficult to consult large population</p> <p>When undertaken in an online mode, restricts participation due to access of internet, language and ability to use new technologies</p>	
		Surveys	v	v	<p>Ability to consult large no. of people</p> <p>Consultation can be done in a structured manner</p> <p>Evidence/Inference compiled can be extrapolated over large population</p> <p>Can be done in both online as well as offline method</p>	<p>Huge costs</p> <p>Can be undertaken only with help of experts</p> <p>Limited flexibility for mid-course correction</p> <p>Quality of Response is heavily dependent upon questionnaire structure</p> <p>Online survey's findings are often not statistically significant and extrapolation is difficult</p> <p>Online surveys have limited applicability due to limited access to internet</p> <p>Consultation of mobile devices (sms based) have limited applicability</p> <p>Response rate</p>	All

						uncertain	
		Expert Panels	√	√	Very useful for complex projects Can get expert opinions for both pros and cons of the project	Choice of panellists may lead to marginalisation of certain points of view Challenging to manage contrasting perspectives Costly to conduct Not always conclusive	Pilot & Roll – Out; Project Enhancement
		Focus Groups	√	√	As given above	As given above	All
		Delphi Process		√	Structured process of getting inputs where responses and conclusions shared Controlled feedback mechanism Very useful in case where participants are in different geographical locations Can be conducted anonymously so that respondents feel comfortable expressing deeply divergent views Useful to explore specific, one-dimensional issues	Limited utility for complex, multi-dimensional modelling  Time consuming – requires several rounds of iterations	Pilot & Roll – Out; Project Enhancement
		Open Meetings/Open days	√		Feedback possible from all stakeholders who choose to be present Can result in greater transparency and accountability	Unless conducted with specific agenda and moderated expertly, they can often degenerate into laissez faire discussion mode Logistical challenges May lead to	Pilot & Roll – Out; Project Enhancement

						accommodating voice of only dominant groups Difficult to manage new expectations	
3	Involve	Citizen Outreach Centres	√		Constancy & Consistency - Fixed Location and time - builds trust Enables involvement on wide ranging issues Provides space to build capacities and enable group as well as individual involvement	Resource intensive - Needs space and manpower Extensive training of facilitators required Difficult to manage new expectations	Pilot & Roll –Out
		Focus Groups	√	√	As Above	As Above	All
		Workshops	√		Excellent for process mapping, identifying bottlenecks and constraints Provides insights into multiple perspectives which can be deliberated upon Can build new relationships Can build ownership	Time and resource intensive Bias/Diversity in selection of participants difficult to manage Difficult to manage new expectations	Project Conceptualisation; Pilot & Roll –Out; Project Enhancement
		Qualitative Interviews	√		In-depth Exploration of issues Useful for engaging people who may not prefer to speak in groups/give voice to un-heard Useful for gaining insights into sensitive issues	Locating and convincing the interviewee Time consuming Extrapolation of findings is difficult Resource intensive – local language and domain experts required	Project Conceptualisation; Project Enhancement
4	Collaborate	New Media – Social Networking, Crowd Sourcing, Wikis		√	Can be an ongoing or issue based Can reach out to both experts as well as non-experts Helps generate multiple	Often feedback is more generic rather than specific in nature Difficult to compile feedback Not easy to	Project Conceptualisation; Post Implementation ; Project Enhancement

					ideas/potential solution in small amounts of time	engage with marginalised and under-represented section	
		Participatory Planning	√		Builds Ownership Builds trust Builds Transparency & Accountability Ensure community's priority based resource allocation Increases opportunity for direct engagement in decision making process Helps in demand projection and management of expectation Instills public confidence	Requires intensive training for internal staff Time-consuming Difficult to achieve common understanding of common needs – differing expectations or goals Difficult to maintain independence and participation of different stakeholders Constant fluidity and dynamism in process	All
5	Empower	Participatory Planning	√		As above	As Above	All
		Stake-holder Dialogue and Concerted Action	√		Joint Planning & Decision making Brings different stakeholders to strategic consensus Identifies opportunities to improve information exchange and decision-making between stakeholders Promotes innovations Promotes identification and exploration of multiple options	Limited capacity/experience to commence the process Multiple/conflicting roles of facilitators Intensive training of all concerned is required Group interests may dominate individual/overall societal interests Non-homogeneity of interest groups Low levels of trusts	All
		Participatory Learning &	√		Appraisal, analysis and action done	As Above	All

		Action			by local people Emphasises on local knowledge and uses group dynamics Facilitates information sharing and learning		
		Matrix Scoring & Ranking	√		Illustrates criteria people use to make decisions Helps to gain an understanding of peoples' priorities and evaluation criteria	As Above	All
		New Media		√	Increased Transparency	Access Issues Confusion with technology and content Lack of trust of the system	All

Table 2: Mapping Techniques of Engagement to Purpose and Project Stage

## 6. Way Forward

Although the concept of citizen engagement or public participation is not new and has been implemented in varied degrees in different projects across the country, but sustained efforts are required to ensure institutionalisation of the philosophy of citizen engagement for all projects and in all stages of project implementation. It is equally important to ensure that such an engagement is constructive by design and leads to value add in the project.

The National eGovernance Plan (NeGP) of the Department of Information Technology aims at changing fundamentally the way public services are delivered with citizen centricity as its cornerstone. DIT would be one of the first government departments implementing continuous citizen engagement for its NeGP projects. The following is proposed as way forward to achieve institutionalisation of citizen engagement in e-Governance projects in India:

**Creating Citizen Engagement Fund:** Creation of Citizen Engagement fund is important not only for developing methodologies for citizen engagement but also for funding the actual citizen engagement pilots which will demonstrate the utility of the concept. DIT shall take the initiative in creating the fund by this year end. This Fund will enable the various Central Ministries/Departments to undertake Citizen Engagement for current e-Governance Projects. For all new projects, appropriate funding arrangement will have to be made from within the project budget.

**Preparation of Engagement Toolkit:** To implement the framework, A comprehensive toolkit will be prepared that can act a guide for undertaking the engagement. The proposed toolkit would enable the implementers to identify the potential methodologies and mechanisms for undertaking at different stages of the project.

**Development of Citizen Engagement Platform:** A platform shall be developed by DIT which will enable both internet as well mobile based engagement with citizens.

**Pilot Citizen Engagement Framework in NeGP MMPs:** In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the framework, the framework will be piloted for select NeGP MMPs at different stages of implementation. This would ensure testing of the framework as well as designing of appropriate methodologies for citizen engagement.

## **Annexure I: Existing Citizen Engagement Models & Mechanisms**

### **India**

1. **National Capacity Building Framework**, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR): MoPR has designed a National Capability Building Framework (NCBF), which outlines a comprehensive approach towards building the capabilities of Panchayats. NCBF was created inter alia for

- (a) Improving the Gram/Ward Sabha functioning, particularly to provide opportunities to the poor, women and scheduled castes/scheduled tribes, to assert their demands through participative planning, monitor plan implementation and to hold their local governments to account through invoking Right to Information and social audit;
- (b) Developing capacity of 'lynchpin capacity providers' and effective mechanisms to engage civil society and the private sector in the delivery of capacity development services; and
- (c) Creating conducive socio-political environment through sensitising the media, political parties, representatives in the legislatures, civil society organisations and citizens to accepting and promoting local governments.

(Source: MoPR: [http://www.pri-resources.in/OverView/NCBF\\_Report\\_02-01-10.pdf](http://www.pri-resources.in/OverView/NCBF_Report_02-01-10.pdf))

2. **Citizen Report Card (CRC)**: Citizen Report Card is a simple yet powerful tool to provide systematic feedback to public agencies from users of public services. Some examples from India are given below.

- a) Bangalore: The Citizens' Report Card in Bangalore was a civil society initiative undertaken in 1993 to monitor government services in terms of efficiency and accountability. The exercise gathered citizen feedback on performance of public agencies and disseminated the findings to the citizenry, thus exerting public pressure on the agencies to initiate reforms. A seven-point rating scale facilitated quantification of citizen satisfaction levels with regard to service delivery, dimensions of corruption, staff behaviour, and so forth. The report card exercise was repeated in 1999 & 2003, to provide a comparative assessment of the progress since 1993.

(Source: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/14832Bangalore-web.pdf>; and <http://www.sasanet.org/documents/Case%20Studies/Bangalore%20Citizen%20report%20card.pdf>)

b) Nagrik Sahyog Kendra or Citizen Cells, Gujarat: In the post earthquake scenario in 2006 in Gujarat, as part of the Reconstruction Programme in Bhachau, Kutch, an Owner Driven Housing Process was conceptualised. The Nagrik Sahyog Kendra were an integral part of the process and were entrusted with the responsibility for

- Educating citizens about all associated processes, guidelines and the progress through 'Nagarvani' and community meetings;
- Holding Public consultations for selection of beneficiaries for each participating NGO;
- Revising beneficiary list on the basis of on site physical verification by different NGOs and their feedback;
- Facilitating periodic coordination meetings along with BhADA;
- Appraising BhaDA on operational issues;
- Facilitating process of land regularisation for all the houses constructed/retrofitted;
- Preparing case files for land regularisation process;
- Following up and ensuring provision of legal documents for land to each beneficiary

(Source: <http://www.unnati.org/pdfs/books/OwnerDrivenHousingProcess.pdf>)

3. **Social Media:** This new channel of engagement is becoming increasingly popular amongst the various government agencies, departments and ministries. The Delhi traffic Police has joined Facebook and Twitter to ease handling of traffic related issues (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Delhi-Traffic-Police/117817371573308>). The Indore Police Department (<http://www.indorepolice.org/>) has been using a blog, Twitter, online and mobile complaint forms, a Google map of police stations and a digital crime mapper to track criminal activities in the region.

The Maharashtra Police Department (<http://mahapolice.gov.in/>) launched an SMS-based complaint tracking system (CTS), called "Turant Chovis", which promised to quickly redress citizen complaints by sending a first response within 24 hours and resolving the issue within 30 days. The Public Diplomacy (PD) division of the Ministry of External Affairs saw merit in leveraging social media to connect with the masses. It made its debut on Twitter with the user id "Indian diplomacy". It was used very successfully in the recent crisis in Libya and Middle East. (<http://twitter.com/#!/Indiandiplomacy>)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi launched a Facebook page last year and created a forum for better interaction with citizens (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Municipal-Corporation-of-Delhi/106030789427235>). Coimbatore Municipal Corporation will soon be visible on Facebook and Twitter where residents can keep track of day to day development at the municipal corporation. Users can thereafter post comments and reply back for better functioning of the civic body.

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## ***Other Countries***

### **1. Norway**

An electronic public record database for the civil service (OEP) was launched in May 2010. This is the first of its kind in the world. Through this all citizens can get access to the documents of the central civil service. Until now, only journalists had the right to do so. On the OEP it is now possible to access the public records database and make searches in the public journals. All documents sent from ministries, directorates and state agencies are journaled in public files. If one finds something of interest, one may easily require the original document in question. The agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) carries the management responsibility for the service. The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform has been responsible for the development of the OEP.

(Source: <http://smart-grid.tmcnet.com/news/2010/05/18/4795395.htm>)

### **2. United Kingdom**

The UK Government is releasing public data to help people understand how government works and how policies are made. [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk) brings it together in one searchable website. Making this data easily available means it will be easier for people to make decisions and suggestions about government policies based on detailed information. The website classifies data based on domains e.g. health, local government etc., provides applications or Apps for mobile devices and provides datasets. It also provides platform for blogs, wiki, resources etc.

(Source: <http://data.gov.uk/>)

### **3. Philippines**

The Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services assesses the performance of selected government services based on client experience. These services are basic health, elementary education, housing, potable water, and food distribution. The Report Card results throw light on the constraints Filipinos face in accessing public services, their views about the quality and adequacy of services, and the responsiveness of government officials. They provide valuable insights on the priorities and problems faced by the clients and how the various services may be better tailored to the needs of Filipinos in general, and the poor in particular.

(Source: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/1143333-1116505690049/20509283/Filipino+Report+Card+on+Pro-chapter7-report-cards.pdf>)

#### **4. Canada**

To strengthen its citizen-centred approach to government, the Ontario province has begun to develop a strategy on citizen engagement. One component of this strategy is intended to expand the use of electronic channels, mainly the Internet, to help bring citizens closer to their government. The goal is to ensure citizens have access to a wide range of tools and information that will enable them to participate more fully in the democratic process. Electronic citizen engagement may take many forms. Some of the possibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Internet consultations on proposed law and/or policy
- “Town Hall” meetings via the Web
- open on-going dialogues on specific issues
- online remote voting for elected officials
- digital voting

Some e-tools for actively consulting with, and engaging, citizens already exist in Ontario. For example, all significant environmental policy and program changes are posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry, which is available through public libraries and on the Internet.

Source: [http://www.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/IAandIT/STEL02\\_046927.html](http://www.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/IAandIT/STEL02_046927.html)

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is considered the world’s leading example of a national system of comprehensive, citizen-based progress and well-being measures. It began in 1999 with a national consultation of Canadian citizens to identify core national values and key aspects of well-being. The Index built a collaboration of representatives of community, universities, business and some government agencies, including the national statistics office of Canada. A framework of eight dimensions forms a framework for measuring the state of national engagement; community vitality, democratic engagement, education, environment, healthy population, leisure and culture, living standards and time use. The Index has begun to generate comprehensive reports on the state of democratic engagement in Canada and forms the basis for discussion of key aspects of citizen engagement and the models available for increasing these.

## **5. Brazil**

The city government of Porto Alegre practices “participatory budgeting”. This practice convenes neighbourhood, regional and city wide assemblies in which participants identify spending priorities with around 50,000 residents regularly participate. Since the practice was established a range of improvements in governance, well being and citizen engagements have been achieved, with an increase from 75 to 99% of homes having running water and the number of public schools almost tripling.

(Source: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/486312-1095970750368/529763-1095971096030/vergara.pdf>)

## **6. Australia**

The Queensland Government has framed its 2020 vision for Queensland called Toward Q2 around five ambitions (Strong, Smart, Fair, Green and Healthy) that address current and future challenges. Toward Q2 will soon be supported by MyQ2. MyQ2 will use social media to build citizen engagement, which meets the needs of government. In addition to the traditional form of participation in policy development, the government has established a wide range of unique mechanisms and tools at the state and local levels, empowering citizens and communities to be more directly involved in government policies and processes.

(Source: <http://www.towardq2.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx>)

## **7. United States of America**

On December 8, 2009, the White House issued an Open Government Directive requiring federal agencies to take immediate, specific steps to achieve key milestones in transparency, participation, and collaboration. In particular, agencies are expected to provide an Open Government Plan within 120 days “that will describe how [they] will improve transparency and integrate public participation and collaboration into [their] activities.” memorandum requires executive departments and agencies to take the following steps toward the goal of creating a more open government:

4. Publish Government Information Online
5. Improve the Quality of Government Information
6. Create and Institutionalize a Culture of Open Government
7. Create an Enabling Policy Framework for Open Government

(Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive> and [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda\\_2010/m10-06.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-06.pdf))