

# Department of Information Technology

Draft Consultation Paper

On

## National Policy for Electronic Accessibility

New Delhi,

31 March 2010

# PREFACE

The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including persons with disabilities. In the electronic age, Information & Communications Technology and Electronics (“ICTE”) is used in all areas of life such as education, health, employment, entertainment, banking, etc.

Keeping in view of the above, Draft National Policy (“Policy”) on Electronic Accessibility has been prepared for public comments. The policy recognizes the need to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disabilities and facilitate equal access to ICTE. The National Policy also recognizes the diversity of persons with disabilities and provides for their specific needs.

The Policy covers accessibility requirements in the area of ICTE. It recognizes the need for ensuring that accessibility standards & guidelines and universal design concepts are adopted and adhered to.

The stakeholders are requested to submit their specific comments / inputs on this Policy by 30th April, 2010. The comments may please be furnished to Dr. Govind, Senior Director, Department of Information Technology, Government of India in electronic form /email : [drgovind@nic.in](mailto:drgovind@nic.in) / Fax : 011-2436 5434.

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# Table of Contents

1. Preamble	5
2. Definitions	6
3. Objectives of the Policy	6
4. Scope	6
5. Strategy and Action Plan	7
5.1 Awareness	7
5.2 Education	7
5.3 Research & Development	8
5.4 Accessibility Standards	8
5.5 Accessible Formats for Content	8
5.6 Implementation and Monitoring	9
5.7 Procurement Strategy	9
5.8 Affordable Access	9
6. Review of the Policy	9

## **1. Preamble**

The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including persons with disabilities. In the electronic age, Information & Communications Technology and Electronics (“ICTE”) is used in all areas of life such as education, health, employment, entertainment, banking, etc. ICTE can mitigate the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in India as well as help them to participate independently in day-to-day life. It is therefore imperative to ensure that ICTE is an enabler and provides equal opportunities to persons with disabilities.

The National Policy (“Policy”) on Electronic Accessibility recognizes the need to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disabilities and to facilitate equal access to ICTE. The National Policy also recognizes the diversity of persons with disabilities and provides for their specific needs.

The Policy therefore covers accessibility requirements in the area of ICTE. It recognizes the need for ensuring that accessibility standards & guidelines and universal design concepts are adopted and adhered to.

The policy expands on:

The Constitution of India.

The United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by India on October 01, 2007.

Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

The Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region, 1993.

The Biwako Millennium Framework for action towards an inclusive, barrier free and rights based society, 2002.

## **2. Definitions**

“Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. [Reference: UNCRPD – Article 2]

“Discrimination on the basis of disability” means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic,

social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination including denial of reasonable accommodation. [Reference: UNCRPD – Article 2]

### 3. Objective

The objective of the National Policy on Electronic Accessibility is to facilitate persons with disabilities equal access to ICTE products and services.

### 4. Scope

Scope of the policy covers access to ICTE products and services by persons with disabilities in the areas of universal design, assistive technology and independent living aids.

The policy covers the following:

All Central Government Ministries, Departments and agencies thereunder

States/UTs Departments and agencies thereunder

Public Sector Undertakings

Private Sector

Publicly funded organizations

R&D organizations

Essential service providers

Disability Organisations

Civil Society Organisations

Academia

Any other entity related to ICTE access

### 5. Strategy and Action Plan

The following strategies shall facilitate implementation of the policy:

Creating awareness on accessibility and universal design

Capacity building

Formulating and adopting standards & guidelines on accessibility and universal design

Conducting Research & Development

Developing Programme and Schemes

Developing procurement guidelines

#### 5.1 Awareness

5.1.1 Awareness be created through campaigns, conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. about ICTE accessibility - barriers and solutions.

5.1.2 Awareness be created about the availability of existing and emerging assistive technologies and independent living aids as well as schemes for the same. Such information be made available in public domain.

## **5.2 Education**

5.2.1 ICTE curricula to include accessibility standards & guidelines and universal design concepts.

5.2.2 Assistive Technology laboratories/ rehabilitation centres be setup across the country to facilitate persons with disabilities identify the right types of assistive technologies.

5.2.3 Curricula in Special Education and Rehabilitation to include assistive technologies and independent living aids.

## **5.3 Research & Development**

5.3.1 Research & Development in ICTE and in the area of assistive technology and independent living aids to encompass accessibility standards & guidelines and universal design concepts, wherever applicable. Such Research & Development projects to associate persons with disabilities.

5.3.2 Incentives be provided for R&D for ICTE solutions with accessibility standards & guidelines and universal design concepts.

5.3.3 Schemes be formulated to support Research & Development for ICTE solutions for assistive technologies & independent living aids.

5.3.4 Representation of person(s) with disabilities be ensured in formulation, implementation and monitoring of schemes.

5.3.5 Information about research and development projects in the area of assistive technologies & independent living aids be provided in the public domain in accessible formats and in local languages.

## **5.4 Accessibility Standards**

5.4.1 Accessibility Standards and Guidelines be formulated or adopted or adapted from prevailing standards in the domain.

## **5.5 Accessible Format for Content**

5.5.1 Content in electronic format including publications, periodicals, journals, multi-media, etc. and educational material including textbooks etc. be produced in accessible format.

## **5.6 Implementation and Monitoring**

5.6.1 An empowered committee be constituted to guide and monitor the implementation of the Policy.

## **5.7 Procurement Strategy**

5.7.1 ICTE procurement guidelines and processes to include relevant accessibility standards and guidelines.

## **5.8 Affordable Access**

5.8.1 Schemes be formulated or amended for affordable access to ICTE for persons with disabilities in rural as well as urban areas.

5.8.2 Information about beneficial Schemes in the area of assistive technologies & independent living aids be provided in the public domain in accessible formats and in local languages.

## **6. Review of the Policy**

This Policy be reviewed from time to time.