



Policy On Collaborative Application Development by Opening the Source Code of Government Applications

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Government of India

Department of Electronics & Information Technology

Ministry of Communications & Information Technology,

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8.	Brief Description	<p>The policy intends to increase the pace of eGovernance application development and rapid roll out/implementation by adopting an open-source development model. The Government of India wants to promote re-use of existing developed applications. By opening the source code, the Govt. wants successful, scalable, high quality eGov applications to be developed in a collaborative manner. It also wants new applications to be developed to encourage creativity - both inside and outside the Government by encouraging collaborative development between Govt. departments/agencies and private organizations, citizens and developers to create innovative eGov applications and solutions.</p> <p>eGov application source open approach including the use and release of application source code to public can reduce costs and development time and improve the overall quality and security through increased transparency and mass peer review.</p>
9.	Target Audience <i>(Who would be referring / using the document)</i>	All Central and State Government Departments, and other Government Agencies providing public services electronically, Government & private organizations engaged by Government departments, other application developers, OEMs, Audit Agencies etc

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Preamble

The Government of India (GOI) aims to make public the source code of various software applications/components/products as it may consider suitable and whose Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are held by various Government entities. It is intended that this will serve the purpose of reuse, faster delivery, product standardization, innovation, quality improvement and cost saving through collaborative development.

1 Effective date

This policy comes in force from the date of its publication.

2 Background

Government Departments and Agencies both at the centre and states are engaged in developing software applications and most such applications are running successfully in their own premises. However, there may be repetitive work going on. Many applications are being re-developed from scratch without reusing the already existing and running applications in other Departments. In the absence of a common Collaborative Application Development Platform, individual applications developed by Government Departments may end up with the same code being rewritten for similar application functionality, which is already available elsewhere. Lack of sharing of the source code prevents the code from scrutiny, thus denying the opportunity for further improvements. These inefficient practices may lead to wastage of time, efforts and public money, which could have been put to more productive use alternatively.

Several hundreds of custom application software are running across central/ state Government Departments and Agencies, PSUs and urban local bodies. Hosting of the source code of these applications on a single unified

platform which can be accessed by Government Departments/Agencies and the general public (with necessary access controls) would result in much faster application development in a better collaborative manner.

3 Objectives

The “**Policy on Collaborative Application Development by Opening the Source Code of Government Applications**” is designed with the objective of promoting reuse, standardization, innovation, quality improvement and cost savings through collaboration and avoidance of duplication.

4 Applicability

This policy is applicable to all software applications/ components/ products whose IPR are held by any Government entity and which the concerned Government entity considers suitable for making the source code public . This policy will be in force for all software application development exercises initiated after the effective date of this policy. This policy will apply to all software application development efforts, whether in-house or through a software development agency. Applicability of this policy on software applications/ components developed prior to the effective date of this policy is desirable but not mandatory. Any procurement exercise for software application/ component/ application development services should give due consideration to this policy and the intent behind it.

This policy is not applicable on software applications/ components/ products utilized or implemented for projects/organizations of national strategic importance and for those projects / applications that may have security

implications. The policy does not apply to Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) software.

5 Policy Statement

Government of India shall adopt uniform policy towards collaborative application development by opening the source code of Government applications to ensure a new and agile way of developing software, reuse and rapid roll out to other Government domains.

1. The Government will have full rights to custom-built software source code for any application developed by any Government agency or by private agencies funded by the Government.
2. If it is a COTS product, then the Government will have full rights on any customization code on the COTS product if it is procured by the Government. The Government shall have the right to reuse the customization code for any other Govt. department or entity if required. What components/code/modules constitute 'customizations on COTS' will be specified in the contract between the Government and the agency doing the customization.
3. If any agency customizes the source code or adds any modules or plug-ins to a particular Government custom-built application or customization code on COTS, the Government reserves the full rights of the source code of the add on modules, plug-ins or customization code.
4. In case an already successfully running application in the Government, whose code is opened and whose IP is owned by Government, needs to be rolled out by private agencies on a commercial basis for any other Government Department/Agency, code changes to the application source code is permissible, but Government reserves full rights to the source code of the modified application.

5. All Government application source code to be developed will be shared on the Collaborative Application Development Platform. To provide an effective and reliable platform for open source development, this Collaborative Application Development Platform shall have proper control mechanisms, version management and policies on verification/validation of the codes w.r.t required functionality, security, performance, design, coding practices and other necessary attributes.
6. While evaluating any new software for development or purchase by any Government entity, preference should be given to software already available in the Collaborative Application Development Platform.
7. The policy does not mandate already developed monolithic applications to open their application source code on the Collaborative Application Development Platform, However, it is recommended that the application source code and the object code with installation script, installation document, database schema and any other documents be shared in the Collaborative Application Development Platform after due quality and security checks will be laid in the guidelines by Government of India. These guidelines would also address governance framework, operational processes, application maturity assessment models, application sustainability models, licensing policy etc. for the Collaborative Application Development platform.
8. The future procurement processes of the Government projects should ensure that the Government receives the **source code and unlimited rights** of custom-built application development. In case of COTS product, the contract clauses should secure full rights to customisation code developed on the **Commercial Off The Shelf** product. The rights should cover reuse of customization code anywhere else in the Government or public sector.

9. The policy does not restrict/prohibit any private/Government entity's commercial interest either in development or implementation and support of Government applications. The commercial terms can be worked out between the concerned Government Departments and Agencies and solution providers on mutually agreed terms. The policy only that the application source code be opened for larger interest of rapid roll out and value addition to the application software through collaborative approach of development.
10. The policy does not impose any obligation on contributors to the source open Government projects to provide support if the application/component is downloaded for reuse by others. It is recommended that contributors should help others in improving the code or during its re-use, but this is not binding.

6 Responsibilities

#	Stakeholders	Role	Actions Required
1.	Department of Electronics & Information Technology Ministry of Communications and Information Technology	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Guidance & Funding for the project • Issuing Policy on Collaborative Application Development by Opening the Source Code of Government Applications • Issue of Guidelines
2.	NIC (System Software Division)	Implementation Agency for Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness & Promotion • Application Owner Onboarding • Setting up, ownership and operational management of Collaborative Application

#	Stakeholders	Role	Actions Required
			Development Platform.
3.	Ministries/ Departments/ NIC/ CDAC etc.	Application Owners/ developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance to “Policy on Collaborative Application Development by Opening the Source Code of Government Applications” • Release of source code of existing stable applications as per policy • Usage of Collaborative Application Development Platform for application development • Contribution to projects listed/ published on Collaborative Application Development Platform
4.	Ministries/ Departments	Application Seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of applications published on Government collaborative Application development platform • Contributing to application modifications/enhancements • Compliance with the Policy
5.	Recognized Software Developers/ Academic institutions	Contributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement in platform usage and enhancement. • Testing of published application and publishing known vulnerabilities.

7 Review of the Policy

The Government shall have the right to revise the Policy as and when required.

8 Point of Contact

All queries or comments related to this Policy shall be directed to JS (e-Governance), DeitY (jsegov@deity.gov.in), Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Electronics Niketan, 6 CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003 .