

8. Indian Government Guidelines

8.1 Introduction

Most of the important Government entities have already made headway in establishing their presence on the Net and others are in the process of doing so. Every other day, there is a new Government website, be it of a State Government Department, Department of a Ministry, Taskforces set-up by the Government, new project, citizen service initiatives, or even a remote district of India. Awareness about the fast changing ICT world and keenness to keep pace with the latest has ensured that almost all the State Governments in India already have their websites up and running.

However, different websites follow different Technology Standards, Design Layouts, navigation architecture, or, in simple terms, different look and feel as well as functionality. This invariably requires a common citizen to familiarize himself /herself with the functionality of each individual website which results in a lot of inconvenience, thus defeating the very purpose of these initiatives.

In today's scenario, the need for a certain standardization and uniformity in websites belonging to the Government in a Country cannot be stressed enough. It is suggested that the Indian Government websites adhere to certain common minimum standards which have been derived, in the form of guidelines discussed in this document. These act as pre- requisites for a Government website to fulfill its primary objective of being a citizen centric source of information & service delivery.

The checklist of the guidelines is given in subsequent pages.

Please note that the reference numbers in the checklist refer to the Guideline Document available at <http://web.guidelines.gov.in>.

Compliance Matrix

Given below is a checklist of mandatory guidelines outlined in this document. Departments may use this checklist to validate their websites against these guidelines and make necessary modification to ensure compliance.

S.No.	GUIDELINE	REF. No.
1. Government of India Identifiers		
1	Association to Government is demonstrated by the use of Emblem/ Logo, prominently displayed on the homepage of the website	2.1.1
2	Ownership information is displayed on the homepage and on all important entry pages of the website.	2.1.2
3	Complete and self explanatory title of the homepage (appearing on the top bar of the browser) is provided.	2.1.6
4	Website is registered under 'gov.in' or 'nic.in' domain.	2.2.1
5	Website provides a prominent link to the 'National Portal' from the Home Page and Pages belonging to National Portal load in new browser window.	2.3.1 2.3.2
2. Building Confidence		
6	Website has a Copyright Policy, prominently displayed on the homepage.	3.1.1
7	Due permissions have been obtained for publishing any content protected by copyright.	3.1.4
8	Source of all documents, whether reproduced in part or full, is mentioned.	3.1.5
9	Website has a comprehensive Hyper Linking Policy.	3.2.1
10	Clear indications are given when a link leads out to a non government website.	3.2.5
11	The mechanism is in place to check the accuracy of Hyperlinked Content	3.2.8 4.3.4(c)
12	Mechanism is in place to ensure that there are no 'broken links' (internal as well as external) or 'Page not found' errors.	3.2.9

S.No.	GUIDELINE	REF. No.
13	Website has a comprehensive Terms & Conditions statement, linked from all important pages.	3.3.1
14	Terms & Conditions statement disclaims responsibility of the content sourced/ linked from a non Government website and clearly indicates whether information available on the site can be used for legal purposes or not.	3.3.3 3.3.4
15	Website has a Privacy Policy linked from all the relevant pages.	3.4.2
16	All electronic commerce transactions are handled through secure means.	3.4.4
3. Scope of Content : Primary Content		
About us		
17	All information about the department, useful for the citizen and other stakeholders, is present in the 'About Us' section and mechanism is in place to keep the information up to date.	4.2.1
Schemes		
18	The complete title of the Scheme is reflected.	4.2.3(b)
19	Website provides a complete description of the scheme along with the procedure for obtaining the associated benefits.	4.2.3(e)
20	The validity of the scheme has been mentioned.	4.2.3(f)
Services		
21	Self explanatory title of the service is published.	4.2.4(b)
22	The website provides a complete description of the service along with the procedure to apply for/avail the same.	4.2.4(d)
Forms		
23	The website provides the complete title of the form along with the purpose it is used for.	4.2.5(b)
24	Language of the Form (other than English) is mentioned clearly.	4.2.5 (c)
Acts		
25	The complete title of the Act (as written in the official notification) is mentioned.	4.2.6(a)
Documents		
26	The complete title of the Document is mentioned on the website.	4.2.7 (c)

S.No.	GUIDELINE	REF. No.
27	The language of the Document (other than English) is mentioned clearly.	4.2.7(e)
28	Validity of the Document has been mentioned.	4.2.7(f)
Circulars and Notifications		
29	The official title of the Circular/ Notifications is mentioned.	4.2.8(a)
30	Validity of the Circular/ Notification is mentioned.	4.2.8(d)
Tenders and Recruitment		
31	Mechanism is in place to ensure that all Tender/ Recruitment Notices issued by the Department are published on the website.	4.2.9 4.2.10
32	Website provides a complete description of the Tender/ Recruitment notice along with the procedure to apply for the same.	4.2.9 (a) 4.2.10(d)
33	Mechanism is in place to ensure that information on old/irrelevant Tender/ Recruitment notices is removed or moved into the archive section.	4.2.9(d) 4.2.10(g)
News and Press Releases		
34	News / Press releases are displayed along with the date and these are organized as per the archival policy of the website.	4.2.11
Contact Us		
35	Website has a 'Contact Us' page, linked from the Home Page and all relevant places in the website.	4.2.12(a)
36	The complete contact details of important functionaries in the Department are given in the 'Contact Us' section.	4.2.12(c)
Presence on the National Portal		
37	Mechanism is in place to ensure that all the Citizen Services, Forms, Documents and Schemes are registered with the respective repositories of the National Portal.	4.2.13
Scope of Content : Secondary Content		
38	Mechanism is in place to ensure that all outdated announcements are removed from the website or moved to archive.	4.3.2(a)
39	All Discussion Forums on the website are moderated.	4.3.3 (c)
40	For every related link, the complete URL of the Home Page/concerned webpage is provided.	4.3.4(b)

S.No.	GUIDELINE	REF. No.
Scope of Content : Tertiary Content		
41	Feedback is collected through online forms and mechanism is in place to ensure timely response to feedback/queries received through the website.	4.4.5(a) 4.4.5(c)
42	The website has a readily available Help section.	4.4.6
43	Complete information including title, size (playing time for audio/video), format, usage instructions and plugin to view the file is provided for downloadable material including documents.	4.4.7(a) 6.7.1 (a) 6.7.1 (b)
44	Mechanism is in place to ensure that all downloadable material is free from virus.	4.4.7(c)
45	Minimum content as prescribed in the guidelines is present on the homepage.	4.5.1
46	Subsequent pages of the website have the minimum content as prescribed in the guidelines.	4.5.2
47	Website is free from offensive/discriminatory language	4.7.2
4. Quality of Content		
48	Content is compiled and packaged with citizen orientation.	5.1.1
49	The Department has a Content Contribution, Moderation and Approval Policy (CMAP) for the website.	5.2.1
50	Home page and every important entry page of website displays the last updated /reviewed date.	5.2.2
51	Department has a Content Review Policy (CRP) for the website.	5.2.3
52	All Documents/Reports have a time stamp at least on the main page.	5.2.5
53	The Departments have a clearly laid out Content Archival Policy (CAP) for the website.	5.2.6 10.4
54	Clear and simple language has been used throughout the website.	5.3.1
55	The language is free from spelling and grammatical errors	5.3.6
56	Whenever there is a change in the language of a web page it has been clearly indicated.	5.3.8
57	Consistency in nomenclature is maintained across the website.	5.4.2
58	All information, which is of direct importance to the citizen, is accessible from the Homepage.	5.6.1
59	Information structure and relationship is preserved in all presentation styles.	5.6.2

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60	The meaningful reading sequence is preserved in all presentation styles.	5.6.3
61	Documents / pages in multiple languages are updated simultaneously.	5.7.2
5. Design		
62	Visual/textual identity elements highlighting the Government's ownership of the website are prominently placed on the page.	6.1.1
63	A consistent page layout has been maintained throughout the website.	6.2.1
64	National identity symbols like Flag, National Emblem etc., are in a proper ratio and colour.	6.3.1
65	Hindi/regional language fonts have been tested on popular browsers for any inconsistency (loss of layout).	6.4.3
66	Web pages allow resizing of text without the use of assistive technology.	6.4.5
67	Text is readable both in electronic and print format and the page prints correctly on an A4 size paper.	6.4.6
68	There is adequate contrast between text and background colour.	6.5.1
69	All information conveyed with color is also available without color.	6.5.4
70	Alternate text is provided for non text elements (e.g. images).	6.6.4
71	Websites provide textual description of audio/video clips & multimedia presentation.	6.7.2(a)
72	Caption have been provided for all important audio content.	6.7.2 (b)
73	Web pages do not contain any content that flashes for more than three times in a second.	6.7.3(a)
74	There is a mechanism to control scrolling, blinking content.	6.7.3 (b)
75	There is a mechanism to control (stop, pause...) audio that starts automatically.	6.7.3 (c)
76	All pages on the website have a link to the home page.	6.8.1
77	The positioning and terminology used for navigation items and navigation scheme is consistent across the website.	6.8.2
78	There are no links to 'under construction' pages.	6.8.4
79	Each page is a standalone entity in terms of ownership, navigation and context of content.	6.8.5

S.No.	GUIDELINE	REF. No.
80	Web pages allow the user to bypass repeated blocks of content	6.8.8
81	Website has either a “search” box or a link to a “search” page from every page of the website.	6.9.1
82	Website has an up to date Site Map that is linked to the Home page as well as to all important entry pages of the website.	6.10.1
83	If the site uses frames, each frame is properly titled.	6.11
6. Development		
84	Website uses Cascading Style Sheets to control layouts/styles.	7.2.1
85	Website is readable even when style sheets are switched off or not loaded.	7.2.2
86	Web pages are usable even when scripts, applets etc are turned off.	7.3.2
87	Documents are provided either in html or other accessible formats. Instructions / Download details for viewing these formats are provided	7.4.2(a)
88	In content implemented using markup languages the elements have been use according to specification.	7.5 (a)
89	Lables have been provided when content requires input from the users.	7.5 (b)
90	Time limit for time dependent web functions can be adjusted by the user (also refer exceptions).	7.5 (c)
91	Instructions for operating/understanding content do not rely solely on characteristics like shape size location etc.	7.5 (d)
92	All input errors are flashed in text.	7.5 (e)
93	Functionalty of content is operable through keyboard.	7.5 (f)
94	Focus is not trapped in any component while navigating through keyboard only.	7.5 (g)
95	Purpose of each link is clear to the user.	7.5 (h)
96	When any component recieves focus it does not initiate change in context.	7.5 (i)
97	Changing the setting of a component does not change the context unless the user has been informed of the same.	7.5 (j)
98	Metadata for page like title, keywords, description and language is appropriately included.	7.5 (k) 9.1.2

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99	Data tables have been provided with nesscessary tags/markup.	7.5 (l)
100	All components recieve focus in an order that preserves the meaning/ operation.	7.5 (m)
101	Role of all interface components can be programatically determined.	7.5 (n)
102	The website has been tested on multiple browsers.	7.6 (b)
103	Website has cleared Security Audit by certified agency and has a Security Policy.	7.7.1 7.7.2
7. Website Hosting		
104	Websites are accessible to the intended audience in an efficient and secure manner on 24x7 basis.	8.2.1
105	The Hosting Service Provider possesses state-of-the art multi-tier security infrastructure as well as devices such as firewall and intrusion prevention systems.	8.2.1 (a) 8.2.1 (b)
106	The Hosting Service Provider has redundant server infrastructure for high availability.	8.2.1 (c)
107	The Hosting Service Provider performs regular backup of the website.	8.2.1(d)
108	The Hosting Service Provider has a Disaster Recovery (DR) Centre in a geographically distant location and a well crafted DR plan for the website.	8.2.1 (e)
109	Web Hosting Service Provider provides Helpdesk & technical support on 24x7x365 basis.	8.2.1(i)
110	All possible security measures have been taken to prevent defacement/ hacking of the website and the department has contingency plan in place for situations like these.	8.3
8. Website Promotion		
111	Website ranks in the first five results on major search engines when searched with relevant keywords.	9.1
112	It has been ensured that all stationery of the department as well as advertisements/public messages issued by the concerned Department prominently display the URL of the web site.	9.2.1 9.2.2
9. Website Management		
113	Department has nominated a Web Information Manager as defined in the guidelines.	10.1.1
114	The website has a website monitoring policy	10.3
115	All policies and plans are approved by Head of Department	10.7