

The Situation Report on eGovernment Policy Awareness and Implementation

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1. Introduction

The ICT Policy and Procedures for the Government (eGovernment Policy) was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 2009-12-16 to be implemented by all government organizations including Ministries, Government Departments, Provincial Councils, District Secretariats, Divisional Secretariats and Local Government Authorities. The Cabinet of Ministers also recommended the eGovernment Policy to be implemented by the Government Corporations and Statutory Boards. A Presidential Circular (No: SP/SB/03/10) was issued to all government organizations to inform the need for eGovernment Policy compliance. It specially drew attention to achieve compliance for 14 critical policy requirements. The implementation period is 3 years starting from June 2009. Amidst other responsibilities, Reengineering Government Programme (Re-Gov) of ICTA carried out a rigorous awareness campaign to educate the public sector on the eGovernment Policy and convince the government Leaders and CIOs of the importance of implementation of eGovernment Policy.

This report details the actions taken for improving awareness on the eGovernment policy and the implementation status up to 2010-12-31 of the organizations which have submitted the compliance sheets.

2. Awareness activities

The following actions were taken for improving the awareness of the Senior Management and CIOs of the government on the important aspects of eGovernment Policy.

i. Awareness conference for Secretaries to the Ministries

This conference was conducted on 2010-07-10. 27 Secretaries attended the conference. Other Secretaries were represented by junior officials.

ii. Awareness workshops on eGovernment Policy for Heads and CIOs of the government organizations

Covered Organizations and Districts	Location and Date	Participants	
Departments & Statutory Boards – Colombo	Colombo 2010-03-18	HOD's 69	CIO's 73
Kandy, N'Eliya, Matale, Badulla, Kegalle District & Divisional Secretariats	Kandy 2010-04-27	HOD's 52	CIO's 63
Galle, Matara, Hambantota and Monaragala District & Divisional Secretariats	Hambantota 2010-06-17	HOD's 44	CIO's 57
Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Ratnpura District & Divisional Secretariats and Statutory Boards	Colombo 2010-06-29	HOD's 52	CIO's 72
Kurunagala, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa District & Divisional Secretariats	Kurunagala 2010-08-03	HOD's 71	CIO's 80

iii. eGovernment Policy follow-up workshops for CIOs

Three CIO workshops were conducted. (4 more workshops have been planned to be held).

Workshop Details	Location and Date	No. of CIOs Attended
CIO workshop on eGovernment Policy Readiness and Implementation (Ministries, Departments & Statutory Bodies)	Colombo 2010-09-28	141
CIO workshop on eGovernment Policy Readiness and Implementation (Kurunagala, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa District & Divisional Secretariats)	Kurunagala 2010-12-02	73
CIO workshop on eGovernment Policy Readiness and Implementation (Kandy, Nuwara-Eliya, Matale, Badulla, Kegalle District & Divisional Secretariats)	Kandy 2010-12-14	61

iv. Awareness Conferences for Provincial Councils

A conference was held for officials of Uva Provincial Council on 09-12-2010. 60 participants attended the conference.

The following policy workshops are planned to be held for Provincial Councils.

Provincial Council	Tentative dates for e-Government Policy Workshops
1. Southern	21st February 2011
2. Western	3rd week of March 2011
3. Northern	4th week of March 2011
4. North Western	1st Week of April 2011
5. Central	4th week of April 2011
6. Eastern	2nd week of May 2011
7. Sabaragamuwa	4th week of May 2011
8. North Central	2nd week of June 2011

v. Book on eGovernment Policy

ICTA printed a book on eGovernment policy which provides an introduction to eGovernment and covers the policy in 3 languages. A copy of the book was issued to each Head and CIO of all government organizations.

vi. Online CIO forum (<http://www.icta.lk/forum>)

Each CIO has been given an ID and password to submit their queries, ideas, comments and observations with regards to the eGovernment Policy readiness and implementation. Currently 460 CIOs who have registered at the forum are discussing various eGovernment Policy issues under 220 topics.

vii. eGovernance awareness meetings with individual organizations

Re-Gov held meetings with the following organizations to educate the entire management of those organizations on eGovernment Policy.

- a. Ministry of Finance
- b. Ministry of Youth Affairs
- c. Ministry of Education
- d. Public Service Commission
- e. Police Commission

viii. eGovernment Policy Wiki

This wiki is created to submit the new ideas and especially the changes that should be made in the policy.

[http://www.icta.lk/apps/govwiki/index.php/The e-Government Policy Approved by the Cabinet](http://www.icta.lk/apps/govwiki/index.php/The_e-Government_Policy_Approved_by_the_Cabinet)

ix. Use of Social Media

Facebook and Twitter accounts for CIOs were created for discussing policy issues. These social media forums were specially introduced to discuss the eGovernment Policy matters while encouraging the social media related activities of CIOs.

www.facebook.com – cio srilanka

www.twitter.com – cio srilanka

3. *Actions taken to assess the eGovernment compliance and implementation levels*

A. Assessing the compliance level for 14 critical policy requirements

As a follow up action to “Presidential Secretariat Circular issued on eGovernment Policy” a letter requesting to report back on the compliance status with regards to 14 critical eGovernment Policy aspects was circulated among all the Ministries, Departments, Provincial Councils, Corporations and Statutory Boards.

B. Assessing the compliance level for total eGovernment Policy requirements

The eGovernment policy contains 155 policy compliance requirements which have been broadly categorized in to 7 areas. Those 7 areas as follows;

1. Human Resource Development
2. Government Network
3. Web Presence
4. Networking and Connectivity
5. Communication Interface
6. Procurement and Contractual issues
7. ICT Governance

In order to make it easy to assess the compliance, 155 policy requirements were lumped in to 70 requirements. In order to assess the total policy compliance, a policy compliance check list containing 70 policy items was prepared and issued to 445 government organizations in hard copies and soft copies. Additionally, an online survey tool was created for CIOs to submit the compliance statuses online which would enable ICTA to conveniently analyze the results.

4. Analysis of the Results

A. Response levels with regards to 14 critical eGovernment Policy requirements

- (i) ICTA received the responses from 479 organizations out of 1436 organizations to which the Presidential Circular has been issued requesting to submit the policy compliance check list with regards to 14 critical eGovernment Policy requirements.

Number of Organizations responded to Presidential Secretariat circular on eGovernment Policy

Type of organization	Number organizations responded
Ministries	41 out of 64
Departments	69 out of 91
Statutory Bodies	49 out of 320
District Secretariats	13 out of 25
Divisional Secretariats	227 out of 331
Provincial Ministries and Departments	73 out of 275+ (voluntary submissions)
Local Government Authorities	7 out of 330 (voluntary submissions)
Total	479 out of 1436

- (ii) The summary of the compliance levels for 14 critical policy requirements

Policy No.	Policy requirement	Overall %
010101	Have an ICT unit	60.0%
010104	CIO has been appointed	73.8%
010106	Have an annual ICT plan	32.3%
2030102	Annually allocate funds for ICT activities through annual budget	40.6%
40102	All official electronic communications are carried out using the official email addresses.	83.3%
40109	The following nomenclature is used for staff officers who are transferable: designation@organization.gov.lk	57.7%

30105	The official website of the organization is trilingual	48.9%
30201	Government organization is registered under gov.lk domain.	64.5%
30104	The official website of the organization is compliant to the “web standards and guidelines” published by ICTA.	61.4%
10405 / 10406	All computers which are used for computing in Sinhala/Tamil have been installed with Sinhala & Tamil Unicode	63.1%
10806	Organizational information has been provided to GIC	28.6%
60101	Government organization is connected to the common government Wide Area Network infrastructure i.e. Lanka Government Network (LGN)	60.5%
10403	Information systems adhere to Lanka Interpretability framework (LIFe)	0.2%
10802	Use Lanka Gate (the middleware infrastructure) and Country Portal (www.srilanka.lk and www.lk) for delivering government services through electronic means	0.2%
10803	Use telephone short code 1919 for delivering mobile telephone based information (through SMS)	8.9%
10407	Consult ICTA before embark on ICT Projects worth more than 2 Million LKR.	50.1%
2040201	Use only licensed (commercial or Open source) software; such licenses can be for either proprietary software, or for open source software	63.4%
70101	Government organization assesses the training and skills needed for all levels of staff to address organizational ICT requirements on an annual basis	52.8%
70201	All staff including senior management and middle management staff in Government organization is competent in the use of ICT in their daily work	49.8%

(The detail compliance levels up to 2010-12-31 of above organizations are given in the annexure I).

When the above results are analyzed it appears that the use of 1919 for SMS based information delivery (8.9%), use of LIFe for ensuring Interoperability (0.2%) and use of Lanka Gate (0.2%) have registered the lowest compliance levels.

However these 3 requirements are not currently applicable to the most organizations as those organizations have not implemented any eGovernment systems. Nevertheless the notable low compliance levels recorded with regards to ICT competency (49.8%), providing information in to GIC (28.6%), having a trilingual website (48.9%), having an annual ICT plan (32.3%) and ICT Budget (40.6%) are of great concern as those are highly critical eGovernment Policy requirements for achieving eGovernment policy objectives.

(iii) Total eGovernment Policy Compliance (for 70 policy requirements)

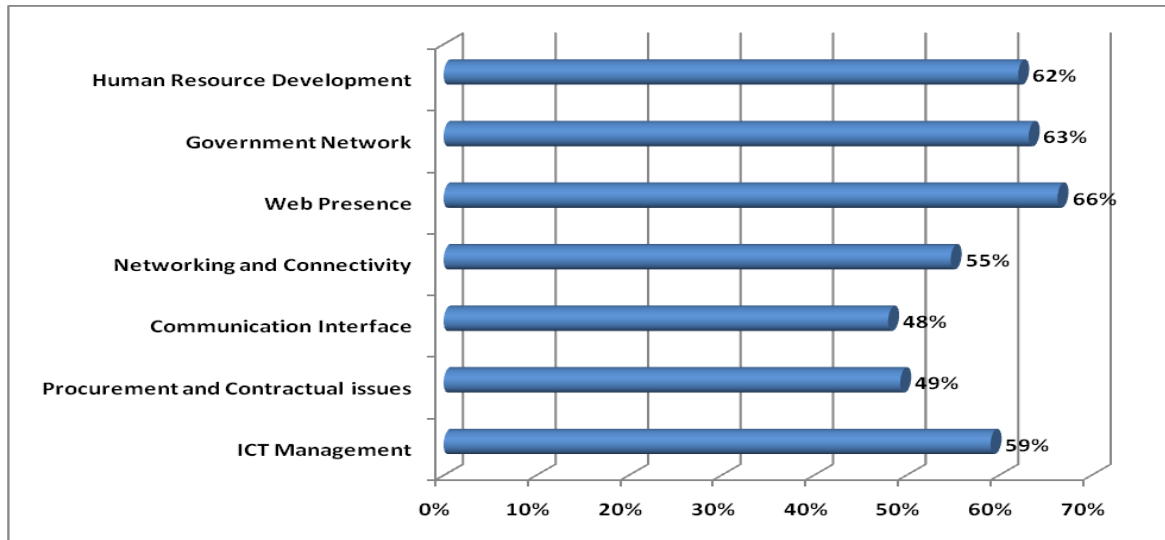
By the end of year 2010 ICTA has received responses from 151 organizations (out of 445 which were requested to submit the compliance check list) with regards to the total policy compliance. The number of organizations which have responded up to 2010-12-31 are as follows in category wise;

Type of organization	Number of existing organizations	Number of organizations addressed	Number of organization responded	% responded
Ministries	64	47	15	32%
Departments	91	72	26	36%
Statutory Bodies	320	57	3	5%
District Secretariats	25	17	4	24%
Divisional Secretariats	331	252	103	41%
Total	831	445	151	34% (average)

(The complete list of organizations which have responded so far is attached as annexure II.)

As above figures indicate the number of responses received is very low (average 34%) which signifies the general low interest demonstrated by government leaders and CIOs with regards to the eGovernment Policy implementation.

The high level analysis of compliance levels for the 7 major policy areas is shown below;



As per the above figures the average compliance rate is 57%. The compliance levels with regards to Communication Interface (use of web and email) and Procurement and Contractual Issues are comparatively low. In general this implies the need for improving email and web usage and ICT procurement awareness of the government.

B. Compliance for most critical eGovernment policy requirements

Analysis of total responses which have been received up to 2010-12-31 reveals that some policy requirements which are difficult to achieve such as the adherence to web standards and guidelines has been met by a higher percentage (80%) of organizations. However some critical requirements which could enable the government organizations to provide citizen friendly services at a very low cost and effort such as “Providing information to GIC” is comparatively at a low level (43%) despite its ease of compliance. It is also noteworthy that the use of official email address and trilingual web as communication purposes have also registered low compliance rates.

The detailed compliance levels for 70 policy requirements can be accessed from <http://www.icta.lk/index.php/en/e-governement-policy> policy requirements.

C. Extensiveness and accuracy of compliance levels

The compliance levels have been submitted by government organizations on highly subjective basis.

For example with regards to the requirement of using Sinhala and Tamil Unicode has been responded in a very general manner. It has been revealed that in some instances when only few computers have been installed with Sinhala and Tamil Unicode software, organizations tend to mark it positively though the majority of computers have not been installed with Sinhala and Tamil Unicode software. It was also revealed that the responses with regards to “using licensed software” has been positively marked when only a few computers have been installed with licensed software. This indicates that due to the absence of facts for validating the responses the results could be highly arbitative.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The response up to 2010-12-31 with regards to the request for submitting the eGovernment Policy check list has been very low. Only 151 organizations (34%) out of 475 organizations have submitted policy compliance check list.

This signifies the importance of carrying out further awareness activities to improve the awareness on need of eGovernment compliance among the government leaders. This also necessitates the need for a robust plan for follow up actions to ensure that all the government organizations would submit compliance check list at minimum.

2. It is not sufficient for government organizations to be compliant with only 14 critical policy requirements to achieve the objectives of the policy. Similarly it is impossible

to make all the government organizations compliant with all 70 eGovernment Policy requirements before 2012-06-30. Therefore it is recommended to identify highly critical policy requirements to which all government organizations should be conforming to by June 2012. Therefore 40 most critical policy requirements were identified for this purpose and have been listed in the annexure III. Hence it must be made mandatory that all government organizations are compliant for 40 critical requirements by June 2012.

3. Since some responses have been submitted in arbitative manner it is required to collect the evidence/facts for validating the responses.

With regards to use of Sinhala and Tamil Unicode it would be required to ask for the number of total computers in the organizations and the number of computers which are installed with Sinhala and Tamil Unicode separately. Hence the 40 prioritized eGovernment Policy requirements with the necessary validating facts are proposed to be circulated in soft and hard copies.

4. It is discouraging to note that compliance levels for policy requirements such as providing information to GIC, providing services through Country Portal and providing information through GovSMS (1919) which can increase the accessibility to government services by citizen and making the government services highly citizen friendly are as low as 47% , 1% & 1% respectively.

Furthermore high level analysis shows that 21% of government organizations use pirated software (the figures could be inaccurate as no validating facts been requested), hence some corrective actions should be taken to improve the situation with regards to this legal requirement.

Therefore a special emphasis should be made to improve the compliance levels for the requirements which are leading to making the government services more citizen centric. It is suggested to give higher weight to those policy requirements when the eGovernment policy readiness index is prepared.

Those policy requirements are;

- i. Use of Lanka Gate and Country Portal for providing eServices
- ii. Use of Gov SMS for providing SMS based services
- iii. Providing information to GIC
- iv. Use of Open Standards

5. It is also recommended to take action to improve the policy by adding some critical eGovernment requirements such as
 - a. Ensuring interoperability for building a Connected Government by adhering to LIFe and using Lanka Interoperability Exchange (LIX) of Lanka Gate

- b. Making the use of Open standards mandatory in all eGovernment systems
- c. Identifying the shared services provided by each government organizations and making it a collective responsibility of all government organizations to fulfill their obligations to provide shared eServices in a collaborative manner.
- d. Releasing the non-privacy related data to the public under the concept of “Open Data” to encourage the 3rd parties to provide more eServices by using Open Data.
- e. Consideration of Open Source solutions when eGovernment solutions are procured.
- f. Disposal of electronic equipment in an environmentally friendly manner.

It is recommended to submit these eGovernment policy requirements to the “eGovernment Policy Committee” for assessing appropriateness.

Wasantha Deshapriya
Director, Reengineering Government Programme
Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka

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