REPORT

AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

OF

WORKING GROUP ON PROVISION OF

INTERNET FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

DT. 31.03.2017

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1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 Provision of Internet Facility to the Government Departments, and laying down proper guidelines has become essential as internet is now forming an important element in the working of the Government. The General Administration Department, by virtue of it being a Department regulating Telephone Entitlements, is partly concerned as the broadband internet facilities are provided through landline telephones. But the actual subject belongs to the Information & Communication Technology Department, as IT is at the centre of activity of the Department.

1.2 However, there are no specific guidelines on the matter. Since the Departments are requiring Internet Connections for their use, they manage by working out their own arrangements, and while some of the Departments avail BSNL Broadband Internet through their Landline Telephones, some other Departments managed by availing broadband connections from private service providers (Tulip, Netsurf, etc.) and also subscribe to mobile data cards. These arrangements have some degree of inconveniences as outlined under:

1) When broadband internet is availed from BSNL Landline Telephones, the monthly bills are hugely inflated depending upon the level of subscriptions of Plans, and runs in thousands of rupees. As the bills are charged against the landline telephones of the officer, the telephone ceilings are exceeded and the Departments are facing problems in settlement of bills. Even when they approach GAD, it is difficult to decide a case, as increase of bills due to internet provision is not the purview of GAD, but that of I&CT Department.

2) When a broadband connection is subscribed from private operators, there is no authority to decide the matter, and to accord approval for such proposals, as there is no system to examine such proposals.

3) When an internet data card is subscribed by a Department, there are no government guidelines prescribing the entitlement, and the upper ceiling on monthly bills, etc.

1.3 Thus, the existing system leaves a lot to be improved upon, the need to put in place a system to attain the following objectives:

1) *Lay down a system where all Government Departments/Offices and Institutions can have reliable internet service.*

2) *Provision of internet should be within optimum cost, and affordable to the Government.*

3) *There is a safety issue in the use of internet, and there is the need to prevent misuse of internet and IT facilities.*

1.4 With that in view, the Government constituted a Working Group on Provision of Internet to Government Departments/Offices vide Notification No. D. 25015/33/2013-GAD dt. 11.05.2016 with the following composition:

1) *Secretary, I&CT Department*	-	*Chairman*
2) *Joint Secretary, GAD*	-	*Member Secretary*
3) *Joint Secretary, Finance*	-	*Member*
4) *Chief Informatics Officer, I&CT*	-	*Member*
5) *State Informatics Officer, NIC*	-	*Member*

1.5 The Working Group has been mandated to look into the needs of the Departments and suggest measures for provision of internet to Government Departments/Offices and for making a proper system in place in the Government.

1.6 The Group met 4 (four) times in the course of the discussion of various issues in connection with provision of internet. The report is the outcome of the deliberations in the meeting.

2. <u>NEED FOR INTERNET IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES:</u>

2.1 Today's world is a digital world. Various services are provided and channelized through the internet. Various business processes, including the government's business are now processed by utilizing internet services. Thus, provision of internet in the Government offices is a part of the normal requirement, like stationery items are required for day–to-day functioning of the offices. Furthermore, use of IT system improves the efficiency of the working of the Government and facilitates delivery of various services to the citizens.

2.2 The different Departments are now requiring internet for one or more of the following activities:

1) *To access information related to various Schemes, Policies of the Central Government, State Governments and foreign governments.*

2) *To access important information on various policies of the different governments and institutions around the world which are made available through websites.*

3) *To maintain their own departmental websites.*

4) *To submit online reports on respective Schemes to Government of India.*

5) *To receive and send official communications through e-mails.*

6) *For connection within office through LAN and sharing of important information.*

2.3 In view of the critical role played by IT and Internet in the working of the Government, there needs to be a system wherein the Government Departments and Office can have provision of internet services within the broad framework laid down by the Government.

3. EXISTING PROVISIONS & FACILITIES AVAILABLE:

The Group discussed and learnt that the following internet facilities are available for subscription by the Government Departments and Offices.

3.1 Broadband Internet through Landline Telephones:

Broadband internet connections through landline telephones are mainly provided through BSNL Landline Telephones. Different Departments have their landline connections and they subscribe BSNL Broadband through such telephones. This forms one major source of internet service to various Departments and Offices. The problem in this arrangement, as indicated above is that when broadband internet service is provided, the monthly telephones are shot up as per the Internet Plan so subscribed and there is no existing system to enable them pays such high bills.

3.2 MSWAN (I&CT):

The Mizoram State Wide Area Network (MSWAN) installed by Information & Communication Technology Department is one source of providing internet services to the Departments/Offices by connecting them with optical fibres. With the improved technology and equipments of the Department, more and more services may be provided through this.

3.3 NICNET (NIC):

NIC, Mizoram State Unit is having a dedicated line of 10GB which could take care of the requirements of various Departments. NIC has been providing internet services to different departments through optical fibres from NIC Station in the Secretariat, Treasury Square.

3.4 Private Service Providers:

There are other private service providers in operation in the State, particularly in Aizawl City. TULIP was earlier the main service provider from which various Departments subscribed their internet service. Now, there are service providers like Netsurf, etc. Due to the need of the Departments

and non-availability of other services, some Departments get their internet service through these providers. The problem in subscribing to the private service providers is that there is no government system regulating such service, and the Departments need to pay whatever charges, which are relatively higher as it comes from private business enterprise.

3.5 Data Cards of Mobile Service Providers:

Apart from the above, there are internet data cards provided by Mobile Internet providers. Earlier, TATA Data Docombo were quite prevalent, but now discontinued. Service Providers like Reliance, BSNL EVDO, Airtel, Vodafone, etc. are available. To meet internet requirements on travels, different Departments also resort to this kind of connection to meet the requirement of their officers.

4. PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

4.1 In the light of the above, the Working Group considers various possible options available for internet connections and to lay down a system for provision of reliable internet service to government offices so that IT as a tool could be made increasingly reliable in the Government of Mizoram. The various options and priority may be laid down as under:

4.2. Broadband Connections through Landline Telephones:

4.2.1 All Government Offices are provided with landline telephones. In many places, BSNL can provide broadband internet through their landline telephones. The Group considers that provision of internet through the landline telephones will be most convenient for the offices.

4.2.2 In this connection, the Group recommended that when a landline telephone provided to the officer of a Department is utilized for broadband internet service, the telephone monthly ceilings fixed by the General Administration Department may be allowed to be increased as under:

Table showing recommended Ceilings

Sl. No.	Entitled Officers	Office Landline		Residence Landline	
		Existing Monthly landline billing	Recommended Ceiling with Broadband internet	Existing Monthly landline billing	Recommended Ceiling with Broadband internet
1	Secretaries	2000	3000	1200	2000
	Addl. Secretaries/ Joint Secretaries/ Heads of Departments	1300	2000	800	1500
3	Other Officers	600	2000	400	1000

4.2.3 In cases where the monthly billing (telephone + internet) subscribed by a Department/ Office exceeds the recommended ceiling, the Department/Office may approach I&CT Department for subscription of

higher band-width with higher monthly billing with proper justifications. Thereafter, I&CT Department, after examining the request of the Department, may issue a No-Objection Certificate.

4.2.4 After NoC is issued by I&CT Department, the Department shall approach GAD for subscription of landline telephone-based broadband connections and for relaxation of monthly ceilings for telephone-based broadband internet connections.

4.2.5 The Group acknowledges that there are locations where the Officers cannot have internet access through landline telephones as there is no such facility in some locations. In such cases, the Group recommended that the Officers be allowed the facility of internet connection from private service providers. However, the overall cost of Telephone, along with Internet shall not exceed the revised ceiling for Telephones with Broadband connections shown in the above Table.

4.3 Internet Connections through MSWAN and NICNET for Offices:

4.3.1 The Group considers that for every Government Office requiring internet service should first explore the possibility of having broadband internet connection from government service providers such as NICNET provided by NIC, or MSWAN provided by I&CT Department. This will require them to procure Optical Fibres for connecting their respective office from NIC or MSWAN Data Centre. The following steps shall be followed by the Departments/Offices:

1) *A requiring Department shall first approach I&CT Department for provision of broadband internet for use in their Department/Office.*

2) *I&CT Department shall, in its turn examine the possibility of providing broadband internet from MSWAN, or NICNET. For that purpose, I&CT Department shall be in touch with NIC to assess the availability of internet band-width for provision to the Departments.*

3) Broadband internet from MSWAN/NICNET may then be provided to the Department/Office through optical fibre.

4.3.2 If no such service is not available, they shall obtain a No-Objection Certificate from I&CT Department and laying down the level of band-width for the Department. Only thereafter, the Department may seek other internet services from other sources, including private service providers.

4.4 Connections through Private Internet Providers:

4.4.1 In today's world, private sector plays an important role in provision of various services in the country. This is true in the case of Information Technology, where the private service providers provide various types of services including broadband internet, mobile internet, etc. which are also very useful for government departments for IT services. Thus, the Working Group also felt that there is merit in availing services provided by private internet service providers for meeting the internet requirements of the Departments.

4.4.2 The Group thus, recommended that the Government Departments be allowed to utilize private internet providers after obtaining NoC from I&CT Department and within the prescribed band-width for the Department.

4.4.3 The Working Group recommended that when internet service is provided by a Department/Office, I&CT Department shall examine the requests of the Departments on the following broad criteria and monetary ceilings:

1) Departments/Offices with Users 20 or less -   Rs. 2000/- per Month
2) For every additional 20 Users   -   Rs. 1000/-

4.5 Mobile Data Cards:

4.5.1 Mobile Data Cards are also provided by some internet providers. It is useful for those officials whose works involve travelling to different stations to provide them internet services. However, indiscriminate use of data cards may put unnecessary strain on the Government's resources. Thus, the Group felt it extremely essential that the use of data cards by the Government officials need to be restricted and fully justified.

4.5.2 The Group recommends that Administrative Heads of the Departments may be the competent authority to grant permission for provision of mobile data cards to officers or staffs after requirements are properly justified.

Submitted to the Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram for further consideration of the Government.

(LALHMACHHUANA)
Secretary, I&CT
Chairman

(VANLALMAWIA)
Joint Secretary, GAD
Member- Secretary

(RAMCHUANA)
Joint Secretary, Finance
Member

(DR. LALTHLAMUANA)
Chief Informatics Officer, I&CT
Member

(LALTHATHANGA)
Sr. System Analyst, NIC
Member