

Guidelines for Indian Government Websites

GIGGW

Compliance

&

Certification

Handbook



About the Document

As the world adopts the Internet media for delivery of information and services, it becomes necessary to establish standards that serve as a frame of reference to guide construction efforts in the virtual world. The Government of India's National Informatics Center (NIC) has devised such standards in the form of **Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)**. These guidelines have become an integral part of the **Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CSMOP)**, and have also been adopted by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**.

To help Indian Government websites become compliant with GIGW, a detailed manual is available to registered users at the website <http://guidelines.gov.in>, a helpdesk is available during office hours on all working days, and regular workshops are conducted by NIC.

The purpose of this document is to augment the GIGW manual and serve as a ready reference of all relevant information in one place for all stakeholders of Government websites, who need to ensure their websites comply with GIGW. This document helps clearly understand various aspects that can ensure GIGW compliance & aid in completion of the certification process.

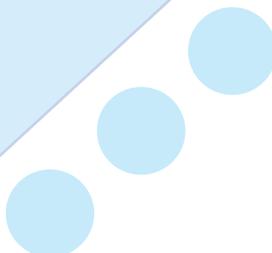
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Background

In the last two decades, our human world has seen a new parallel universe emerge along with the widening of Internet's reach. The Internet ensures that citizens who seek information and services can do so without having to visit a physical brick-and-mortar government office, and without being constrained by limited office/working hours, by simply visiting the government office's website from anywhere at any time!

This seemingly simple e-enabling to deliver government's information and services requires significant effort by various stakeholders of the government office's website so that the citizens' lives benefit truly through rendering of information & services in an accurate, efficient, relevant, timely manner. The website stakeholders operating behind the scenes need to bear in mind aspects of the human computer interface carefully so that all citizens, including those with different abilities are able to feel facilitated vs hindered.

To use an analogy, in a brick-and-mortar world having multiple storey structures, in addition to a staircase, an elevator is built to enable accessibility to all storeys by citizens, including those with limited limb movement. Or, even in single-storey structures, along with a flight of stairs, a ramp is built with supporting hand-railings to enable a citizen navigating on a wheelchair to travel between two levels.

In the case of websites, being considerate to the needs of all citizens, including those with different abilities, such as audio-visual impairments, information & services are rendered in a manner that allows access by all. For example, a government website can make available the text transcript of an audio so that audio-impaired citizens can read it, or the same transcript can be read by assistive technologies like screen readers to help visually challenged citizens to access the information conveniently. All such simple yet significant measures show the government's responsiveness towards the needs of its citizens, and its intent of being inclusive in delivering the benefits of governance to all, without discriminating on the basis of abilities, access to bandwidth, technology etc.

In keeping with the above philosophy and to set a minimum benchmark for all government websites 'Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)' were formulated by National Informatics Centre (NIC). GIGW was adopted by the Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievances (DARPG), and made an integral part of the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CSMOP) in January 2009 to ensure Indian Government websites conform to the UUU trilogy, viz., user-centric, user-friendly, & universally accessible.

What is Compliance with GIGW

Compliance with GIGW ensures that a website is user-centric, usable, & universally accessible at all stages: starting from launch, continuing during its operations & maintenance.

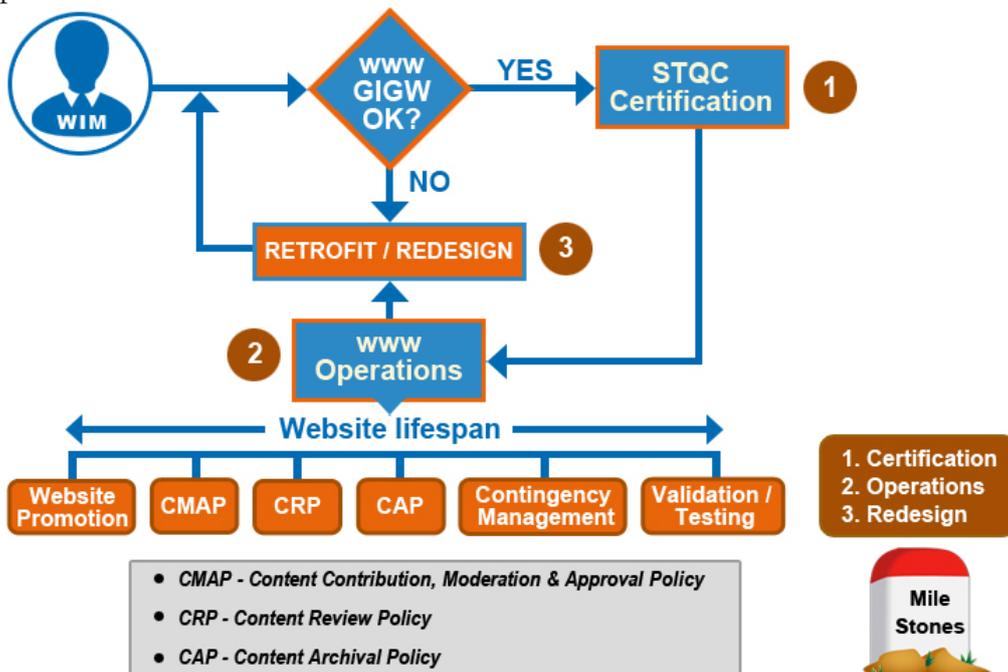
GIGW promotes standards that are broadly placed in three categories: **advisory, mandatory, & voluntary**. Mandatory standards are the minimum criteria that every website **MUST** meet; advisory standards are the guidelines that websites **SHOULD** endeavor to comply with; & voluntary standards are those which websites **MAY** adopt based on their discretion.

GIGW Compliance matrix provides a checklist of 115 mandatory guidelines/checkpoints. Majority of these checkpoints relate to the front end of the website (accessibility, identity, content, and design) while others relate to backend policies, processes and plans to enable better management of websites. These 115 checkpoints are exhaustive and cover all the possible scenarios that may apply to the entire universe of government websites. There may be few government websites to which each of the 115 checkpoints may be applicable. A majority of government websites may be such that while most of the 115 checkpoints would apply, some checkpoints may not be applicable.

Website stakeholders need to ensure compliance with the mandatory guidelines that are applicable for the particular website in such a manner that the:

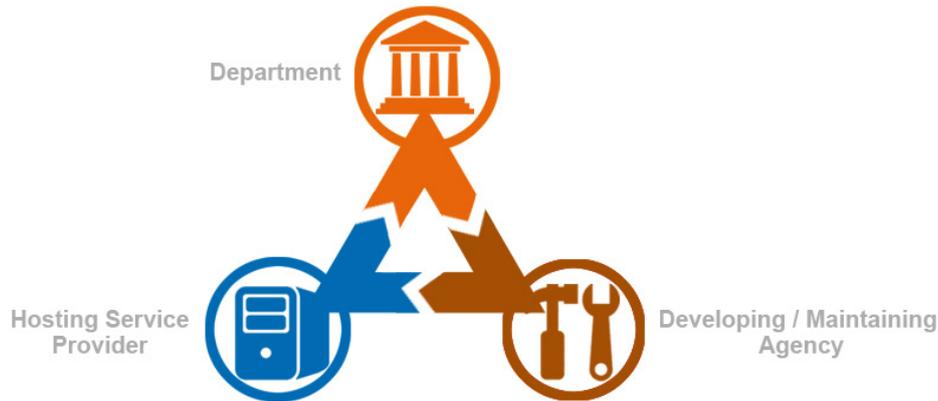
- user interface is fully compliant
- backend policies are honored fully

Once a website conforms to the applicable mandatory guidelines, the owner department must apply to **Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC)** for GIGW compliance certification.



Roles & Responsibilities of Website Stakeholders

The responsibility to ensure GIGW compliance is shared between 3 stakeholders:



In addition certain guidelines related to issues like accessibility and content authenticity and currency will be systemically complied with, if a Content Management System (CMS) is adopted, which is recommended as a best practice.

Department



Department is the owner of the website, responsible for initiating design, content creation, review, modification, archiving etc, and managing operations through website lifecycle, with the help of other stakeholders like development agency & hosting service provider.

A Government department can initiate steps towards GIGW compliance by designating a Web Information Manager (WIM), at the level of Joint Secretary, who spearheads the department's website initiative. A WIM is responsible for deliverables such as:

- Approving all policies to handle legal aspects such as copyright, hyperlinking, privacy etc
- Approving all policies for effective management of the website's content, as required by GIGW: content moderation, review, and archival
- Approving processes and plans to effectively monitor the website and handle any contingencies
- Ensuring effective promotion of the department's website

Developing/Maintaining Agency



Development Agencies act as per the mandate from the Government department, and contribute technical expertise to design, develop & maintain department websites.

The department can engage the services of a Developing / Maintaining agency to ensure the department website is developed to comply with GIGW guidelines not just at the time of website launch, but through the life of the website in the listed ways:

- All content is universally accessible
- Government identity and the department's lineage is prominently displayed through the proper use of emblem, flag etc.

- Prescribed minimum content and functionality as stipulated by GIGW is present on the website e.g., Feedback, Help, Search, Sitemap etc.

Hosting Service Provider



Hosting Service Providers offer hosting services to ensure secure, reliable, robust availability of Government department websites.

The Hosting Service Provider can ensure GIGW compliance by providing infrastructure to enable :

- Multi-tier security
- Effective & regular backups
- Disaster recovery

Collective efforts of all stakeholders to fulfill their respective responsibilities can help deliver the desired common goal: websites that truly serve interests of all visitors!

Refer [Appendix i - Demystifying the GIGW Compliance Matrix](#) to see details of the mapping between specific GIGW guidelines that are complied with, by design through action by various functional owners, such as Government department, developing/maintaining agency, and hosting service provider.

Refer [Appendix ii - Achieving GIGW Compliance using a Content Management System \(CMS\)](#) to see how a Content Management System (CMS) can help comply with GIGW guidelines specific to Accessibility, Content Scope and Quality, Visual Identity, Consistent page layouts design etc.

Refer [Appendix iii - SUGAM Web Editions](#) to see editions, that aim to engage all stakeholders who are involved in delivering eGovernance in a meaningful way to ensure **S**ustainable **U**ser-centric **G**overnance through **A**ccessible and **M**anaged websites.