

Ministry of Law and Justice
Department of Justice

eCourts Mission Mode Project

The eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project is one of the National e-Governance projects being implemented in District and Subordinate Courts of the Country. The objectives of the project is to provide designated services to litigants, lawyers and Judiciary through universal computerisation of district and subordinate courts, as well as the upgradation of ICT infrastructure of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

Phase I

In the year 2007, CCEA approved the computerisation of 13,348 district & subordinate courts over a two year period at the cost of Rs.441.80 crore. In the year 2010, in the light of cost and time over-runs, CCEA approved the computerisation of 14,249 district & subordinate courts March 2014 (later extended up to March 2015) with an enhanced scope and a revised budget of Rs.935 crore. This was termed as Phase-I.

Approximately 95% of the activities relating to installation of hardware and software, connectivity and change management have been completed within the stipulated timeline by 31st March, 2015, as indicated below.

S. No.	Module	Status as on 31.12.2015	% Completion
1	Sites funded	14249	100.00
2	Sites readiness	14249	100.00
3	Hardware installation	13436	94.29
4	LAN installation	13683	96.02
5	Software deployment	13672	95.95

In addition to the above, ICT infrastructure of the Supreme Court and High Courts has also been upgraded. Progress on other activities of the project as of March, 2015 is given below:

I. **Laptops to Judicial Officers:** Laptops have been provided to 14,309 judicial officers.

II. **Software:** A unified national core application software - Case Information System (CIS) software - has been developed and made available for deployment at all computerised courts. Entry of data regarding past cases has been initiated, and data in respect of over 7 crore cases is available online.

III. **Judicial Service Centre:** Judicial Service Centre (JSC) have established at all computerised courts which serves as a single window for filing petitions and applications by litigants/ lawyers as also obtaining information on ongoing cases and copies of orders and judgments etc.

IV. **Change Management and Training:** As part of the Change Management exercise, over 14,000 Judicial Officers have been trained in the use of UBUNTU-Linux OS and over 4000 court staff have been trained in CIS software.

V. **Process Re-engineering:** eCommittee has initiated the Process Re-engineering (PR) exercise; PR Committees have been set up in all High Courts to study and suggest simplification in existing rules, processes, procedures and forms.

VI. **Video Conferencing** facilities in courts and jails: Based on experience of pilot, it was decided in consultation with the eCommittee of Supreme Court of India to provide VC facilities for 500 Court complexes and corresponding jails.

VII. **Service Delivery and National Judicial Data Grid:** The national e-Courts portal (<http://www.ecourts.gov.in>) has become operational and has been opened for public access. The portal provides online services to litigants such as details of case registration, cause list, case status, daily orders, and final judgments. Currently, litigants can access case status information in respect of over 7 crore pending and decided cases and more than 3 crore orders/judgments pertaining to district and subordinate Courts. NJDG data will also help the judiciary in judicial monitoring and management and the Government to get data for policy purposes.

Phase-II

Envisaging further ICT enhancement through universal computerisation of all the courts, the Phase II of the project was approved by the Cabinet in July 2015 with a cost of Rs 1670 crore and duration of four years. Sanction of the Project was issued in August 2015. The project would function in line with the Digital India program of the Government of India.

The project is aimed at delivery of 30 different services to the litigants through seven different platforms.

Phase-II of the project proposes the following new initiatives:

- I. **Enhancement of computer infrastructure in courts as compared to Phase I:** From 4 computers in each courts to 8 computers considering that computers are used by all important sections of the court registry for day to day processes and service delivery.
- II. **Strengthening the system of serving notices and summons:** Through provision of authentication devices for process servers at Court Complexes.
- III. **Hardware to District Legal Service Authorities and Taluka Legal Service Committees:** The offices of DLSAs & TLSCs are required to work in tandem with the court processes for holding of Lok Adalats, listing of cases in Lok Adalats, the cause lists, proceedings, orders etc., in those cases.
- IV. **Hardware for computer labs in State Judicial Academies:** For sustainability of the efforts of ICT training for Judicial Officers and court officials.
- V. **Information kiosks at each court complex:** To provide services such as case status and daily order sheets to litigants without having to approach court officials.

- VI. **Development of Central Filing Centres with sufficient infrastructure:** It has been proposed that Judicial Service Centres (JSCs), which were envisaged primarily as filing counters in Phase I, will be utilised for a composite set of services, including positioning of kiosks and waiting area for litigants. Central Filing Centres (CFCs) and will be called JSC-cum-CFC.
- VII. **Court libraries computerization:** The libraries of the courts will be computerised. An Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) has been successfully implemented in the Supreme Court.
- VIII. **Solar energy for power backup:** To utilise solar energy, as an alternate source, being environment friendly and easily available, it is proposed to initially cover 5% of the total court complexes.
- IX. **Service Delivery through use of cloud computing:** Dispensing with the need for servers in individual court complexes and improving efficiency and scalability of the automation of courts. This will also reduce the need to deploy technical manpower at individual court complexes.
- X. **Systems for timely and regular updation of data:** To be done by laying down protocols for updation and improving connectivity to expedite data updation to NJDG by all courts.
- XI. **Discontinuation of manual registers:** To promote use of ICT for day-to-day activities by discontinuation of manual registers and court registers to be maintained only in e-form.
- XII. **Mobile based service delivery through SMS and Mobile Apps:** Preparation of mobile phone applications on various mobile platforms for latest case related information, and an SMS Gateway based infrastructure to facilitate push and pull based SMS for litigants and lawyers.
- XIII. **Court record room management automation:** The digitised documents/case records pertaining to a particular court will be automatically generated in the court at the time of hearing.

Achievements of Phase – II:

- **Funds released:** DoJ has released Rs.430.05 crore to High Courts and Rs.38.66 crore to NIC under Phase II. High Courts have started the process of procurement of computer hardware and NIC has began procurement of equipment for cloud computing.
- **Upgradation of software.** A new, more user friendly version of Case Information Software (NC 2.0) has been developed and all computerised courts are being migrated to it. The eCommittee is also working towards integrating High Courts and Supreme Court data into this software.
- National Judicial Data Grid has been (NJDG) developed. A pilot was first launched in select states in 2013. It was made available for all jurisdictions under Phase II and made public in September 2015. Currently, litigants can access online case status information in respect of over 7 crore pending and decided cases and more than 3 crore orders/judgments pertaining to more than 16900 district and subordinate Courts. Litigants and lawyers are also provided services through Judicial Service Centre at the court complexes such as Case Filing, Certified copies of orders and judgments, Case status etc.

- More than 56 crore transactions recorded through eTaal since inception, indicating frequent use of the facility by litigants and lawyers.
- During Jan-Jun 2016, 63 lakh SMSs auto-generated through the system have been sent to the litigants and lawyers.
- VC facility has been operationalised between 500 courts and corresponding prisons.
- Process Re-engineering exercise undertaken by the eCommittee has not made much progress after they requested first the Law Commission and then a retired High Court Judge to develop common minimum guidelines on the basis of the reports submitted by High Courts. In June, 2016, a Workshop was conducted for all RGs and Law Secretaries where High Courts have identified processes to be revisited. High Courts have given reports on revisions required in existing rules in respect of two important procedural changes and two simple changes. Reports have been received from High Courts. Department of Justice has completed indexing of these reports and eCommittee is working on preparing common minimum guidelines.

In line with the Digital India Programme of the Government of India which emphasises on Citizen centric services, the project would also focus on Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen providing Governance and Services on Demand subsequently digitally empowering the Citizens.