

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Empowered Technology Group (ETG)

- 1. Background:** The Cabinet Secretariat vide its order No. 1/17/1/2020 dated 29th February 2020 notified the constitution of Empowered Technology Group (ETG) as an institutionalized structure to proactively lay down, coordinate and oversee national level policies relating to procurement and induction, and Research and Development in technologies that require large outlays and timely advice for determining direction and trajectory of Government's R&D and Technology Development Programmes. The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser provides administrative and secretarial support to the ETG.
- 2. Purpose:** The purpose of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish procedural guidelines for efficient functioning of the Empowered Technology Group (ETG). This SOP outlines the step-by-step procedures to be followed for transparent, secure, and effective functioning of ETG in the interest of the nation.
- 3. Scope:** This SOP is applicable to all the members of the ETG and officials involved in the ETG proceedings and concerned Ministries/ Departments sharing the Draft Cabinet (DCN) Note / Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) note/ Public Investment Board (PIB) notes containing information, or updates regarding technology-related matters (henceforth referred to as proposals) for the consideration of the ETG.
- 4. Proposal Evaluation Stages:** ETG interacts with the Ministries and Departments at two stages:
 - A. Proposal Review**
 - i. Submission of proposals along with the filled in self-appraisal form and a brief summary of proposal by concerned Ministries and Departments for ETG evaluation.
 - ii. Internal assessment of the proposal followed by Subject Matter Experts' review and ETG Members' review.
 - iii. Communication of review comments to the concerned Ministry/Department.
 - B. Proposal Evaluation in ETG Meeting**
 - i. ETG Meeting chaired by PSA.
- 5. Details of the Proposal Evaluation Process**

A. Proposal Review

i. **Submission of proposals along with the filled in self-appraisal form and a brief summary of the proposal by concerned Ministries and Departments for ETG evaluation:**

The Ministries and Departments should submit their proposal for ETG evaluation along with a prescribed self-appraisal proforma and a brief summary of the proposal. The self-appraisal proforma is required to gain additional context and technological details on the proposal which are relevant for ETG. The Cabinet Secretariat vide its order No. 1/50/2/2022 dated 2nd May, 2023 notified proforma for self-appraisal form for proposals.

The circular can be accessed at – https://psa.gov.in/CMS/web/sites/default/files/psa_custom_files/ETG%20notification%20Self%20appraisal.pdf, and the proforma is also enclosed here as

Annexure – I.

Additionally, the Ministries and Departments should submit a brief summary of the proposal which can be shared with external Subject Matter Experts for review. The template for submitting the brief summary of the proposal is annexed (**Annexure-II**).

ii. **Internal assessment of the proposal followed by Subject Matter Experts' and ETG Members' review:**

The ETG secretariat functions at the Office of PSA.

- a) The proposals are internally assessed by the ETG secretariat and then the proposal along with the self-appraisal form are shared with the ETG members for review.
- b) The proposals received by ETG secretariat are diverse in nature and pertain to important policy, technology procurement, R&D etc. Accordingly, external Subject Matter Experts are consulted for technical evaluation of the proposals by sharing the self-appraisal form along with the brief summary of the proposal.
- c) The Subject Matter Experts are selected from a resource pool of identified experts from government institutions i.e., Ministries/Departments, academic and R&D institutions. **It is ensured that only the additional documents i.e., self-appraisal form and brief summary of the proposal, as received from the Ministry/Department, are shared with**

experts through NIC email to their government authorized and authenticated e-mail IDs.

d) The self-appraisal form and brief summary notes are sent to experts in a password protected manner.

e) Self-certification from experts about no conflict of interest are obtained to ensure unbiased review. Identity of the reviewers is kept confidential.

f) The experts are sensitized about not disclosing/ sharing the proposal details with others.

iii. Communication of review comments to the concerned Ministry/Department:

a) The expert review comments are internally evaluated and relevant comments for further improvement in the proposal are conveyed to the concerned Ministries and Departments.

b) The expert review comments are also shared with the ETG members for their consideration.

c) The comments and observations as ETG review are recommendatory in nature. The Ministries and Departments are requested to appropriately incorporate the comments as per their discretion.

B. Proposal Evaluation in the ETG Meeting

- i. ETG Meeting chaired by PSA: the ETG meetings are generally convened once a month, preferably during 2nd and 3rd week of every month. The ETG meeting is attended by the ETG members, representatives of the concerned Ministries and Departments, and members from ETG secretariat as special invitees.
- ii. The concerned Ministries and Departments are required to present the proposal along with point-wise tabular response to the ETG review comments during the ETG meeting.
- iii. ETG recommendations are recorded in the minutes of meeting and after due approval of the Chairperson ETG, they are shared with all concerned.
- iv. Concerned Ministries and Departments, whose proposals are evaluated, are advised to include the minutes of the ETG meeting, along with the pointwise responses to the ETG review comments presented during the meeting, in the proposed note. Besides, it is advised that a suitable reference to this should be included in the technology implication section of the proposed cabinet note.

Annex to the OM no. 1/50/2/2022-Cab dated 02.05.2023.**Self-Appraisal Form for Submission of Notes to Empowered Technology Group**

- ✓ Section A is Mandatory for all proposals.
- ✓ In addition to Section A, Section B to be filled for all Technology Procurement proposals.
- ✓ In addition to Section A, Section C to be filled for all R&D proposals.
- ✓ In addition to Section A, Section B and Section C to be filled for all proposals where R&D also involves Technology Development.

No.	Item	Description	Explanatory remarks
Section A: Mandatory for All Proposals (Tech. Procurement/ R&D proposals/ Policy/Programmes/Missions/ Agreements)			
1.	Basic purpose of the proposal		
2.	a) Is there any specific scientific /technological requirement of the proposal? If yes, please provide details thereof. b) Is basic R&D a part of the proposal? If yes, please provide details thereof.		
3.	Capacity: a) Availability of skilled manpower for the proposal b) Capacity Building Component of the proposal		
4.	Monitoring: Technical monitoring and evaluation plan for the proposal.		
5.	Impact of the proposal in terms of the following: a) Import Substitution b) Indigenous Manufacturing c) Export Promotion		
6.	Please provide details of complementary documents prepared if any (such as strategy document/ action plans/ guidelines etc.		
Section B: Technology Proposals (Mandatory for technology procurement proposals)			
1.	Mention the specifics of: a) Availability of Technology /or its subsystems within India b) Indigenous content in the technology (in terms of cost and components) c) Critical technologies being imported, if any. d) Is there any technology transfer involved? If yes: i. Availability of material supply chain ii. Production capabilities in the country		

	e) Involvement of industry and start-ups		
2.	Global Benchmarking: a) Whether the technology being procured is the latest in its field? b) If not, justifications for the current technology procurement		
3.	Obsolescence: a) Estimated Technology Obsolescence Period b) Plans for replacement / upgradation of obsolete/outdated technologies with latest ones.		
Section C: R&D Proposals (Mandatory for R&D proposals)			
1.	Basic purpose of the research proposal and potential usage of research outcomes.		
2.	a) Are similar initiatives/research projects/programs being run by other organisations? b) If so, how the present proposal is different. c) How collaborations and synergies between similar programs will be attained.		
3.	a) Indigenous content (in terms of cost and components) b) Plans for further indigenisation		
4.	Global Benchmarking: a) Whether the technology being developed is the latest in its field? b) If not, justifications for developing proposed tech.		
5.	Technology Commercialization Plans: c) Commercialisation plans of developed technologies/ Products. d) Availability of material supply chain in the country e) Development of production capability f) Involvement of industry and start-ups g) Involvement of academia and individual innovators		

Template for submitting brief summary of the proposal for submission to expert reviewers

1. Introduction

- Briefly state the objectives of the proposal along with the key features, deliverables, benefits and stakeholders.

2. Background

- Provide relevant background information such as the current state of affairs and rationale/justification for the proposal.

3. Summary

- Provide brief summary of the proposal including its specific components and administrative structure. Mention technical details such as specifications, architecture, framework, technology stack for technologies/technology solutions used.

4. Implementation Plan:

- Provide details about the work plan, including major milestones, timeline and responsible authorities and anticipated challenges if any.

5. Financial Implications

- Provide a brief outlay of the financial implications.

6. Approvals/ discussions/consultation held

- Provide details about the previous stages of approval(s)/ appraisal(s)/ consultation(s) held on the proposal.
- Briefly mention about comment(s)/observation(s) received during previous stages of consultation which are not incorporated in the final document and reasons thereof.

Notes:

This brief summary should be of 4-5 pages and include details which are not covered in the self-appraisal form. It is reiterated here that self-appraisal proforma has to be filled in conjunction with this brief summary document to ensure that both documents are integrated and corroborated.
