

CHAPTER 3
e-Enablement of services

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This chapter examines the planning, business process re-engineering and system development done to provide public services online. Audit examination revealed that none of the departments constituted a task force for development and implementation of e-services. As against 506 services notified under the MRTPS Act, 337 notified services (67 per cent) were not available through the online Portal. Documents related to business process re-engineering for e-enablement of services were not available.

Technical documentation of the application software developed by the system integrator was not available. A third-party audit of the functioning of the online system and its use was not done. Business continuity and disaster recovery plan were not documented.

Vital management information system reports to monitor the delivery of public services were not provided in the system. For applications submitted through the service centres, there was no facility in the online system for filing an appeal either directly by the citizen or through the service centres.

3.1 Introduction

As per the e-Governance policy of Maharashtra, 2011, each department was required to prepare a list of citizen services for e-enablement¹ of services in a time-bound manner. The departmental e-Governance initiatives were to be executed in a planned manner in consultation with DIT. The Government had to ensure that all e-Governance projects were accompanied by plans for re-engineering business processes and change management systems associated with them.

DIT appointed (January 2016) Mahaonline, as the system integrator for the development of a portal, application software for public services and integration with public services provided through other departmental portals. In August 2016, Maharashtra Information Technology Corporation Limited (MahaIT), a GoM enterprise, was established and the responsibility of financial transactions related to ASSKs was assigned to it.

GoM issued (September 2015) detailed guidelines regarding action to be taken by the departments for providing service through the Portal.

The use of Information Technology to provide public services results in benefits to both the service user and the service provider such as the capability to store large amounts of information, quick retrieval of data, opportunities to offer new services and availability of services at the convenience of the people. Audit

¹ e-enablement of services includes information availability, submission of online forms, online processing and payments, online verification, online status tracking and online availability of services

findings related to e-enablement of online services are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

3.2 System design and development

3.2.1 Non-constitution of task force for online services

As per the guidelines issued (September 2015) by GAD, GoM, all government departments were required to prepare a plan for providing online public services notified under the MRTPS Act in a phased manner. For this purpose, each department was required to set up a task force consisting of regional level officers, commissionerate/directorate level officers, concerned administrative department level officers and a representative from Mahaonline/DIT before 15 October 2015. The task force was required to finalise changes in the existing process of delivery of public services and submit a report within one month to DIT and prepare plans for the development and implementation of e-services.

Scrutiny of records in nine test-checked departments revealed that in none of the departments, a task force was constituted and therefore, plans for the development and implementation of e-services were not prepared in any of these departments.

The non-constitution of the task force and non-preparation of plans for development and implementation of e-services resulted in many of the notified services not being e-enabled as discussed in **paragraph 3.3.1**.

During the exit conference, Additional Chief Secretary stated (July 2022) that necessary action would be taken in consultation with NIC and Secretary, Information Technology, GoM.

3.2.2 Non-availability of Government business process re-engineering documents

As per paragraph 7.4 of the e-Governance Policy of Maharashtra, 2011, Government would ensure that all e-Governance projects are accompanied by documented plans for business process re-engineering (BPR).

Since the process involved in the delivery of services is based on rules, manuals or instructions issued from time to time by the departments, documented BPR was required to be prepared and approved before mapping into the online system. However, documents related to BPR for e-enablement of public services prepared, if any, were not available in the nine test-checked departments and DIT.

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner and Project Manager, MahaIT accepted the facts and assured (July 2022) to look into the issue.

Recommendation 6: Government should ensure that plans for business process re-engineering are documented for all the e-enabled services.

3.2.3 Absence of Service Level Agreement

Mahaonline (system integrator) was required to develop the application software for the services notified under the MRTPS Act on a revenue-sharing

model, under which, Mahaonline was entitled to receive a share out of the service charges collected from the citizen.

Any Information System Project would require a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the purchaser and the vendor covering issues such as process relating to the design of solution architecture and coding, testing, business process description, documentation, version control, change management, minimum quality of services to be provided and response time for addressing any issues.

Audit observed that though the order on revenue sharing with the system integrator was issued in February 2015, SLA for the development and implementation of application software for providing public services through the Portal was not executed.

In the absence of SLA, Mahaonline failed to address deficiencies in the system as discussed in **paragraph 3.3.8**.

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner and Project Manager, MahaIT agreed (July 2022) to ensure proper documentation.

3.2.4 Non-availability of technical documentation and user manuals

Technical documentation of an Information Technology (IT) system such as system requirement specifications (SRS), system design documentation (SDD), entity relation diagram (ERD), user acceptance testing (UAT) and data dictionary is necessary to ensure the quality of the system as well as for future maintenance. Audit observed that the technical documentation of application software for online service and design and structure of complete database including database tables and their relationship was not available with DIT.

Besides, the user manual detailing the process at various stages from the time of receipt of application from the citizen till approval of application and monitoring of service delivery was not available with DIT.

The lack of technical documentation on the design and structure of a complete database also pose a major risk for future maintenance of the system and its up-gradation.

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner and Project Manager, MahaIT agreed (July 2022) to ensure proper documentation.

3.3 Inadequacies in the online system

3.3.1 Notified services not e-enabled

GAD, GoM issued (September 2015) guidelines that all the public services should be provided through the Portal. The guidelines specified the actions to be taken by the departments as shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Action to be taken by departments for e-enablement of services

Sr. No.	Existing procedure for providing public services	Action to be taken by the department
1	If the entire process from the acceptance of the application to the final delivery of the service was being done through the Mahaonline system.	No need for any change
2	If the entire process from the acceptance of the application to the final provision of the service was being done through the software application of the concerned department.	Integrate the complete process from acceptance of applications to final delivery of services through the Portal
3	If the entire process from the acceptance of the application to the final delivery of the service was being done through offline mode.	Develop software application and integrate with Portal

Source: Circular of GAD dated 20 September 2015

Scrutiny of the records at GAD, DIT and in the nine test-checked departments revealed that documents regarding the schedule of implementation of online services and date(s) from which the services were available online were not available on record.

Analysis of dashboard data revealed that as against 506 notified services, only 169 services were in use. Thus, 67 per cent notified services (337 notified services) were not available through the Portal.

As per the information furnished by DIT, the number of software applications developed and integrated by Mahaonline with the Portal is shown in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Status of software application developed and integrated by Mahaonline

Sr. No.	Status of the software application developed for services	Number of services
1	Applications developed under the MRTPS Act	310
2	Applications integrated with Portal	78
3	Applications under different stages of development and integration	82

Source: Information furnished by DIT

As seen from **Table 3.2**, as against 388 services (**Sr. No. 1 and 2 of Table 3.2**) developed/integrated with Portal, only 169 services were in use. The department-wise services developed/integrated by Mahaonline under the MRTPS Act and the services actually in use in the Portal are shown in **Appendix 3.1**.

Thus, 219 services though developed/integrated by Mahaonline, were not available to the citizen online. As seen from **Table 3.2**, only 82 services were at different stages of development and integration with Portal and the departments had not taken up the issue of e-enablement of 255 notified services² with DIT.

Further, the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department (Department) was providing 11 services through a separate software application viz., 'Vaidhmapan' developed by National Informatics Centre while the service of issue of new ration cards or renewal of ration cards was done through its own portal viz., Ration Card Management System. Audit noticed that these services were not integrated with the Portal.

² 337 notified services less 82 services under different stages of integration

Thus, a significant number of notified services were not e-enabled with the Portal despite guidelines issued by GAD in September 2015.

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner stated (July 2022) that the implementation of online services would be reviewed.

Recommendation 7: Government should review the status of e-enablement of services in each department and prepare a plan for its implementation in a time-bound manner.

3.3.2 Inadequacies in the system of filing appeals

As per Section 9 of the MRTPS Act, a person whose application for services had been rejected or who was not provided public service within the stipulated time limit had the right to file an appeal before the first appellate authority. A second appeal with the second appellate authority could also be filed against the order of the first appellate authority. The first appellate authority had to decide the appeal within 30 days while the second appellate authority had to decide the appeal within 45 days.

Audit noticed that for an application submitted through ASSKs, there was no facility in the Portal for filing an appeal either directly by the citizen or through ASSKs. The aggrieved citizens had to file appeal with the concerned appellate authority in offline mode. For applications submitted directly by the citizens through the Portal, facility was available for filing appeals in the system. Since 87 per cent of applications processed in the year 2020-21 were through ASSKs, these citizens were denied the opportunity to file appeals online.

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner and Project Manager, MahaIT agreed (July 2022) to take action to create the facility for filing appeals through the portal for applications submitted through ASSKs.

3.3.3 Inadequate Management Information System

As per the workflow of the online system (refer to chart 2.1 of chapter 2), desk-1 and desk-2 in the department, scrutinizes the application along with the supporting documents received from the citizen and either accept or return the application. On acceptance, the application is forwarded to the designated authority (desk-3) who approves and digitally signs the certificate. Desk-1 and desk-2 in the department have been given the facility to return incomplete applications back to ASSKs or Portal.

Audit noticed that there was no facility available in the system for the designated authority (desk-3) to verify/review the applications pending at desk-1 and desk-2 and the applications returned by desk-1 and desk-2.

The District Collector of each district designated as the controlling officer for the implementation of the MRTPS Act in the district, is provided with dashboard data showing the number of applications received, applications disposed of and applications pending at the district and taluka level. Audit noticed that the dashboard data available to the District Collector did not show the designated authority-wise status of pending applications.

Audit further noticed that the online system did not generate management information system (MIS) reports such as (a) report showing the services

provided by ASSKs for the purpose of annual evaluation by the District Collector, (b) periodical reports showing the collection of service charges and application fee and remittance of application fee into Government accounts and (c) report showing appellate authority wise pending applications.

Thus, vital MIS reports to monitor the effective and efficient delivery of public services, were not provided in the system resulting in applications pending for more than a year (**Paragraph 2.8.1**) and delay in remittance of application fees in Government account (**Paragraph 2.8.5**).

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner and Project Manager, MahaIT stated (July 2022) that improvisation would be done in the system for required MIS.

3.3.4 Incomplete list of villages in the database

While submitting the online application, the ASSK operator or the citizen has to select the district, taluka and village from the drop-down list available in the system.

During the joint survey of ASSKs, seven ASSKs stated that the names of a few villages were not available in the system. On counter-checking the data in the master table, the names of the few villages were not found to be listed in the system as shown in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Illustrative cases showing names of villages not included in the online system

Sr. No.	District	Tahsil	Names of villages not included in the online system
1	Kolhapur	Shirol	Sambhajipur
2		Hatkanangale	Durgewadi
3	Nagpur	Umred	Heoti
4	Nanded	Kandhar	Nehrunagar, Mumdedwadi, Hanmantwadi, Mansingwadi, Kagnewadi and Walsangwadi.
5		Kinwat	Jalna Nagar, Chapala N Tanda, Khairguda, Chincholi, and Kolmandara
6	Pune	Junnar	Khangav and Chinchechiwadi
7		Khed	Koyali and Koliye

Source: Information furnished by ASSKs

In the absence of a village name, the citizen or ASSK operator had to select any other village name from the list, since the selection of village name was mandatory to complete the application submission process. This also resulted in incorrect village name being included in the certificate issued. The incomplete list of villages indicated that DIT did not ensure the completeness of the master data tables from the District Collectors.

During the exit conference, Project Manager, MahaIT stated (July 2022) that matter would be reviewed and necessary action would be taken.

3.3.5 Assignment of multiple service names in the system for notified services

Scrutiny of master data tables in the system revealed that for one notified service, multiple service names had been assigned. Few illustrative cases are given in **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: Multiple names for notified services

Sr. No.	Name of the notified service	Name of the service in the online system
1	Caste Certificate	Caste Certificate (with affidavit), Migrant Caste Certificate
2	Non-Creamy Layer Certificate	Non-Creamy Layer Certificate
		Non-Creamy Layer Certificate (with affidavit)
		Non-Creamy Layer Certificate (renewal with affidavit)
		Non-Creamy Layer Certificate (renewal)
<i>Source: Analysis of data done by Audit</i>		

The online system did not ensure the creation of one identity (ID) number for one notified service with the facility to create a sub-category of services under each notified service. The incorrect system design resulted in multiple service name being shown against one notified service thereby inflating the number of services in the system besides the generation of incorrect MIS reports.

During the exit conference, Project Manager, MahaIT stated (July 2022) that matter would be reviewed and necessary action would be taken.

3.3.6 Inadequate validation check for the input of mobile number in the system

As per Rule (7) of the Maharashtra Right to Public Services Rules, 2016 (MRTPS Rule), for any application received through the online Portal, an acknowledgement should be sent through email or short messaging services (SMS) or any other electronic means. Further, as per Rule 10(2) of the MRTPS Rule, the public authorities were required to create a mechanism through which timely updates on the status of the application could be sent to the eligible person through SMS or email or through any other means.

Audit noticed that facility did exist in the online system to send SMS to the mobile phone number of the applicant acknowledging receipt of application and updates on the status of the application. Thus, feeding of correct mobile phone number into the system was of vital importance to ensure transparency in the delivery of public services.

However, analysis of the online data for the year 2019-20 to 2020-21, revealed that the mobile number of the applicant was not properly captured in the system as mobile numbers such as “8888888888” (in 2.51 lakh applications), “9999999999” (in 3.16 lakh applications) and the mobile number of ASSKs (9.59 lakh applications) were found to be entered in the system.

Thus, the system did not have adequate validation checks by way of one-time password (OTP) to prevent the input of incorrect/invalid mobile numbers in the system.

During the exit conference, Project Manager, MahaIT stated (July 2022) that matter would be reviewed and necessary validation checks would be incorporated in the system.

3.3.7 Deficiencies in the dashboard data

A dashboard was created for the Commission, Collectors and designated officers for monitoring the delivery of public services under the MRTPS Act.

Scrutiny of information available on the dashboard revealed that only summarised data of the number of applications received, disposed, pending and disposed within the stipulated time was available. However, the dashboard did not have a facility for the user to drill down to the granular data to ascertain the status of each individual application whenever required.

Six talukas (Ambarnath, Kalyan, Mira-Bhayandar, Murbad, Thane and Ulhasnagar) in Thane district, were processing applications for caste certificates and non-creamy layer certificates partially in online mode. In partial online mode applications received from the citizens were entered into the system but thereafter the processing and issue of certificates were done manually and, therefore, the applications remained pending in the system. Scrutiny of the dashboard data for the year 2020-21 revealed that all the applications received for caste certificate and non-creamy layer certificate in these six talukas were shown as approved, though in the database, the applications were pending. Thus, incorrect data was being captured in such cases on the dashboard.

The deficiency in the dashboard data undermined effective monitoring by stakeholders.

During the exit conference, Chief Commissioner and Project Manager, MahaIT stated (July 2022) that matter would be examined and reviewed.

3.3.8 Unresolved deficiencies in the online system

For effective and efficient functioning of the system, rectification of deficiencies noticed by the users is to be attended promptly. Few deficiencies pointed out (October 2020) by District Collector, Mumbai city which remained unresolved by DIT/Mahaonline are detailed in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5: Deficiencies in the online system

Sr. No.	Deficiencies in the online system
1	In case of rejection of an application, the name, designation, address, contact information of appellate authority and time limit for appeal are to be intimated to the applicant. Such facility was not available in the system due to less space provided for giving such details in the system.
2	The name of the caste was not captured correctly in the system example- Meghwal caste captured as Menghwal caste.
3	The system did not display whether an application for a caste certificate was approved or rejected earlier.
4	Frequent break down of the session.
5	Digital signature sometimes appearing below or between two paragraphs instead of appearing above the designation.
6	There was no facility to view the documents attached by the citizen along with the application as the same has to be downloaded before viewing which takes time.
7	There was no facility in the system enabling the designated officer to pull up the application in the absence of subordinate officials for duty in desk-1 and desk-2.

Source: Deficiencies pointed out by District Collector, Mumbai city

The deficiencies shown in **Table 3.5**, indicated that the requirements of the users of the system were not considered before e-enablement of the services and further the deficiencies have not been rectified despite being pointed out in October 2020.

3.3.9 Absence of third-party audit of the system

The Commission in its Annual Report of 2017-18 had recommended a third-party audit of the functioning of the online system and its use but no action was taken on the recommendation. Audit noticed that third-party audit of the functioning of the online system and its use was not done.

During the exit conference, Additional Chief Secretary stated (July 2022) that the matter would be taken up with the Information Technology Department, GoM for conducting third party audit.

3.4 Information system security

3.4.1 Business continuity and disaster recovery plan

An organisation should have a business continuity and disaster recovery plan to retrieve and protect information maintained in case of eventualities. Lack of such Plan can lead to interruption of services or disaster leading to temporary or permanent loss of computer facilities and data.

Audit observed that though the Mahaonline system was a critical system and used throughout the State, business continuity and disaster recovery plan was not documented.

During the exit conference, Project Manager, MahaIT agreed (July 2022) to take action for proper documentation for business continuity and disaster recovery plan.

3.4.2 Inadequate audit trail

Audit trail captures the flow of transactions in a system in order to track the history of transactions. Audit scrutiny revealed that audit trail reports on the various stages of processing the application and issue of certificate were not available in the system.

During the exit conference, Project Manager MahaIT stated (July 2022) that audit trail would be incorporated.

3.4.3 Deficient logical access controls

In any computerised system, access to data is required to be restricted to authorised users only. Audit noticed that though User ID and password were provided to each user of the Mahaonline system, the User IDs were created using generic user names such as 'kalyan.desk3.user7', 'thane.desk3.user1', 'thane.desk3.user4'. Due to the use of generic User ID in the system instead of email id of the official concerned, the name of the official and designation could not be identified to fix accountability in the event of delay in processing the application, if any, as per the MRTPS Act.

Recommendation 8: Government may ensure proper documentation of business continuity and disaster recovery plan and development of audit trail report in the system.

