

Proactive Disclosure of non-strategic information- An Initiative of the Government of Karnataka

Dear all,

In June 2009 the President of India stated in her address to the joint session of Parliament that disclosure of information in non-strategic areas would be improved. While this will be applicable to the Central Government, it is important to take note of a similar initiative launched by the Government of Karnataka from December 2008. A Monthly Programme Implementation Calendar (MPIC) has been designed and disseminated amongst all public authorities to capture the plans and the progress of work regards implementation of various schemes and activities at various level of the State Government. A circular issued by the Chief Secretary, guidelines for filling up the MPIC and various formats to be used including Excel sheets are accessible at: <http://finance.kar.nic.in/mpic/planmon.htm> The Fiscal Policy Institute in Bangalore is providing backup support to departments to implement this initiative. The scheme was launched under the glare of the media. Compliance has been slow to pick up. The main features of MPIC are given below:

Monthly Plan Implementation Calendar in Karnataka:

1) Objectives:

The Monthly Programme Implementation Calendar (MPIC) is a system intended to facilitate effective and timely implementation of Government's programmes. MPIC involves detailed planning of important activities which form part of the process of implementation of a programme / scheme and arranging them in appropriate sequence according to a monthwise schedule. The monthwise schedule of activities for the implementation of a programme will help the implementing officers at the state, district, taluk and other levels to take up the programmed activities in a timebound manner according to a planned schedule for optimum results. This will avoid programmes being implemented without adequate preparation, or being unduly delayed. This will also avoid rush of expenditure by government departments towards the end of the financial year. MPIC may be considered as an extension of the Monthly Multilevel Review (MMR) system, which is in operation in the State since the early 1980's.

2) Preparation and Use of MPIC:

Apart from indicating the physical and financial targets to be achieved under a programme during different months/parts of a financial year, MPIC will also depict the typical activities to be taken up for implementing the programme every month. Thus, even if no physical or financial targets / milestones are expected to be achieved in a given month, the preparatory activities for achieving the programmed targets during subsequent months are shown in the calendar. The completion or non completion of the activities programmed for every month is reported to enable implementing officers and reviewing authorities to take corrective action on a timely basis so that the targets are achieved within the time allowed for implementing the programme.

The MPIC report is to be prepared for every plan scheme including the schemes relating to salaries and other establishment expenditure, and every non-plan scheme excluding the schemes / provisions meant for salaries and office expenses. Thus, plan schemes like Direction and Administration, even though relating to creation of posts and payment of salaries, are included in the MPIC while such items of non-plan expenditure are excluded. Thus, non-plan schemes / programmes like maintenance of buildings, disbursement of scholarships, purchase of medicines, etc., are all included in the MPIC reviews. The MPIC reports are to be submitted strictly complying with the MPIC format as shown in (the Annexures).

In typical development departments like Agriculture, Horticulture, Education, Public Works, etc., the responsibility for implementation of programmes goes down to the officers at the Taluk / Sub-division level. The responsibility for reviewing the programmes rests with authorities at the District / Division,

State Headquarters / Directorate, and the Secretariat / Ministry levels. Therefore, MPIC formats for most departments are to be prepared separately at the State level by the Head of the Department, at the District / Division level by the District / Division Heads, and at the Taluk / Sub-division level by the concerned implementing officers. In respect of Departments which do not have district / taluk level establishments the Principal Secretaries / Secretaries to Government may specify the authorities including Boards and Corporations which will report progress for MPIC reviews.

The progress achieved in the implementation of schemes is to be reported in the MPIC formats by Taluk, District and State authorities in the same manner as in the case of MMR reports. At each level, the progress reported by the lower levels is to be consolidated for review and for reporting to the next higher level. The review of MPIC reports will take place in the Monthly Multilevel Review (MMR) meetings as per the current practice.

3) Disclosure of MPIC:

The Departments may post MPIC as prepared at the beginning of the year, updated every month with information on progress achieved on their website for public viewing. [A typical MPIC filled up for a specific month is available on the Department of Horticulture website: <http://www.horticulture.kar.nic.in/mpic.pdf> However the MPIC of this Department for later months is not available on this website. MPIC is not accessible on the websites of a large number of departments and directorates in Karnataka.- CHRI's note]

I hope readers will share similar examples from other jurisdictions within and outside India. Andhra Pradesh has a vibrant and working system for proactively disclosing information about the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act/Scheme through the Internet. Monitoring compliance with requirements like the MPIC is the first step towards securing accountability of public authorities.

Thanks

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p.s. Apologies for crossposting