
GUIDELINES FOR COMPUTERISATION OF TPDS

Preface:

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the States/UTs. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the depots of FCI. The operational responsibility for lifting and distributing the allocated foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards and supervision over the distribution of foodgrains through the Fair Price Shops rests with the State/UT Governments. Computerization of PDS is a must for strengthening and revamping the Public Distribution System and for addressing the challenges faced by PDS i.e. inclusion/exclusion errors, leakages/diversion of foodgrains, lack of transparency, weak grievance redressal and social audit mechanism and lack of viability of Fair Price Shops.

These Guidelines are issued by the Department of Food & Public Distribution, GOI to all States / UTs in regard to the Computerization of TPDS which need to be implemented in a time bound manner as stipulated by Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 14.09.2011.

1. Components of TPDS Computerization

For achieving end-to-end Computerization of TPDS, the Department of Food & Public Distribution, Government of India has identified 4 key components which are required to be implemented in all the States/UTs as below:

- 1) Creation & Management of digitized Beneficiary Database
- 2) Supply-Chain Management of TPDS commodities from Food Corporation of India (FCI) till Fair Price Shops (FPS)
- 3) Sale of TPDS commodities at Fair Price Shops including identification and authentication of beneficiaries and recording of transactions.
- 4) Transparency and Grievance Redressal Mechanism

2.1 Prioritization for Implementation of Various Components

2.1.1 End to end computerization of PDS in States/UTs would be implemented in two parts as follows:

I. Component I

Supply-Chain computerization of the entire TPDS operations would cover monitoring of foodgrains allocation, storage and movement starting from the base depots of FCI till the FPS. The information related to the supply-chain would be made available in public domain through the Transparency Portal. The portal would have different dashboards catering to the varying information needs of various stakeholders involved in TPDS operations.

II. Component II

This component relates to the computerization of operations at the Fair Price Shop. Under the Gujarat model, new Bar Coded Ration Cards were issued to all existing card holders as well as for fresh Ration Cards also. The new Ration Card System captured the biometric information of at least one adult member depicted in the Ration Card. Along with Bar Coded Ration Cards, the Gujarat model requires issue of Bar Coded Food Coupons to the beneficiaries.

Based on the Report of the High Powered Committee constituted by the Supreme Court (hereinafter referred to as the HPC), the Honorable Supreme Court has observed that legacy systems of issuing Smart Cards/Food coupons etc. may require reengineering and replacement with online Aadhaar authentication at the time of foodgrains delivery which will take time. This was proposed to be taken up under Component II.

- 2.1.2 States/UTs are to implement Component I within a period of three months. The Chhattisgarh model of Computerization of TPDS should be adopted for Component I. Component II may be done on lines of Gujarat model of Computerization. However, some State/UT Governments like Government of Gujarat which is following Component II or other States/UTs which may be at advanced stage of following some other model, such States/UTs may continue to follow the same so long as it is fulfilling the end objectives of completing computerization.

3. Component-wise details:

3.1 Ration Card Management

- 3.1.1 Issuance of ration cards and ensuring the authenticity of the beneficiary is the most critical part of the entire computerization as many of the benefits of the TPDS system are lost due to challenges like inclusion/exclusion errors, duplicate/bogus cards etc. leading to diversions and leakages. States/UTs must digitize their beneficiary data and create a centralized database with clear process of data updation to be put in place in a time bound manner. A special drive to eliminate fake and bogus ration cards should be undertaken. A comparison with data available with other Departments like election, census etc. gives quick estimates about the bogus cards. The HPC observed that at some places, units in the ration cards exceed even the population of the area. These practices should be checked immediately. This can also be linked up with the Socio Economic Census in Rural Areas which is expected to be completed shortly, within this year itself.
- 3.1.2 Once the digitized database of ration cards is created, States/UTs should put up the ration card information in the public domain including the websites.
- 3.1.3 The Department of Food & Public Distribution has already forwarded vide letter no. 23/Task Force/2010/2010-PD-II dated 18.03.2011, the Ration Card Data

Capture Form and Data Dictionary for acceptance and conveying inputs to all States / UTs. The inputs received from various States/UTs were examined in consultation with NIC. All States/UTs have been requested vide letter No. 23-12/2011 dated 13th October 2011 to suitably adopt the Ration Card Data Capture Form and Data Dictionary, which has been finalized by the Department.

- 3.1.4 As the biometric information for all usual residents would be captured under the UIDAI Aadhaar Project or under the National Population Register being prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the digitization of ration card data base may not include the capture of biometric information at this juncture. States/UTs have the option to either digitize the existing ration card data base and compare the same with other data available so as to eliminate bogus cards or in the alternative, States/UTs may undertake a fresh exercise for issue of Ration Cards and thereafter digitize the data base. In case, fresh ration cards are to be issued, the format of the Bar Coded Ration Cards being issued by the Government of Gujarat may be adhered to so as to ensure seamless progression to the stage of Computerization of FPS operations i.e. Component II.

3.2 Supply-Chain Management

The features of supply-chain management, transparency, grievance redressal and social audit were addressed by the State of Chhattisgarh in the following manner. The State of Chhattisgarh has created a unified Ration Card database which is maintained using a web based application. Similarly, a web based application is used for automated allotment to all FPSs; warehouses and distribution centers are computerized where PDS stocks and sales figures of previous month of all the FPSs are keyed in and information w.r.t. stock position is available on the web. Additionally, various information/reports are placed in the public domain/web, which include details of ration card holders, list of FPSs, FPS wise allotment and lifting details, and complaints lodged and their status. Whenever the PDS commodities are dispatched to a FPS from the warehouse, an e-mail/SMS is sent to all registered e-mail IDs/mobile numbers. A Call-Centre with a toll free number is in place at State level for lodging of complaints and getting relevant information related to F&CS Department. Complaints are monitored at all levels through the system.

3.3 FPS Automation

- 3.3.1 The delivery of TPDS commodities to beneficiaries is the most important end objective of the TPDS computerization. It has to be ensured that prescribed quantities of TPDS commodities are issued to the eligible beneficiaries and data regarding the commodities issued, quantity issued, authentication of beneficiary, etc, are captured during the transaction. FPS automation should cover the following:-

- a. Beneficiary Authentication ó the objective is to ensure that TPDS commodities are issued to the intended eligible beneficiary only. This

authentication can be done by using suitable technology which is feasible at the FPS level.

- b. Commodity Issuance ó In order to ensure that right quantity is issued to the intended beneficiaries, commodity issuance transactions may need to be automated. This would bring transparency and also help the States/UTs in recording and reporting the stock position at a FPS in an automated manner.

3.3.2 The State of Gujarat is issuing bar-coded ration cards after capturing photograph & biometric details of at least one family member of the Card holder. Bar Coded Ration Card & biometric based bar-coded coupon system is being used for delivery of PDS foodgrains. Bar-coded Ration Cards (RCs) are presented to eGram/CSC (kiosk operator in rural area working under eGovernance program), who in turn will issue a printed coupon to the beneficiary subject to online verification based on biometric data. The type and the quantity of the commodities are entered in the coupon as per the choice and allocation of the beneficiary. The Software has been developed and implemented by State NIC unit and it has been informed that the software is UIDAI compliant.

3.3.3 The financial viability of the FPS may need to be ensured for the success of this project on computerization of PDS operations. States/UTs may take required steps/measures to make the FPS financially viable.

3.4 Transparency and Grievance Redressal

3.4.1 Single unified information system i.e. transparency portal should be used at State / UT level for achieving total transparency in TPDS.

3.4.2 All the State/UT Governments will ensure that required allocation reaches the fair price shop before 1st day of the month and this information should be available on the transparency portal.

3.4.3 State/UT Governments will ensure door step delivery of food grain for the ration shops in a time bound manner and shall ensure that information related to movement and availability of food grains is available in public domain.

3.4.4 A PDS public information portal (Transparency portal) would be made by States / UTs, which will have complete, relevant information for TPDS operations. Such information would be related to stock availability, movement and date of stock/ quantity supplied to FPS every month for all the shops, digitized database of ration cards, etc.

3.4.5 To enable effective social audit, States / UTs would also undertake dissemination of information about availability of foodgrains through Short Message Service (SMS) to the pre-identified individuals in the local community or any other registered individual. This system would also provide stock position at a specific location on demand. The information regarding stock availability, movement, date and quantity of stocks supplied to FPS should be made

available in the public domain by using latest technological interface like SMS, website or other means.

- 3.4.6 An effective grievance redressal mechanism should be put in place by all States/UTs. This grievance redressal mechanism should include SMS, email, or other suitable technology which can be used for timely resolution of the citizen/beneficiary grievances, giving feedback to supervising authority, public, etc.
- 3.4.7 A four digit toll-free number should be established by all the States /UTs for grievance registration and redressal thereof.

4. **Software Options**

- 4.1 Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India vide letter no. 21-2/2011-PD-II dated 20.09.2011 has intimated all States/UTs that National Informatics Centre (NIC) is offering the following application software which can be used by States/UTs as per their requirements in line with orders of the Honøble Supreme Court in WP(C) 196 of 2001-PUCL vs. Union of India & Ors. dated 14-09-2011:
 - a. Smart Card Application Software
 - b. Supply-Chain Computerization (Chhattisgarh model) and
 - c. Food Coupon & Bar coded Ration Cards (Gujarat model)

The salient features of the various modules of these applications were communicated to the States/UTs along with the above said reference.

- 4.2 NIC has also agreed to host these applications at its own data centre. The States / UTs may select the application modules as per their specific requirements, customize the application in consultation with NIC and implement the same. An implementation plan with clear timelines should also be prepared in consultation with NIC, the progress on which would be submitted by States/UTs to the Honøble Supreme Court.
- 4.3 NIC has developed a Common Services Platform (including application) for TPDS which can be used by all the States/ UTs to computerize its TPDS operations. The Common Services Platform/ Smart Card Application is an end to end solution for TPDS Computerization which is flexible enough to meet the State / UT requirements and also ensure standardization at national level. It consists of modules for procurement, stock reporting, stock transfer/movement, allocation, consumption reporting, ration card management, FPS automation, etc. for delivery of commodities to end beneficiaries.

5. Role of Aadhaar

- 5.1 States/UTs are encouraged to include PDS related KYR+ fields in the data collection exercise being undertaken by various UIDAI appointed Registrars across the country as part of the UID (Aadhaar) enrolment.
- 5.2 As far as possible, State/UT Governments should link the process of computerization of Component 6 II with Aadhaar registration. This will help in streamlining the process of biometric collection as well as authentication of beneficiary at the time of commodity issuance at FPS.

6. Technical Support/Capacity building

- 6.1 Using NIC's application software, the above mentioned requirements under Component I & II would help in achieving end-to-end computerization of TPDS. States / UTs going forward would also require ensuring that the existing F&CS officials, staff and other stakeholders including FPS dealers are also equipped to handle & bring about this change. The States/UTs would assess the overall requirements in terms of training and capacity building for all stakeholders associated with the TPDS operations.
 - 6.2.1 Some of the indicative training programs for this purpose are given as below:
 - Awareness Workshop and Process Training - Overview of Re-designed processes and envisioned To-be scenario
 - Application Training
 - Change Management & HR Training

7. Institutional Mechanism

- 7.1 With TPDS being the joint responsibility of Centre and States, computerization of TPDS requires active and continuous involvement of States / UTs. End to end computerization of TPDS in States / UTs in mission mode is a sizable exercise and its implementation necessitates a separate and dedicated institutional mechanism which has active participation of all stake holders including the State/UT Governments. The institutional mechanism so created shall look after the progress of computerization of PDS and would be completely responsible for meeting the timelines. Government of India with the help of UT/State Governments will ensure that the institution has sufficient infrastructure and finances to complete the computerization in a time bound manner.
- 7.2 In the Apex Committee Meeting held on 29.07.2011 under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary, Government of India to review the status of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) including the Mission Mode Projects (MMPs), it was decided to include computerization of PDS as a Mission Mode Project. The Department of Information Technology (DIT) vide DO letter no. 9(5)/2011-EG-II dated 26.08.2011 has sent NeGP guidelines for further support and reference, namely, (i) Operational Guidelines on NeGP, (ii) Guidelines on Strategic Control, and (iii) Guidelines on Dedicated Project Team. These Guidelines are

available on the DIT's website <http://www.mit.gov.in/content/templates-guidelines> . The MMP guidelines prescribe a detailed governance structure for each MMP.

7.3 A two tier structure at the Centre i.e. Department of Food & Public Distribution (DoF&PD) would be operated:

- Empowered Committee (EC), with Secretary (DoF&PD) as its Chairman, would be responsible for overall guidance, policy level matters and to act as final body for approving all deliverables relating to the programme. The other members of EC are Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser, concerned Joint Secretaries, Chairman and Managing Director, FCI, Department of Information Technology representative, Director General, NIC and Food Secretaries of 3-4 State Governments.
- Central Project e-Mission Team (CPeMT) has been established with concerned Joint Secretary (as Mission Team Leader), Executive Director, FCI, Dir/DS/HOD, representatives of 3-4 State Governments, internal domain specialists, internal finance representative, technical persons, representatives from DIT and NIC, etc.

7.4 Similarly as per NeGP guidelines, vide Secretary (F&PD)'s D.O. letter No. 23(7)/2011-PD-II dated 11th October, 2011, each State/UT has been requested to establish a two-tier governance structure as follows:

- State Apex Committee with Chief Secretary as Chairman and Secretary (in charge of the Dept.), representative of Finance Department, HODs of concerned Depts., State IT Secretary and NIC Representative.
- State Project e-Mission Team (SPeMT) with Secy. in-charge of the Deptt. as Mission Leader. The SPeMT shall comprise of other members as HOD/Director/Spl. Secretary, domain specialists, internal technical representatives, representatives from State IT Dept. and NIC, etc.

7.5 As end to end computerization of TPDS is to be undertaken on top priority, States / UTs should appoint a dedicated nodal officer to monitor the projects related to TPDS computerization. Secretary, Food & Civil Supplies may be designated as the nodal officer for this purpose.

8. Action Plan for States/UTs

8.1 Government of India is to ensure that State/UT Governments prepare a time bound action plan for completing the process of computerization of PDS system within three months' time. Strict deadlines are to be fixed in the action plans and these action plans are to be submitted before Hon'ble Supreme Court within three months time. These action plans would be implemented keeping the timelines in mind and would be regularly submitted before the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

8.2 For ensuring end-to-end computerization of TPDS across States/UTs, the following action is to be undertaken by all States/UTs within a period of three months:

- a) Implementation of Chhattisgarh model of computerized Supply-Chain Management
- b) Door step Delivery of foodgrains for all ration shops in a time bound manner
- c) Allocation of foodgrains to reach FPS before 1st day of the month & information thereof be made available on the transparency portal.
- d) PDS Public Information portal to provide for complete TPDS information
- e) Digitized database of ration cards to be put in the public domain including on the websites
- f) Measures to be taken for making FPS financially viable
- g) Four digit toll free number in all States/UTs for grievance registration & redressal
- h) Drive to be started to eliminate fake and ghost ration cards
- i) All States /UTs to prepare a time bound action plan for TPDS computerization and submit to Hon'ble Supreme Court within 3 months

9. Infrastructure Requirements and Financial Support

Government of India and State/UT Governments would provide necessary infrastructure and financial support for computerization of TPDS. Computerization needs to be completed in a time bound manner and the institutional mechanism created would be responsible for meeting the timelines. Government of India with the help of State Governments/UTs will ensure that sufficient infrastructure and finances are provided to complete the computerization in a time bound manner. States/UTs should send their action plan to Government of India by 10th November, 2011.
