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Published: April 8, 2012 23:46 IST | Updated: April 8, 2012 23:46 IST

### More channels soon for delivery of mobile services through government gateway

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The eSMS Gateway is a part of the MSDG. MSDG is a set of component gateways that interconnect the National Service Delivery Gateway (NSDG) and State Service Delivery Gateways (SSDG) with the tele-communications industry in India.

A Mobile Services Delivery Gateway (MSDG) was conceptualized by DIT. The objective of creating MSDG is to create government-wide shared infrastructure and services to enable the rapid and inexpensive development, mainstreaming and deployment of m-Gov services.

The task of creation of MSDG is entrusted to Center for Development of Advanced Computing. e-SMS is the official SMS-platform for the Government of India. It is an exclusive SMS Gateway and a part of the Mobile Service Delivery Gateway (MSDG) and serves department as a national gateway for officials in G2G and G2C communications.

The SMS gateway that forms part of the Mobile Services Delivery Gateway. Photo: Special Arrangement

More channels, encompassing different mobile technologies, are to be made operational soon for delivering various government services through the Mobile Services Delivery Gateway (MSDG), with the Framework for Mobile Governance prepared by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEIT) having been notified earlier this year.

The gateway started working in July 2011; now it is used for the delivery of 40 SMS-based services of 30 Central and State government departments and agencies.

“At present, SMS services are being offered for a number of activities, such as tracking of the status of applications, sending alerts for transactions and for delivery of services, grievance registration and redress,” said Rajendra Kumar, Director (Projects), National e-Governance Division, DEIT.

Other services, based on such technologies as Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and General Packet Radio Service (GPRS), are to be made operational in the coming months. USSD can be used for providing interactive value-added services, while IVR can be used for automated voice-based services. GPRS facilitates data and forms-based services. “We expect them to be made operational by the end of 2012-13,” Dr. Kumar said.

The creation of the gateway is a core element in the Framework, which states that various channels, such as voice, text (SMS), GPRS, USSD, SIM Toolkit (STK), Cell Broadcast (CBC), location-based services and multimedia (MMS) will be used to provide mobile users with different services.

The gateway has been conceived as a piece of infrastructure to be shared by the Central and State government departments and agencies.

“We are working with government departments and agencies to develop complete end-to-end mobile-based applications for their services,” Dr. Kumar said. He hoped that a large number of departments and agencies would be able to deliver their services through the MSDG during 2012-13.

“We are also developing a Mobile Applications Store where the mobile-based applications for public services shall be hosted for download by the users.”

Since it is difficult for the State governments to leverage the resources to create local service delivery platforms, the setting up of the MSDG is a good initiative, says Sanjay Vijayakumar, Chief Executive Officer, MobME Wireless Solutions.

The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) has nearly completed the technology platform development but the pace of implementation has to be augmented.

“The C-DAC has now selected private partners for transfer of technology, which will increase the uptake by various departments,” he said.

The framework states that the m-apps store will be integrated with the MSDG. “The open platform will be developed and deployed in conjunction with the MSDG for making the additional value-added services available to the users, irrespective of the device or network operator used by them.”

The MSDG will have Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for the creation of value-added services by different providers, besides mechanisms, including an Aadhaar-based one, for authentication of the users of various services. It will be equipped with an integrated mobile payment gateway. The framework suggests that government departments and agencies use the gateway for their mobile-based public service offerings to avoid duplication and save on costs. Even departments that have already created their own delivery platforms are being encouraged to use them.

The framework also proposes the creation of a Mobile Governance Innovation Fund to support the development of applications by not only government departments and agencies but also by third-party developers, including start-ups.

Keywords: [mobile technology](#), [Mobile Services Delivery Gateway](#), [Mobile Governance](#), [e-governance](#)

Printable version | Feb 13, 2014 6:26:50 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/more-channels-soon-for-delivery-of-mobile-services-through-government-gateway/article3294248.ece>

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