No 30011/12/2015-O&M (C N: 6452)
Government of India
Ministry of Personnel Public Grievances and Pensions
Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

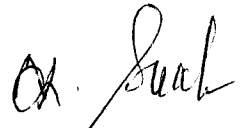New Delhi dated 13th May, 2020

Office Memorandum

Subject: Framework for "Work From Home"

The COVID 19 Pandemic has necessitated many Ministries/ Departments to operate from Home to maintain social distancing. Many of the Ministries/ Departments in Government of India have successfully managed and rendered exemplary results in combat against the ongoing pandemic outbreak during the lock down period by leveraging e -office and video conferencing facilities of NIC. This was the first of its kind of experience in the Government of India.

It is quite likely that for the near future, the Central Secretariat will continue to go for staggered attendance and variable working hours to maintain social distancing at workplace. Therefore, a broad framework for **Work from Home** is important to standardize the operating procedure even post Lock down situation and to ensure safety and security of information, while accessing Government files and information remotely from home.

Accordingly a draft consultation paper for the **Work from Home** is being enclosed at Annexure for comments. We shall be grateful for considered views and comments of your Ministry/Department on the proposal latest by 21st May 2020. If comments are not received by 21st May 2020, then, it will be presumed that your Ministry/Department is in agreement with the proposed draft.

This issue with the approval of Secretary (DARPG)

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Encls: Annexure

To
1. All Ministries/Departments of Government of India
2. The DG (NIC)
3. JS (CIS) Ministry of Home Affairs

DRAFT

Subject: Framework for "**The Work from Home**"

The COVID 19 Pandemic has necessitated many Ministries/ departments to operate from Home to maintain social distancing. The backbone of this remote operation is e -office and virtual meetings through video Conferencing. It is quite likely that for the near future, the Central Secretariat will continue to go for staggered attendance and variable working hours to maintain social distancing at workplace.

Therefore, a standard framework for Work from Home" across the Ministries/ Departments/ Subordinate offices in Government of India is needed for a smooth and seamless functioning of the government, which will ensure continuity of the office works besides imparting resilience in the ecosystem even post lock down situations. In this regard several rounds of consultations were held with the ministries/ Departments. Based on their inputs, broad framework for **The Work from Home**, which will be in place during and after lock down, is being proposed here as under:

1. Presently about 75 Ministries/ Departments are actively using e - office platform of which 57 Ministries / Departments have achieved more than 80% of their work in e- office. The remaining Ministries/ Departments would also make endeavour for expeditious implementation of e-office in secretariat/Ministries/Departments and also in their attached and subordinate offices in a time bound manner.

2. Box e.7.1 of Central Secretariat manual of Office Procedure (CSMoP 2019) provides for VPN to the officers at the level of Deputy Secretary and above to access the electronic files remotely on secured network. However, Ministries/ Departments with the approval of the respective HODs, can provide VPN to the officers up to the level of Section officers based on the functional requirements in their Ministry/ Departments subject to the proper due diligence for security aspects.

3. Chapter 13, Box e.13.1 of CSMoP 2019 deals with treatment of classified papers/files in e -office. However, as per instructions of ministry of Home Affairs no classified information shall be handled through e-office. Therefore, classified files shall not be processed in e-office during work from home. NIC may evaluate the existing security protocol for remote access of classified file/ information in consultation with MHA and propose suitable guidelines and standard operating procedures for handling classified information in e-office. Till the time classified files shall be processed on standalone computers only as specified in Para 2 of Box e.7.1 of CSMOP 2019

4. Logistic supports in the form of laptop/ Desktop, shall be decided by the Ministries/Departments in accordance with the orders issued by the Department of Expenditure 3(6)/2020-E-II(A) dated 27.03.2020. Ministries may use the inventory of laptops on rotational basis for the officers who are working from home and needed such logistic support.

5. Department of Expenditure may consider reimbursement for data uses to the officers working from home and if required may issue separate guidelines in this regards.

6. Central Registry Unit (CRU) shall remain functional to receive the physical Dak/ receipts in the Ministry. CRU Staff will scan and forward the receipt to the concerned officer in e-office as well as in his official e -mail.

7. It is important that SMS and email alert in e- office should be enabled so that the important files/daks get immediate attention. Departmental NIC teams may work out SMS provisions for e-receipts and e-files in consultation with their Ministries / Departments.

8. E-office has facility to link the important files and documents for referencing in e-files. However, to enable this feature in Work from Home environment, it is important that the important files/ folders /circulars are available in the Knowledge Management System of e-office. The Ministries are therefore advised to make use of this feature in e-office so that the important documents that may be

needed in examining the files are available while working from home.

9. To facilitate inter ministerial consultations ,exchange of files between the Ministries may be made seamlessly in e office.

10. E office has facility to dispatch a communication from the system itself. The dispatch is possible via e-mail or CRU (Central Registration Unit). In case dispatch is addressed to CRU, then the CRU on receipt of dak in e-mail immediately diarise and forward the same to the concerned officer to further process the dak in e file. If the communication is directly sent in e -mail of the officer, the concerned officer will initiate necessary action as required in e -office on receipt of the communication in e-mail and will make full use of all the functional features available in the e-office even during the **The Work from Home** environment.

11. Necessary emails can be made part of the e-file and maintained as digital record for future reference and processed as fresh receipts.

12. All VIP and parliament matters require utmost attention. Therefore, SMS alerts be sent for all such receipts and files to the next officer in the channel.

13.NIC video conferencing facility shall be leveraged to organize important meetings while working from home. Officers and Staff shall attend the meetings by activating VC link forwarded to them by NIC in formal meeting set up. VCs shall also be used as far as possible in office environment to maintain social distancing during COVID 19 pandemic. NIC may strengthen the VC to make it more facilitative. Officials working from home shall adhere to all norms of office environment while attending VC meetings.

14.It shall be incumbent on a Ministry/Department to create a help desk manned by technical persons. The NIC central help desk may be contacted in case of advanced technical assistance required during Work from Home. NIC will ensure that the contact details of central

help desk and Departmental NIC officers are communicated to all officers.

15. The officers to whom official laptops are provided shall ensure that they do the official work in official device only. NIC shall ensure that their devices are well protected against malware and malicious websites. The officers who are working on their personal computers/ lap tops shall ensure installing regular updates, running antivirus scans, blocking malicious sites, etc with the help of NIC to ensure safety of their device against information theft.

16. Officers who are working from home shall be available on phone as per requirements and directions of their officers.

17.Standard Operating Procedure for e- office has been elaborated in Central Secretariat manual of Office Procedure (CSMoP 2019) for further guidance.

18. DOPT may provide option for Work from Home to the eligible officers/ Staff for 15 days in a year as a matter of policy.