

## Kerala-Information Technology Policy

### 1. Preamble

1.1 This IT Industry Policy document endeavours to delineate a strategy for harnessing the opportunities and the resources offered by Information Technology for the comprehensive social and economic development of the State. This strategy has been conceived keeping in view the fact that Information Technology constitutes the primary instrument for facilitating Kerala's emergence as a leading knowledge society in the region.

1.2 This blueprint for IT development has been formulated in the context of emerging developmental trends and imperatives that are relevant to the growth strategy of the State:

- The growth of Kerala in coming years will be increasingly driven by the knowledge and service-based sectors, where ease of information transactions will be a key determinant of success. Recent trends in the convergence of technologies have thrown up new opportunities and new services for the State, such as I.T enabled services, e- commerce and multimedia.

Kerala has a large traditional agricultural and industrial sector; and the infusion of I.T into these domains would be essential for its survival and growth in the face of imminent international competition.

- I.T has opened out new channels for service delivery in areas such as e-Governance, education, e-health and information dissemination. I.T can serve as the platform for widening the reach of the advances made by the State in domains like health, education, and participative local governance.

1.3 Kerala offers fertile ground for the effective utilization of these new technologies; on account of its densely networked communities which possess high awareness and literacy levels, its superior telecom connectivity, and its propensity for quick technology absorption.

1.4 I.T offers exciting possibilities for radically enlarging and improving human resource skills. Kerala's core competence is its near universal literacy and awareness levels, and this can be transformed into economically rewarding and employable skills by deploying the tools offered by I.T.

1.5 The primary impetus for growth in I.T has to come from private enterprise and community energies. The I.T policy accordingly envisages the role of Government as being primarily that of a facilitator for creating an enabling environment where the energies of the private sector and of civil society can be most effectively deployed. The objective of the Government is to put in place a package of policy measures and

incentives, which will make Kerala one of the most attractive investment destinations in I.T.

1.6 The CII sponsored independent study of 18 Indian States: " How the States are Doing" placed Kerala at

# 3 in terms of overall composite score,  
# 1 in Health and Education,  
# 1 in Law & Order,  
# 8 in Labour;  
# 5 in investment attractiveness, and  
# 13 in investment.

These are not IT sector specific. A comparative statement of all parameters is attached as per Annexure III. Through the measures enunciated in this policy document the Kerala Government seeks to improve its relative position on both labour and investment into the top 3 ranks amongst States in the country, making it # 1 in overall composite score amongst all States

## 2. The Policy

The Policy initiatives delineated in this document comprise a three pronged strategy aimed at:

-Creating an appropriate pro-business, pro-enterprise, legal, regulatory and commercial framework to facilitate the rapid growth of the IT industry in the state.

-Establishing Kerala as a global center for excellence in Human Resources, through the creation of a large pool of diverse, multi-skilled technically competent manpower in the State and

-Establishing an internationally competitive business infrastructure and environment for the IT industry in the State, on par with the best facilities and practices worldwide.

## 3. Objectives

In line with this broad strategy, the Government have set the following immediate objectives for the promotion of the IT industry in the State.

1. To establish Kerala as a leading IT destination in the country within the next five years.
2. To provide a nurturing and enabling environment conducive to the vigorous growth of the local IT industry in the State.
3. To significantly enhance direct and indirect employment creation in the IT sector.
4. To attain a minimum growth level of 100% every year in IT.

5. To significantly accelerate the levels of investment inflows including foreign capital into the hardware, software and ITES sectors.
6. To aggressively promote the State as the destination of choice for emerging IT business opportunities including IT Enabled Services, new media products and E-services. To establish ITES as the definitive core competence of the State.
7. To develop Kochi as an international media and ICT hub.
8. To consolidate and expand the Technopark, Trivandrum as a leading software and HR Centre in the region.
9. To provide the physical and institutional environment for the growth of SOHO and decentralized IT businesses.

#### 4. Financial Incentives for the I.T industry:

4.1 Govt. have formulated a comprehensive and unique package of incentives for the IT products, software and ITES industry in the State, which seeks to reward value creation, employment generation and enterprise excellence.

#### 5. IT Infrastructure

##### 5.1 Govt. Parks Initiative:

The city of Kochi will be promoted as an ICT hub where facilities offered will match the best available worldwide. A Hi-tech park will be developed here, comprising an area of 200 acres. An IT Corridor connecting the new international airport at Nedumbassery with the city will also be established as part of the larger proposed Special Economic Zone continuum. These facilities shall be developed through Joint Venture partnerships with the private sector and shall endeavour to provide an international business infrastructure and environment at Kochi. Kochi has all the necessary enablers in place including virtually unlimited bandwidth on tap from the VSNL gateway, concentration of quality, technical and non-technical human resources, a cosmopolitan social infrastructure and environment, and excellent air connections. These advantages shall be leveraged to make the city amongst the most preferred IT investment destinations of India.

The Technopark, Trivandrum with about 1 million sq. ft of built up area, has established itself as one of the leading IT parks in the country. The campus is now home to several SEI-CMM companies and centres of HR excellence. The IIITM-K, which commenced functioning in the last year and which offers high-end training in emerging technologies is expected to move over to an independent campus shortly. In the second phase of expansion of the park, it is proposed to develop 26 acres with the participation of the private sector.

The total space availability for IT industry shall be augmented by a minimum of 750,000 sq.ft annually for the next two years. Thereafter, for the next three years a minimum of 1.5 million sq.ft space capacity shall be created annually. These additional capacities will be created through 100% private sector investments as well as Joint Venture projects between the Govt. and the private sector.

The IT Department shall shortly initiate with the help of leading consultants the exercise of preparation of Master Plans for each of the designated IT parks/ zones. These Master Plans shall delineate the blueprint for park development and framework for facilitating private sector participation.

Govt. shall endeavour to maintain uniform, international quality standards for park infrastructure and services across all State promoted and managed IT parks. A professional Parks' Management team will be set up under the Kerala IT Department for ensuring this.

Built-up space for IT industry shall be classified under a new category "IT Industry" under the Kerala Building Rules with applicable FAR of 5. This classification shall apply only for newly built-up space that shall be used predominantly (at least 80% of carpet area) for IT software industry for a minimum period of 5 years from the date of first occupation/commissioning.

Govt. shall proactively encourage and facilitate the development of ancillary social infrastructure in a planned manner including hotels, restaurants, entertainment multiplexes, hospitals, schools, colleges etc within and appurtenant to the IT parks.

## 5.2 Private Parks Scheme:

To accelerate the process of private sector led IT infrastructure development, Govt. shall, in association with reputed global IT parks' developers/consultants, announce a minimum set of standards to qualify as 'Parks' Standard' certified IT park. Compliance shall be assessed, on formal request, at the pre-construction/design stage and thereafter on project completion. The State IT Parks' Management team shall serve as the nodal agency for compliance assessment and administration of the 'Private IT Parks Scheme'.

All Parks' standard compliant IT parks shall be entitled to the FAR classification as applicable to IT industry under Kerala Building Rules. For other compliant IT parks that are either entirely for IT hardware industry or for both IT hardware and IT software industry companies, classified under 'Industrial' category of the Kerala Building Rules, additional FAR of 50% shall be permitted (over currently applicable FAR of 1.5).

The Kerala State Electricity Board, the Kerala Water Authority, and the Office of the Chief Town Planning Authority shall each designate a Nodal Officer who shall facilitate the process of inspection, application processing, and application closure, for their respective responsibility areas. Response standards shall be announced by these agencies for the fast track clearance process.

A certified private IT park shall be governed by the same set of industry enabling regulations that are applicable for the State promoted IT parks.

A private park that qualifies for certification under this scheme shall be promoted by the State Govt. as an integral part of the State's IT Infrastructure, provided the promoter of the park so desires.

The scope of the 'Private IT Parks' scheme shall be restricted to projects that seek to provide a minimum of 50,000 sq. ft per project either through creation of fresh built up space or through conversion of existing space for use by IT industry. Projects less than the 50,000 sq.ft qualifying stipulation shall still have the benefit of FAR provided under point 1 provided they are otherwise compliant with the Parks' standard.

### 5.3 Leveraging Submarine Cable Landing at Kochi for Industry:

Kochi has the unique connectivity advantage of being the landing point of two major international submarine cables linking to US, Europe and the Far East. All IT Parks partially or fully promoted by the State Govt. shall be connected by OFC to the Kochi gateway. Data communication bandwidth, a strategic input for the IT sector, shall be thus made available to IT industry through the SII with assured quality of service across the State.

## 6. State Information Infrastructure

The State Information Infrastructure, which is to be set up within the coming two years shall endeavour to provide robust and seamless connectivity to industry across the state.

### a. Present Status:

Kerala enjoys the highest telephone density in the country today. 100% of the 982 telephone exchanges in the State are digital, covering all 14 district headquarters, all 63 taluk headquarters, and all 1468 panchayats/villages. The BSNL telephone exchange is collocated with the panchayat headquarters in a majority of the panchayats, and the balance is within a maximum of 3 Km. from the nearest telephone exchange. 945 of the 982 exchanges are networked through optic fibre cable (OFC), and the balance 37 shall also be connected on the OFC backbone within 3 months. 266 exchanges currently support ISDN service. Further, another 100 digital telephone exchanges shall be commissioned by BSNL across Kerala this financial year. VSNL has made substantial investments in its Kochi gateway where two submarine cables- Sea-Me-We-3 and FLAG- land. Kochi is one among two locations nationwide which has submarine cables landing. With 10 GBPS bandwidth supported, it currently handles about 70% of the nation's data communication traffic. Sourcing bandwidth from VSNL at Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram provides significant savings vis a vis most other locations in the country. Subsequent to the 'Rights of Way' policy announced in 2001, a number of telecom companies have come forward to establish OF based data/voice networks in the State.

### b. Purpose of the SII

The Government has identified target beneficiaries of IT led development as (i). Citizens/Individuals, (ii). Industry, (iii). Academic Institutions, and (iv). the different bodies of Government. For the benefits of IT to be exploited in full measure, but at minimal cost, the Government recognizes the need for a communication infrastructure backbone- the State Information Infrastructure- that spreads across the State and reaches out to all targeted beneficiaries. Further, there is the critical need to ensure that a minimum grade/quality of service is available from the SII so that the target beneficiaries can in turn plan software applications and hardware deployment based on the availability and quality of the SII.

Industry shall benefit from direct Optic Fibre Cable Connectivity into the Kochi gateway from most towns within the State, and that at a significant cost advantage. This would drive IT enabled services that are bandwidth intensive and which require reliable, failsafe operations including Business Process Outsourcing operations, Multimedia call centres, and Multimedia Content Development/Processing centres. Schools and colleges within the State as well as the Panchayats can today look forward to an era of seamless connectivity for communication within their communities as well as the world at large. Finally, most importantly, the SII would enable the ushering in of a new era of transparent, efficient, citizen-responsive governance from the Kerala government.

#### c. Quality of Service (QOS) Definition for Data Communication Services:

Service providers within the State shall be urged to maintain and transparently share quality of service data with their consumers. This minimum grade of service shall apply irrespective of the location within the State. This step is expected to ensure uniform quality of internet access and community level intra-networking across the State. Further, this shall prepare the State for an era when 'voice over internet protocol' (VoIP) communication shall be permitted in India. Appropriate mechanism shall be established to measure, report, analyse, and provide feedback to service providers to maintain/improve network performance. The QOS requirement shall be reviewed with concerned service providers, consumers, on an annual basis to reflect changes in network capabilities as well as consumer requirements.

### 7. Ancillary and Support Infrastructure:

#### 7.1 Power:

IT industry units are entitled to tariff under HD I industry and LT IV industry depending on the supply of and connected load to the IT industry. This classification shall be maintained even in the case of IT software industry units brought under the purview of the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act 1960.

#### 7.2 Roads:

The Govt shall ensure that access roads from the nearest city or airport to designated IT Parks/zones shall be of the highest quality and designed/upgraded to minimize travel time. This is recognized as a basic need of industry. Such activity shall be encouraged on a build-operate- transfer basis with the private sector.

## 8. Thrust Areas in IT

### 8.1 IT Enabled Services:

1. The Govt. shall endeavour to promote Kerala as a favoured ITES destination in this part of the world and to aggressively market ITES as the State's core competence. The focus domains in this sector shall be Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Customer Interaction Centers, Multimedia Content Creation and E-services. Kerala already has the basic enablers in place to make this vision a reality - best in class communication infrastructure to support bandwidth intensive ITES operations, a large pool of English speaking personnel, low cost of operations and low employee attrition. Govt is also putting in place a regulatory framework, which would address the specialized employment requirements of the industry.
2. To leverage the natural advantages the State has in this sector, focused training inputs shall be delivered throughout the State to create a large pool of trained manpower for Business Process Outsourcing Centres, voice and non-voice based ITES centers, including voice/web/email based call centers, Geographical Information Systems, and Animation/Content Creation. The content shall be created with the help of experts from the ITES industry and delivered using innovative methods.
3. English is the universal language of business. Kerala Govt. realizes that its front runner advantage in universal coverage and reach in the State's education network can be leveraged to ensure frontline status in the use of English for enhanced employability of its people. To improve the communication skills of the local populace in English, Colleges and Universities in the State shall be encouraged to upgrade the quality of English language courses to accepted international standards. Further, Govt. shall also encourage the introduction of Japanese, French and German language courses in a phased manner in Colleges so that a pool of man power trained in these languages is available within the State.
4. Kerala shall host an annual International Business Process Outsourcing Conclave each year. This event, the first of its kind in India, shall be the lead and definitive event for the Indian and regional BPO industry.

### 8.2 Supply Chain management Operations:

The Govt. recognizes it as an imperative to attract global IT Products companies to Kerala. Kochi offers several natural advantages to become a choice location for Supply Chain Management Operations (SCM). Kochi has an all-weather port, an international airport well connected into the Far East through Singapore and into Western Europe/USA

through the West Asian countries. Further, Kochi is home to one of four Special Economic Zones of the country that provides a flexible, fast track environment for running predominantly export oriented SCM operations. Special incentives have been announced for such SCM units. The IT products companies based at designated IT parks in the State have enjoyed harmonious labour relations over the last several years in addition to high productivity levels. The new labour regulatory framework shall lay the foundation for such operations to proliferate. The Govt commits itself to playing a strong enabling role in this regard.

### 8.3 Establishment of a Global HR Centre in Kerala:

In view of Kerala's peaceful, salubrious and cost competitive setting, the State is a natural location of in-house training facilities for IT companies. The State Govt. shall focus on this comparative advantage by promoting the Technopark as an attractive global HR center. As part of this endeavour, Govt shall encourage leading IT Corporates to set up their HRD centres in Kerala.

### 9. Performance Excellence Initiative:

The State Govt. will promote international bench marking of the IT industry in the State by fostering a Performance Excellence Initiative for improving organizational excellence and business maturity. A Performance Excellence advisory group shall be constituted for prescribing short and medium term course and to devise operational guidelines as well as training inputs for the IT industry.

Performance Excellence calibration shall be undertaken and a system of awards and incentives shall be put in place.

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### 10.Synergy with the Tourism Industry :

IT and Tourism have been defined as Kerala's focus areas and both these sectors can benefit from mutual synergy. IT has a significant role to play in enhancing service levels, particularly in the high end Tourism segment that Kerala dominates. The Tourism and IT Department shall develop a comprehensive plan for improving efficiencies reducing costs and for creating customer delight in the Tourism industry through the use of IT. Local IT industry shall be encouraged to develop/offer the necessary IT products and services. The State Information Infrastructure shall be made available to the Tourism industry to serve the industry's communication needs. Special Tourism packages shall be evolved to bring in leisure travelers from the IT industry into the State thus benefiting both the sectors.

### 11 Promotional Initiatives:

Govt. shall launch concerted promotional efforts to establish the State as a favoured investment locale within the country and abroad. These efforts shall comprise overseas

business promotion, focusing on global IT centers as well as targeted individual efforts aimed at attracting large IT companies into the State.

### 11.1 Business Promotion Cell for IT Industry

The Kerala IT Department has set up a Business Promotion Cell for IT (IT-BPC), which shall:

Direct enquiries from within Govt as well as from industry elsewhere in India/abroad to IT units in the State, and

Appropriately represent/promote IT units at the leading industry tradeshows/seminar that the IT-BPC participates in. This shall include provision of space at important exhibitions/tradeshows. IT units must register with the IT Department to participate in this program.

The ongoing interface mechanism between the IT\_BPC and IT industry shall be transparent and open. The services of the ITBPC shall be provided free of cost to IT units until 31.12.2002. Thereafter, a nominal fee may be charged to cover the expenses of operation. Kerala based IT units have to register with the IT Department to participate in this program.

### 11.2 Customer Facilitation Cell for IT Industry:

The Kerala IT Department shall set up a Customer Facilitation Cell for KIT (IT-CFC) to facilitate the initial entry phase of business into the state. The services of the Cell shall include facilitation of single window clearance, including STPI registration and other statutory registrations; expedited import clearance, advising on company formation/setting up procedures; and other facilitation as may be necessary.

### 11.3 Incubation facilities:

A Business Cum Technology Incubation Fund shall be set up to assist young start up entrepreneurs. This Fund shall provide services including appropriate business and technical advice, and infrastructure and shall work in close co-ordination with the Kerala Venture Fund and the IITM-K.

## 12. HRD for the IT Industry:

12.1 Kerala's distinctive qualitative edge lies in the quality and adaptability of its human resource base. The high quality of manpower available in Kerala can be a lever not merely for attracting high value IT investments into the State, but also for widening and disseminating the IT base into small towns and outlying areas spanning the entire State. The State's endeavour shall be to convert Kerala as a leading off shore center for provision of IT services worldwide.

12.2 The policy measures delineated in this document seek to address the following two broad objectives:

(a) To provide adequately trained manpower to meet the requirements of the IT industry; and

(b) To upgrade the productivity, skill & knowledge levels of the populace by equipping them with the appropriate level of IT literacy.

1. Government have set up the IIITM-K as a center of excellence in IT education, for imparting training in high-end and emerging technologies. The Institute will be leveraged as a key resource center for upgrading the quality of technical education in the State.

2. The State Govt. will promote the establishment of an International Business School in Cochin within the next three years. This school is envisaged as being a predominantly industry driven and industry led enterprise and shall focus on offering business education relating to the management of information. This institute will produce high caliber managers who will be equipped to run the information oriented enterprises of the future knowledge society.

3. State Govt. have recently embarked on a major policy initiative of liberalizing the professional and higher educational sector of the State. Government have multiplied manifold the number of technical seats in the IT sector (including Engineering and MCA). With the liberalization of the technical education sector in Kerala, the number of seats available is expected to be increase four fold in the next five years.

4. Basic IT skills have become a sine -qua-non for exploring any branch of knowledge. Hence, a fundamental IT module will be incorporated as an essential component of the curriculum for all degree courses in the state, including the Arts & Humanities courses.

5. The relevance of the course content& training imparted in the ITI"s, & polytechnics shall be reviewed & appropriated changes made in the course design & curriculum to ensure compatibility with requirements of the local industry.

6. State Govt. shall promote the deployment of a state wide educational grid to cover all colleges & institutions of higher learning which will facilitate the creation of subject specific e-learning communities centering around designated institutions as resource centres for various subjects. The objective of the grid shall be to formulate dynamic partnership between existing institutions of higher educations and centers of excellence for upgrading the quality of course content and teaching. IIITM-K shall prepare the basic blueprint for the educational grid and shall function as the nucleus of the grid.

7. Govt. shall also promote the establishment of a Media information & Resource Center for Education under the IIITM-K as a nodal agency for the creation of educational content in relevant disciplines.

8. Govt. shall form an expert Committee with experts drawn from academia/ IT industry to review the content of IT in Higher Education curriculum in the State on an annual basis, particularly for non-Computer Science Engineering and Electronic Engineering students and for Science, Arts and Commerce streams.

9. Supplementary training programmes in IT shall be introduced in professional and non-professional colleges with support from nationally accepted training agencies such as the NCST and other reputed training institutes.

10. The Govt shall undertake career aptitude assessment programmes in cooperation with private organizations with proven expertise in the area to help develop cost effective programmes that provide appropriately trained human resources for the IT industry. The whole assessment process shall be monitored by a group of eminent experts from industry, academia to ensure that the objectives are substantially met, without compromise in quality.

11. Govt. shall formulate minimum guidelines for IT training institutions in the State.

### 13. Industrial Relations & Labour laws:

In an area like IT, where the nature of the labour inputs are highly flexible and mobile and where there is intense competition between states and regions for attracting inward investment, Govt. recognizes the need to ensure a regulatory environment and an employment regime that will be a positive inducement for investment.

Government shall declare by notification that IT Software industry units are deemed 'establishment' under the purview of the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1960. Further, Government shall exempt these units from the provisions of the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1960 in respect of the following:

i. Working hours stipulation under Section 6 of the Act. This shall enable 'Flexitime' operation.

ii. Employment of female employees between 7 PM and 6 AM, under Section 20 of the Act, subject to (a) Special arrangements being made for protection of female employees between these hours, (b) female employees should be employed jointly or in minimum group of 10 female employees, and (c) arrangement of rest room should be made separately for the female employees. (d) the IT software industry unit shall employ a minimum of 50 persons (including female employees) between these hours.

iii. 'Spread Over', under Section 9 of the Act.

iv. 'Opening and closing hours', under Section 10 of the Act.

v. 'Closing of establishment and grant of weekly holidays', under Section 11 of the Act.

vi. Further, by virtue of the IT Software industry being deemed 'establishment' under the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1960, there shall be no restriction on three shift operation.

#### Loading and Unloading Work for IT Industry:

Government shall through necessary enactment regulate the presence and activity of headload workers on the premises of the IT industry establishments, as well as state promoted IT Parks in general, to ensure smooth, undisturbed functioning of the IT industry.

#### Self certification:

Government shall permit self-certification, to the extent possible, of IT industry in respect of the following Acts/Regulations:

- i. Payment of Wages Act
- ii. Minimum Wages Act
- iii. Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act
- iv. Workmen's Compensation Act
- v. Employees State Insurance Act
- vi. Employment Exchanges Compulsory Notification of Vacancies Act
- vii. Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act
- viii. Payment of Gratuity Act
  
- ix. Kerala Casual, Temporary, Badli Workers' (Wages) Act

#### Public Utility Services:

Government shall declare IT Industry as 'Public Utility Services' under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

#### Part-time Working:

The Government recognises the need for the IT industry to cost effectively deal with fluctuating demand for services. Government shall put in place special provisions for part-time employment for IT industry.

#### Tele-Commuting:

Government shall put in place special provisions to encourage tele-commuting in order to ensure greater efficiency in functioning of IT Software industry.

#### 14 Accelerating PC and Internet access and usage penetration:

1. Kerala with its unique social fabric, socio-economic development, penetration levels of the press, audio-visual media, telephony, mobile telephony, with the best Information Infrastructure in the country represents fertile ground for the use of IT products and services by the population at large, and for the introduction of viable services targeted at and involving the citizen, the community, panchayats, and Government Bodies.

2. The ability to generate Malayalam language content at a decentralised level by the individual for the immediate and extended community, with resultant content being managed centrally, can possibly evolve into a viable business model. The Government shall encourage Private Sector initiative to attempt a Proof of Concept of this or similar models that encourages creation and use of Malayalam language content.

3. An Expert Advisory Group with leading experts from the Internet and Computer industries has been formed under the aegis of the IT Department to recommend the enabling steps to accelerate the process of PC and Internet penetration in the State.

#### 15. Role of Open or Free Software

The Government wishes to encourage the judicious use of open source/free software that complements/supplements proprietary software, to reduce the total cost of ownership of IT applications/solutions without compromising on the immediate and medium term value provided by the application. The Government welcomes research into the use of open/free software in the context of education, governance, and for general use at home, to make IT truly a part of the daily lives of the people of the State. The Government also encourages projects such as the Simputer that is low cost, based on open software, and attuned to the needs of the common man.

#### 16. Software Piracy, IPR, Data Protection, Patents

The IT Department shall centrally make available resources that will simplify the process of applying for patents in India and the U.S. This will be backed by an expert committee on IPR/Patents (not restricted to IT) that will advise and guide the serious inventor through the process of patent application.

The Government shall provide orientation programs to its law enforcement agencies to understand the intricacies of the laws under the IT Act 2000 to curb software piracy.

### 17. Role of Industry Associations

The Government shall work closely with industry associations including NASSCOMM, MAIT, CII, and GTECH (Group of Technopark Companies that represents Kerala IT industry) and others to ensure a coordinated and smooth industry-Government interface on all matters of common concern, for the vibrant development of the IT industry in the State.

### 18. Accessibility:

Kerala has traditionally been at the forefront of enlightened social initiatives. The Government shall examine the means by which access to and use of information and services by individuals with disabilities shall be made comparable to that available to individuals without disabilities. IT is a significant enabler of accessibility. An Expert Committee with members from organizations representing the disabled, from industry, and from the relevant departments of the State Government shall be constituted within 3 months under the chairmanship of the Minister for IT & Social Welfare to chart the steps to be taken in this regard. The report by this committee shall be submitted not later than 6 months from the effective date of this policy.

The Government is aware that rapid change and transformation is the essence of this sector, and acknowledge the need for a dynamically evolving policy that caters to the changing I.T environment. Hence this policy document is envisaged as an evolving blueprint, that sets out an indicative roadmap. Government will endeavour to improve upon the components of this policy on the basis of suggestions from stakeholders and the changing requirements of the sector.