

# eOffice Deployment Guidelines

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**Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances**

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# Objective of this document

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This document is a handbook for Ministries/ Departments planning to deploy eOffice. It outlines a set of guidelines for planning, procurement, and overall project management, which are indicative only and may be suitably adopted or modified by the implementing departments for their use.

## Background

“The Government of India, in recognition of the long-felt need for efficiency in government processes and service delivery mechanisms, has included e-Office as a core Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National eGovernance Plan (NeGP).

The main objectives of this MMP are:

- a) To improve efficiency, consistency and effectiveness of government responses;
- (b) To reduce turnaround time and to meet the demands of the citizens charter;
- (c) To provide for effective resource management to improve the quality of administration;
- (d) To reduce processing delays; and
- (e) To establish transparency and accountability
- (f) Less paper office
- (g) To provide cost effective e-storage facility
- (h) Environment friendly, eco-friendly office

# About eOffice

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## Introduction

This section presents an overview of eOffice. It describes its main modules and outlines its benefits.

## Scope of eOffice

The functions or activities in any government office can broadly be categorized as follows:

1. Government to Government(G2G) transactions
2. Government to Citizen(G2C) transactions
3. Government to Business(G2B) transactions
4. Staff management activities
5. Internal financial, accounting, and administration aspects

Integral to all these activities is the process of decision-making in the files/meetings.

## File movement

While decision-making is an important collaborative process involving multiple stakeholders, the file movement process has been central to it for decades. It is this file movement process that eOffice seeks to automate and streamline. Other modules like leave handling, tour and KMS are also available.

## Main features of eOffice

### eFile:

eFile helps streamline the file movement process in the following ways:

- Scanning and diarization of inward letters: Incoming correspondence need no longer be tracked through manual registers. eOffice facilitates scanning of receipts and their conversion into a format suitable for further processing in eOffice
- Digital signatures: Once converted to electronic form, the system ensures that receipts are 'sent' and 'delivered' securely. Digital signatures are used to authenticate users.
- Route files to appropriate authorities: eOffice creates an electronic environment that replaces the paper file system. It has features that allow selection of the next recipient in the workflow.
- Set due dates and reminders: The sender of a document can request the receiver to respond by a certain date and also trigger reminders before and after the due date.
- Search and view files: Since files are maintained electronically in a central repository, eOffice provides users the facility to search files based on recipient, subject, and other keywords.

- Identify pending files and receipts and their pendency
- Identify special files (e.g. VIP references, Parliament matters)
- Generate reports on file creation and movement

### **eLeave:**

Employee applying for leave is a very routine activity in any organization. A leave system is required that allows employees to apply for leave online at a convenient time and location. Approver who approves leave also needs the same convenience. Further, reporting officer many times require knowing as to how many of their staff is on leave at during certain period. Administration staff also has many activities like addition of Earned leaves every six months, preparation of Leave notification etc. All these activities are taken care by the Leave Management System. The employees also know current leave balance at any given point of time.

#### Key Features

- Role based Access
- Leave management is per GOI
- Link Officer(for leave approval)
- Alerts at approval leave
- Online submission of Joining report
- Current Leave Balance
- Leave details of subordinates
- Admin Module

### **eTour:**

Tour and Travel management requires a lot of paper work and approval. State of the art online Tour Management System is required to improve efficiency and ongoing saving of money and time.

A solution which could keep HR & Admin departments focused on their core tasks by avoiding redundant follow up of line managers and employees for documents, approvals, forms and photocopies.

#### Key Features

On line mode for:

- Submission of tour
- Approval of tour
- Confirmation of tour

On line Tour claims:

- Settlement and Expense Claim
- Confirm Expense Claim
- Cancel Claim Request
- Approve Reject Claims
- Claim History

## **KMS:**

Government is one of the largest entities that have to manage large volumes of documents (or, mostly called as files), which either is of critical or routine nature. These documents can be Policies, Forms, Acts and Regulations, Circulars, Guidelines and Standards and Manuals.

The immediate need in the Govt. scenario is to have a system where the authorized employee can locate the document/File in the shortest possible time, update and share with other relevant users and finally store it with proper versioning and tracking. Information in the Govt. set up can also be e-mail messages and attachments and hence the KMS must ensure that the content whatever the type it may be of must be treated in the same manner. Govt. documents have to go through several updates and finally archived.

### Key Features

- Online Access of documents
- Create and upload Documents
- Manage Documents
- Metadata compliant with standards
- Centralized Document Library with folder wise categorization
- Separate user area for users folders and documents
- Sharing of Documents and Folders with other users
- User Discussion on Documents
- Folder Subscriptions
- Personal Contact List for easy sharing
- Online Search
- Published Document Board for every user
- Different views for viewing the document
- Alerts on document change
- Versioning of Documents
- Working Copy Support

### Collaboration and Messaging Services:

Under this Appointment, Instant Messaging, Discussion forum services and RSS feeds would be provided.

# Deployment overview

## Introduction

Implementation of eOffice in central government ministries/departments will be done in phases. Each phase will include a set of government departments/ministries.

## Main deployment activities

E-Office will be deployed in the department in three stages:

1. Planning (or eOffice Deployment Planning)
2. Execution (or eOffice Deployment Execution)
3. Adoption (or eOffice Adoption)

The project plan is given below, with the essential activities to be carried out by the implementing department, are in **bold**.

S. No.	Activity	Responsible	Start	*End	
1	Conduct awareness presentation	DARPG/ NIC	Jun 2011		Planning
2	Conduct brief day process study at department	DARPG	Aug 2011		
3	Provide deployment handbook	DARPG/NIC	Aug 2011		
4	<b>Set up department project team</b>	DARPG/User department	Aug – Sep 2011		
5	Assess infrastructure requirements	NIC/User department	Aug-Sep 2011		
6	<b>Allocate funds</b>	User department	Sep 2011		
1	<b>Procure and install required hardware and software</b>	User department	Oct 2011		Execution
2	Scan historical records and prepare other data	User department	Parallel Activity		
3	<b>Set-up users</b>	NIC	Oct 2011		
4	Provide handholding support to address deployment issues	NIC	Oct 2011		
5	<b>Product training</b>	NIC	Oct 2011		
6	Declare deployment complete	DARPG		Mar 2012	
1	Begin post-deployment support	NIC			Adoption
2	Conduct detailed change management	DARPG/User	Continuous		

		department			
3	Gather product feedback and manage change requests	DARPG /NIC	Continuous		

\* It will vary department to department.

## Awareness presentation

DARPG/ NIC will make an initial presentation to the department highlighting the main facets of the application and outlining the deployment plan.

## Deployment handbook

DARPG will also provide a set of guidelines to the department for assistance during deployment, which it can use or customize. This document is the deployment handbook.

## Department project team

Every department will appoint a nodal officer along with other officers to form a project team that will drive implementation in the department.

## Preliminary study

DARPG will in some cases conduct a brief study of the department to understand its structure, functions, processes, and any special features, with a view to assessing the readiness and any potential roadblocks.

## Allocate funds

Departments need to allocate funds primarily for covering any gap in their IT Infrastructure. DARPG, as the nodal department for this MMP, will provide the software, training and hand-holding support for initial period.

## Assess infrastructure requirements

NIC will carry out an infrastructure gap assessment study to identify the infrastructure to be procured.

## Procure and install required hardware and software

Once the infrastructure required has been frozen, the process of ordering and delivery must be initiated. See the section 'Infrastructure Procurement' for more details.

## Digitize active records

Since most decision-making will now be processed through the system, the department will have to convert its physical files to electronic format. Any new files will also have to be opened in electronic format and receipts scanned and uploaded into the system. This process is called digitization.

It involves two basic steps:

1. Scanning of paper documents (e.g. letters, books)
2. Tagging them with certain meta data prescribed in the system (based on certain guidelines)



## **Scanning**

Since scanning could involve handling a large volume of documents, the department can decide to digitize them in one lot or stagger the scanning in phases. See Appendix: Digitization strategy.

## **Tagging and loading into the system**

Scanned documents need to be loaded into the system. eOffice provides a user interface for this purpose. The tagging methodology will be covered in the user training.

## **User setup**

This is the process of identifying the users, loading all relevant master data for eOffice, setting up security privileges, and carrying out any other basic configuration required to get the product operational.

## **Provide handholding support to address deployment issues**

A team deputed from NIC will handhold users during deployment to make the transition to an electronic environment as seamless as possible.

## **Assess product feedback and manage change requests**

Once the department starts using eOffice, users will have suggestions to improve the product. Their feedback would be routed through DARPG to NIC. This feedback will be evaluated both on technical feasibility as well as on process conformity and the decision communicated back to the user.

## **Manage user training**

NIC will provide training to users on the product.

## **Declare deployment complete**

Once a site begins using eOffice for all but a select few transactions it will be declared as an eOffice site. The following conditions will need to be met for a department to be declared an eOffice site:

1. The department has passed an internal order that all new receipts (except some excluded by special clearly defined criteria) must be processed in eOffice after a certain cut-off date.
2. All new receipts in a continuous period of one month, after the order, are converted to electronic form and processed through eOffice.

## **Begin post-deployment support**

The handholding team positioned by NIC will provide support to a department until it goes live. During the deployment, NIC will set up a cell to provide online and call-based support to users.

## **Conduct detailed change management**

Working in an electronic environment is a major change to users at all levels. The DARPG/department shall initiate suitable awareness and counselling sessions as well as suitable communication mechanisms in order to streamline the process of change and encourage users to adopt the new system enthusiastically.

# Funding

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## Introduction

This section prescribes guidelines for estimating the funds required for deploying eOffice.

## Expenditure heads

The potential heads of expenditure for any Ministry/ Department are:

1. Hardware procurement
2. Network bandwidth augmentation and periodic network costs

## Funding mechanism

Departments/ Ministries have to allocate 2- 3 % of their Plan budget for e-Governance \*. Such funds can be used for procuring the IT Gap Infrastructure, if any. Else Departments/ Ministries will have to budget for the same at the RE (Revised Estimate) stage. Funding for application development and enhancement, user training and hand-holding support will be provided by DARPG.

\* Group of Ministers (GoM) decision on para 6.3.9 of the 11<sup>th</sup> report of the ARC refers that an independent budget head of account should be created to utilize 2 to 3 % of plan funds for e-Governance projects.

## Approximate funds requirement

The funds estimate will flow from the infrastructure gap assessment report described in the section 'Infrastructure procurement'. Use the following table for estimating the funds requirement once the gap assessment has been carried out.

Item (1)	Indicative unit cost (Rs.) (2)	No. of units required (per infrastructure gap assessment report) (3)	Total cost (Rs.) (2 x 3)
Computers:			No. of computers required x per unit cost
Scanners:			No. of scanners x per unit cost
Power Backup Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)			No. of UPS required x per unit cost
Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)			No. of DSC required x per unit cost
*Network	(a)Initial Setup		

Item (1)	Indicative unit cost (Rs.) (2)	No. of units required (per infrastructure gap assessment report) (3)	Total cost (Rs.) (2 x 3)
bandwidth (Lease Lines, Router)	Cost (b)Recurring Monthly Cost		
Scanning		Number of pages to be scanned	(If outsourced)
Total			

# Infrastructure procurement

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## Introduction

This section prescribes the categories of infrastructure that are pre-requisites for effective eOffice operation, and recommends guidelines for assessing the gaps.

## Infrastructure categories

The following broad categories of infrastructure are required.

1. Computers (PCs)
2. Scanners
3. UPS
4. Digital Signature Certificate(DSC)
5. Internal network connectivity
6. External network connectivity

## Computers (PCs)

Every e-Office user requires a separate PC. Shared PCs are not recommended. The minimum PC specifications, which were used in the eOffice Pilot projects, are:

Hardware (Minimum Recommended)

Processor speed: 2.0 GHz

RAM: 1.0 GB

USB 2.0 controller (for Digital Signature Certificate)

Software (Minimum Recommended)

Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 or Linux

Internet Explorer (6.0 and above) or other browsers

Adobe Reader 9 (downloadable free of cost)

Any Antivirus

Note:

1. These specifications are optimal for the use of eOffice alone (or co-located with basic PC-based office software). If the department is using or planning to use other special purpose applications (e.g. project management systems) that could consume sizable computer resources, then the specifications might need to be re-defined bearing the consolidated PC workload in mind.
2. NIC will provide the final specifications as part of the gap analysis they will do for each ministry/department.

## Scanners

Scanners will be required for digitising the following:

1. Currently active files (including their contents)
2. Files that could become active (including any relevant content)
3. Paper receipts from outside the department, books or other documents that need to form part of the eOffice knowledge base

The number of scanners should be based on the following considerations:

1. Estimated documentation load (in pages per day)
2. Organizational units (Divisions or sections) that need to maintain confidentiality
3. Officers who have special confidentiality needs
4. Geographical spread of the department

The general recommendation is the following:

1. One heavy duty scanner in the CRU
2. One medium-duty scanner for every section provided that there is at least one per floor
3. One light-duty scanner per official including and above the rank of DS.
4. However one medium-duty scanner per floor

These are only guidelines, and departments can feel free to adjust the number of scanners or seek the help of DARPG or NIC to help assess the number and configuration of scanners.

## Internal network connectivity

All computers with eOffice should be connected together in a modern LAN configuration with the standard configuration of cables, switches, and other networking equipment.

## External network connectivity

The Department/Ministry will be connected to the eOffice servers located in NIC data centres over the Web. This requires primary and a standby lease lines.

## Gap assessment guidelines

Using similar guidelines as above, NIC will provide an infrastructure gap assessment report to each Department/Ministry. The results can be consolidated for the purposes of funding as follows:

Item	Current availability (No. of units) <date>	Requirement <No. of units>	Basis for requirement	Gap (No. of units)	Comments
PC					
UPS					
DSC					
Heavy duty scanner					
Medium –duty scanner					
Light –duty					

Item	Current availability (No. of units) <date>	Requirement <No. of units>	Basis for requirement	Gap (No. of units)	Comments
scanner					
Internal network equipment (LAN cabling, switches etc.)					
External network connectivity (Lease line/Broadband router/VSAT)					

### Procurement process

The procurement of any gap infrastructure by the Department may be done as per existing government rules and procedures.

# Project management

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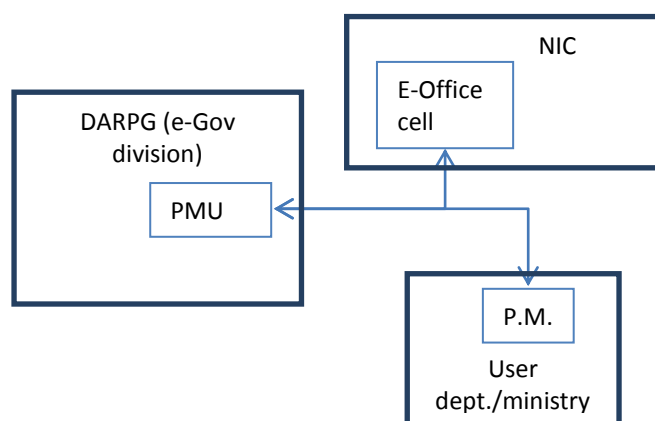
## Introduction

This section describes the organizational setup for managing the deployment of eOffice and prescribes the framework for monitoring it.

## Project management team

The Departmental Nodal Officer should be appointed from among the senior-most officers of the department, preferably JS and above, who will be responsible for policy decisions and for resolving escalated issues. The department will also appoint a project management team headed by a Project Manager (Director-level or above) to coordinate the deployment effort and serve as the single window for interacting with DARPG and NIC.

DARPG has set up a Programme Management Unit (PMU) which has been entrusted with the task of managing the implementation programme across all departments.



## Roles and responsibilities

### User department

The departmental Project Manager will have the following responsibilities:

1. Get the project completed within agreed timelines
2. Maintain a project plan with timelines
3. Track activities according to the plan
4. Escalate delays or other issues in a timely fashion
5. Communicate product change requests or other feedback via the established mechanism
6. Coordinate with DARPG and NIC on all project management issues

### DARPG

DARPG and its PMU will have the following responsibilities:

1. Manage the overall eOffice implementation programme

2. Provide guidance to the department/ministry in managing the deployment
3. Monitor and track progress
4. Analyze user feedback
5. Screen change requests
6. Initiate any process changes that might emanate from the user feedback

## **NIC**

NIC, being the technical partner/ system integrator, is responsible for:

1. Doing the infrastructure gap analysis and providing financial estimate to the department for procurement
2. Implementation and rollout of the eOffice application
3. Provide implementation and post- implementation technical support

NIC will also provide manpower for each department that will hand-hold the department staff during implementation. The handholding team will provide the following inputs:

1. Resolve bugs or defects speedily
2. Analyze user feedback and change requests
3. Implement change requests
4. Conduct product training
5. Guide the team in setting up and configuring users

## **Monitoring framework**

Regular monitoring of the status is key to the success of the project.

### **Progress metrics**

The following metrics should be regularly tracked and reported.

1. Existence of an updated project plan with timelines
2. Progress against the plan
3. Issues faced

### **Issue tracker**

The nodal officer will maintain an issue tracker listing the issues arising during deployment. The issue tracker should be updated regularly and shared with DARPG.

### **Reporting mechanism**

The nodal officer will send a fortnightly report to DARPG on the status of implementation.

## **Project - time estimate**

Departments/ministries have to complete the project in the timelines defined by the department/ministry at the start of the project. Depending on various parameters like the size/ locations of the department, number of staff, computer knowledge of staff, etc. the project deployment/ implementation period could range from 3 to 9 months.



# Change management

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## Introduction

Working in an electronic environment is a major change to users at all levels. The user department/ministry, with support from DARPG if required, shall initiate suitable awareness sessions and develop suitable communication mechanisms in order to streamline the process of change and encourage users to adopt the new system enthusiastically. Given below are a few steps that the department could use as a guideline for carrying out the change management:

- Internal awareness program
- Stakeholder assessment
- Staff incentives
- Regular training
- Workload transition planning
- Risk assessment

## Internal awareness/ communication

The earlier staff members at all levels are made aware of the impending changes and the quicker they understand the implications of such change on working styles, the smoother will be the process of change. Communication is key to facilitating awareness. The communication must not only be transparent and unambiguous but should also make use of as many channels as possible. It could be through written circulars, face-to-face sessions in small groups by section or divisional heads, general Q&A sessions chaired by Secretary or Additional Secretary, notice board pin-ups, and email.

## Role change assessment

The department must assess how the new environment will realign roles and make a list of affected people. Every such person will need to have a modified job description. This will need to be communicated to him or her. The format used in appendix could serve as a guideline for the assessment.

## Staff incentives

Departments need to be creative in designing a reward system for employees who are new to the use of ICT to motivate them. Any positive behaviour that is in consonance with the requirements of the new job must be re-enforced. Any outstanding efforts, suggestions and innovations can be rewarded/ recognized to boost morale of employees.

## User training

Training will be extensively used as a tool for skill building and creating an interest around the project. Training is a crucial component of the eOffice project, especially since processes have

changed and new skills are required. Some of the mediums of training to be used are e-learning, videos, classroom training, on the job training, interactive fora and expert speak.

## Workload transition planning

There are a few issues that the department must take care of as it transitions its workload to an online system:

1. Which kinds of files should go electronic first? See the section “Digitization strategy”
2. Is it necessary to transition all documents in a file for the file to be considered electronic?
3. Should all divisions/ sections be transitioned at one go, or should it be done in phases?
4. How should inter-departmental communication be handled?
5. How should files moving to divisions or wings outside Delhi be handled?

A table in the following format could be maintained to track the transition of files to electronic format:

File no.	File name	Section	Divn.	Usage category	File requires Minister’s approval? (Y/N)	File requires Interdepartmental approval? (Y/N)	Scanning priority	Date of conversion	Comments

## Risk assessment

The department should prepare a set of probable risks that could stall or even derail the deployment process. Here is a tentative list of risk categories and some indicative approaches to mitigating them:

1. Schedule overrun
2. Cost overrun
3. User resistance

Risk category	Risk	Mitigation
Schedule overrun	No clear milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a formal project management process and a project team</li> <li>• Create and track a detailed project plan.</li> <li>• Make sure that the plan is regularly monitored by top management</li> </ul>
	Procurement delays	

Risk category	Risk	Mitigation
	Digitization bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow adequate time for procurement.</li> <li>• Seek assistance from DARPG (if required) in setting up the project plan</li> <li>• Start digitization early or in phases</li> <li>• Allow sufficient time for the procurement process</li> <li>• Escalate issues early</li> </ul>
	Integration with other applications (NIC)	
	Top management oversight	
Cost overrun	Infrastructure costs	
User objections	Technical issues (NIC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up an effective user feedback mechanism</li> <li>2. Establish a solid change management process with adequate training and counseling</li> <li>3. Top management must set an example by using eOffice</li> <li>4. Raise with NIC handholding team. Escalate to DARPG if not resolved.</li> </ol>
	Change in working style	
	Network bandwidth issues	

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## **What part of the work (which activities) will be taken care of by the application?**

Answer: See the section “About eOffice”

## **Apart from the eOffice do we need any other software?**

As the application is browser/ web-based, as such no other software is required to run the application. But some Java updates and digital signature software needs to be installed on the client machines which will be taken care by NIC during implementation.

## **Can eOffice integrate with other applications?**

The mechanism for integrating will have to be evolved on a case-to-case basis. Generally, after eOffice is deployed, NIC applications like FTS (File Tracking System) and OPA (Office Procedure Automation) would not be required.

## **How much funds do we need and under which heads?**

See the section “Funding”.

## **What about funding for the software, servers and training?**

These are being taken care by DARPG and NIC.

## **What kind of issues do you envisage during deployment?**

See “Risk Assessment” in “Change Management”.

## **Which departments have started using eOffice or have signed up for its implementation?**

The project has been successfully implemented in 3 Pilot sites –DARPG, eGovernance division of DIT and Training division of DoPT. Additionally, eOffice is also running in the Cabinet Secretariat, LBSNAA Mussorie and few other Departments.

Being a Mission Mode Project, all Central Government Ministries’ and Departments have to implement eOffice. DARPG has prepared a phase-wise plan of getting the deployment completed in all Departments.

## **What is the process for procuring the hardware?**

See the section “Infrastructure Procurement”.

## **How will file tracking happen during the transition phase, i.e. when some files are on eOffice and others are not?**

Each file will follow its own independent workflow. To keep track, it would be advisable to follow the existing procedure for files which are in physical format even after introduction of eOffice.

## **How will the system work for departmental offices that are not located in Delhi?**

For the present, ministries/departments that are located in Delhi are being covered.

### **How will exchange of files happen with department that are not on eOffice?**

Departments that are not yet live on eOffice will require printed or scanned copies of electronic files. If a file is to be sent to such an office, the originating department must take a printout of the file and its contents, and either send the printouts or email their scanned copies to the destination departments by using official e-Mail ID. Responses received from such offices will have to be scanned and uploaded back into eOffice for further processing.

### **Can the scanning be outsourced?**

The department can take a call to get the scanning done in-house or through an outsourced agency based on considerations like data confidentiality, secrecy, cost, accuracy and staff workload. In an outsourced scenario, on-going hand-on supervision is required.

### **How about support for Hindi language?**

Currently, the software supports phonetic typing (typing in English but it gets displayed and stored in Hindi).

### **How will security of our data be taken care of?**

eOffice is hosted on servers which are kept at secure NIC Data Centers. Also, the connectivity from the Department to the server will be through NICNET, which is a secure network for government only, maintained by NIC. IT security certification of the application code is also planned. Moreover, NIC will take regular backups of the departmental data hosted on their eOffice servers.



4. Prioritize the scanning according to the following:
  - a. Priority 1: Files in categories A5 to A3 that do not need Ministerial or inter-department approval
  - b. Priority 2: Files in categories A2 to A1 that do not need Ministerial or inter-departmental approval

## How to select files to be scanned?

This section outlines the guidelines to be followed by the assistant who will be responsible for scanning the files that are in processing and for files that are closed.

- a. Current files – Current files are those which are currently in circulation/ in use. They deal with cases that are open and decisions on the issues being considered in them are yet to be finalized.. An active file may contain many documents or a few documents depending on its use.

All current files which are likely to remain active will be scanned and converted to efile.

- b. Closed/Recorded files – Files are marked as closed/recorded once all actions are complete on the file and the Section Officer gives his approval for closing the file. Closed files have no outstanding fair communications to be issued and no further action due.

Closed/Recorded files may be scanned more selectively with only relevant correspondences and notes being captured. As these files require no further action, versioning and change tracking is not a significant requirement and hence linking/ referencing can be minimized to the documents which directly feed into the actions taken.

Closed files/Recorded files will be scanned as and when they are referenced.

## How to select pages in the file for scanning?

All pages in the file will be scanned except the following:

- a. Extra Copies of G.O.s/ D.O. letters issued in the file
- b. Copies of other, older G.O.s referred to in the file. Digitization of knowledge (GOs, acts etc.) is a separate activity. The knowledge bank will be populated after digitization, that digitization of acts, rules, etc is not related to the file scanning activity.
- c. Copies of vouchers, tickets etc which have been billed already
- d. O.C.s, rough drafts etc of letters/G.O.s/ Project Reports – fair copies of which have been scanned earlier
- e. Any correspondence/ noting/ issue etc. for which soft copy is already available

## Digitization process

The precise steps to be taken while scanning a document are part of the eOffice User Manual which will be circulated by NIC.