

## e-Governance Gathers Momentum, Says Skoch Report Card 2005

Second survey of India's most prominent government projects

- Spending on e-Governance up 37% year on year – expected to surpass 5,000 crores by 2007
- Suwidha in Punjab and Rural e-Seva in Andhra Pradesh top for citizen services delivery
- 86% citizens report reduction in corruption
- 91% find cost of e-governance affordable compared to 95% last year
- Speed of delivery up from 78% last year to 88% this year

**New Delhi 17th October 2005:** Spending on e-governance is soaring. By December this year the government spending on e-Governance projects is expected to increase to Rs. 3014 crore, up from Rs. 2200 crore in 2004 – a whopping 37% increase.

“Most of the increased IT spending in next two years will go to areas like rural projects, education, Panchayati Raj, Common Services Centers and communications connectivity.” Said, Mr. Sameer Kochhar, CEO, Skoch Consultancy Services.

Mr. Kochhar was addressing the media on the release of India's second e-Governance Report Card based on intensive one to one interviews with about 350 citizens across seven states. The report is focused on “Measuring Outcomes” and rates top 16 projects in the country on the basis of concrete deliverables to the citizens.

“*Skoch e-Governance Report Card 2005*” was researched over eight months of Skoch field visits to various e-governance sites spread across the country, interfacing with citizens and collecting first hand feedback. All the 16 projects were carefully pre-qualified by a panel of experts. Each project has been rated on 14 parameters - from reduction in corruption to ease of use.

The report notes that some of the pilot projects are being replicated enthusiastically and the citizen approval is similar to the benefits reported from the original projects. “Examples would be an approval rating of 7.6 to Land Records in Hooghly in West Bengal this year compared to a rating of 7.2 for a similar project in Uttaranchal last year. Property Registration project ‘Sarita’ in Maharashtra got a rating of 8.3 last year compared to a rating of 8.2 for a similar project in rural Shimla this year,” said, Mr. Kochhar. Some of these initiatives are now covered under the Department of Information Technology Replication Projects that extend to over 35 districts/projects.

The Skoch survey defines e-governance as electronic delivery of government services to citizens and business in a reliable, timely and transparent manner; not just computerization of a government department.

The survey notes that the projects covering village India are also getting significantly high citizen approval. Suwidha project in Punjab and Rural e-Seva in Andhra Pradesh are two such projects rated at 8.9 – the highest rating nationally.

This year 16 projects get an overall citizen approval score of 8.3 out of 10, which is substantially higher than last time, when 21 projects got 7.6.

The report says this year the decline in corruption scores 8.6 (on a scale of 1-10) compared to 8.1 last year. Alignment with user expectation is up from 7.5 last year to 9.0 this year. Some people said that the fee charged in the land record projects to be on the higher side.

### **Sneak peek at some of the projects**

The Skoch report mentions that **Suwidha** centers in **rural Punjab** are providing a single window for 24 services. These include issuing licenses, certificates, passports and handling approvals, pension cases and ration cards. Presently there are 18 Suwidha centers – one each for every district in Punjab. These are now planned to be rolled out to 72 sub-divisions by the end of this year.

In the case of rural **e-Seva** project in the **West Godavari** district in Andhra Pradesh, the original project started just as a facilitation centre, to allow citizens to get their income and other certificates from one place. Now, it is used for paying bills and offering children computer aided education. People are even selling handicrafts through the system. There are nearly 200 e-Seva centers already operational there and will be replicated all over the state within a year.

The **Delhi Transportation project** is the turnaround story of the year. Rated at only 6.2 last year the citizen approval has gone up to 8.1 this year.

The report observes that a **Citizen Information Centre** in Temi village of South **Sikkim**, housed in a Panchayat Ghar, is the citizens' window to the outside world. From examination results to downloading government forms (31 in all) to looking for jobs, commodity prices and doing banking on the net, people from 6 to 60 are finding it of great value. There are 40 such centers across the state.

**The Rajiv Gandhi Computer Literacy Programme (RGCLP)** in **Assam** is implemented in 400 schools covering 150,000 students across the state and even in remote places like Majuli island in the midst of Brahmaputra river. Students are taught physics, chemistry, maths and English using computers. Facilities in Majuli were found to be as good as those in Guwahati.

“A nationally significant project that has done very well is related to computerization of Judiciary particularly the work done in Supreme Court,” said Mr. Kochhar. The back log of cases has reduced dramatically from lakhs to a few thousand.

While the findings were very encouraging, the report cautions that ambitious projects like rural Employment Guarantee Plan and even the new Right to Information Act will not give the desired outcome unless IT is made an integral part of implementation.

To sustain the growth in e-governance the government should ensure that these projects are replicated widely and quickly.



**About Skoch:**

Skoch, the strategy and management-consulting boutique in the ICT market, has a footprint in 11 major countries globally. Transnational corporations engage with Skoch for gaining a competitive edge in the world markets.

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