

## **DEF News**

### **April Newsletter**

#### **Shri Kapil Sibal Launches 'Open Government Platform' Developed by India and US**

The Minister of Communications and Information Technology Shri Kapil Sibal launched India's Open Government Platform (OGPL) here today. Jointly developed by India and the US, OGPL is a software platform which aims to provide enhanced public access to government data and documents, and spur citizen engagement and interface with the Government. The OGPL combines and expands the best features of the India's "India.gov.in" and the U.S. "Data.gov" sites.

While launching OGPL, Shri Sibal said it is the first step towards future, as information is power and this platform will transfer power to the citizen providing seamless data sharing. The Minister said such a platform would have a significant impact on improving governance, enhancing accountability and generating greater collaborations between India and the US. He said this effort is a result of leveraging the collective strengths of the two sides and a great example of collaborative working. Shri Sam Pitroda, Adviser to Prime Minister on Public Information Infrastructure and Innovations spoke about the need for democratizing information and improving governance by creating new tools and platforms such as the OGPL.

National Informatics Center Director General Dr. B. K. Gairola, spoke about the role of NIC as the technical partner on this project. He also highlighted the Platform's capabilities and gave an overview of its technical aspects.

The U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Peter Burleigh said the Open Government Platform represents a new kind of diplomatic collaboration that benefits the global community. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake also addressed the press about this U.S.-India collaboration. On the US side, Project Head Mr. Steve VanRoekel, Chief Information Officer and Mr. Chris Vein, Deputy Chief Technology Officer, joining via video from the White House, also shared how the teams from India and the US (India's National Informatics Center (NIC) and the U.S. General Services Administration) have worked together using open source technologies and project management tools to develop this product.

The Open Government Platform, a collaborative endeavour, was started as part of a series of initiatives announced by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and US President Barack Obama in November 2010 in Delhi. This initiative has been chaired on the Indian side by Mr Sam Pitroda, Adviser to Prime Minister on Public Information Infrastructure and Innovations and on the US side by Mr Aneesh Chopra, former Chief Technology Officer to President Obama.

The purpose of the platform is to enhance access and use of government data to foster innovation; improve delivery of government services for interested countries and cities around the world; and promote government transparency, accountability, and public participation.

The India-US OGPL technical team further demonstrated the key features of the OGPL which include:

- The ability to publish government data, documents, and processes from multiple departments within a government
- An internal workflow process for approvals and management of datasets
- The ability to create data-rich community spaces around topics of national priorities
- Cloud/ Host-based operation at multiple levels of government, with the ability link data from federal, central, state, district, municipal, and local levels
- Open source architecture to allow software developers to develop applications and new features to view, compare and use Government data

With this launch, the two sides will now work on enhancing the scope and increased use of OGPL as the project moves forward, including offering it to interested countries.

Source: PIB <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=82025>