# E-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF)

## Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

DRAFT VERSION

# e-GIF Implementation, Management and Compliance

by

**Ravi Raina**

**E-Government Consultant, MCIT,**
**Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**October 2008**

# List of Contents

The e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) comprising the policies, technical standards, guidelines and practices necessary for achievement of interoperability between the ICT systems in the various agencies, departments and institutions of the government is by its very nature complex and dynamic. Its systematic management and perpetual revision is therefore essential. As new technologies are developed and adopted to replace the existing ones new standards would need to be followed and many existing ones would need revision. Similarly, as the government of Afghanistan expands its range of e-services new technical standards and practices may need to be followed necessitating upgrading the e-GIF. The management of e-GIF on a perpetual basis is therefore necessary to ensure that the e-GIF standards and practices remain up to date at all times in line with the international best practices and the government's needs.
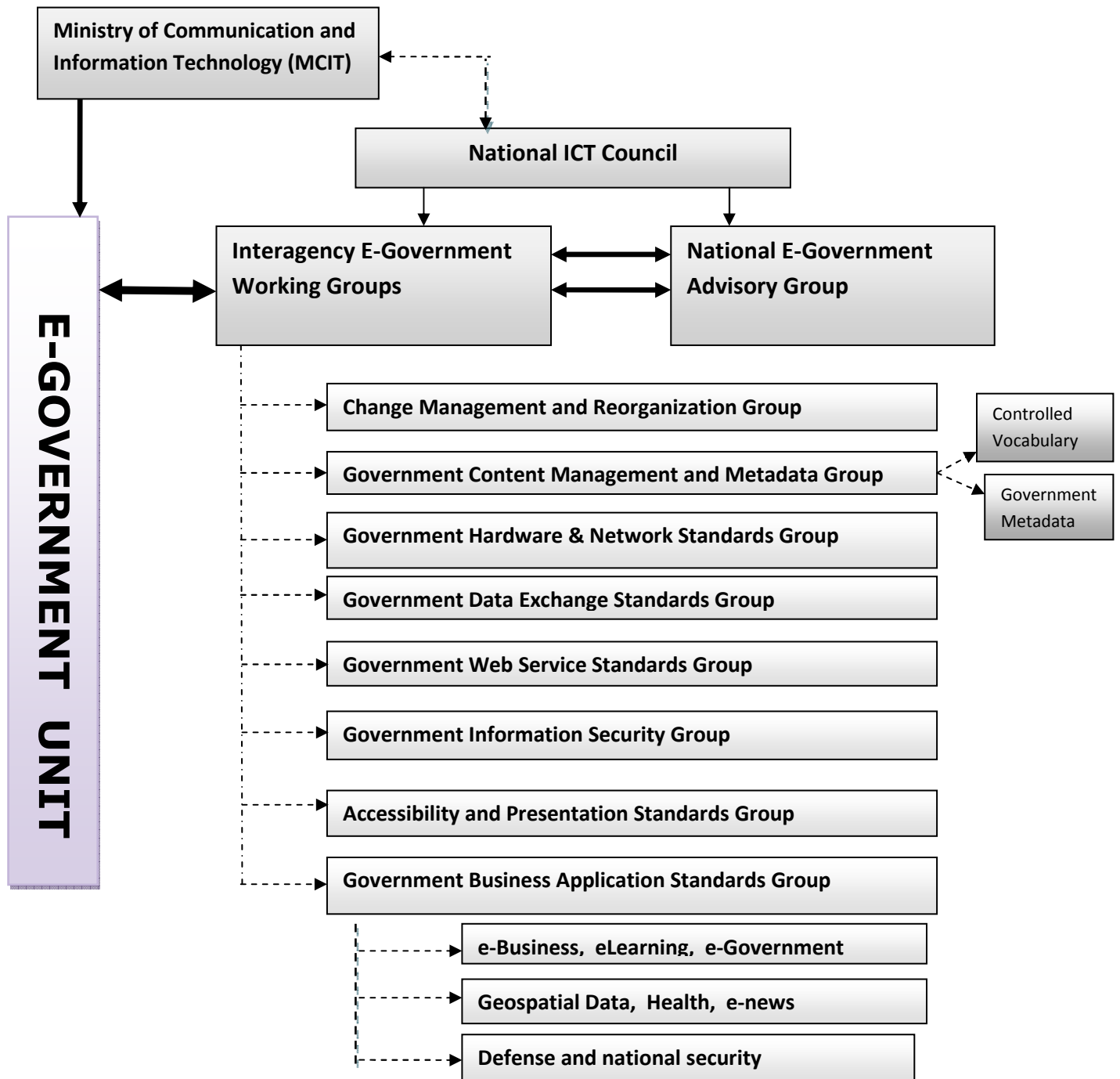
## 1.0    Organization for e-GIF Implementation:

The E-Government unit (EGU) within the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology has been mandated by the government to manage the e-GIF, initiate and manage all projects and activities aimed at the evaluation of the technology policies, practices and standards in all agencies, departments and organs of the government. The EGU is further mandated to develop interoperability policies, guidelines and standards and ensure that these are updated and kept current at all times in line with the needs of the government; keeping abreast of the international developments in ICT application for governance.

The EGU will initiate and coordinate the establishment of the national ICT advisory group and various interagency ICT working groups and committees. It will also act as the secretariat of these interagency working groups: organizing and facilitating the meetings of the working groups and carrying out and implementing the resolutions of these national level advisory and working groups. The high level organizational structure for e-GIF within the EGU is given here under:

# ORGANIZATION FOR E-GIF IMPLEMENTATION

**Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT)**

**National ICT Council**

**E-GOVERNMENT UNIT**

**Interagency E-Government Working Groups**

**National E-Government Advisory Group**

**Change Management and Reorganization Group**

**Government Content Management and Metadata Group**

Controlled Vocabulary

Government Metadata

**Government Hardware & Network Standards Group**

**Government Data Exchange Standards Group**

**Government Web Service Standards Group**

**Government Information Security Group**

**Accessibility and Presentation Standards Group**

**Government Business Application Standards Group**

**e-Business,  eLearning,  e-Government**

**Geospatial Data,  Health,  e-news**

**Defense and national security**

**National   ICT Council**

The already formed National ICT Council (NIC) with senior level representation from all the Ministries of the government will be the apex body to give strategic directions and provide oversight in the implementation and management of e-GIF. In this regard the responsibilities of NIC would be as follows:

- All matters that need government wide implementation as a mandatory requirement would need to be deliberated upon and approved in the NIC before the EGU can take steps towards their formal implementation.

- Draft e-GIF and all its subsequent revisions will need approval of the NIC before implementation.

- All technical standards and policies that are to be adopted as a part of the e-GIF will be submitted to NIC for consideration and approval before implementation.

- NIC may seek the advice of the National Advisory Group or any other competent national or international entity on matters submitted to it for consideration and approval.

- NIC may either grant approval or reject a submission or may advice changes and modification and seek re-submission after the changes have been made.

**Interagency E-Government Working Group ( IAEGWG)**

It is recommended that an interagency working group be formed that has representation from all the ministries and agencies of the government. This will be a strategic technical group comprising of senior technical and policy level officers of the various agencies of the government. The Chief Information Officers, expected to be appointed in the various agencies may be the fit candidates to represent their respective agencies in this working group.

The major responsibilities of IAEGWG  with respect to e-GIF implementation and management would be as follows:

- Formulate various Technical Committees for specific specialized ICT and E-Government areas.

- Formulate the terms of reference for the technical committees that it forms.

- Supervise the work of the technical committees and provide guidance and directions to them.

- Consider and deliberate on the Draft e-GIF and all its subsequent revisions and recommend modifications and changes as it may deem fit before recommending its adoption to the NIC.

- Consider and deliberate on all Draft e-GIF Technical Policies, Standards and Guidelines submitted to it for consideration by the EGU. Recommend its adoption or rejection or recommend changes as it may deem fit.

- Grant approval to documents sent to it for consideration for seeking Request for Comments (RFC).

**Technical Committees**

To carry out the work of evaluation of technical standards or formulation of new standards or other technical issues related to e-GIF or e-Government technical committees will be formed by the E-Government Working Group in consultation with the EGU.  Each technical committee would focus on one or more specialized e-GIF/ICT/E-government subject. Membership to each technical committee would be by invitation of the EGU on the recommendation of the e-GIF/e-Gov. working group. In the first instance the following committees and sub committees are expected to be formed:

- Change Management and Reorganization Committee

- Government Content Management and Metadata Committee

- Government Hardware & Network Standards Committee

- Government Data Exchange Standards Committee/Group

- Government Web Service Standards Committee

- Government Information Security Group

- Accessibility and Presentation Standards Committee

- Government Business Application Standards Committee

Each of the committees may decide to form one or more subcommittees that would focus on highly specialized technical work. For instance the Committee on Meta data and Content Management may decide to have separate committees on say Controlled Vocabulary and Meta Data Development. Similarly the Committee on Business Applications may have sub committees one for each application area e.g. e-learning, e-health and other application areas.

**Production of XML Schemas:**

One of the major jobs of the e-GIF working group would be the production of XML Schemas for the government that would encourage and facilitate data exchange and data interoperability. A repository of XML Schemas would be maintained by the EGU and published on the e-government web site. Data Integration /XML Schema Technical Committees will lay down the design rules for the production of XML Schemas, which would be published on the e-GIF/ e-Gov web site and would be followed by the XML schema developers.
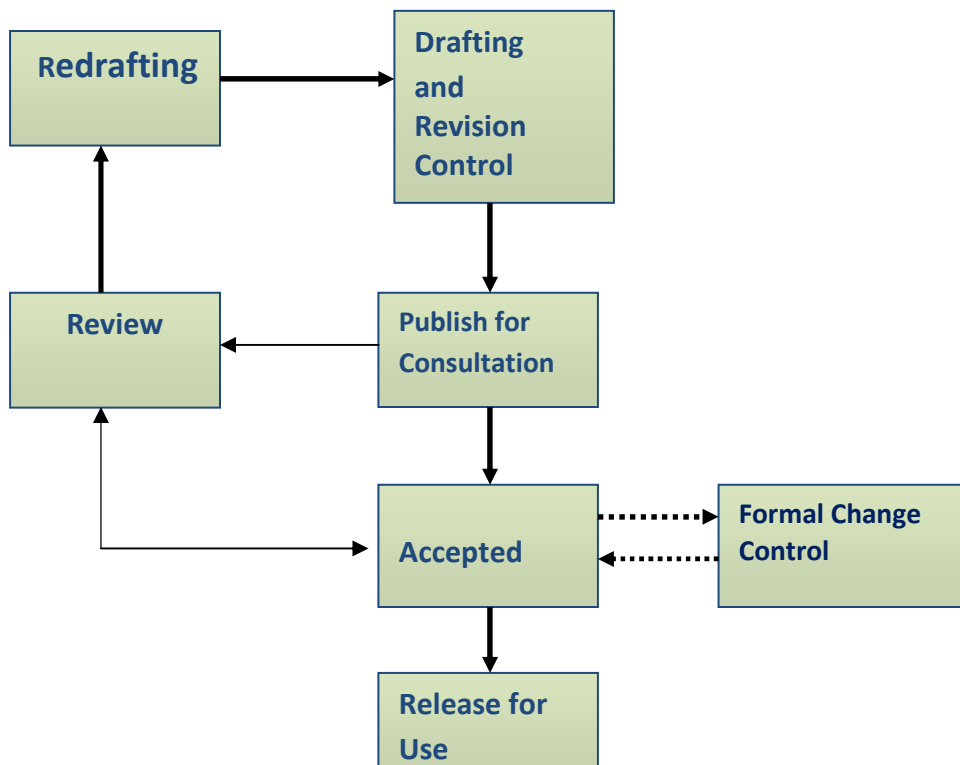
**Membership of Working Group and Committees:**

EGU may invite private sector organizations or government department with specialized expertise and knowhow for working on Afghanistan Government interoperability projects to become full members of the working group and committees mentioned above. They can attend meetings and take part in decision-making and direction-setting for the groups and technical committees. The list of full members will change over time as new interoperability projects are started and existing ones are completed. The past and current membership of the various committees, the working group and advisory group would be published on the e-government web site: http://www.egov.gov.af

## 2.0   e-GIF High Level Management Process:

The management of e-GIF must cover the entire life cycle of the technical policies, standards and the guidelines and other resources that form the e-GIF.

## Drafting and Revision Control

The drafting of the technical standards, policies and guidelines and other documents as a part of the e-GIF could be undertaken by the technical committees and sub committees as well as by their consultants and advisors. The drafted documents would be subject to a formal review process by the committee members and / or the National E-Government working group before the same could be accepted. The documents could be authorized for publishing on the e-government web site as a Request for Comment (RFC) document. The previous versions of each document would be available on the e-government web site for any user to examine and compare with the revision that may be current at any time.

## Acceptance and Publishing

The procedure and guidelines for acceptance and for final publishing of the document would be laid down by the EGU on the recommendations of the National E-Government working group. The e-government web site would be the primary vehicle for publishing the documents of the e-GIF. The policies and procedure for publishing on the e-government/e-GIF web site would be enunciated, including the privilege of authorizing publishing on the web site would be predefined.

## Wide Consultations and Participation

It will be a policy to seek wide participation of all stake holders in the review of and deliberations on the standards, guidelines and policies of e-GIF. Comments and views of users and experts within and outside the government would be sought and their participation encouraged. This could be achieved through formal reviews and considerations by committees and groups established for this purpose as well as through views expressed on the discussion forum of the e-government website.

**Revision and Updating**

The e-GIF will be managed by EGU on a perpetual basis. However the e-GIF, its policies, standards and guidelines would be reviewed at least once a year and updated as may be necessary. Each version of the e-GIF would carry a number starting with e-GIF Version 0.1.

## 3.0 Compliance:

The e-GIF guidelines, policies and technical standards once adopted and released for use are mandated to be followed by all the departments and agencies of the government. One of the important tasks of the EGU is to ensure compliance of the agencies to the agreed policies, guidelines and standards included in the e-GIF. Compliance can be achieved by adoption of the e-GIF through an executive presidential order or through appropriate legislation.

**Test for Compliance**

A system in an agency can be said to be complaint to the e-GIF if the standards, guidelines and policies in the e-GIF have been followed. The main test of compliance would be to ensure that there is no contravention to the policies and standards of the e-GIF.  In the least a system would be subjected to test on data integration, interconnection, e-services access and content management to determine its interoperability. This would mean that a system would be considered as interoperable if the system can exchange services and information with other systems in the government enterprise.

**Time table for Compliance**

All the new ICT systems in the various agencies and departments of the government would be mandated to comply with the e-GIF standards and policies.  The existing and legacy systems in the various government departments and agencies would be checked

for compliance and such systems identified that may not be compliant. Each agency in consultation with the EGU and National E-Government Working Group will draw a time table to achieve full compliance through development of interfaces and enhancements to their existing systems.