

**Expression of Interest**  
**No. 30-2/2010-USOF/S.I.**  
**Department of Telecom**  
**Office of the Administrator, USO Fund**  
**Dated 16.1.2012**

**Subsidy Support from USO Fund to set up Pilot Project on Access to ICTs and ICT**  
**Enabled Services for**  
**Persons with Disabilities in Rural India**

**1. Background**

1.1 India is home to one of the largest disabled population in the world. As per census 2001, 21.9 million Indians suffer from some form of disability. Seventy five per cent of persons with disabilities live in rural areas. A good percentage of these would either be unemployed and/or illiterate. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can play an important role in facilitating the socio-economic and political inclusion and mainstreaming of Persons with Disabilities (“PwDs”) as ICTs can enable them to access various services (health, education, government services etc.), information, employment opportunities etc. and most importantly, to communicate effectively in spite of their particular disability. In recognition of the significance of ICTs in improving the daily lives of PwDs, enhancing their well-being and productivity and enabling their active participation in society, a scheme of Pilot Projects for access to ICT facilities combined with ATs for PwDs in rural India is being launched.

1.2 The Universal Service Obligation Fund of India (USOF) came into being with effect from 1.4.02 with the passing of the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act 2003 in December 2003. The Fund which is headed by the USOF Administrator has a mandate of providing access to telegraph (Telecommunications) services to people in rural and remote areas at reasonable and affordable prices. The Fund has initiated a large number of schemes aimed at promoting public and individual access to telephony and broadband services in rural India.

1.3 Ensuring that PwDs in rural India are able to effectively access telecommunications services is an important facet of bridging the digital divide. Given its mandate, USOF appreciates that special initiatives and schemes are required to this end. In fact USOF is aware that addressing the need of individual and public access to telecommunications services by PwDs in rural India will also benefit the significant proportion of rural Indians who are aged or illiterate and need assistive technologies (ATs) to enable meaningful ICT access.

1.4 Accordingly, in October 2010, USOF circulated a concept paper on ‘Connecting Persons with Disabilities through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Mobile Phones in Rural India’ prepared on its behalf by the Centre for Internet and Society. This concept paper and feedback/proposals received from stakeholders were placed on the USOF website. Subsequently, a concept paper on the pilot project scheme was prepared and circulated to various stakeholders and also placed on the USOF website. A stakeholders’ conference was held by USOF on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to elicit feedback, comments and suggestions of stakeholders on the proposed scheme and based upon the feedback thus obtained, the scheme has now been finalized. All details of the scheme including proceedings of the stakeholder conference and subsequent inputs from stakeholders are placed at <http://usof.gov.in/usof-cms/disabled.htm>

## **2. Objectives of the Scheme**

2.1 Primary objective of the scheme is to provide PwDs in rural India with meaningful access to telecommunications facilities and through telecommunications facilities enable them to access public services, information, educational and employment opportunities thereby helping them to achieve self-reliance and facilitate their inclusion in mainstream society.

2.2 The scheme, via pilot projects, seeks to effectively demonstrate and highlight the utility and benefits of AT enabled ICTs to PwDs and their families in rural India and to institutions/organizations dealing with PwDs and to service providers, equipment manufacturers and content providers etc. The scheme seeks to encourage service providers and other stakeholders to take up such initiatives on a larger scale in order to address the needs of PwDs

2.3 Pilot Projects accepted under the scheme will facilitate access to ICTs for PwDs. The scheme will take the form of facilitation with regard to provision of appropriate ATs by way of

**telecommunications infrastructure** (mobile phones and computers/servers), **assistive software and content** (including real time information and data bank of books and other printed matters relevant to PwDs in regional languages). Projects would also cover the aspect of training of both facilitators and PwDs in the use of ATs.

### **3. Scope of Work**

3.1 Service Provider shall coordinate with proposed partners to lead the implementation of the project. Roles and responsibility envisaged for different stakeholders as and where applicable are as follows:

- **Service Provider:** To coordinate with content providers, equipment manufacturers and NGOs/organizations working for PwDs to formulate project proposals and lead the implementation of projects under the scheme. Also to provide special tariff plans keeping in mind specific needs of PwDs (if applicable)
- **Educational/Vocational/Rehabilitation Institutions (for PwDs):** To communicate the needs of PwDs and make necessary arrangements for incorporating use of ATs to make ICTs accessible. To undertake training of trainers/facilitators and PwDs regarding use of ATs and also facilitate in the development of a data bank of training material, books, reports, journals etc. in accessible formats
- **Equipment Manufacturers:** To offer discounts on equipment, such as mobile handsets/telephones/computers etc. equipped with necessary ATs
- **Application and Content Developers:** To identify demand of different kinds of content for PwDs in coordination with concerned NGOs and institutions and deliver the content in easily accessible formats
- **Non-Governmental Organizations:** To identify and convey the requirements of PwDs, facilitate scheme implementation including training of trainers/facilitators, PwDs, operators of public access points/ICT centres and help by way of handholding throughout the project duration

- **Concerned Ministries and Departments of Government of India:** To offer necessary assistance and support to USOF and other project participants to ensure realization of objectives of this scheme
- **USOF:** To undertake the responsibility to evaluate and approve project proposals from interested participants, provide subsidy for projects launched under the scheme, evaluate, compile and disseminate scheme results for further scaling up of such initiatives

3.2 Upper ceiling limit for subsidy support shall be Rs.50 lakhs per Pilot Project.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the Service Provider**

4.1 It shall be the overall responsibility of the Service Provider to execute the Pilot Project in association with the identified NGOs/organizations working for PwDs.

4.2 Service Provider may also partner with appropriate Equipment Manufacturers, Assistive Technology (AT) Provider and Content Provider as deemed necessary. However, NGO/ Organizations working for PwDs are compulsory partners.

4.3 Service Provider will be responsible for maintaining technical and financial data on the execution of the Project.

4.4 Service Provider will be required to provide the AT enabled ICT services to PwDs for a period of at least 12 months from the date of signing of the agreement.

4.5 The Service Provider shall specify the intellectual property rights (IPR) liabilities, if any, associated with the Pilot Project at the outset so that this aspect shall not create a hindrance at a subsequent stage. Financial repercussions, if any, of the IPR aspect shall also be clearly specified by the Service Provider.

## **5. Eligibility Condition**

5.1 As per USOF rules, following categories of service providers are eligible to apply for the scheme:

- Cellular Mobile Service Providers,
- Unified Access Service Licensee,
- Internet Service Providers,
- Basic Service Operators, and
- Infrastructure Providers

## **6. Type of Projects to be funded**

6.2 The type of pilot projects which could be undertaken include:

- Setting up of ICT centres equipped with appropriate ATs for PwDs in educational/rehabilitation/vocational training institutions in rural areas
- Provision of special handsets with/without access to bundled content for PwDs in rural areas
- Public access to ICT facilities with ATs in villages or in/near rural institutions dealing with PwDs

## **7. Processing of the applications**

7.1 The selection of the Service Provider will be made by a fully transparent process.

7.2 The project proposals will be shortlisted for eligibility in a time bound manner by scrutinizing all the applications.

7.3 Presentation shall be made by eligible applicants to the Members of the Evaluation Committee on the Pilot Projects giving details of the proposed Assistive Technology, subsidy requirement, proposed partners, project timelines, etc.

7.4 Based on presentations made by shortlisted parties, the Evaluation Committee shall give the recommendations for the Pilot projects to be supported.

7.5 The quantum of subsidy within the prescribed limit, and its phasing shall be decided by the Evaluation Committee.

7.6 The number of such pilot projects shall be limited to 10.

## **8 Evaluation criteria**

8.1 Applications will be evaluated for their technical and financial merits. The evaluation criteria would include:

- Experience/Credentials of the Service Provider and the proposed partners in carrying out similar projects;
- Compatibility of the proposed costs of Pilot Project with proposal scope and effort;
- Conformity of stated Objectives with the specific needs of the target PwDs;
- Clarity of proposed approach, scope and limitations of the project
- Potential for sustainability and scalability of the Pilot Projects after the subsidy period;
- Potential of the proposed Assistive Technology (AT) to provide sustained wide-spread benefit;
- Willingness of the service provider to contribute to the overall cost of the project

## **9 Agreement**

9.1 A bilateral agreement shall be signed between the Service Provider and the USOF Administration.

9.2 The clauses in the Agreement may cover, inter alia, monitoring the project, inspection, examination of records, time frame, payment schedules, termination, resolution of disputes, etc.

9.3 Liability of each of the parties shall be spelt out clearly in the Agreement.

9.4 A specific payment schedule will be incorporated in the agreement. The payment will be made periodically based on satisfactory provision of AT enabled ICT services to the targeted PwDs. To facilitate monitoring of the project and project evaluation, the Service Provider is required to submit the returns in the prescribed formats.

9.5 The bilateral Agreement signed shall not be treated as grant of fresh license under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 (13 of 1885).

## **10 Support from the USO Fund is not available for:**

- Basic research
- Travel, conferences, workshops, etc.

## **11 Submission of applications**

11.1 Applicants are encouraged to study the concept notes, stakeholders' feedback and problem statements etc as available at <http://www.usof.gov.in/usof-cms/disabled.htm> while formulating project proposals.

11.2 The USO Fund shall receive the application in format as per Annexure I to this EoI for subsidy support for Pilot projects till **1600 Hrs. of 31.3.2012**

11.3 The applicant is requested to carefully study the instructions before filling in the application form. The application with supporting documents may be sent, in six copies along with the soft copy to:

*Shri Vijay Kumar*  
*Dy. Administrator (F),*  
**Universal Service Obligation Fund,**  
**Room No. 1118, Sanchar Bhavan,**  
**20 Ashoka Road, New Delhi 110001**

Email: [dafusf@gmail.com](mailto:dafusf@gmail.com)

11.4 USO Fund reserves the right to amend these Pilot Project Funding Guidelines, without notice.

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Department of Telecom  
Office of the Administrator, USO Fund**

**USOF Pilot Project Scheme  
Access to ICTs and ICT Enabled Services  
for  
Persons with Disabilities in Rural India**

**PROJECT APPLICATION FORM**

**(Total Pages: 6)**

**USOF EoI No: 30-2/2010-USOF/S.I. dated 16.1.2012**

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# 1 Project Details

## 1.1 Project Name

## 1.2 Project Category (Please tick)

- i. Setting up of ICT centres equipped with appropriate ATs for PwDs in educational/rehabilitation/vocational training institutions in rural areas.
- ii. Provision of special handsets with/without access to bundled content for PwDs in rural areas.
- iii. Public access to ICT facilities with ATs in villages/in rural institutions dealing with PwDs
- iv. Other-Please specify

## 1.3 Area of Operation

<State, District, Block, Village, Rural Institution Name & Address>

## 1.4 Details of Lead Agency & Partners

### 1.4.1 Service Provider

<Name, Contact Information, Signature>previous experience in the field of ICTs for PwDs.  
Enclose copy of DoT license/registration

### 1.4.2 Equipment Manufacturer

<Name, Contact Information, Signature>previous experience in provision of ICTs/ATs for PwDs

### 1.4.3 NGO

<Name, Contact Information, Signature>previous experience in working with PwDs> Area of work> other aspects to establish credentials

### 1.4.4 Educational/Vocational/Rehabilitation Institution for PwDs

Name, Contact Information, Signature> previous experience in working with PwDs> Area of Work>other aspects to establish credentials

### 1.4.5 AT Provider

<Name, Contact Information, Signature> previous experience in provision of ATs for PwDs>

### 1.4.6 Content Provider

<Name, Contact Information, Signature> previous experience in provision of content for PwDs>

### 1.4.7 Target Beneficiaries

<State, District, Village, name of Institution, Number of Beneficiaries , Type of disability>

*NOTE: 1.4.3 or 1.4.4 are compulsory partners*

## **2 Objective of the Project**

<Explain objectives and expected outcomes, contribution of project in improving accessibility and empowering Persons with Disability (PWD). Please indicate clearly the specific needs of PwDs that are being addressed and how the project shall meet these needs.>

## **3 Scope of Pilot Project**

< Detail project components, timelines, explicitly mention scope and limitations of pilot project. >

## **4 Credentials**

<Please provide details of any special capabilities and skills as well as relevant credentials (i.e. special achievements, letter of appreciation from clients, etc) with respect to projects etc related to ICTs/ATs for PwDs of each partner

## **5 Pilot Project Approach**

< Detail the approach that would be adopted in the execution of this project, supported by work distribution among different partners and reasons for these decisions. Please indicate clearly proposed Roles and Responsibilities of each partner. Explain how coordination shall be achieved amongst partners and how the project progress shall be monitored. Please explain in detail what new ATs are being used/which existing ATs are being customized and how. Whether the underlying the technology is proprietary or open source. Is there any relationship with an existing project of another Govt. Department/Ministry? How is the project going to be implemented and supported covering all stages from initiation, setting up of necessary infrastructure, service provisioning to maintenance, as applicable. Specifically explain anticipated training requirements of project (PwDs, franchisees, trainers) and how these shall be met. Any special tariff plans proposed keeping in mind specific needs of PwDs>

## **6 Project Deliverables**

<Provide list of expected outcomes/deliverables with qualitative and quantitative details>

## 7 Timelines and Key Milestones

S.No.	Milestone	Target Completion Date	Comments

## 8 Assumptions and Risk Factors

<Provide list of all assumptions related to the project, what are risk factors and how will they be met>

## 9 Financial Analysis

<Provide costing details of various components of Project used in the Financial Analysis of Project. Provide market value/price of each project component/service and if applicable, also provide discounted price if provided as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Costs must be broken up under heads of hardware, software, content, training& facilitation costs and others (please specify), with each category being further detailed>

## 10 Funding Details

<Provide an exhaustive list of planned sources of funding for various project components. Sources could include CSR, USOF, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, etc. List contribution expected from each source>

## 11 Additional Information

<List other aspects that are not covered above but Project Applicant wishes to provide information about>

## 12 Sustainability & Scalability

<Indicate how the project shall be sustained beyond the subsidy period and the potential/plans if any for scaling up of the project, Detail how affordability and availability of AT enabled ICTs to be ensured beyond subsidy period>

## 13 Declaration

Service Provider must furnish a declaration in the enclosed pro-forma

# **DECLARATION**

**(To be signed by the Applicant)**

The particulars given in the Application Form are true and correct. No material has been suppressed or concealed. It is certified that I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of the authorized signatory on behalf of the Service Provider) have read the guidelines, terms and conditions governing the scheme and undertake to abide by them on behalf of my/ our organization/ company. The financial assistance, if provided, shall be put to the declared use.

**APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE**

**(With seal of the company)**

**Date**

**Place**

**(Strike out whichever is not applicable)**