

National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT)

Open Licensing Policy Guidelines

1. Preamble

The National Knowledge Commission (KNC) in 2007 in its recommendations¹ to the Govt of India recognised the role of Open Educational Resources (OER) in the knowledge economy and to up-grade the quality of education. At that time India was the first country in the world to have recognised the potential of OER and Open Access. NKC recommended creation of a National Educational Foundation to develop a web-based repository of high quality educational resources as OER through a collaborative process. It said, “an enabling legal framework that would allow unrestricted access without compromising intellectual authorship must be devised for this purpose”. It further recommended strengthening faculty development and teacher training in the area of OER to improve quality. Since the recommendations of NKC, several projects to create learning resources have been initiated with the support of the Govt of India. The National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) has emerged as a flagship initiative for Engineering and basic Science courses. In September 2012, the NPTEL released its materials in CC-BY-NC-SA license². The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)³ has also started an OER project and released its materials under CC-BY-NC-SA. However, the National Repository of Open Educational Resources⁴ (NROER) at National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has adopted a CC-BY-SA license.

Intergovernmental agencies like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO⁵) and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL⁶) have adopted open licensing policy for their materials, and have been advocating the use of open license for public funded resources, while respecting the intellectual property rights. In fact, the World OER Congress in 2012 organised by UNESCO and COL released the OER Paris Declaration⁷ 2012 that urges Governments, educational institutions and teachers to release educational materials as OER.

Release of learning resources, software and technology in an appropriate open license regime would foster an environment of openness, collaboration, and a culture of sharing, reuse and adaptation amongst institutions and teachers to enhance the quality of education in the country. Learners will have easy access to digital and non-digital resources available either freely or at a low cost. Teachers in remote areas will have access to quality resources and can contextualise the materials without worrying about prior permissions and copyright issues, if materials

¹ <http://knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/report2009/eng/report09.pdf>

² <http://nptel.iitm.ac.in/>

³ http://oer.nios.ac.in/wiki/index.php/NIOS_Copyright_Policy

⁴ <http://nroer.gov.in/home/>

⁵ http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ERI/pdf/oa_policy_rev2.pdf

⁶ <http://www.col.org/progServ/policy/Pages/oer.aspx>

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http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/Paris%20OER%20Declaration_01.pdf

developed under NMEICT are available in an openly licensed manner. Open licensing will also foster innovations in software development and create an ecosystem for the products delivered through the Mission funding. As the Govt of India has been providing financial support to develop learning content, software and technology, release of these in open license would enhance their utility, relevance and further development. For the e-Governance, it may be noted that Govt of India has already notified⁸ an open standard policy⁹.

2. Principles of Openness

The following shall be the basic principles of openness adopted in all the projects funded by NMEICT:

- (a) All information products (content, software and technology) shall be treated as national resource. Unless specifically declared, all such information shall be freely accessible the general public through the Web.
- (b) Community engagement shall be a part of all activities, and use read-write tools available on the web shall be encouraged.
- (c) Information and knowledge resources generated shall be made available in a persistent permanent basis freely to all through the Web.
- (d) Information creation/authoring and dissemination shall be done using commonly accepted standards in such a way so as to encourage discoverability, and capture relevant metadata to promote sharing.
- (e) While the moral rights of the creator will remain with the original contributor, all intellectual property rights (IPR) shall be transferred to the Govt of India to enable it to be released in an appropriate open license.
- (f) All information and knowledge resources shall be released in a suitable open license to optimise social and economic value of the investment.

Overall the principle of free, online, persistence and permanence, and open shall govern all the activities under the NMEICT projects.

3. Guidelines

- (a) These guidelines shall be applicable to all the knowledge resources developed with the support of NMEICT.
- (b) There shall be a single portal/gateway for all the knowledge resources developed under the NMEICT. Sakshat can be the common gateway for this purpose.
- (c) Regardless of whether these resources may remain in distributed platforms or on a NMEICT Cloud, the Portal/Gateway will provide links, and also ensure permanent access to them.
- (d) All educational materials shall be released under an appropriate open licensing regime, current preference being CC-BY-SA¹⁰. This license will permit users to share (copy and redistribute) the material in any medium or format; and adapt (remix, transform, and build

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<https://www.egovstandards.gov.in/sites/default/files/Notifications/Notifications%20of%20Standards/Notification%20for%20Policy%20on%20Open%20Standards.pdf>

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https://www.egovstandards.gov.in/sites/default/files/Policy/Policy%20on%20Open%20Standards/Policy_on_Open_Standards_for_e-Governance.pdf

¹⁰ <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

upon) the material for any purpose, even commercially. The user shall provide attribution to the original creator, and also, mandatorily, distribute any adaptation and/or enhancements under the same license.

- (e) When the grantee/creator use other open license materials in his/her works, the license shall adhere to their specific licensing conditions, and intimate NMEICT about the same.
- (f) All software delivered under the project, these shall be released in open source using an appropriate license and the source code shall be made available online on a permanent basis using an acceptable depository.
- (g) The agency or institution that has developed the software shall create a community of developers to ensure long-term sustainability of the project.
- (h) All content developed under the Mission shall use open formats for delivery of the outputs. Use of proprietary software will be strongly discourages. However, if proprietary software is used for any development work, the source file in its final version along with the relevant APIs should also be made available online to enable others to re-use the same.

4. Implementation

- (a) Implementation of the open license policy guidelines shall be the responsibility of the central project Unit (Mission).
- (b) The status of the adherence to this policy shall be reported every three months to the Project Approval Board (PAB).
- (c) Non-compliance to the policy shall result in stopping of further grants and/or recovery of the funds.
- (d) Advice on licensing shall be provided upon request to specific projects by the central project unit.
- (e) Workshop on the open license schema adopted by the Mission shall be organised from time to time for the project grantee to adhere to the guidelines.