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Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Manpower

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Introduction

As a responsible Governmental entity, Ministry of Manpower recognises the importance of consulting with our key stakeholders: staff, jobseekers, labour force in the country, sponsors and other governmental and private agencies in the country. Our success as an organisation depends on our commitment to professional, timely and structured consultations.

This guide has been developed to make sure that Ministry of Manpower has a framework in place. It has been developed in consultation with all directorates to ensure consistency of approach.

In addition we have developed a set of principles for communication, which should be applied when planning consultations.

After going through the document, if you need further assistance regarding eConsultation, you are welcome to contact the Ministry of Manpower at the following:

- **Contact Toll free no:** 800 77 000 Saturday to Wednesday from 7.30 am to 2.30 pm
- **Contact email:** suggestion@manpower.gov.om
- **Online:** Contact us form available on the Ministry of Manpower Portal.

What is eConsultation?

Consultation is a 2-way dialogue that allows the public, private, voluntary and community sectors a realistic and timely opportunity to influence decisions being taken by Ministry of Manpower.

Consultation will take place where stakeholders:

- have a legal entitlement to be consulted
- can reasonably expect to be consulted because proposals and policies under consideration by Ministry of Manpower would have significant impact on them
- will be expected to implement or contribute to proposals and policies

As a result, policies will be developed which will make a significant impact on the Labour Sector as well as the Vocational Training Sector in the Country.

eConsultation is the process of using electronic media like internet, mobile, kiosks and conferencing facilities for interactive consultation between the Ministry and the stakeholders. The chosen media allows on-line interaction to debate, discuss, share and provide opinion about the government policies, new initiatives etc.

Why eConsultation?

Consultation and public involvement are at the heart of good decision-making and strengthens the relationship between the Ministry and our stakeholders. Ministry of Manpower is committed to improving consultation with its stakeholders as part of its transparent and open way of working.

Ministry of Manpower values the multinational diverse nature of the community and will use a range of consultation methods, to ensure that we meet the needs and aspirations of the local community, by giving them an opportunity to inform and be informed about the services that the Ministry delivers.

By implementing eConsultation, the advantages of using technology are better utilized. Some of the advantages of using eChannels for consultation are:

- **Increased participation:** The target audience can easily participate in the process of consultation.
- **Reach:** Easy to penetrate to target audience that are aligned to the chosen media (like internet, local presses, Radio, hotlines etc)
- **Quick response:** eConsultation provides instant response.
- **Transparency:** The media ensures that the whole process is done transparently and in a manner that everyone can have end to end visibility
- **Ease of analysis:** Data captured (like surveys, opinion polls etc.) can be easily analyzed using analytical processing tools.
- **Environment Friendly:** No paper is used for eConsultations.
- **Easy to store and backup:** Easy to store and back up the data as the medium of communication is electronic channels.

Scope & types of consultation

We will seek advises and opinion time to time from the concerned stakeholders on topics / subject matter concerned with the ministry functioning, policies and procedures. The scope of these consultations would involve such topics where we need improvement / suggestions / opinions / new ideas etc. The topics will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of the topics to the areas of function of the ministry as well as stakeholders
- Type of stakeholders like G2C, G2G
- Impact to the target stakeholders
- Objective / outcome required on the subject

All topics for eConsultation would be open for public view unless it is specifically targeted for a specific group. In such cases, ministry might use appropriate electronic tools to address the specific target groups to get their opinions. The opinions gathered through this process would be appropriately analyzed and utilized for decision making purposes. The ministry is not legally bound to accept any comments through such processes.

Consultation can take a number of forms. It may be a one-off exercise or extend over a period of time. The table below outlines the different types of consultation available:

Type	Explanation
1 - Informing	Used when a decision has been taken and consultation is not required. Informing local communities what Ministry of manpower has implemented.
2 - Researching	When information is needed to help to make a decision, local communities are consulted. Gathering information on opinions, attitudes and priorities to inform decision-making
3 - Consulting	When views are taken into consideration for making a decision. Obtaining views on proposals or initiatives and taking them into account when decisions are made.
4 - Involving	Asking for ideas and encouraging involvement in making a decision. Seeking out new ideas and suggestions and encouraging staff or the community to participate in the decision-making process
5 - Partnership	When we are making a decision along with others. Initiating joint working and decision-making with the local community and other stakeholders

eConsultation Standards

By introducing a standard process for consultation we will:

- Provide a consistent approach and structure to consultation
- Have documents to capture information in a structured way
- Have a process which allows quality control, evaluation and monitoring of our process
- Measure the effectiveness of consultation on our decisions

Have a system which we can adapt/improve based on qualitative and quantitative feedback
Ministry of Manpower is committed to effective communication with our stakeholders. To ensure that all consultation is consistent it is imperative that our communication principles are at the heart of our consultation process.

The principles that guide us are:

- Our communications will be clear, simple and consistent
- Be open, honest and factual
- We will communicate internally before communicating externally
- We will maximise face-to-face communications
- We will manage expectations
- We will use a credible approach
- We will avoid information overload
- We will share good news
- We will encourage bottom-up communications
- We will reinforce messages by using different communication channels
- Our communications will be timely and relevant
- We will listen and act on feedback

eConsultation Process

eConsultation Process Cycle followed by Ministry of Manpower will depend on the need, urgency and the type of the topic being consulted. General form of the eConsultation Process Cycle will be:

Step 1: Publish the document

Ministry will publish the topics for eConsultation in the ministry website and the social networking channels used by the Ministry.

Step 2: Broadcast and create awareness about the topic

Ministry will create awareness among the target audience for participating in the consultation process by broadcasting the topic through various channels like TV, radio, newspapers, journals, conferences, websites, and announcements through blogs.

Step 3: Collect Feedback and responses

Once the topic is open for citizen opinion, the ministry will monitor the responses and feedbacks that are posted on the chosen channels and moderate the use of any inappropriate language. The ministry will consolidate all the responses and provide timely feedback for any queries raised by the participants.

Step 4: Analyze the responses

After the responses are received, the Ministry would analyze the responses/citizen opinions and appropriate suggestions to the ministry for decision making. Once the decisions are taken by the ministry, the ministry would prepare feedback for responses received based on the decision taken.

Step 5: Communicate and announce the decision

The ministry will communicate and announce the decision through appropriate online methods.

Step 6: Closure and Archive

After successful completion of the eConsultation cycle for every topic, ministry will close the topic of discussion until / unless further consultation is required on the topic in future. The ministry will maintain a record of the full process cycle for each topic that is being consulted by the Ministry. The following will be maintained:

- Initial assessment for the eConsultation;
- Documents/communication that was developed for the specific topic;
- Decisions taken by the Ministry for response received;
- Statistical records of number of participants; number of responses;
- All the issues/problems that came along and how it's being solved;

eConsultation channels

We use multiple channels as a medium to receive the feedbacks from the citizens and residents.

Ministry of Manpower currently provides the following electronic channels for eConsultation:

- Facebook
- Opinion Polls conducted on the Ministry of Manpower Portal
- Frequently conducted surveys on the Ministry of Manpower Portal
- Suggestions page on the Ministry of Manpower Portal
- Complaints page on the Ministry of Manpower Portal

The selection of the media for consultation would be based on :

- Target population of the eConsultation;
- Topic of the eConsultation;
- The overall duration of the eConsultation