

ANNEX D

ENHANCED – E- CONSULTATION

Public consultation is a critical tool that government agencies use for shaping policies and guidelines. It contributes to more holistic policy-making, as it seeks a diversity of views and ideas from various stakeholders, particularly from those who will be directly affected by the policy changes and new initiatives.

The Government has consulted extensively since 1985 with the formation of the Feedback Unit. Today, REACH (or Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry@Home) Unit has taken over this role of gathering feedback. In 2010 alone, there was an average of two to four public consultation exercises launched each month.

Moving forward, the REACH portal will be further enhanced as the official channel for news and updates on all government consultation exercises. New features and channels such as mobile and social apps will be introduced. Citizens can receive mobile alerts and provide their views and suggest improvements via these apps. Guidance to government agencies will also be provided to facilitate the adoption of best practices in e-consultation exercises.

Benefits

For citizens, the portal offers the convenience of having a single-access point to be kept informed of, participate in and be updated on the outcomes of public consultation exercises. Mobile and social media apps will also help in reaching out to more citizens in an accessible and convenient manner. These apps will allow citizens to share their views and suggestions on issues with the Government and their friends via their mobile phones and the social media accounts. Government agencies will also benefit from the resources developed to guide public officers in conducting public consultation exercises more effectively.

NEW E-ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS

The Government will also look at new ways of engaging citizens and tapping on their views and ideas. New platforms for engaging citizens will be explored for inviting ideas and initiatives that will contribute towards a better Singapore.

One possibility being studied is Crowdsourcing. This refers to tasks being outsourced to a large group of persons or a community, through an open call, leveraging on the mass collaboration enabled by Web 2.0 technologies. It typically involves users – also known as the crowd suggesting, discussing and selecting the solutions to the challenges at hand. The winning individuals in the crowd are sometimes rewarded, either monetarily, with prizes, or with recognition.

Possible topics where Crowdsourcing could be used to engage citizens include suggestions to enhance community relations and improve neighbourhood amenities.

REACH is studying how this new mode of engaging citizens could be implemented in Singapore. It will work with government agencies in identifying potential topics that could be included and the mechanics of implementing such a programme, including the setting up of a crowdsourcing platform that could be used by all government agencies.

Benefits

The new e-engagement platforms will allow citizens and the Government to work together, towards solving issues which are close to their hearts. It will also give citizens a greater sense of ownership in the resolution of the issue.

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