E-PARTICIPATION POLICY
FOR THE STATE OF QATAR

Draft

icotQATAR Consultation Document

Ministry of Information & Communications Technology ‘icotQATAR’

Issue Date: July 20, 2014
Deadline for Response: September 15, 2014
Public Consultation

The goal of e-participation initiatives should be to improve the citizen's access to information and public services; and promote participation in public decision-making which impacts the well-being of society, in general, and the individual, in particular.

E-participation is the sum total of both the government programs to encourage participation from the public and the willingness of the public to do so. It is imperative that to successfully embrace e-Participation in the State of Qatar, thereby ensuring social and economic progress of the nation, all government agencies implement the provisions as laid out in the draft policy provisions. However, the full benefits of this policy and the efforts by the Government agencies cannot be reaped if the people of Qatar do not participate in this.

Prior to issuing this policy, Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR) intends to seek feedback and comments on the proposed policy provisions from the government agencies and general public in the State of Qatar. Please see attached draft policy for the details.

Respondents are requested to provide their responses within a period of six weeks from the date of circulation of this paper. A list of questions pertaining to the proposed e-Participation policy is attached herewith.

How to Respond

All views and comments should be submitted in writing and in soft copies, which should be sent to policyfeedback@ict.gov.qa on or before September 15, 2014. Consultation survey may also be filled online at the Hukoomi website.

Respondents are required to include their personal or company particulars and details as indicated in the table attached in their submissions. ictQATAR may make all or parts of any submissions made in response to this consultation paper public and disclose the identity of the source. Any part of the submission which is considered commercially sensitive must be clearly marked and placed as an Annex to the comments raised. ictQATAR will take this into account in its review.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this important initiative. All comments, views and opinions provided to this Consultation shall be taken into account by ictQATAR in finalizing this policy.
# Consultation Questions

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## Questions

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<td>2. Do you think the proposed provisions identified in the e-Participation Policy are sufficient to guide government agencies to engaging the public? If no, are there any measures or provisions that may be missing?</td>
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<td>Do you agree that the policy targets set for the Government Agencies are reasonable and achievable within the timeframe outlined?</td>
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<td>In your opinion, what other roles can the government play to encourage greater public participation and feedback through the use of ICT and social media?</td>
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Definitions and Acronyms

“Agency” means Government Agency unless otherwise specified.

“Government Agency” refers to all ministries and public institutions directly reporting to ministries or Council of Ministers in the State of Qatar.

“ictQATAR” refers to Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of the State of Qatar, previously known as The Supreme Council of Information & Communication Technology.

“Social media” includes web-based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. It may be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

“Web 2.0” is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community.
1 Legal Mandate

Article 14 of Decree Law No. 16 of 2014 setting the mandate of Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (hereinafter referred to as “ictQATAR”) provides that ictQATAR has the authority to supervise, regulate and develop the sectors of Information and Communications Technology (hereinafter “ICT”) in the State of Qatar in a manner consistent with the requirements of national development goals, with the objectives to create an environment suitable for fair competition, support the development and stimulate investment in these sectors; to secure and raise efficiency of information and technological infrastructure; to implement and supervise e-government programs; and to promote community awareness of the importance of ICT to improve individual’s life and community and build knowledge-based society and digital economy.

Article 12 (9) of Decree Law No. 27 of 2014 setting the organization structure of the ictQATAR provides it with the authority to draft legislations, policies and standards for information technology systems, electronic transactions and e-government services to enable the transformation of government agencies in the State of Qatar. Further, Article 11 (4) of Decree Law No. 27 of 2014 identifies promoting the principles of electronic participation (hereinafter “e-Participation”) between government agencies and the public as ictQATAR’s responsibility.

This Policy Document has been prepared taking into consideration current applicable laws of the State of Qatar. In the event that a conflict arises between this document and the laws of Qatar, the latter, shall take precedence. Any such term shall, to that extent be omitted from this Policy Document, and the rest of the document shall stand without affecting the remaining provisions. Amendments in that case shall then be required to ensure compliance with the relevant applicable laws of the State of Qatar.
2 Introduction

Globally, there has been significant efforts by Governments to promote peoples’ participation and engage them in their decision and policy making processes. These efforts aim not only to inform people but also to empower their participation and involvement.

Broadly, engagement with their people allows governments to tap into wider perspectives, sources of information, and potential solutions to improve decisions and services. It also provides the basis for productive relationships, improved dialogue and deliberation, and ultimately, better governance.

The Government of the State of Qatar, like many others internationally, has recognized the value of engaging the public in governance processes. Qatar’s National Development Strategy 2011-2016 acknowledges that people are a country’s most valuable asset and their participation in political, social and economic spheres will contribute to sustaining a prosperous society. The strategy also notes that social development requires broad participation of all people and the government, working together to fulfil the basic rights of individuals and the needs of the state.

The human development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030 calls for investing in and developing all of Qatar’s people, and creating an enabling environment for them to participate fully in the above spheres thus contributing to the achievement of national development goals.

In an annual survey on Qatari Youth 2013 conducted by a local Arab daily (http://www.al-watan.com/viewnews.aspx?d=20140422&cat=citizen4&pge=5), many citizens voiced their frustrations with government agencies but expressed that the use of electronic systems and mobile applications have helped them to connect better with some agencies. Use of electronic means and online communication channels for public-government communication offers ease of use, convenience of time and location, transparency and public trust, and reduction in governance cost. Therefore, governments internationally and in the region are adopting such means and communication channels to encourage public participation in governance, which has aptly grown to be known as e-Participation.

The objective of e-Participation is to engage people in development policy and decision-making processes through use of information and communication technologies. e-Participation is an important index in major global e-Government rankings such as UN-e-Government Survey and WEF-Global IT Report (GITR). Qatar currently ranks 22nd in the e-Participation Index in the GITR 2013. As per findings of a UN e-Government Assessment Mission conducted in 2011, the culture of e-participation is still lacking in many institutions and citizens in Qatar.
This policy document, therefore, aims at instituting the culture and practices of e-Participation in the Government Agencies and improving transparency and public participation, thereby assisting the State of Qatar in achieving its national development goals.
3 Scope and Application

One of the objectives of ictQATAR is to improve e-participation between government agencies and the people. This can be achieved through putting in place an e-Participation policy where all government agencies will integrate a full e-participation strategy into their day-to-day operations of public administration. An effective policy and its implementation will also help in improvement of Qatar’s position in the global e-Government rankings.

The policy will cover 2 key segments:

- Commitment by Government of Qatar to actively consult, solicit residents’ opinion, feedback and input through public consultation; and

- Engaging and empowering the people to be involved in the process of policy and decision making through various online communications tools including online polling and online petitioning, etc.

The e-Participation Policy will institute specific actions to ensure all of our Government Agencies will take steps to promote information sharing, public consultation and collaboration with residents and communities in Qatar, through the use of online communication tools within the provisions of all applicable laws, policies, regulations or contracts.

The e-Participation Policy applies to all Government Agencies in the State of Qatar and their online communication and public-engagement activities covering the above two segments.
4 Policy Provisions

Public participation in governance processes and decision making is a vital component in the new knowledge-based society. This section provides provisions for Government Agencies in the State of Qatar to support the use of online community engagement as an integral part of the development, implementation and evaluation of its policies, programs and services.

This policy on e-Participation requires all Government Agencies in the State of Qatar to take the following steps:

4.1 e-Participation Administration

i. Each Agency shall assign responsibility to a senior officer and be provided with sufficient authority to communicate with public and external bodies on behalf of the Agency, to oversee the administration and implementation of e-Participation activities, including but not limited to those outlined in Appendix 1.

ii. Additionally, he or she shall lead all online communication activities in the Agency, and spread awareness among its employees and senior management about importance and benefits of the same as well as provide general guidance to them on usage of social media in personal and professional capacities as outlined in Appendix 2.

iii. In the absence of an assigned officer, the official spokesperson or public relations in-charge, or equivalent, in the Government Agency shall assume above tasks and responsibilities in the interim.

4.2 e-Participation Webpage

i. Each Agency shall establish an exclusive webpage for all e-Participation activities within the Agency’s official website, with link in the main page.

ii. This webpage shall provide the following information, including but not limited to:

a. Agency’s Commitment on e-Participation – a brief description of Agency’s aims in engaging the people and its e-Participation activities and plans, including how the public can engage with the Agency online and on what matters;
4.3 **Online Public Consultation**

Public consultation is the process of seeking views and ideas from the public and key stakeholders when formulating and implementing policies. Agencies should in drafting or reviewing its policies issue a Public Consultation Document to solicit public feedback.

Agencies shall take the following steps to ensure effective online public consultation:

i. **Identify appropriate policy issues or topics for public consultation:** In general, any policy issue or a related matter that has a direct impact on the general public, communities or businesses in Qatar as service recipients, should be identified for public consultation.

   Any other policies that may be related to State of Qatar’s internal security, bilateral or multilateral relations with other countries, internal procedural matters and any other issue as deemed sensitive or unrelated to public, communities or businesses in general in Qatar, may not be subjected to public consultation.

ii. **Draft Public Consultation document:** *Agencies shall state the objective, scope and process* of the public consultation exercise, including the following information in the public consultation document:

   a. explain in the consultation document at which people or target groups the consultation is directed;
b. provide the rationale of policy subject, how the policy shall affect the target group and benefits that the people, communities or nation that shall derive as a result of policy implementation. Make this document as simple and concise as possible. Use of practical examples may help better explain technical concepts;

c. include a list of questions the agency is seeking views on, in the consultation document;

d. state clearly in the document the aspects of the issues where decisions have already been taken, or which are not currently open to change, so as to make clear the scope of the consultation exercise.

In drafting the Public consultation document, Agencies shall also ensure it will provide simple and easy to use information on the policies and issues under consultation. Agencies should also provide any other relevant information to the public to help them make informed inputs, e.g. briefs on the current policy framework, surveys, etc. Such information should be made widely available using both electronic and other means, and free of any fees/charges.

iii. Publish consultation papers online:

a. Agencies shall publish all their consultation papers on their “e-Participation” webpage;

b. Agencies shall include a short summary/extract of the paper open for consultation, include the document open for consultation, details on how the public should submit its feedback as well as date for close of consultation;

c. Agencies shall update those papers closed for consultation with the final documents (please see item 4.3 (vi) above);

d. Agencies may wish to also provide facilities for online submission of public feedback as well as providing Agencies’ responses to the public feedback;

iv. Provide sufficient time for responses: Agencies shall provide sufficient time for people to respond with their feedback and such period of time should be stated. Where issues are complex, more time may be needed.
The following may be used as a guideline in determining how much time may be required for the consultation exercise:

- **8 Weeks** - Consultations that cover national policy initiatives and/or of interest to a wide range of stakeholders;
- **6 Weeks** - Consultations that covers important sector-specific policy proposals and are of interest to a wide range of stakeholders;
- **4 Weeks** - Consultations, for which there is an urgent need to reach a decision by specified time period because of market developments, have already been the subject of a previous consultation and for proposals that will have a limited effect on the market.

Agencies should identify and include in its consultation, those most likely to be affected or who have most to contribute. These may include professional groups, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

v. **Follow-up and inform public on outcome**: Public inputs should be seriously considered with an open mind. Agencies shall always follow-up to update on its Public Consultation sub-section to:

a. acknowledge responses;

b. provide a summary of the feedback and views expressed by the public (subject to privacy and confidentiality requirements as stipulated by relevant laws applicable);

c. publish Agency’s responses with reasons for rejecting suggestions, if any;

d. publish Agency’s decisions of the consultation so that people are aware and kept updated; and

e. publish final outcome or revised document.

This will ensure that people do not feel that they have wasted their time in providing their inputs.

Section 1.2 of Appendix 4 may be referred for online tools available and widely used for Consultation segment of e-Participation.
4.4 Online Public Engagement

It is expected that some of the targeted participants are not especially interested in the policy topics. However, they may care about many specific issues that affect their lives and be willing to contribute with opinions or be informed. In order to engage them by allowing to raise such issues with the government and share their opinions, Agencies shall take the following steps:

i. Within the e-Participation webpage, Agencies shall provide a brief description about how the public, communities and businesses can reach government agencies with their ideas and views on various governance issues.

ii. Agencies shall create and maintain official social media accounts and list them in their e-Participation webpages. Wherever possible, such accounts should be certified by the service providers as official accounts or have appropriate authentication measures in place.

iii. Agencies shall allow public to create or subscribe to online polls or petitions related to policy or governance areas.

iv. Agencies shall allow public to submit their new ideas or suggestions on general governance issues. Agencies shall always review such suggestions and follow-up with the contributors on a timely basis;

v. Agencies shall perform online satisfaction surveys of their services and other relevant topics on a periodic basis. They shall publish results of all surveys conducted.

Sections 1.1 and 1.3 of Appendix 4 may also be referred for online tools available and widely used for online public engagement.

4.5 Use of Social Media Analytics

i. Agencies should consider the use of various social media analytics tools to assess the performance of its social campaigns, online reputation and social profile with the general public. Such tool can help agencies to:

   a. identify what issues may be becoming topical in the local community;

   b. gauge public sentiment about particular issues;
c. respond to misinformation about the government’s position on an issue;

d. raise awareness about opportunities to influence government decision making on an issue; and

e. encourage public’s responses through official channels.

Appendix 5 may be referred for tools available for social media analysis.

ii. Agencies may also utilize social network management applications or aggregation tools to assist them in updating, managing and maintaining several communication outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube etc. vide one unified interface. Please refer Appendix 6 for details on this topic.

iii. Agencies should evaluate whether online public discussions or comments should be responded to, and where they decide to provide a response, it should be specific, factual and concise targeted at addressing the issue. Appendix 7 may be referred while performing such assessments.

4.6 National e-Participation Portal

Agencies shall note that a national e-Participation portal is being planned by ictQATAR to encourage digital public participation at pan-government level. The portal, combined with a range of supporting tools, will serve as a trustworthy mechanism for constructive, two-way dialog between the Government and the public. It aims to both increase civic engagement and develop more effective policies for people of Qatar. As and when the national portal is launched, Agencies shall observe the following:

i. Ensure that the requirements of the national portal are complied with at the respective agencies;

ii. Work closely with the core team of the national portal to ensure successful implementation of e-Participation at national level.

4.7 Additional Requirements

i. All Agencies are encouraged to implement any additional measures for enhancing e-Participation experience of users or applying security procedures that they deem fit and important.
ii. Agencies shall implement requirements of this Policy and undertake its utmost efforts to engage the public.

iii. Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ictQATAR) may issue any additional or supplementary procedures, guidelines and best practices from time to time to support the e-Participation Policy.

iv. Agencies shall make every effort to achieve the policy targets as set out in Appendix 8 of this document as well as any new/revised targets as may be provided in future by ictQATAR to ensure effective adoption of e-Participation in the State of Qatar.

4.8 Implementation Progress and Review

i. Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR) as custodian of the overall e-Participation Policy shall monitor Agencies’ implementation of e-Participation initiatives. A compliance checklist as broadly outlined in Appendix 9 shall be used in monitoring implementation.

ii. Agencies shall perform a self-assessment based on the compliance checklist or other parameters as may be circulated by ictQATAR at the time of assessment request, and submit report with ictQATAR. Agencies shall submit any additional information or report as may be requested by ictQATAR to assess progress of e-Participation implementation.

iii. Agencies may put in place success measures to assess periodically the progress of their online activities. Some of such measures are outlined in Appendix 10 for reference. Additionally, some tips to achieve success in online activities are provided in Appendix 11.
5 Annexes

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Appendix 2  General Guidelines for Employees
Appendix 3  General Disclaimer Guideline
Appendix 4  Online Tools for e-Participation
Appendix 5  Social Media
Appendix 6  Social Networks Aggregation
Appendix 7  Decision Tree - Social Media Response
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Appendix 10  Social Media Success Measures
Appendix 11  Tips for Social Media Success
Appendix 1  Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities section assigns responsibility for the policy requirements set out in Section 4 (Policy Provisions).

i. At least one senior staff with sufficient skills, experience or training in using online communication tools for corporate communications, public relations or equivalent field, should be assigned the overall responsibilities of e-Participation activities in the agency. The assigned staff should have sufficient authority to officially communicate on behalf of the agency.

Duties of the staff should include:

- ensuring that policy requirements and targets as set out in this document are implemented and achieved in their Agencies;
- planning and managing execution of Agency’s online communication plans;
- managing all social media accounts of the Agency;
- soliciting response from the business or policy departments for public queries, complaints, requests etc. and assist them in preparing responses;
- creating an Agency e-Participation webpage with the help of IT department or as appropriate,
- act as single point of contact to the national e-Participation Portal and utilize the national e-Participation portal’s discussion forum for public feedback, moderate discussions content wise; optimize online communication by making use of other activities as may be facilitated by the portal;
- responding to public queries or responses within reasonable time or as required by the policy;
- involve other Agencies where useful for response/issue resolution;
- monitoring and reporting on public social media activity and opinion related to their Agencies;
- assisting business departments in performing public consultation of policies and strategies.
ii. Business departments in the respective Agencies, in the context of e-participation, have the responsibility to:

- provide responses to e-Participation official in a timely manner or as required by the policy, and resolve issues where needed;
- perform public consultation of policies and strategies through e-Participation official; prepare discussion forum and add background information when needed;
- review public comments and use as input for policies, services etc.

iii. Ministry of Information and Communications Technology has the responsibility to:

- update the e-Participation policy from time to time to ensure currency of the policy and to address new or emerging needs and best practices;
- issue procedures, guidelines and best practices to support the e-Participation Policy;
- ensure the National e-Participation portal is established and managed in accordance with the requirements set out in this Policy;
- provide instructions or advise any action that Government Agencies should undertake to support effective implementation of this Policy;
- monitor progress of implementation of this policy at Government Agencies.
Appendix 2 General Guidelines for Employees

Outlined below are general guidelines for employee engagement with social media. These guidelines will evolve as technology continues to make possible new ways for social networking.

If an employee of a Government Agency participates in social media as a means to discuss the work of the Agency, either on a personal or a professional basis, these guiding principles should be followed by the employee.

Personal Use of Social Media

If an employee uses social media in his or her personal capacity, he or she should be mindful of the following:

1. The employee should never disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to his or her employer or any third party (e.g. companies, individuals and other government agencies) that has disclosed information to the Agency in confidence. He or she should never comment on anything related to legal or commercial matters such as regulatory matters, the status of tenders and employment contracts. Employee’s existing employment contract should also be prohibiting this.

2. The employee should keep in mind that what he or she publishes will be widely accessible. For example, his or her supervisor and colleagues may come across what is being communicated online through their own use of social media. So the employee should think about what he or she is saying and be responsible.

3. If the employee identifies himself or herself as an employee of the Agency, he or she should make it clear that the views expressed are his or hers alone and should not use the Agency’s logo or other means that may cause the audience to believe that he or she is representing the Agency’s views. The employee may use the following declaration as an example:

   The views expressed on this (e.g. blog; website…) are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of <Agency name>.

4. The employee should not infringe on the privacy rights of colleagues, such as by posting pictures of colleagues or giving out their contact details without their permission.

5. Personal use of social media should be done at employee’s personal time.
Professional use of Social Media on behalf of the Agency

When it comes to using social media professionally (e.g. as part of the Agency’s awareness campaign, interactive on-line discussions with external peers and contacts, or when representing the Agency in particular on-line forums), these basic guidelines should be followed:

1. The employee should disclose who he or she is and his or her role at the Agency. The employee should not pretend to be someone he or she is not.

2. The employee should try and understand the culture of the online communities he or she communicates with so as to interact effectively.

3. The employee should protect his or her own privacy and respect the privacy and contact preferences of others.

4. The employee should write about what he or she knows and his or her areas of expertise. If the employee is not an expert on particular topic that comes up for discussion, he or she should make this clear to others. The employee can also suggest how to get in touch with someone else in the Agency who has expertise in a given topic area if appropriate and after the proposed expert’s permission. He or she should not comment on any matter which may have legal or commercial implications for any third party.

5. Where practicable, links to the Agency’s website should be provided so that individuals and on-line communities have access to official statements, documents and initiatives.

6. The employee should engage in healthy debate and not use social media to criticize or denigrate colleagues or individuals, agencies and companies that the Agency employs and/or collaborates with. When disagreeing with others’ opinions, the employee should keep it appropriate and polite. He or she should choose words wisely and be careful and considerate.

7. The employee should be accountable by quickly and clearly correcting any mistakes he or she may make in presenting information related to the Agency’s work and initiatives. For example, if he or she chooses to modify an earlier post to a blog, readers should clearly be informed that he or she has done so.

8. The employee should take a few minutes to think about what he or she is going to say before actually saying it. He or she may also want to consult his or her manager if he or she is unsure
how to respond to a particular issue that is being discussed. What the employee publishes is his or hers and so is the responsibility. So the employee should use good judgment.

9. The employees should not create additional social media accounts of the Agency. All official social media accounts should be created and administered by the personnel assigned with the responsibilities of online communications in the Agency (Appendix 1).

10. Departments in the Agency seeking to market their activities in social media or who want to start a blog/create pages/accounts should channel it through the personnel assigned with such responsibilities.

11. If the employee comes across in social media comments regarding Department level programs or the Agency in general, he or she should keep the personnel assigned with the responsibilities of online communications, informed.
Appendix 3 General Disclaimer Guideline

The following text should be made available from a prominent location on any official social media channel or page:

1. Comments posted by you on this page will be removed by the administrator if it:
   a. impersonates any other person or falsely claim to represent any other person, whether living or dead, real or fictitious;
   b. it is abusive, harassing, threatening or violates the legal rights of others;
   c. is misleading, deceptive, false, defamatory or libelous;
   d. is a statement that may interfere with or prejudice the course of or otherwise deals with civil or criminal proceedings that are presently before any court, tribunal, commission or similar body or any investigation by the police, or other agency;
   e. seeks to raise personal matters which have been dealt with or concluded judicially;
   f. uses insulting, threatening or provocative language or language that is hateful towards a certain group of people;
   g. incites hatred on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality or sexuality or other personal characteristic;
   h. includes indecent, obscene, pornographic or otherwise inappropriate language, information or other content;
   i. infringes the intellectual property rights of others or discloses their confidential information;
   j. contains any commercial advertising material;
   k. is not relevant to the themes currently being discussed; or
   l. invades the personal privacy of any other person or groups without their consent.

   You may also be banned from this page by the administrator for posting comments or other content of this nature.

2. Comments posted anywhere by an employee of our organization other than those posted through our official id’s, do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization and should be considered as personal opinion of the employee. <Agency name> does not endorse or take responsibility for any content posted by employees through the use of social media.
Appendix 4  Online Tools for e-Participation

Improving e-participation unavoidably requires a certain level of knowledge about the available online tools. This section presents several online tools based on what activity they may facilitate in the participation process. It should be noted that no printed list of online tools will remain relevant for a long period of time. New tools enter the industry every day, some tools may cease to work.

<table>
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<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult &amp; Collaborate</th>
<th>Involve and Empower</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Provide balanced and objective information</td>
<td>Obtain public feedback on issues</td>
<td>Work directly with the public throughout the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible obstacles</td>
<td>Access, Technical/management</td>
<td>Interaction, Cultural issues</td>
<td>Interaction, Political cultural issues, Technical/management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming obstacles online with</td>
<td>E-mail lists, Websites, Blogs, Microblogs, Vlogs, Social networking sites, Translation tools, Aggregating tools, Web feed</td>
<td>Websites, Blogs, Vlogs, Social networking sites, Translation tools, Polling tools, Discussion forums, Planning tools, Collaborative working tools</td>
<td>Petition tools, Voting tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of most of the tools listed here is free of charge. With every tool a link to the original site and the owner of the software or web service will be found.

Please note that by providing examples as below, this document does not endorse use of a particular tool or application over others that are not mentioned in the list. The intent is to provide appropriate examples to the Government Agencies in order that they are able to further research and choose the tools or applications most suited to their needs. Government Agencies should ensure that the tools chosen by them, from the list below or otherwise, comply with requisite security standards or protocols and all applicable legislations and policies in the State of Qatar.
1.1 INFORMING AND PUBLICATION TOOLS

Tools listed below can help in sharing or spreading information among the target groups present online e.g. in social networks, and turn communication into an interactive dialogue with the target groups.

1.1.1 E-mail lists

E-mail lists allow the user to send information to all the people who have signed up for the mailing list. Many organizations use email lists to disseminate, for instance, their newsletters online.

Mailing list hosting services:

FreeLists provides free e-mailing list hosting.

Mailchimp.com is an e-mail marketing and e-mail list manager.

1.1.2 Web publishing

There are a number of service providers that offer free hosting for websites, and some providers additionally offer content managing systems (or CMS) that allow the user to design and maintain a website with only a minimum of technical skills. These sites are usually offered in free versions with somewhat limited functionalities or in paid full versions.

WordPress is a blogging tool that can be equally seen as a free publishing and content management platform. It offers a variety of layout templates. Additionally, the wordpress software can also be downloaded at WordPress.org and installed to a server of the user’s own choosing.

Edicy is a simple, customizable tool for creating a website. Minimum technical skills are needed and it has both a free and a paid "pro" version. The user interface is available in 16 different languages.

Google sites is a free tool for setting up websites. The choice of layouts and additional options however is smaller, compared to for example WordPress.

1.1.3 Blogs

Blogs are web-based services which allow publication in written, audio and video formats. They are often used to express opinions and facilitate discussion with the blog followers about a given topic.

Benefits of blogs include:
structured organization of the user’s messages and other content elements, usually in chronological order;

- ready for use after registering with an online blog service provider;

- an easy-to-use text editor which allows the user to see the article while writing it, almost in the same form as it will appear after publishing it;

- support embedding of various widgets provided by other service providers e.g. Youtube videos, Slideshare slides, etc.

Some free blogging services are:

**WordPress** is a blogging and publishing service with a focus on aesthetics, web standards, and usability. The WordPress blog can be made private, meaning that it is visible only to the people selected by the blog owner, or otherwise publicly visible to everyone. The user interface is available in 120 languages.

**Blogger** is a publishing tool from Google for sharing text, photo and video. In order to blog in Blogger a Google account is necessary. Private blog may be shared with up to 100 Google account holders. The user interface is available in 50 languages.

If the user has a blog, it will appear on Technorati, the largest blog search engine in the world. Once the user registers, Technorati tracks “blog reactions” or blogs that link to the user’s blog. The user can search for his or her name on Technorati and subscribe to RSS alerts, so that the user knows about it when someone blogs about him or her.

### 1.1.4 Microblogs

Microblogs or miniblogs differ from traditional blogs for they provide a forum for more limited content at a time. Organizations or individuals can use microblogs to announce short and condensed messages.

**Twitter** is the best known microblog, which allows posting 140-character long text updates. Users can follow other users’ tweets. Posting regular tweets and following the tweets of the target audience may increase the users’ visibility and the number of followers. Please note that tweets may be set as public so that anybody can see updates, or private so that only users’ followers can view content.

**Tumblr** is an easy-to-use tool which allows sharing content in text, photo and video formats. The tool provides its users with a useful support center.
Facebook and Google+, the popular social networking sites, may also be used as microblogs with the status updates that are visible to all the other users in the user’s network. Please note that the status updates on Facebook and on Google+ may also be set as public so that everybody may see the user’s updates.

1.1.5 Vlogs and video sharing tools

Using video sharing tools, vlogs, may help the user increase outreach. Providing information in video format in an interactive and Web 2.0 sharing environment may be beneficial in reaching people with reading and/or language difficulties.

The use of video sharing sites is growing rapidly. On video publishing sites, the user can upload and share his or her information in a smart way. Utilizing video sharing tools can bring more viewers to the user’s personal or organization’s website.

For example, when sharing an introductory video on an issue through a video sharing site, some of the viewers may want to visit the organization’s website to learn more about the topic.

Some video sharing tools include:

- YouTube and Vimeo are video sharing websites where users can upload, share, view, and comment on videos made by themselves and by others.

- VideoJug is focused on “how to..?” videos.

- Animoto helps to turn photos, video clips and music into videos to share with everyone.

- Screenr is a web-based screen recorder to make screen-casts.

1.1.6 Social networking sites

Social networks consist of individuals and/or organizations which are related to each other in various ways, depending on the network type (e.g. friendship, interests, business relationships, etc.).

Benefits of social networking sites include:

- creating new networks
- sharing information in real time with mobile applications
- increasing outreach
- increasing interaction
increasing participation

Facebook is a social networking tool which enables people to connect with friends and others who work, study and live around them. Facebook provides an opportunity to share text, photos and videos with friends on the user’s contact list.

Organizations can use Facebook by creating a page or group. The main advantage to an organization of having a Facebook page or group is that everyone who likes or joins the organization in Facebook will receive updates to their own Facebook wall, and therefore can be updated about news.

For example, when authorities start an inclusion process, or an organization wants to advertise a public event, they can post information on their Facebook page so all those following their activities will receive an update.

Google+ is a networking platform, which was built as an alternative to Facebook, enabling forming of separate groups or ‘circles’ of people, in order to share different information between different circles of people. It also includes video and group chat features, allows sharing updates with particular groups, and collecting information on keywords or topics of interest.

Other popular social networking tools include, among others, diaspora, badoo, foursquare, IRC Galleria (Suomi), ning and Tagged.

Wikipedia alone lists over 200 social networking sites.

Many sites analyze the popularity of web sites and social media. For instance, ebizmba is specific to social media while alexa and comscore analyze the popularity of websites.

Finally, AddThis.com enables sharing information on to others wherever they feel like.

1.1.7 Aggregating tools

Using multiple social media tools may be challenging in terms of managing the updates and the interaction.

Aggregating tools allow combining different types of social media content, and creating blogs which gather all kinds of feeds so they appear on one page.

Some of the services are:

flavors.me and about.me allow the user to create a website that collects social media updates, photos and videos into a unified web presence.
Posterous is a service for posting material on many social media channels at once, eliminating the need to post material separately to each one.

Paper.li allows the user to pull together different content, e.g. Facebook or Twitter feeds or any other web content and publish it as a newspaper.

Civicboom is a content sharing tool which allows anyone to post requests for specific items of content and to share content. It is possible to geotag the content (set location on the map).

Please also refer Appendix 6 for detailed information on Social Networks Aggregation.

1.1.8 Making a website multilingual

When publishing information on a web page it is important to think of the target group – can they understand the language of the text, or should it be translated into other languages?

A multilingual website may be provided by integrating a translation gadget on the website. The gadget allows the user to select a preferred language on the website, and translate the content immediately.

Google translate gadget can be added to any web site to enable site visitors to easily translate content into one of the 50 available languages on Google translation tools.

Microsoft translator widget is a similar tool providing translation to and from over 30 languages.

1.1.9 Informing about an interesting web-content

When browsing information on the web, on some sites AddThis button (http://www.addthis.com/) can be found which enables the user to share information through many desired social media channels, e.g. Facebook, or to send a link by email. Authorities and organizations can add this widget to their website so that if users want to share news with their friends or colleagues they can do it easily, directly from the website. Such button can be also installed into the user’s browser allowing the user to share any content he or she finds interesting (even if the sharing option is not provided by the website).

As an alternative, Lockerz Share tool can be used to share information to many desired channel. Lockerz Share tool needs to be grabbed separately for each kind of service where the user wants to share something.

1.1.10 Making links look better
Sometimes when it is needed to publish a link of a certain article on a website, the link may be very long and difficult to read. Service providers offer URL forwarding service so the user can make a short version of the article’s URL address and use the short link instead of the long one. The service provider takes care that the short URL takes the user to the original link.


Social bookmarking services like Delicious and Diigo are online services that allow the user to organize, save and share his or her bookmarks with other people using tags.

1.1.11 Web feed

A web feed is a data format used for providing users with frequently updated content, e.g. news from another public blog or website, without visiting the site. When the blog or website is made private, then reading a web feed is not possible. The most common web feed is RSS.

There are different ways for reading web feeds:

**Web browsers**: users can add feeds of websites of interest to their web browser favourites menu, and be notified when there have been changes to the websites.

Learn about subscribing to a feed using the Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Safari browsers. See also a tutorial video in Youtube.

Google Chrome cannot automatically read feeds, but an official extension can be downloaded from here.

**E-mail clients**: RSS feeds can be viewed as e-mails on many of the e-mail client programmes. For example, read how to set up MS Outlook to read RSS feed.

**RSS readers**: there are also online RSS readers. The main advantage is that feeds can be read from any computer or mobile device. Examples of such services are:

Bloglines enable searching, subscribing, creating and sharing news feeds, blogs and rich web content.

For Google account owners there is the option of using Google Reader. See also: How To Use Google Reader Like A Rockstar.
There is also another online RSS reader from Google – iGoogle. It is not only a reader, but a private page with necessary daily information (weather, news etc), which looks like a small individually customized newspaper.

For Yahoo clients there is MyYahoo that allows creating customizable news page for daily use.

FeedDemon is a RSS feed reader for Windows.

RSSOWL is for Windows, Linux (32 Bit and 64 Bit) and Apple Mac OS X, which can save selected information in various formats for offline viewing and sharing. There are tutorials available for various features of RSSOWL.
1.2 CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION TOOLS

All the above tools may also be used in the consult phase. The consult phase aims at collecting feedback from the public while collaboration aims at both government working with the public and public working together independently for a cause. The online tools below permit consulting, co-working and collaborating online both in synchronous or asynchronous modes. The section has been logically divided into planning, execution (consultation), evaluation and collaboration sub-sections.

1.2.1 Planning Tools

1.2.1.1 Process planning

The newly created web-based tool iCoworker (htk.tlu.ee/icoworker) gives an opportunity to visualize the process of co-creating a draft document or a petition, by presenting a timeline, along with the invited participants, links to documents versions and other useful source information, as well as the comments and opinion of the joint work group. The tool could be also used for a small-scale project management or inclusion activities.

The Inclusion Process Planner developed in the UK helps the user to choose methods suitable in various stages of planning where he or she wants to involve people in a project, common decision-making activities, or other participatory events. The Process Planner prompts the user with a series of questions which are compared to a database of inclusion methods to determine which of these best fit the user’s needs. It is often a good idea to combine different methods at different stages of a decision-making cycle.

The Finnish e-participation environment project (osallistumisymparisto.fi and otakantaa.fi) develops web services for enhancing and enabling dialog and interaction between citizens, politicians and public servants. The services provide tools and methods for, e.g., inclusion planning, deliberative discussions, different kinds of online discussions, questionnaires and surveys, formal commenting of drafts and municipal and national initiatives. The services are introduced in phases, mainly between mid-2012 and 2013, and can be used on a local, regional and national level. Target groups of the toolset are governmental organizations as well as NGO’s and individuals.

1.2.1.2 Scheduling meetings and events

When it is needed to invite many parties to a meeting and find a common time which would suit to all, it could be tedious to make a phone call to everyone in order to find out the suitable times slots in their schedules, and match these between all of the expected participants.

Online scheduling tools save resources in planning an event with multiple stakeholders.
**Doodle** (doodle.com) allows the user to select a range of dates for a meeting, and ask everyone to indicate their preferences. The user can decide the meeting time according to the options most suitable to the participants, sending all a notification with the final decision on date and times. Additionally, all participants can see which dates and times other people had preferred for the meeting. Doodle is simple, quick and requires no registration.

**Wiggio** (wiggio.com) is an easy to use toolkit, allowing the user to keep a shared calendar (with text message reminders), poll groups in real-time, send bulk text messages, store files in one common folder, and create to-do lists. The advantage of Wiggio compared to others is the possibility to set up virtual conference calls. [Watch a tutorial.](#)

**Zwiggo** (zwiggo.com) is a group sharing platform for private and public groups. Each group can design their own space by adding applications for chatting, sharing photos, files, links, documents and books, creating and assigning to-dos, date planning and calendaring, putting up sticky notes, having discussions, mapping out locations, blogging, getting votes and making decisions. [See an introductory video.](#)

### 1.2.2 Consultation and Evaluation Tools

#### 1.2.2.1. Consultation tools

While many tools listed in the 1.1 Informing and Publication section may be used during this stage, one tool of significant importance is discussion forums.

An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. They differ from chat rooms in that messages are often longer than one line of text, and are at least temporarily archived. Also, depending on the access level of a user or the forum set-up, a posted message might need to be approved by a moderator before it becomes visible.

Forums have a specific set of jargon associated with them; e.g. a single conversation is called a "thread", or topic.

A discussion forum is hierarchical or tree-like in structure: a forum can contain a number of subforums, each of which may have several topics. Within a forum’s topic, each new discussion started is called a thread, and can be replied to by as many people as so wish.

Depending on the forum's settings, users can be anonymous or have to register with the forum and then subsequently log in in order to post messages. On most forums, users do not have to log in to read existing messages.
Many governments internationally have been online discussion forums successfully to engage with their peoples. Some of the examples are Reach (https://www.reach.gov.sg/) at Singapore where consultation forum has centralized structure, and United Kingdom where consultations forums are decentralized at council and department levels (http://consultations.dh.gov.uk/, https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti). Other countries that are leading in this area are Canada, Denmark, Scotland and Australia.

A national e-Participation portal is being planned by ictQATAR in the State of Qatar which will provide discussion forum feature for Government Agencies to use in their e-consultation activities.

Here is a link to understand how to start an online discussion forum: http://www.wikihow.com/Start-an-Online-Discussion-Community.

Polling tools as mentioned in the next section (1.3 Involve and Empower Tools) may also be used where consultation questions are very structured and decision will be based on objective opinions of the public.

1.2.2.2 A guide to evaluating public participation

A UK based organization, Involve, has published a web-guide titled Making a Difference: A guide to evaluating public participation in central government. Although the guide is addressed to government institutions, it provides helpful insights also to organizations and communities organizing large scale projects that involve informing or including a wider circle of participants.

The evaluation guide may be read or downloaded at http://www.involve.org.uk/evaluation-guide/.

1.2.3 Collaboration Tools

Collaboration tools allow collaborative creation and management of documents online, and are useful when many people need to work on the same document at the same time. With online collaboration tools, there is no need to send static documents between the collaborators by email. Instead, a document can be created and commented on online.

1.2.3.1 Document creation and editing tools

Document creation tools allow instant online collaboration with commenting, editing and discussion functionalities. Here is a list of somewhat similar online tools, which do not require registration or any user account, are easy to use, and useful for recording meeting minutes, brainstorming, project planning, drafting sessions and more. The tools below allow multiple people to edit the same document at once, and all changes are instantly reflected on every participant's screen. Once the
document is created it can be easily shared by simply sharing the document’s URL (link) with others. All co-authors can pick a personal color that indicates their original text in the document.

**Sync.in** (sync.in/) allows the user to enter a suitable name for his or her online document, upon creation. Basic text editing tools, such as bold typeface etc. are provided. The user can save and export versions of the document. The time slider function provides an overview of the document changes over time. A chat room is also included so users can add comments and discussions next to the document editing area.

**Primarypad** (primarypad.com/) has all the above-mentioned features similar to Sync.in, but additionally it allows importing files to be edited. Up to 15 people are allowed to collaboratively work together in real time. The document will be saved for 30 days. The user can save up to 50 revisions.

A similar tool is **PiratePad** (piratepad.net), which additionally allows creating read-only version of the document. This comes handy if the user wishes to share the file, but not let others modify the content.

**Netcomment.net** (netcomment.net) is a service that makes the process of commenting and approving digital material easy and efficient. In addition to commenting, it provides too to manage the workflow of document editing and approval.

**YooMoot** (yoomoot.com) is a place to participate in structured debates. Although currently in a “by invitation” mode, it has received praise from technology media companies and is a service perhaps worth trying out later.

**Google Docs & Spreadsheets** (docs.google.com) allow creating collaborative online documents and spreadsheets with all the main possibilities of document editing software, being somewhat similar and recognizable for those used to Microsoft Word and Excel or LibreOffice. The user can also upload existing files, pictures or videos and share them with other users. The files may be exported and saved, or shared online with selected users or made public to everyone. The tool thus has more sophisticated features but it requires registration and a user account.

### 1.2.3.2 Wikis

A wiki is a website where users can collaboratively add, modify, or delete its content.

Wikis keep track of the history of changes in the text; so that earlier versions of the document can be tracked when necessary. Wikis do not allow instant co-creation of a document, because an article will be locked while it is being edited by someone. But it allows making changes when other users are not working with the document.
Wikis are especially useful for building knowledge bases because they allow expansion and creation of new articles or sub-articles when new information becomes available. Creating sub-articles and building connections between articles makes it easy to use wikis as a source of information.

See the comparison of wiki software.

Although most wikis require downloading and installation on a web server, there are also web-based versions of wiki software available:

WikiSpaces (wikispaces.com) allows the user to create a wiki which the user and his or her readers can add to, edit and change in any way.

EditMe (editme.com) is a wiki hosting service that empowers non-technical users to quickly and easily build and host editable web sites.

Wikidot (wikidot.com) is a wiki hosting service which allows the creation of up to 5 wikis for free, with limited storage space.

1.2.3.3 Visualization tools

Visualization tools allow drawing or sketching ideas collaboratively. These tools can be especially useful during online meetings; for instance during a Skype call when participants need to visualize their ideas.

Some easy-to-use visualization tools include:

Dabbleboard (dabbleboard.com) is an easy drawing and sharing tool which does not require registration. There are many possibilities to draw elaborate shapes for sharing ideas. It is possible to download and upload files. See a tutorial video.

Cosketch (cosketch.com) is a multi-user online whiteboard designed to give the users the ability to quickly visualize and share ideas as images. No registration needed. The users can upload and share images to draw on or use Google maps as the background for their sketches to show directions or share trips.

Scriblink (scriblink.com) is an interactive whiteboard that is geared more for educational purposes, and allows using various characters and math symbols. In addition to chat it is possible to use VoIP (voice over IP) conferencing at the same time.

Chartle (chartle.net) allows easy creation of charts and embedding them into a blog or a website. In addition to the variety of charts and diagrams, it is possible to make intensity maps and geo maps.
Mindmeister (mindmeister.com) is a collaborative online mind-mapping tool. The basic version is free and facilitates sharing folders and files as well as task lists. There are various templates for brainstorming, project plan, to do list among others. It is possible to chat and attach files to the mind-map.

1.2.3.4 Online slide presentation tools

Online presentation tools are useful in many ways. For example, when the meeting is carried out over Internet, using Skype, all participants could simultaneously follow the slide presentation presented by the speaker.

Sharing presentations online has the following advantages:

- The presentation file is too big to be sent by e-mail, or there is doubt about whether everyone can receive large files by e-mail.

- Uploading presentations to a web site can help spreading the information among a wider audience, attracting possibly interested people outside the existing contact list, and community members.

- Online presentations can be shared very easily, by sharing and forwarding only the link to the presentation instead of the file itself.

- The viewers of the presentation do not need additional software for viewing it.

Slideshare (slideshare.com) allows uploading slide presentations to the web for sharing with other people.

Prezi (prezi.com) is meant for preparing creative presentations collaboratively create a presentation over the Web.

Issuu (issuu.com) is a publishing platform which enables its users to upload and share PDF documents such as magazines, catalogues and presentations.

1.2.3.5 Group working and sharing tools

There are various e-tools that facilitate working in groups. In general, the user can create a group and invite people to join and share ideas, files, events, etc with each other.

Wiggio (http://wiggio.com/) is an easy to use toolkit, allowing the user to keep a shared calendar (with text message reminders), poll group in real-time, send bulk text messages, store files in one
common folder, and create to-do lists. The advantage of Wiggio compared to others is the possibility to set up virtual conference calls.

Facebook group (http://www.facebook.com/groups) is a collaboration tool for Facebook members. It is possible to share files, advertise events, chat, video call, create polls, etc. in various languages.

Some of the tools which are specifically for content management and sharing:

Google Groups (https://groups.google.com/) if the user has a Google account he or she can use the Google Groups to share content and group work. The user can search the content of existing public groups and join them. The advantage of this tool is the availability in many languages as well as setting up an automatic translation tool for the user’s group.

Civicboom (http://civicboom.com/) is a content sharing tool which allows anyone to post requests for specific items of content and to share content. It is possible to geo tag the content (set location on the map).

Teambox (http://teambox.com/) is collaboration software for workplace communication and free up to five team members. Allows to share messages, tasks along a calendar, and a Wiki page to work collaboratively.

Mindmeister (https://www.mindmeister.com/) is a collaborative online mind-mapping tool. The basic version is free and facilitates sharing folders and files as well as task lists. There are various templates for brainstorming, project plan, to do list, and etc. which is possible to chat and attach files to the mind-map.

1.2.4 Instant messaging, voice and video call

Instant messaging tools allow discussions and meetings free of place restrictions.

Instant messaging tools offer two basic functions:

- Chatting – participants can collaborate and discuss issues in a common chat environment and the whole discussion will be saved for further reference.
- Calling – participants can collaborate over a voice call (VoIP). For smaller meetings it is enough to use a laptop’s built-in speakers and microphone. For bigger meetings more advanced technical equipment like loudspeakers, a stand-alone video camera and microphone may be needed. Also, testing should be done beforehand, to make sure that everything is working well before the meeting starts.
Skype (skype.com), MSN messenger (explore.live.com), Yahoo messenger (messenger.yahoo.com) and Google Talk (google.com/talk) offer similar functionalities of chat and video call, although Google Talk seems to be more efficient with slow Internet connections.

Additionally, above mentioned applications can be used to call to any phone number around the world, which however, this is not a free service, although cheaper than using a regular phone.

Free call (freecall.com), Evaphone (evaphone.com) and Free conference call (freeconferencecall.com) are well-known to facilitate cheap phone calls.

For concrete example on how to use various collaboration tools — for example wikis, collaborative writing tools, microblogs and instant messaging and VoIP tools together, a report by Somus may also be referred: Social media for citizen participation.
1.3 TOOLS TO INVOLVE AND EMPOWER

It is expected that some of the targeted participants are not especially interested in the policy topics. However, they do care about many specific issues that affect their lives and are willing to contribute with opinions or be informed. The Involve and Empower tools listed below allow the participants to raise such issues with the government and share their opinions through e-polling or surveys.

1.3.1 Petition and polling tools

There are several websites available for launching an initiative and collecting signatures and opinions of people to connect who share views, and create an interest group to present the ideas to the authorities.

A newly created tool iMapper (htk.tlu.ee/imapper) allows the users to rank petitions and ideas initiated by themselves or others, by which they can find and connect with other same-minded people, and form a virtual community.

The authorities may also benefit from the online petition and voting tools in the consulting phase during the inclusion process, for collecting feedback from the public.

Online voting tools allow platforms to collect public feedback. Examples of online voting include:

ipetitions (ipetitions.com) is a free online service for launching a campaign or petition. Registration is required.

Online questionnaire services do also provide multiple opportunities for collecting feedback from the public. These services include webropol (webropol.com) and surveymonkey (surveymonkey.com).

Hukoomi portal in Qatar also provides functionality to conduct survey based on online questionnaire. The online poll feature allows people to vote on a question and view the tallied results.
1.4 OTHER

Wordle (www.wordle.net) is a simple visual word-counting tool for illustrative purposes.

Screenr (www.screenr.com) is a tool that helps to create simple instructions with the functionality of recording the activities on the screen along with the instructor’s voice.

Tutorials

What is a browser? - whatbrowser.org/en-gb/

Learn to use WordPress.com - learn.wordpress.com/get-started/
Appendix 5  Social Media Analytics Tools

While not strictly an e-Participation activity, monitoring subjects related to the work of an agency is an important part of engaging online. In many cases, social media analysis is an extension of traditional media monitoring, which many agencies already do. As discussed below, social media monitoring can also be undertaken by individual public servants using a range of online tools. Compared to traditional media monitoring, social media monitoring has the advantage that it can give more direct access to community sentiment and the opportunity to respond in real time.

Even before beginning to use e-Participation tools, monitoring the online world for discussion and content related to an agency, program or area of interest can be beneficial. It may even prove that social media monitoring can provide the impetus for building a more comprehensive organizational e-Participation strategy. For example, if an agency can see that a wide ranging conversation is happening on Twitter regarding its work or area of interest, it may assist in motivating the agency to become involved in that conversation.

There is a broad range of tools available for monitoring online traffic about an organization. In many cases these tools will be able to supplement traditional media monitoring, particularly when they pick up on online versions of articles in mainstream media. When beginning to monitor activities, it is not necessary to spend large amounts of money. A basic social media monitoring toolkit could consist entirely of free tools.

Social media analysis will quite possibly discover activity and comment with respect to an agency, its senior leadership, staff and executives in many places. Once such activity has been discovered, questions arise about how to respond, including:

- How to decide to respond to any activity, whether negative, neutral or positive.
- Who is responsible for responding officially, as opposed to more general responses by staff which may also be permitted in some cases.
- The nature of any response.
- The platform on which any response should occur, for example, if and how to respond directly to a negative Facebook comment or group, versus responding from the agency site and linking to the Facebook page.

Appendix 7 may be referred for assessing how to respond to social media postings.
1.1 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS TOOLS

Some of the tools that may be used for social media research and analysis are listed below. Please note again that by providing examples as below, this document does not endorse use of a particular tool or application over others that are not mentioned in the list. The intent is to provide appropriate examples to the government entities in order that they are able to further research and choose the tools or applications most suited to their needs. Government Agencies should ensure that the tools chosen by them, from the list below or otherwise, comply with requisite security standards or protocols and all applicable legislations and policies in the State of Qatar.

1.1.1 Tools for social media


Numerous tools have also been created to help research and monitor particular social media tools. These may be useful for analyzing particular activities on single social media presences. Examples include Google Blog search (http://blogsearch.google.com/), Twitter Search (http://search.twitter.com/), Boardreader for forums (http://boardreader.com/), Socialtalk for Twitter, Facebook, Wordpress, Moveable Type (http://www.socialtalk.com/), Needium for Twitter (http://needium.com/), TruReach and Video Engagement for videos (http://www.visiblemeasures.com/), Videolytics for videos (http://www.kantarvideo.com/), WebDig, DigTV and AdSlider for Internet, TV and Radio (http://woollabs.com/) and Glerts for all media indexed by Google (http://www.glerts.com/beta).


1.1.2 Alerts

Google alerts - Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on the choice of query or topic. These can be emailed to the user’s gmail address or added to his or her Google Reader: www.google.com/alerts.
Yahoo alerts offer a similar service: http://alerts.yahoo.com

1.1.3 Keyword searches

The following tools search across social media applications; the keyword ‘qld premier’ has been entered as an example.

- Social mention (http://socialmention.com)
  – Example: http://socialmention.com/search?q=qld+premier&t=all&btnG=Search

- Day mix (http://daymix.com/)
  – Example: http://daymix.com/Qld-Premier/

- Who’s talkin (http://whostalkin.com/)
  – Example: http://whostalkin.com/search?q=qld+premier&x=0&y=0.

1.1.4 RSS feeds

Subscribe to RSS feeds in Twitter for keywords relating to the agency’s department or campaign.

Instructions on using Google Reader can be found online:

- Mashable – how to use google reader
  http://mashable.com/2008/12/07/how-to-use-google-reader/

- Google reader in plain English video
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSPZ2Uu_X3Y&feature=related

1.1.5 Analytics

Analytics software can provide details of websites linking to the agency website. This information can help discern where traffic is coming from, including official social media presences or other web and social media sources. By identifying these and reviewing the sources of traffic the user can analyze the nature of the links and potentially address issues and engage audiences in ways that meet the needs identified from social media chatter at the source of existing traffic.

1.1.6 Google search

View the Google search instructions to improve search results and especially the ability to search within websites to monitor relevant online content.
Search within a specific website:

Google allows the user to specify that his or her search results should come from a given website. For example, the query [ qatar site:nytimes.com ] will return pages about Qatar but only from nytimes.com. The simpler queries [ qatar nytimes.com ] or [ qatar New York Times ] will usually be just as good, though they might return results from other sites that mention the New York Times. The user can also specify a whole class of sites, for example [ qatar site:.gov ] will return results only from a .gov domain and [ qatar site:.qa ] will return results only from Qatari sites.

https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/136861
Appendix 6 Social Networks Aggregation

Social network aggregation is the process of collecting content from multiple social network services, such as MySpace or Facebook, into one unified presentation. The task is often performed by a social network aggregator, which pulls together information into a single location, or helps a user consolidate multiple social networking profiles into one profile.

All content appears in real time to other members who subscribe to a particular community, which eliminates the need to jump from one social media network to another, trying to keep an eye on one's interests.

Social network aggregation systems can rely on initiation by publishers or by readers. In the publisher-initiated aggregation systems, the publishers combine their own identities, which make their readers see all aggregated content once subscribed. In the reader-initiated systems the readers combine the identities of others, which has no impact to the publishers or other readers. The publishers can still keep separate identities for different readers.

PCWorld has identified top 5 such tools based on four criteria – affordability, scalability, support and update posting assistance (scheduling):

- **HootSuite**: The award-winning software’s user interface takes the form of a dashboard, and supports social network integrations for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Foursquare, MySpace, Wordpress, TrendSpottr and Mixi. Additional integrations are available via HootSuite’s App Directory, including Instagram, MailChimp, Reddit, Storify, Tumblr, Vimeo and YouTube. *HootSuite* uses the URL shortener ow.ly to shorten URLs submitted to its service.

  *HootSuite* acquired *Seesmic* in September 2012, another popular social network management tool. Other than many large companies and organizations, Obama administration is also a known user of *HootSuite*.

- **VerticalResponse**: The *VerticalResponse Social* service marries email and social media campaigns in a way that other tools do not. Usually people regard email and social media as separate islands, but bringing them together under the umbrella of one online marketing campaign makes much more sense.

  *VerticalResponse Social* schedules everything from single updates to entire campaigns up to 30 days in advance. It allows clients to set up their own custom content library of common websites for their industry, and it offers suggestions for content based on the nature of their
business. The chief advantage of this tool is that it is designed for professionals who think that they don't have the time for social media and are not tech-savvy.

- **Sprout Social**: Sprout Social's major advantages over other social media management tools lie in its user interface and in its detailed but easy-to-understand reports. It also provides the ability to assign tasks to team members, as well as a "Smart Inbox," which collects all social media messages in an organized inbox that can be managed from one dashboard.

  Sprout's feedback is also extremely useful. After an account is set up, it pulls together the follower demographics within 24 hours, and it tells the user what he or she could be doing better.

- **Sendible**: Sendible drills down on various tasks, giving its users the choice of posting to Facebook personal-page photo album, posting notes to Facebook page or profile, posting items to a LinkedIn Group or LinkedIn status, and so on. This attention to specific actions saves a user a lot of time, and it makes Sendible's cost over other tools well worth the investment for organizations that use social media more aggressively. Google Analytics monitoring and basic social media analytics come with the Marketer package.

- **Postling**: Postling blends social media analysis, posting, and reporting, but it also incorporates instant notifications for reviews of user’s business on TripAdvisor and Yelp, the two sites by which hospitality and restaurant businesses live and die. For any company involved in those industries, Postling is the obvious tool of choice. The inbox is similar to Sprout Social's in that it allows the user to deal with all mentions and messages from one place.

  Postling’s pricing structure makes it ideal for businesses that want to maintain a pared-down social media presence. If you need the scalability to add many accounts in the future, it may not be the best choice given its per-account pricing.

Please note that by providing examples as above, this document does not endorse use of a particular tool or application over others that are not mentioned in the list. The intent is to provide appropriate examples to the Government Agencies in order that they are able to further research and choose the tools or applications most suited to their needs. Government Agencies should ensure that the tools chosen by them, from the list above or otherwise, comply with requisite security standards or protocols and all applicable legislations and policies in the State of Qatar.
Appendix 7  Decision Tree - Social Media Response

Social Media Response Assessment

**DISCOVER**
- A post discovered about the agency
  - Is it positive or balanced?
    - Yes
      - "Concurrence" A factual or well-cited response, which may agree or disagree with the post, yet is not factually erroneous, a rant or rage, bashing or negative in nature.
    - No

**EVALUATE**
- "Unhappy customer" Is the posting due to negative experience?
  - Yes
    - Restoration - Rectify the situation and act upon a reasonable solution
  - No
- "Misguided" Are there erroneous facts in the posting?
  - No
  - Yes
- "Rager" Is the posting a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature?
  - No
  - Yes
- "Trolls" Is this site dedicated to degrading others?
  - No
  - Yes
- Do you want to respond to post to concur with or provide positive review?
  - Yes
  - No

**RESPOND**
- Let stand - Let the post stand – no response
- Fix the facts - Respond with factual information directly on the comment board
- Monitor only - Avoid responding to specific posts, monitor site for relevant information and comments. Notify management.

**Response Considerations**
- **Transparency** - Disclose your role at or connection with the agency
- **Sourcing** - Cite your sources by including hyperlinks, images, video or other references
- **Timelines** - Take time to create good responses. Don’t rush.
- **Tone** - Respond in a tone that reflects on the rich heritage of the agency
- **Influence** - Focus on the core content that will influence the audience positively

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### Appendix 8  Key Policy Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Target duration from the date of publishing this Policy</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Designate senior officer with sufficient authority to assume the e-Participation official’s responsibilities</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Senior Management of Government Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create a webpage dedicated to e-Participation activities in the Agency’s websites in both Arabic and English languages</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Senior officer assigned by the Government Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Publish agency news &amp; plans, senior leadership’s views and other interactive information on the e-Participation webpage in accordance with the terms of this Policy</td>
<td>3 months onwards - at least one activity per month</td>
<td>Senior officer assigned by the Government Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Establish or facilitate establishment of a national e-Participation portal</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>ictQATAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Link all Agencies’ e-Participation activities on their webpages to the national e-Participation portal</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Senior officer assigned by the Government Agencies and ictQATAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. First e-Participation implementation review</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>ictQATAR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9  Policy Compliance Checklist

Progress of implementation of this Policy at the Government Agencies shall be measured against the following broad checklist on an annual basis by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e-Participation Compliance Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has the Agency assigned e-Participation responsibilities to a senior officer in the Agency?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Has the Agency created an e-Participation webpage on their website addressing the policy requirements?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the Agency publishing information on the e-Participation webpage in both Arabic and English languages?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the Agency take up at least one e-Participation activity per month?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Does the Agency keep its online consultation documents updated, including summary of comments and updated final documents?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is the agency utilizing discussion forums of the national e-Participation portal for public consultation of its policies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does the officer assigned with the e-Participation responsibilities provide response to public query, comments on a timely basis?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ictQATAR may update or modify the above compliance checklist as it deems fit for monitoring progress of implementation of the e-Participation policy. ictQATAR may request the Agencies to perform a self-assessment and provide responses within 15 working days of such request. ictQATAR may request for further information or details during evaluation of Agencies’ self-assessment reports.
Appendix 10 Social Media Success Measures

Social media is an integral part of e-Participation. Tracking social media success may also help in assessing whether the Agencies are able to effectively engage the public in their e-Participation activities. Following metrics may be referred to help determine the success of the social media accounts.

Activity Metrics

- bounce rate
- brand mentions
- comments and trackbacks
- connections (between members)
- contributors
- interactivity (with other media)
- loyalty
- members, friends, followers
- number of groups (networks/forums)
- page views
- posts (ideas/threads)
- referrals
- tags/ratings/rankings
- time spent on site
- virility – spread of posts
- visitors/unique visitors

Activity Ratios

- frequency: visits, posts, comments by time period
- ratios: member to contributor; posts to comments; active to passive contributors, etc.

Customer service metrics

- quality and speed of issue resolution
- relevance of content, connections
- satisfaction
Results

- number of mentions (tracked via web or blog search engines)
- positive/negative listing ratios on major search engines
- positive/negative sentiment in mentions

The above is only a suggestive list of indicators. Government Agencies are free to choose from the above and others in determining the success criteria that best befits the Agencies’ needs.
Appendix 11  **Tips for Social Media Success**

Some tips for social media success:

1. **Get Buy-In.** Obtain support from senior leadership to commit time and resources. Make sure that management understands the implications of investment in a new and rapidly evolving medium.

2. **Develop a Strategy.** Avoid a reactionary, “scattershot” approach to social media engagement by developing a comprehensive social media strategy.

3. **Establish clear goals.** Set targeted outcomes. These might include increasing brand visibility and awareness, greater message penetration and promoting interest in events and in conventional media such as websites and e-newsletters.

4. **Identify key social media sites.** Don’t rush into joining new social media sites; consider first whether that medium will add value and allow your organization to achieve its social media goals. Build a relationship with local social media sites to ensure more brand visibility over time, and make sure you understand the policies of each social media account.

5. **Create a social media overseer.** Appoint a single, dedicated employee to oversee social media. Ideally that employee should have experience not only in the technical aspects of social media but also will possess a developed understanding of content requirements. If a team works on social media, make sure its style is consistent. Maintain only one voice on each social medium.

6. **Develop a response system.** Create a system for handling non-routine comments and complaints in a timely manner. Don’t respond to complaints with a single, generic reply; personalize responses to increase impact.

7. **Tailor content.** Monitor closely the length of social media content to match that content to the type of site and its users. Be selective in posting content. Don’t post overly promotional material. Don’t post or tweet the same content multiple times a day to avoid clutter.

8. **Promote interaction.** Take steps to ensure that social media content promotes interaction with your targeted audience. Adopt interactive tactics such as adding questions to the body of the post, utilizing the “discussions” feature on Facebook, and live-tweeting from events. Respond swiftly to user comments and inquiries.

9. **Prepare for criticism.** Prepare to be criticized by users. True engagement can be both positive and negative. Constructive feedback can be particularly useful to an organization or agency.
10. **Analyze traffic and user demographics.** Use social media analytics to analyze traffic and demographics. Sites such as Facebook and Twitter provide these statistics free of charge.

11. **Be patient.** Don’t expect sudden increases in site traffic or user feedback. Social media success builds over time. Remember that the quality of user interactions is more important than the quantity. Don’t depend too heavily on numbers to measure success.

12. **Anticipate change.** Prepare to re-evaluate strategy constantly to adapt to changes. The world of social media is very young, and the relative value of specific sites or strategies will evolve over time.
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