

# Policy Guidelines for Empanelment of Social Media Platforms

## INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (“MIB”), released a draft of social media advertisement policy guidelines titled ‘Policy Guidelines for Empanelment of Social Media Platforms with Bureau of Outreach and Communication’ on May 13, 2020 (“Policy Guidelines”). The Policy Guidelines will be valid for a period of 5 (five) years.

The MIB is responsible for disseminating information on government policies, schemes and programmes through multiple media of mass communication. It is also the focal point for policy matters related to the broadcasting sector, as well as for administering public service broadcasting (Prasar Bharati). The Bureau of Outreach and Communication (“BOC”) is a nodal organization for paid outreach programs through various media platforms on behalf of ministries and departments of the Government and acts as an advisory body to the Government on media strategy as well as provides communication solutions to ministries and departments of the Government.

## OBJECTIVE

The MIB has issued the Policy Guidelines in an attempt to regulate and standardize social media advertisement buying and outreach of Government ministries and

departments. The social presence of a number of ministries and departments of the Government as on date is limited to the social media handles of the respective ministry or department. The Policy Guidelines aim to target a larger audience, who may not necessarily be subscribers to such media handles and engage social media platforms on a payment basis to increase visibility of socially relevant messages.

## ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, a social media platform must fall within the criteria laid down under the Policy Guidelines. The Policy Guidelines, within the criteria, specifies the meaning of social media platform, the number of unique users that must be visiting the social media platform over a specified period of time, the platform being in operation with the same domain name for at least 6 (six) months and maintaining a minimum of 25 (twenty five) million unique users (from within India) per month (based on the data of 3 (three) months immediately preceding the date of application) and possessing an online panel with demonstrated credibility through which the space/inventory for advertisement is booked.

## TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT



The social media platforms interested in participating in advertising campaigns are required to apply in the format prescribed by the BOC and enter into an agreement with the BOC, the broad terms of which are annexed to the Policy Guidelines at Annexure A.

## **RATE AND PRICING**

Social media platforms operate on the basis of dynamic pricing/auction. BOC will participate in the bidding process for buying inventory/space for government messages. An indicative (*but not exhaustive*) list of models through which space/inventory is booked for social media campaigns is annexed to the Policy Guidelines at Annexure B. These include dynamic pricing with ceiling price, auction model, reach and frequency model.

The indicative (*but not exhaustive*) list of the type of messages that can be communicated on such social media platforms are annexed to the Policy Guidelines at Annexure C. These are texts, photo ads, video ads, carousel ads, unskippable video ads and collection ads.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF BOC AND THE MINISTRIES/ DEPARTMENTS**

### BOC:

- (i) Identifying relevant social media platforms for the outreach activity of the ministry/department. Preference to be given to social media platforms based in India.
- (ii) Preparing a media plan within the indicated budget wherein the suggested platforms and the expected deliverables will be indicated to the ministries/departments along with the tentative cost.

- (iii) Scheduling the activity in such a manner that more deliverables may be generated at a lesser cost wherever timelines for undertaking the activity permits such scheduling.
- (iv) Nominating personnel to execute and monitor the campaign and taking proper care to safeguard credentials.

### Ministries/ Departments:

- (i) Indicating to BOC, the social media page/handle which will be designated for the campaign activity and sharing the credentials (such as password) of the page/handle.
- (ii) Nominating personnel to execute and monitor the campaign.
- (iii) Conveying approval for outreach activity to BOC at least 5 (five) days in advance of the social media campaign.
- (iv) Placing 100% funds in advance with BOC for campaign to be run. If the actual expenditure exceeds the planned expenditure, the balance will be paid by the respective ministry/department to the BOC.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

- (i) Should not have been suspended/blacklisted or be under suspension by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology or any other ministry/department or agency/autonomous bodies/public sector undertaking of Government of India or any state governments/ union territories.



- (ii) Informing BOC of any change in domain address/access address, official address, bank account details, ownership, etc. within 7 (seven) days from any such change.
- (iii) Authorizing designated personnel for any communication with BOC and informing BOC of any change in such authorized personnel or their contact information.
- (iv) Providing a real time dashboard (which shows the actual quantified outcome of the campaign), dated reports and consolidated execution reports to the BOC.

## **GROUNDS FOR REVOCATION OF THE AGREEMENT**

- (i) Social media platform being in suspension by a government agency, as mentioned above.
- (ii) Failure to comply with applicable laws.
- (iii) Claims for payment made on the basis of false/incorrect information.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

In case of any dispute, efforts would be made to resolve it amicably. However, if the dispute is not resolved amicably, the courts in Delhi have jurisdiction over all disputes.

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