

**OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**  
**OF**  
**ACT EAST POLICY AFFAIRS**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

The Department of Act East Policy Affairs (AEPA) of the State Government has been set up in 2017 by an Executive Order in the form of a Notification of the Administrative Reforms & Training Department [*vide* No. AR 94/ 2016/ Pt-1/ 2 Dated Dispur, the 22nd May, 2017]; with the avowed intention of formulating, implementing and monitoring the policies of the State Government concerning the neighbouring and other foreign countries so as to reap the benefits of the implementation of the Act East Policy by the Central Government.

Engagement with such neighbouring and other foreign countries is potentially centred around three Cs: Connectivity, Commerce and Culture. Based on that, the slated objectives of the Act East Policy Affairs Department are:

1. **Socio-Cultural Exchange** *with* ASEAN and BBIN countries – taking into account the similarities in socio-cultural patterns, anthropological/ ethnic backgrounds, and proto-religious practices between peoples of NE States and the aforementioned countries;
2. **Economic Integration** *with* ASEAN and BBIN countries – *involving* seamless trade and commerce [*including* creation of Free Trade Zone and Integrated Border Townships], *as well as* technical and industrial collaboration;
3. **Seamless Connectivity** *with* ASEAN and BBIN countries – on the lines of *Panchapath* (**Roadways, Railways, Airways, Waterways** and **Information-ways**), including multi-modal and fast transportation system and effective telecommunication mechanism; and
4. **Hassle-free Movement of People** *with* ASEAN and BBIN countries – *through* opening of consulates/ Asst. High Commissioners' Offices of these countries in Guwahati, and having facilities for Visa-Free Travel/ Visa on Arrival for *bona-fide* people [*viz.* traders, officials and tourists].

Towards meeting its objectives, the Department [*vide* the Notification No. AR.94/2016/Pt-1/2 Dated Dispur, the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 of AR & T Deptt.] has been given the following functions as its broad mandate:

- i) Conduct of research and analysis in order to suggest to the State Government the areas of Act East Policy where the State can be stakeholders.
- ii) Preparation of policy/ schemes for reaping the benefits of Act East Policy, and translating such policy objectives to actions.

- iii) Identification of issues concerning Foreign Affairs, and playing of a creative role in the Foreign Policy making – especially in furthering the Act East Policy by suggesting effective measures.
- iv) Handling of the Non-Resident Affairs of the people of Assam.
- v) Any other programmes connected with the development of related areas.

As per the Notification, the detailed mandate of the Department would be finalized on the basis of the findings of a well guided research by the Department – wherein the areas of Act East Policy where the State can be stakeholders would be identified. On the basis of preliminary research and discussion with multifarious stakeholders, the detailed mandate of Act East Policy Affairs Department – comprising its role, modus operandi, functions, responsibilities and powers – has been delineated in black and white in the form of these Operating Guidelines.

## 2. DEFINITIONS –

The following terms shall have the meanings as mentioned alongside in the Operating Guidelines – unless otherwise defined.

- 1) Central Government: **Government of India**
- 2) Central Government Ministry: **Ministry of Government of India**
- 3) Central Government Department: **Department of Government of India**
- 4) Central Government Agency: **Agency of Government of India**
- 5) State Government: **Government of Assam**
- 6) Department of the State Government: **Department of Government of Assam**
- 7) State Government Agency: **Agency of Government of Assam**
- 8) Department: **Department of Act East Policy Affairs**
- 9) Secretary: **Secretary to the Government of Assam, Act East Policy Affairs Department**
- 10) Research and Development (R & D) Team: **Research and Development (R & D) Team of the Act East Policy Affairs Department**

## 3. ROLE –

The designated role of the Act East Policy Affairs Department would be 3 (three) pronged: *viz.*

- 1) agency seeking **expeditious implementation of key projects;**
- 2) body effecting **stakeholder integration;**
- 3) mechanism for **policy generation and documentation;** and
- 4) organization acting as the **front end counter of Assam Government in neighbouring and other foreign countries.**

#### 4. FUNCTIONS –

Based on that designated role, the delineated detailed mandate for the Department comprise the following functions:

- (1) As an agency seeking **expeditious implementation of key projects**:
  - i. Identification of ongoing projects of Central Government important for accomplishment of the 4 (four) stated objectives.
  - ii. Taking up with the implementing Central Government Ministry/ Department/ Agency for monitoring the implementation of such projects (as mentioned *vide i.*).
  - iii. Coordinating with other relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate smooth implementation of such projects (as mentioned *vide i.*).
  - iv. Devising of projects for the State Government for accomplishment of the 4 (four) stated objectives.
  - v. Identification of State Government Department/ Agency for actual implementation of such projects (as mentioned *vide iv.*).
  - vi. Handholding and monitoring the State Government Department/ Agency implementing such projects (as mentioned *vide iv.*).
  - vii. Providing a platform for coordination with other relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate smooth implementation of such projects (as mentioned *vide iv.*).
  - viii. Holding of meetings of Govt. Departments and agencies, as well as other stakeholders for reviewing such projects (as mentioned *vide iv.*).
  
- (2) As a body effecting **stakeholder integration**:
  - i. Acting as the Nodal Department of the Govt. of Assam for implementation of projects and works relating to the Act East Policy.
  - ii. Interaction with the different relevant Ministries/ Departments of the Central Govt. [*as enlisted under Schedule I*] from the side of the State Govt. – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy.
  - iii. Interaction on behalf of the State Government with relevant Central Government Agencies like NITI Aayog, North Eastern Council, DGCA, NHAI, NHIDCL, Indian Railways, IWAI, BSNL, ICCR, *et al.* [*as enlisted under Schedule IA*] – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy.
  - iv. Interaction on behalf of the State Government with relevant academic, trade and cultural institutions – both public and private – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy.

- v. Interaction on behalf of the State Government of Assam with the State Governments of other North Eastern States; as well as stake-holder Departments and Agencies of such State Governments [*viz.* Industries & Commerce, Home, Border Areas, PWD (Buildings & NH), PWD (Roads), Transport, Water Resources, Information Technology, Education, Culture, Tourism, Finance and Transformation & Development – *as enlisted under Schedule II*] – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy.
  - vi. Coordination among stake-holder Departments and Agencies of the State Government of Assam [*viz.* Industries & Commerce, Home, Border Areas, PWD (Buildings & NH), PWD (Roads), Transport, Water Resources, Information Technology, Education, Culture, Tourism, Finance and Transformation & Development – *as enlisted under Schedule II*] – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy.
  - vii. Facilitate coordination of the stake-holder Departments and Agencies of the State Government of Assam [*as enlisted under Schedule II*] with relevant external agency/ stakeholder – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy.
  - viii. Providing a single point window for Departments and Agencies of the State Government of Assam for taking up projects and other works in furtherance with the Act East Policy *vis-à-vis* the State of Assam.
  - ix. Effecting inter-Departmental coordination in the review meetings (as mentioned *vide* (1) viii.) and summits held for specific projects.
- (3) As a mechanism for **policy generation and documentation**:
- i. Providing a single point system for policy generation and documentation, project implementation and performance assessment, and other related aspects of the Act East Policy *vis-à-vis* the State of Assam.
  - ii. Setting up of a Think Tank involving eminent thinkers and policy-makers for charting the roadmap of Act East Policy.
  - iii. Engagement of the Think Tank with similar policy think tanks across the entire South and South Asian region; and
  - iv. Devising of policies and actionable points – taking care that the aspirations of the State and the region are respected and accommodated in the process.
  - v. Documentation of such policies, and conversion of actionable points into specific projects.
  - vi. Conduct of Feasibility Study (if required), and preparation of Detailed Project Reports of such projects (as mentioned *vide* v.)

- (4) **As front end counter of Assam Government in neighbouring and other foreign countries**
- i. Setting up of Front Desks of AEPA Department in (or under the aegis of) the Embassies/ High Commissions of India in ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – for facilitating Trade & Cultural Exchanges of these countries with Assam and other NE States.
  - ii. Handling of affairs of Non-Resident Assamese (*Pravasi Asomiya*) people through the Embassies/ High Commissions of India in ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – as well as other relevant foreign countries.
  - iii. Coordinating and handholding of the interactions and joint activities of other State Government Departments and Agencies with their counterparts and/ or other stakeholders in ASEAN and BBN bloc countries.
  - iv. Facilitation of trade delegations to and from ASEAN and BBN bloc countries.
  - v. Participation in summits and workshops in ASEAN and BBN bloc countries.
  - vi. Facilitation of educational and cultural exchanges with ASEAN and BBN bloc countries.

## **5. MODUS OPERANDI –**

The modus operandi of the Act East Policy Affairs shall involve the following:

- (1) Correspondence with Central Government Ministry/ Department/ Agency implementing projects in furtherance of the Act East Policy – for monitoring of such projects and facilitating coordination with local stakeholders.
- (2) Correspondence with local stakeholders to facilitate Central Government projects mentioned at (1).
- (3) Review of projects mentioned at (1) at a local level, and identify problems of implementation (if any). Seeking resolution of the problems on behalf of the State Government.
- (4) Devising of projects for the State Government for accomplishment of the 4 (four) stated objectives under Act East Policy through the medium of the Research and Development (R&D) Team and the Think Tank.
- (5) Identification of State Government Department/ Agency for actual implementation of such projects.
  - i) Correspond with such Departments/ Agencies concerned.
  - ii) Have meetings and working sessions to prepare DPRs, Plans and Estimates, etc.
  - iii) Ensure starting of the implementation of such projects by the Departments/ Agencies concerned.

- (6) Handholding the State Government Department/ Agency implementing such projects and regular monitoring of such projects by:
- i) soliciting regular progress reports;
  - ii) conducting joint inspections (if there is scope for that);
  - iii) coordinating with other relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate smooth implementation of such projects; and
  - iv) having regular review meetings with Govt. Departments and agencies, as well as other stakeholders for assessing progress of such projects and addressing problems that may arise in implementation.
- (7) Reviewing progress of projects and programmes being implemented by other State Government Departments and Agencies on their own in furtherance of the Act East Policy – by:
- i) receiving information/ intimation of such projects and programmes from the State Government Departments and Agencies concerned;
  - ii) soliciting regular progress reports;
  - iii) conducting joint inspections (if there is scope for that);
  - iv) coordinating with other relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate smooth implementation of such projects; and
  - v) having regular review meetings with Govt. Departments and agencies (if deemed necessary mutually).
- (8) Correspondence on behalf of the State Government of Assam with the State Governments of other North Eastern States [as well as stake-holder Departments and Agencies of such State Governments] for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy of mutual stake and/ or importance. In regard of such projects, the Department, in association with relevant stakeholder Department/ Agency of the State Government of Assam, shall –
- i) solicit and analyze reports;
  - ii) oversee joint inspections (if deemed necessary); and
  - iii) organize/ attend meetings for reviewing such projects and/ or ensuring proper coordination in implementation.
- (9) Correspondence on behalf of the State Government of Assam with relevant academic, trade and cultural institutions – both public and private – for effective implementation of ongoing and newly proposed projects under different facets of the Act East Policy. In regard of such projects, the Department shall –
- i) solicit and analyze reports;
  - ii) share findings with relevant stakeholder Department/ Agency of the State Government of Assam,

- iii) oversee joint inspections of the academic, trade and cultural institutions with relevant stakeholder State Government Department/ Agency (if deemed necessary); and
  - iv) organize/ attend meetings for ensuring proper coordination in implementation.
- (10) Organising regular general review meetings and project-specific summits for effecting inter-Departmental coordination.
- (11) Setting up of a Think Tank involving eminent thinkers and policy-makers for charting the roadmap of Act East Policy. The Think Tank shall engage in fruitful interaction with similar policy think tanks across the entire South and South Asian region.
- (12) The Research and Development (R&D) Team of the Department – comprising Research Officers, External Consultants and an OSD deputed from the Chief Minister’s Secretariat – shall:
- i) engage in policy generation and documentation, project implementation and performance assessment, and other related aspects of the Act East Policy *vis-à-vis* the State of Assam;
  - ii) devise such policies ensuring that the aspirations of the State and the region are respected and accommodated in the process;
  - iii) document such policies and deduce the actionable points therefrom;
  - iv) convert of actionable points into specific projects in coordination with the technical personnel of the relevant stakeholder Department/ Agency of the State Government; and
  - v) conduct Feasibility Study (if required), and prepare Detailed Project Reports of such projects in coordination with the technical personnel of the relevant stakeholder Department/ Agency of the State Government.
- (13) Setting up of Front Desks of AEPA Department in (or under the aegis of) the Embassies/ HCs of India in ASEAN and BBN Countries – for facilitating Trade & Cultural Exchanges of these countries with Assam.
- (14) Facilitation of trade delegations to and from ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – in association with Trade Bodies and the Industries & Commerce Department of the State Government.
- (15) Promote educational exchanges and technical collaboration with ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – in association with the Education and Science & Technology Departments respectively of the State Government.
- (16) Promote mutual tourism with ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – in association with the Tourism Department of the State Government and associated agencies like Directorate of Tourism and Assam Tourism Development Corporation.
- (17) Facilitation of cultural exchanges with ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – in association with Cultural Affairs Department of the State Government and

agencies like Indian Council for Cultural Exchange (ICCR) under the Ministry of External Affairs.

- (18) Participation in summits and workshops in ASEAN and BBN bloc countries – in association with the relevant stakeholder Department/ Agency of the State Government.

## 6. ORGANOGRAM –

(1) The Department shall comprise of the following structure:

- i) Additional Chief Secretary = 1 (one) number
- ii) Principal Secretary/ Secretary = 1 (one) number
- iii) Additional Secretary/ Joint secretary = 1 (one) number
- iv) Deputy Secretaries = 2 (two) numbers
- v) Officer on Special Duty (OSD) = 1 (one) number – *deputed from* Chief Minister's Secretariat.
- vi) Financial Advisor (FA) = 1 (one) number – *deputed from* Finance Department
- vii) Public Relations Officer (PRO) = 1 (one) number – *deputed from* Information & Public Relations Department
- viii) Senior Research Officer = 1 (one) number
- ix) Research Officers = 2 (two) numbers
- x) Senior Stenographers = 2 (two) numbers
- xi) Superintendent = 1 (one) number
- xii) Senior Administrative Assistants = 2 (two) numbers
- xiii) Junior Administrative Assistants = 4 (four) numbers
- xiv) Grade IV = 4 (Four) numbers

(2) The Department shall house a Think Tank – comprising eminent thinkers and policy-makers for guidance in matters of course of action. However, the role of the Think Tank shall be advisory, and it shall not be mandatory on the part of the Department to accept the advice of the Think Tank.

(3) The Department shall also have a Research and Development (R&D) Team – comprising the following personnel:

- i) OSD deputed from the Chief Minister's Secretariat.
- ii) The Senior Research Officer and the 2 (two) numbers Research Officers of the Department.
- iii) External Consultants – if deemed necessary by the Senior most Secretary of the Department.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibility of the Department shall be to deal with the following objective-wise subjects:

### **7.1 Connectivity –**

#### **7.1.1 Airways:**

7.1.1.1 Establishment and Maintenance of Direct Airlinks with ASEAN and BBN bloc countries

7.1.1.2 Upgradation of Guwahati Airport into a global airport, and upgradation and development of other existing airports of the State

7.1.1.3 Construction of new mega airport for Guwahati, as well as construction of green-field airports across the State.

#### **7.1.2 Roadways:**

7.1.2.1 Development of Mainland India – Bangladesh – North East India (MI-B-NEI) Corridors

7.1.2.2 Development of Road Access to Chittagong Port and other ports

7.1.2.3 Development of Road Access to South East Asia

7.1.2.4 Development of Internal Road Structure in Assam to complement the Road Access to and through South and South East Asia

#### **7.1.3 Waterways:**

7.1.3.1 Development of access to Chittagong, Mongla, and Sittwe Ports through Inland Waterways

7.1.3.2 Development of Port Townships/ Hubs

7.1.3.3 Development of night navigation facilities on Brahmaputra & Barak Rivers

7.1.3.4 Kaladan Project

#### **7.1.4 Railways:**

7.1.4.1 Railway Connectivity to Border Towns.

7.1.4.2 Railway Connectivity with and through Bangladesh

7.1.4.3 Railway Connectivity with and through ASEAN countries

7.1.4.4 Railway Connectivity with and through China

#### **7.1.5 Information-ways:**

7.1.5.1 Digital Connectivity from Cox Bazar Landing Station (CLS)

### **7.2 Trade & Industry –**

#### **7.2.1 Trade & Commerce**

7.2.1.1 Lifting of Tariff and Non-Tariff Trade Barriers

7.2.1.2 Strengthening of Border Trade Centres/ Integrated Check Posts

7.2.1.3 Motor Vehicle Agreements

7.2.2 Industry –

7.2.2.1 Industrial Development of North Eastern Region *vis-à-vis* Act East Policy

7.2.2.2 MSME Clusters

7.2.3 Logistics of Logistics & Background Infrastructure –

7.2.3.1 Development of Logistics

7.2.3.2 Development of Multi-Modal Logistic Hubs

7.2.3.3 Development of Air Cargo Terminal at Guwahati Airport

7.2.3.4 Development of Act East Cities

7.2.4 Other Vistas of Economic Cooperation –

7.2.4.1 Hydro-electricity and Solar Power

7.2.4.2 Investment of East and South East Asian Companies

7.2.4.3 Investment in South and South East Asian Countries

7.2.4.4 Handicrafts and Textiles

7.2.4.5 Other Avenues of Cooperation

**7.3 Tourism:**

7.3.1 Establishment of Mutual Tourism

7.3.2 Medical Tourism

**7.4 People-to-People Relations:**

7.4.1 Opening of the Consulates of ASEAN and BBN bloc countries in Guwahati

7.4.2 Easy Visa Regime and Relaxation of Restricted Area Permit (RAP) provisions for ASEAN and BBIN countries.

7.4.3 Pravasi Asomiya (Non-Resident Assamese/ Assamese Diaspora) Matters

7.4.4 Front Desks of Assam in ASEAN and BBN Countries

7.4.5 Recalibration of Foreign Policy

7.4.6 Press Relations

**7.5 Educational Relations:**

7.5.1 Ties between Universities

7.5.2 Technical Collaboration

7.5.3 Student Exchange Programmes

7.5.4 Topical Seminars & Workshops

7.5.5 Chapter of South Asian University in Assam

## 7.6 Cultural Relations:

7.6.1 Exchange of Cultural Troupes

7.6.2 Joint Celebration of Festivals

7.6.3 Research into Common Culture with ASEAN and BBN countries

7.6.4 Tai Connect.

## 8. POWERS

The Act East Policy Affairs Department shall have the following powers *vis-à-vis* other Departments and Agencies of the State Government

- 8.1 Any Department and/ or Agency of the State Government undertaking any project/ programme/ work/ initiative on matters relating to the Act East Policy has to intimate the Department about such project/ programme/ work/ initiative. The same applies to any District Administration and any Autonomous Council (within and outside the Sixth Schedule).
- 8.2 Any Department and/ or Agency of the State Government implementing such project/ programme/ work/ initiative on matters relating to the Act East Policy has to keep the Department in the loop, and inform about the progress of such project/ programme/ work/ initiative by giving regular reports in a periodicity mutually decided upon. The same applies to any District Administration and any Autonomous Council (within and outside the Sixth Schedule).
- 8.3 The Department may – based on the Think Tank or R&D Team input – initiate any project/ programme/ work/ initiative on matters relating to the Act East Policy, and identify any Department and/ or Agency of the State Government for implementation. The Department/ Agency of the State Government thus identified has to take up the implementation of such project/ programme/ work/ initiative; and prepare plans/ estimates accordingly.
- 8.4 When any Department and/ or Agency of the State Government implements such project/ programme/ work/ initiative on matters relating to the Act East Policy – initiated as per Para 8.3, it has to keep the Department in the loop, and inform about the progress of such project/ programme/ work/ initiative by giving regular reports in a periodicity mutually decided upon.
- 8.5 In case of projects/ programmes/ works/ initiatives on matters relating to the Act East Policy – initiated as per Para 8.3 or as per Para 8.1, the Department may solicit progress reports, financial reports, technical reports and any other type of reports. The implementing Department and/ or Agency of the State Government have to provide such reports to the Department.
- 8.6 In case of projects/ programmes/ works/ initiatives on matters relating to the Act East Policy – initiated as per Para 8.3, the Department may desire to conduct field visits and joint inspections (if applicable). The implementing Department and/ or Agency of the State Government have to facilitate such activity.

8.7 In case of projects/ programmes/ works/ initiatives on matters relating to the Act East Policy – initiated as per Para 8.3, the Department may organize meetings for reviewing progress thereof and/ or for ensuring coordination among stakeholders. The implementing Department and/ or Agency of the State Government have to attend such meetings and cooperate for ensuring their success.

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### **SCHEDULE I**

#### **Central Government Ministries associated with Act East Policy**

- i. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
- ii. Ministry of Development of North East Region (MoDONER)
- iii. Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)
- iv. Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
- v. Ministry of Railways (MoR)
- vi. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH)
- vii. Ministry of Shipping (MoS)
- viii. Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)
- ix. Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR)
- x. Ministry of Telecommunication (MoT)
- xi. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY)
- xii. Ministry of Culture (MoC)
- xiii. Ministry of Power (MoP)

### **SCHEDULE IA**

#### **Central Government Agencies associated with Act East Policy**

- i. NITI Aayog
- ii. North Eastern Council (NEC)
- iii. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)
- iv. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
- v. National Highways Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited
- vi. Indian Railways
- vii. Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)
- viii. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)
- ix. Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR)

### **SCHEDULE II**

#### **State Government Departments associated with Act East Policy**

- i. Industries & Commerce Department
- ii. Home Department
- iii. Department of Border Areas Development
- iv. Public Works Department (Roads)
- v. Public Works Department (Buildings & National Highways)

- vi. Water Resources Department
- vii. Information Technology Department
- viii. Education Department
- ix. Cultural Affairs Department
- x. Tourism Department
- xi. Finance Department
- xii. Transformation & Development Department
- xiii. Transport Department
- xiv. Agriculture Department
- xv. Health Department