

## eAbgari

### Objective of the Project

eAbgari project is a strategic administrative reform initiative of West Bengal State Excise Department leveraging state-of-the-art modern technology to achieve the government's mandate of (a) eradicating the manufacture, distribution, supply and sale of illicitly distilled / counterfeit / non-duty paid / spurious intoxicants, (b) clandestine transport of rectified spirit, (c) supervision for proper use of alcoholic spirits, including medicinal and industrial spirits, and lifesaving narcotic drugs and (d) socially regulate a sector which has far reaching public health and law and order implications so as to minimize the social and public health import while safeguarding the revenue collection from excisable articles.

*The key objectives of eAbgari project include:*

- To enable the department in generating actionable information for effectively dealing with spurious intoxicants for safeguarding public health
- To aid with improved MIS for control over the movement of intoxicants for maintaining the security, peace and harmony in society
- To enable effective, efficient and equitable revenue collection through greater traceability, transparency and accountability in tax administration and detection of tax evasion by ensuring all liquor available in the state is sourced and sold through legal channels
- To have a robust grievance redressal system to enable collection of complaints, thereby increasing enforcement activities against manufacture, supply, distribution and sale of illicit and spurious intoxicants
- To enable execution of key internal functions of department in a timely, transparent, accessible manner and through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce

*The key functional blocks of eAbgari project include: -*

- Seamless online communication among all excise officials across the state, all licensees, administrative departments & other stakeholders through workflow based systems hosted in state excise portal <https://www.wbexcise.gov.in>
- Technology oriented Business Process Re-engineering
- Focus on enforcement activities, arresting revenue leakage and revenue reconciliation using Business Intelligence (BI)
- Reduce activity cost, total process cycle time & waiting time for the stakeholders and thereby increasing throughput of the system
- Multiple channels of communication, with several closer access points for user convenience including Pull/Push SMS, Email, Mobile Apps, Helpdesk and Online services.
- Online collection of data from the lowest level in state excise supply chain to build centralized databank containing relevant information of regulatory activities, licensees, registered liquor brands, production and movement of excisable goods and transaction of revenues
- Reconciliation of every drop of spirit imported or manufactured
- 360 degree profile of around 6000 licensees and 3,568 registered brands
- Automated supply chain management for excisable goods
- Pendency checker for tracking process pendency at all levels
- Online dynamic dashboard for excise officials/licensees
- Extracting process status information or authentication of permits/passes or SKUs of packaged liquor on the field through Bar Codes and QR Codes or through free Pull SMS or Mobile app.
- Ensuring supply of life saving drugs to CCUs within 90% reduced time

- Supply of medicinal spirits for manufacture of homeopathic and ayurvedic preparations
- GIS tracking of tankers carrying bulk spirit
- Electronic audit trail to ascertain authenticity of information
- GPS mapping of 5,750 excise establishments enabling effective policy interventions
- Processing of around 84,70,00,000 QR code based security holograms to identify counterfeit liquor bottles
- Reporting of around 19,000 Enforcement Raids and initiation of 1,77,091 Criminal cases
- Around 11,00,000 system generated Alert SMS
- Generation of around 41,00,000 Permits / Passes for movement of spirit/liquor to licensee premises, hospitals and educational institutions

eAbgari has been the single most transformational factor in which the Excise Department functions and has greatly increased the department's enforcement and regulatory capabilities through ICT driven process reengineering. While enforcement activity centrality remains at the core of the initiative, eAbgari actively partners in the socio-economic development sector through a robust revenue generation apparatus and effective tax administration.

### **Beneficiary of the Project**

eAbgari offers free of charge 'anytime anywhere' services to all its stakeholders, significantly reducing cost of compliance. The stakeholders not only reap tangible benefits of the accuracy and efficiency of eAbgari, but also through its sensitive approach to deal with grievances/ feedbacks.

*The project is primarily directed at: -*

- Medical Hospitals intending to procure/distribute lifesaving drugs (G2C)
- Educational Institutions / Research Organizations procuring spirits for research purposes (G2C)
- Around 6,000 licensed Liquor Retailers, Manufacturers, Wholesalers & Distillers doing business in West Bengal (G2B)
- Members of Citizen applying for new license or intending to lodge grievance (G2C) informing illegal activities pertaining to illicit liquor
- Liquor Consumers intending to check authenticity of packaged liquor through scanning of QR coded holograms or texting the serial number of hologram to fetch product details as PULL SMS (G2C)
- Excise Officials at various levels across the state engaged in enforcement activities and safeguarding the revenue collection from excisable articles (G2E)
- Government to (a) monitor excise crime through enhanced IT driven regulatory capabilities, (b) track the production, distribution and sale of liquor in West Bengal and monitor the inventory of foreign liquor and country spirit manufactories, trade warehouses and liquor retail outlets throughout the state and (c) arrest revenue leakage through spirit & revenue reconciliation using eAbgari BI (G2G)

*The secondary stakeholders of eAbgari project are: -*

- Treasuries & Banks – facilitating hassle-free online government revenue receipts (G2G)
- Other Administrative Departments integrated with eAbgari through web services e.g. (a) State Commercial Tax collecting sales tax on packaged liquor (b) Police Administration for issuance of NOC while granting excise licenses or permission for late closure of retail outlets (G2G)
- Excise Authorities & Licensees of other States & foreign countries importing from or exporting to West Bengal (G2G and G2B)
- Citizens of other states intending to check authenticity of packaged liquor imported from West Bengal (G2C)

## Coverage – Geographical and Demographic

eAbgari project is built on the methodology of “Reduced discretion - Electronic workflow - Electronic service delivery” adopting a web-enabled delivery mechanism implemented at <https://wbexcise.gov.in> to ensure the delivery of services in a timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable manner.

- To ensure user convenience, multiple channels of communication are in place with several closer access points to make comprehensiveness of reach of faceless services including Online services, Pull/Push SMS, Email, Mobile Apps and dedicated Helpdesk. Around 11,00,000 system generated SMS were sent in last 2 years.
- The excise offices located all over West Bengal (329 in total) act as extended delivery centres. Utmost care is taken so that the services are provided in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce.
- Almost all agency Banks in West Bengal are integrated with eAbgari through GRIPS portal for hassle-free online deposition of excise duties/fees through secured channels for transfer of money.
- Around 4,000 Medical Hospitals / Nursing homes located across the state connect eAbgari online while intending to procure/distribute lifesaving drugs for CCUs
- More than 100 Educational Institutions spread across West Bengal avail online e-services of eAbgari to obtain spirits for research purposes
- Around 6,000 Excise Licensed establishments (Liquor Distilleries, Manufacturers, Wholesalers & Retailers) located across the state work with eAbgari for putting requisition towards (a) Renewal of license (b) Registration of packaged liquor labels and (c) Issuance of Permits/Passes for movement of liquor within West Bengal and Import/Export to/from outside the state, Submission of Periodical (daily/monthly) e-Return, etc.
- Over 5,000 Excise Officials of the Excise Directorate, administering regulatory measures and engaged with enforcement activities to prevent loss of health and life across West Bengal, connect with eAbgari through its online e-services.

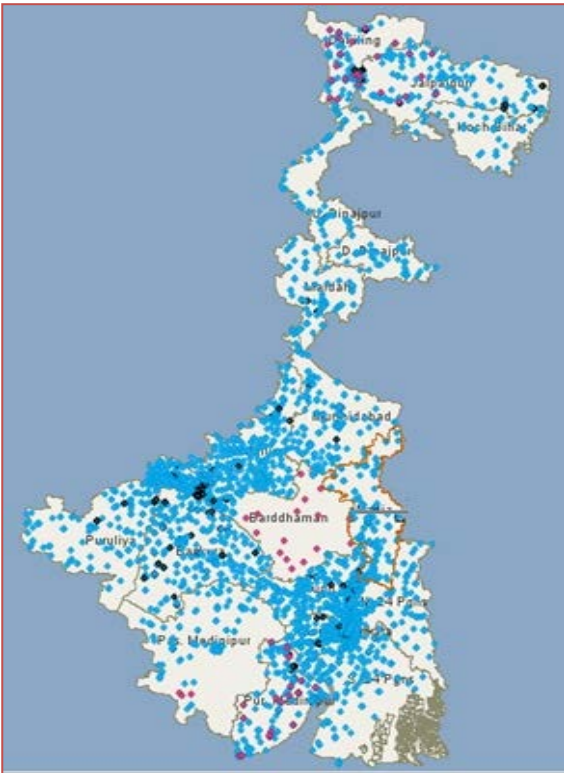
Primary Stakeholders		 <p>The project covers all stakeholders in Excise Value Chain in the State of West Bengal</p>	Secondary Stakeholders	
Excise Licensees (~ 6000)				Excise Nodes of Other States
Medical Hospitals (~ 4000)				Treasuries & Banks
Educational Institutions (~ 100)				Other Admin. Departments
Citizen of West Bengal (~9 crore)				Citizens of other States

- Members of Citizen from around 9 crore population access eAbgari online/mobile phones while applying for new license or intending to lodge grievance or intending to check authenticity of packaged liquor through scanning of QR coded holograms or texting the serial number of hologram to fetch product details as PULL SMS.
- Web services are made available in eAbgari to facilitate other administrative departments e.g. Commercial Tax Directorate, Police Administration for exchange of data
- The Call Centres located at State Secretariat and Excise Directorate is accessible to all stakeholders for immediate assistance 7 days a week.
- eAbgari has provision for easy and convenient services to its stakeholders across globe through email.
- An Online Grievance module is available for the benefit of members of citizen & stakeholders, through the eAbgari website.

- Written queries, grievances and letters can be sent to the IT Cell administrating eAbgari for its early redress thorough an elaborate digital workflow.
- eAbgari extends service coverage to its stakeholders not only within the entire state, but also to the stakeholders located in other states & abroad, that fall within the ambit of Bengal Excise Act 2012.

Practically anyone with an internet connection or mobile phone device can access the services being delivered by West Bengal State Excise through eAbgari.

### Number of delivery centres



eAbgari project works on Spoke-Hub model, where eAbgari hosted at National Data Centre is the hub for e-delivery of services to all its stakeholders.

The excise offices located all over West Bengal act as extended delivery centres through the e-office model to provide helpdesk and support services to eAbgari stakeholders on request.

This includes:-

- 8 Excise Divisions
- 27 Excise District Offices
- 87 Excise Range Offices and
- 266 Excise Circle Offices

The distribution of such excise establishments (excise offices & around 6000 excise licensee locations) are pointed in the *West Bengal State Excise Map* derived through GPS.

Besides, helpdesks manned by qualified ICT professionals are operational at State Secretariat and Excise Directorate under the supervision of NIC and IT Cell of Excise Directorate.

### Geographical Coverage

- (a) National Level – No. of State covered
- (b) State / UT Level – No. of District covered
- (c) District Level – No. of Blocks covered

#### Primary Stakeholder

1

20

344

#### Secondary Stakeholder

eAbgari covers also rest **28** States & **7** Union Territories of India which intend to import from or export to West Bengal.

Besides, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and other foreign countries are covered in eAbgari Supply Chain Management.

All the 20 administrative districts, including the 344 Development Blocks within such districts, in the State of West Bengal are covered under the eAbgari project, viz., Bankura, Bardhaman, Birbhum, Purba Medinipur, Hooghly, Purulia and Paschim Medinipur under Burdwan Division; Coochbehar, Darjeeling, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur under Jalpaiguri Division; and Howrah, Kolkata, Murshidabad, Nadia, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas under Presidency Division.

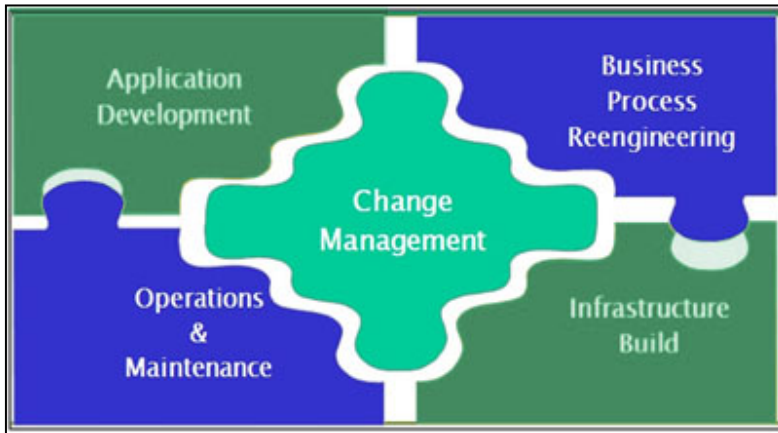
Besides, the Excise Departments & Licensees of other states & union territories of India intending to import from West Bengal or doing export to this state are also covered by eAbgari project.

Though the project is primarily targeted at businesses engaged in manufacture, distribution and trade in liquor as also the health care sector in so far as procurement and distribution of life saving narcotic medicine is concerned, the benefits accrue to the entire population of the State (~9.12 crores as per Census 2011).

Also, 100 per cent of the population can access the citizen centric services offered under the eAbgari project.

### Extent of Process re-engineered

The reengineering initiative involved the implementation of Information Technology solutions for departmental processes. This was done through the “eAbgari” project developed and implemented with the technical assistance of National Informatics Centre, and it has been the single-most transformational factor in the way the Excise department functions.



eAbgari is developed as an ICT-enabled platform that would make it easier for liquor retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers to transact business with the department, while, at the same time, provide the departmental authorities an effective and efficient mechanism to regulate the manufacture and sale of liquor in the state and carry out the enforcement activities.

It has been designed as a system which, while ensuring timely and transparent delivery of the department’s services to its stakeholders, would

also check the evasion of state excise taxes and ensure that all liquor available in the state is sourced and sold through legal channels.

The key components of the eAbgari project includes web-based mechanisms for grant and renewal of state excise licenses, issue of permits and passes for the import, export and transport of liquor, registration of brands of liquor manufactured or sold in the state, automated inventory management of liquor at manufactories, wholesalers and retailers, e-payment of excise duties and fees, GPS-based mapping of liquor businesses in the state and grievance-handling systems. Seamlessly integrating a wide array of modern ICT technologies - the web, bar-codes and QR codes, SMS, BI Tools, GIS - eAbgari has significantly reduced service-delivery times for the West Excise Department and has greatly enhanced the department’s regulatory capabilities.



Specifically, state excise process standardization & simplification are done through technology enabled business process re-engineering in e-Abgari to render the following e-Services:-

#### G2C Services

- Robust Grievance lodging mechanism
- Delivery of life saving drugs to CCUs within 90 % reduced time and ease of availability
- Web based universal access to the services offered by the department

- Enhancement of enforcement activities through use of GI tools, use of anti-evasion tools like GPS based tracking of spirit movement and real time monitoring of preventive operations of the department
- Hassle free and easy availability of laboratory spirits for educational institutions
- Availability of information related to administrative process flows for services rendered
- Pendency checker and service request status information through the web and SMS services

#### *G2B Services*

- Grant and renewal of State Excise licenses
- Issuance of Permits/Passes for Import/Transport/Export of Bulk Spirit & Packaged Liquor
- Registration of labels for Packaged Liquor
- Enabling hassle free collection mechanism for Excise duties and fees thru' ePayment Gateway
- Automated inventory management at business premises

#### *G2G Services*

- 360-degree profile of licensees of the department, brands registered in the State, and various permits and passes requisitioned and executed
- Use of Business Intelligence tools in data aggregation for administrative intervention and policy formulation
- Plugging of revenue loopholes
- Streamlining and systematizing Inter-departmental and Intra-Departmental information resulting in increased efficiency in Administration, cutting down response times and delivering better services
- Dynamic dashboards for officers for monitoring of pendency and traceability of decisions across the hierarchical set up for fixing up responsibility and accountability
- Reconciliation of every drop of spirit imported or manufactured.

#### *G2E Services*

- Digital archiving of documents & information
- Easy & error free record maintenance and data retrieval
- Easy access to rules regarding their domain of work through State Excise Portal & Knowledge Intranet
- Anti-evasion tools built into the system for checking frauds and malpractices and authenticating payment information of Excise taxes by assesses

### **Online Service Delivery and Electronic Collection of Data**

In general, the introduction of ICT tools re-engineered the department's processes in two ways:

- (a) The department's services are now delivered online. This has eliminated entire administrative layers involved in the processing of service requests. Earlier, service requests had to be made through paper applications, which had to travel from table to table, and involved an enormous amount of paperwork.

After the implementation of eAbgari, liquor manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers make most service requests – applications for Import Permits, License Renewals, Registration of Brands etc. – online. The eAbgari software validates the requests for compliance with existing rules and procedures.

As most of the scrutiny work/validation are done by eAbgari system itself, fewer officials are now involved in the processing of the requests. This has drastically reduced application processing times as well as chances of error in comparison the manual system.

Issuance of online acknowledgement with id.no. for each request of service has been incorporated to facilitate the stakeholder to track the process status any time from the online system or PULL SMS.

With centralized database in place, some distinct features are embedded in eAbgari towards better online service delivery e.g. (a) Unique Id. No. across the state for each licensee, (b) Unique codification of licensee premises (thru' incorporation of data from state land records department), (c) Issuance of statutory signed documents to stakeholders in decentralized manner needed for producing outside West Bengal e.g. Authorization Slip for importing excisable consignments from other states etc.

Deposition of excise duties/fees through online government payment gateway (GRIPS) integrated with eAbgari is made mandatory by the Government. This facilitates excise licensees & applicants for new license to deposit requisite amount of duties/fees (as calculated by eAbgari) online 24x7. It has significant impact from the perspectives of both Service Requester and Excise Official. The stakeholder need not take regular pain for deposition of duties/fees in Banks. On the other hand, dealing excise officials need not check the authenticity of challan from treasuries. This, in turn, helped the stakeholders to do more business, and hence more revenues are getting generated in government account.

(b) Collection of data – regarding revenue, sale, imports, crime etc. – is now done electronically. Relevant, actionable data is now available in real-time to Excise officials across the entire hierarchy.

## **Specific Areas Re-engineered**

The specific areas where processes have been re-engineered are:-

### **❖ Workflow based System for Grant of New Excise License**

- e-Application by Members of Citizen for Grant of New Excise License
  - ✓ e-Payment of requisite Fees as guided by eAbgari
  - ✓ Uploading of relevant documents
  - ✓ e-Submission of Application to concerned Excise District Superintendent
- e-Issuance of Acknowledgement to Applicant
- Workflow based e-Actions on submitted Application and e-collection of site inspection reports
- e-Issuance of Excise License

### **❖ Workflow based System for Grant of License for the Next Period of Settlement (Renewal)**

- e-Application by Excise Licensees for Grant of License
  - ✓ e-Payment of requisite Fees as guided by eAbgari
  - ✓ Uploading of relevant documents
  - ✓ e-Submission of Application to Range Officer
- e-Issuance of Acknowledgement to Excise Licensee
- e-Acting on Application by Excise Officer either to Hold on or, to Forward the Application to Excise Collector
- e-Acting on Forwarded Application by Excise Collector to
  - ✓ Seek Clarification or
  - ✓ e-Issuance of Excise License for the Next Period of Settlement

❖ **Workflow based System for Label Registration of Packaged Foreign Liquor (FL) & Packaged Country Spirit (CS)**

- e-Application for Label Registration
  - ✓ e-Payment of requisite Fees as guided by eAbgari
  - ✓ Uploading of relevant documents
  - ✓ e-Submission of Application to Deputy Excise Commissioner of FL & CS
- e-Issuance of Acknowledgement
- Workflow based e-Actions on submitted applications
- e-Issuance of Label Registration Certificate

❖ **Workflow based System for Import Permit-cum-Pass for (a) Bulk Spirit (b) SDS, Methanol (c) Spirit for Medicinal/R&D Purposes to Hospitals/Educational Institutes**

- e-Requisition by Licensee for Import Permit-cum-Pass
- e-Issuance of Bar-coded Import Permit-cum-Pass by Competent Authority
- e-Receipts of Imported Consignment & automatic updating of Stock
- e-Issuance of Excise Verification Certificate (EVC) by Competent Authority

❖ **Workflow based System for Import Permit-cum-Pass for Packaged Foreign Liquor**

*Packaged Foreign Liquor can be imported from other states on payment of duty. The e-Abgari system enables the importer to place requisition and deposit relevant duty/fee at his own convenience. Besides, as the database for Registered Brands are maintained in e-Abgari, it is automatically ensured that Licensee can import only those brands which are registered at Excise Directorate for current financial year. Information on the status of the requisition is available to the importer on real time basis.*

- e-Requisition for Import Permit-cum-Pass for Packaged Foreign Liquor
- Acting on the Requisition electronically by the Competent Authorities
- e-Issuance of Bar-coded Import Permit-cum-Pass for Packaged Foreign Liquor printed on Security Paper supplied by the Government Press
- e-Receipts of Imported Consignment & automatic updating of Stock
- e-Issuance of Excise Verification Certificate (EVC)

❖ **Stock Inventory System for Foreign Liquor / Country Spirit Manufactory, Manufactory adjacent Trades, Exclusive Trades**

a. Manufactory

- e-Receipts of Spirit
- e-Stock Inventory of Strong Spirit (SST) VAT
- e-Issuance of Spirit to Blending & Reduction (BRT) VAT for production of a Brand of Specified Batch
- e-Issuance of QR Code based Adhesive Labels for pasting on Packaged Liquor
- e-Recording of Produced Packaged Foreign Liquor – Measure, Total Cases/Bottles
- e-Transfer of Produced Bottles to the Stock of Adjunct Bond
- Real Time / Daily / Monthly Stock Inventory of Spirit in Manufactory

b. Warehouse



- e-Receipts from Manufactory OR e-Receipts through Import from Other States
- e-Issuance of Bottles to Trades through De-bonding (Transport Pass)
- e-Stock Inventory of Packaged Liquors

c. Trades

- e-Receipts from Manufactory OR e-Receipts through Import from Other States
- e-Issuance of Bottles to Trades/Retails through Transport Pass
- e-Stock Inventory of Packaged Liquors

❖ **Workflow based System for Transport Pass for Packaged Foreign Liquor / Country Spirit**

*For movement of Liquor within the state, Transport Pass is necessary. The e-Abgari automatically determines the type of transport considering the nature of license of the Consignee & Consignor. Besides, as the database for Stock is maintained in e-Abgari, it is automatically ensured that the Consignee can place a requisition for only those brands which have adequate balance in the Consignor's stock.*

- e-Requisition for Transport Pass for Packaged Liquor
- e-Issuance of Transport Pass for Packaged Liquor
- e-Receipts of Transported Consignment
- Automatic updating of Stock at both Consignee & Consignor ends

❖ **Daily/Monthly e-Return for Manufactory, Bond-cum-Trade, Exclusive Trades & Retail Licensees**

- Receipts of Spirit / Packaged Foreign Liquor
- Issuance of Spirit / Packaged Foreign Liquor
- Excise Duty / Fee Deposited

❖ **Collection and Aggregation of data regarding revenue, production and sale of liquor, excise-related crimes and enforcement activities**

- Monthly Online e-Reporting System for Intoxicant Consumption & Revenue Receipts by Excise Collectors
- Online Daily Preventive Raid e-Reporting System by Excise Collectors of all districts

❖ **e-Bond Value Register (e-BVR) and e-PL Account Register**

*Most Important Statutory Registers at Manufactories indicate (a) the eligibility for Under Bond Import/Transport of spirit and (b) Status of Revenue Deposition at Government Accounts*

- Automatic Recording of Transactions (Credit & Debit)
- Generation & Printing of Monthly & Yearly Registers

❖ **SMS based e-Services at State Excise Portal**

- Aims to utilize the massive reach of mobile phones and harness the potential of mobiles to enable easy and round-the-clock access to G2B, G2C & G2G services

- PUSH SMS: Auto-sending of SMS to Excise Licensees, Excise Officers in the events of Requisition Submission for Permits/Passes by Excise Licensees, Requisition Forwarding by Excise Officers, Permit /Pass Generation by Competent Authorities, Label Registration Certificate Issuance etc.
- PULL SMS: Allows the Stakeholders to request for and receive information pertaining to Application/Requisition/Permit/Pass as an SMS. All anybody needs to do is SMS: - *WBGET <Sub-Keyword><Full or, Part of Requisition/Permit/Pass No.>* and send it to 9231025205.

#### ❖ e-Chemical Examination Laboratory

- To streamline the process of chemical examination of samples and seized articles and to monitor the disposal of articles analyzed
- E-Submission of Requisition for Chemical Analysis of both Industrial & Court Case Samples by Stakeholders
- Receipt of Physical Samples & Generation of Receipts
- e-Allotment of Sample Testing
- e-Generation of Sample Analysis Results for E-Issuance to the Applicant

#### ❖ e-Court Case Monitoring

*Because of the enormous volume of pending cases, it was becoming very difficult for the Law Cell of the Excise Directorate to have the life cycle details of a Court Case within a stipulated period of time, since cases may drag on for years. Therefore it was felt that an e-monitoring system needs to be developed.*

- Ensures details on engagement of Lawyers, Court Case life cycle management, Case wise Petitioner List & Respondent List, Hearing Details and Case wise status enquiry by the intended stake holders
- Ease of Monitoring of Court Cases for Excise department with combinational query features
- Less time-consumption for searching a specific case and all its related cases (Appeals against the said case & the cases which lead to this case)

#### ❖ e-Grievance Redressal

*To ensure that the Excise Licensees & Citizens get responsive, accountable and transparent administration, redress of citizens' grievances is one of the most important initiatives of West Bengal Excise Department. The Public Grievance Monitoring System (PGMS) is made available in Excise Directorate Portal with an objective of speedy redressal and effective monitoring of Grievances.*

- Online Registration of Grievance
- Generation of Grievance Id. & Acknowledgement
- Auto-SMS to the Complainant acknowledging receipt of Grievance
- Auto-SMS Alert to Officer-In-Charge with which Grievance is related
- Auto-SMS sent to Complainant informing Action Taken

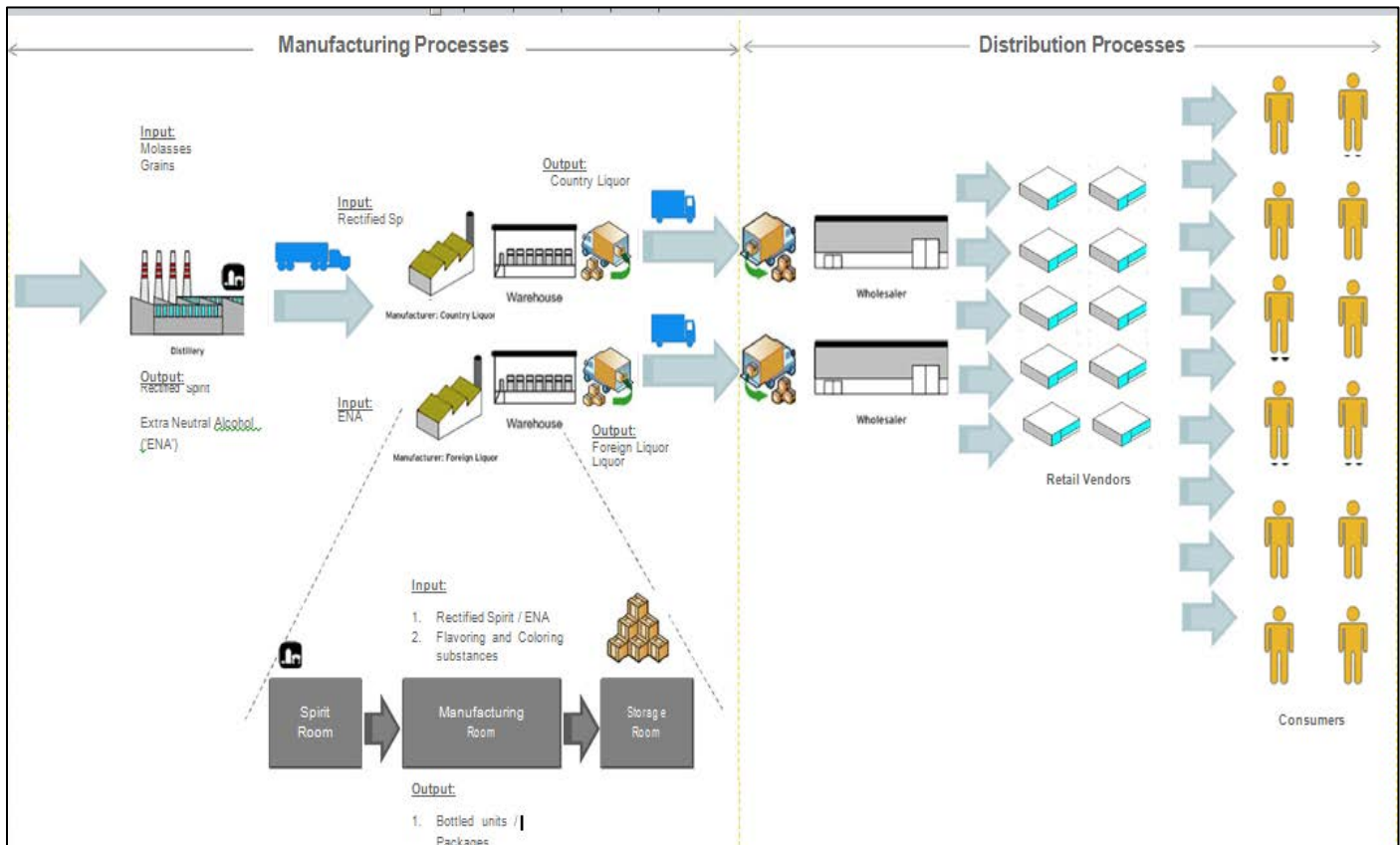
#### ❖ Facilitating to check authenticity of Packaged Liquor

*To ensure that all packaged liquor are sourced from legal channel, QR Coded Adhesive Labels are generated for pasting on packaged liquor bottles. This has helped (a) to arrest revenue leakage from government*

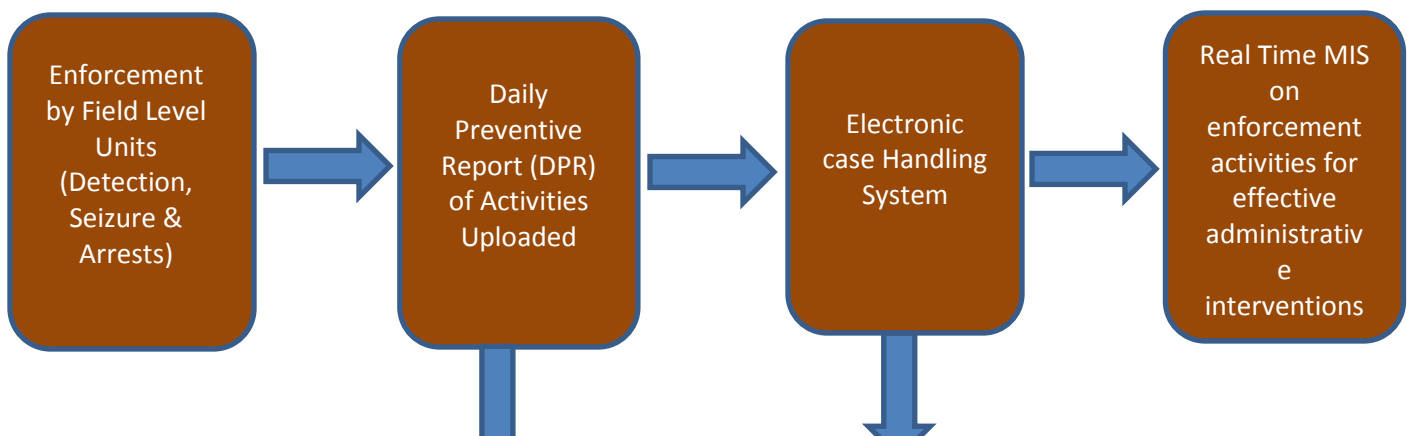
perspective and (b) to facilitate consumer to check authenticity of packaged liquor and thereby to avoid health hazards due to consumption of illicit liquor.

- Unique random numbers are generated online through eAbgari to generate QR Coded Adhesive Labels for pasting on liquor bottles.
- The QR Coded Labels are both physically & logically tagged with liquor bottles of specific batch of production.
- On scanning the QR Codes pasted on tops of liquor bottles, every characteristics of bottles are made available, e.g. Brand Name, Manufacturer Name, Measure, Production Batch No. & Date, MRP etc.

### Spirit Flow: Production to End Consumer



### Enforcement & Regulation



## **A Before-and-After Analysis**

A “Before and After” analysis of the process reengineering initiative would reveal the following:

### *Before:*

- Applicants had to submit manual, paper applications for Import Permits
- The processing of those applications would take a long time – in many cases, a month or more
- The applicants needed to visit the office physically to be updated about the status of his application
- The excise authorities had limited means to verify the authenticity of some of the details that the applicants would mention in the application (e.g. the Way Bill Number, the details of payment of the applicable fees and duties etc.)
- It was difficult to verify the authenticity of documents like Import Permits, Excise Licenses, tax-payment challans etc.
- Tax-payers had to pay their taxes by physically visiting banks, and using manual challans
- Collection of data was a manual-intensive process
- Citizens and government officials alike had limited means to verify the authenticity of liquor bottles available in the state

### *After:*

- Applications are submitted online
- The processing of application has been cut down to a 1-3 days
- The applicant can check the status of their applications online, and they also get automated SMS alerts regarding the status of their applications
- The authenticity of most information provided by the applicants can easily be verified by excise officers. For example, the authenticity of tax-payment challans can be verified online. Way Bill data is validated through integration with the database of the Commercial Tax department
- The authenticity of documents like permits, tax-challans etc. can easily be verified by excise officers through a “pull SMS” service, or online, or, in case of Import Permits and Transport Passes, by scanning the barcodes printed on the permits and passes
- Tax-payers can pay Excise duties and fees online. In 2015-16, 100 % of Excise Revenue was collected through the online payment system, up from 0% in 2011-12.
- Data is collected electronically through various mechanisms viz.
  - Data regarding the sale of liquor and payment of excise taxes is captured and aggregated through the electronic returns that liquor wholesalers and retailers have to mandatorily submit online on a monthly basis

- Data on the collection of excise revenue is captured through an M.I.S. linked to the government's online payment system
- Data regarding inventories of liquor are captured and aggregated through M.I.S. linked to the electronic Import Permit and Transport Pass modules
- Data regarding licenses, registered brands of liquor etc. are captured through the relevant application processing systems
- Data regarding pendency of applications for grant of new Excise licenses and status remark trails are available both to the applicants as well as the departmental officers through the relevant applicant processing systems for monitoring and administrative intervention
- Data related to processing of Miscellaneous Cases against erring licensees, including offences committed, date of hearing fixed by the competent authority, date and manner of disposal with details etc. are available through the electronic case handling and processing systems
- Data regarding excise raids, seizures and arrests are collected through a mechanism of uploading the figures by officers concerned through specific software modules
- The authenticity of liquor bottles can be verified by scanning QR-codes on liquor bottles or through a "Pull SMS" service.

### **Communication and dissemination strategy and approach used**

The success of a project lay in not only developing a good technology enabled solution, but also in ensuring that the solution is citizen centric and the stakeholders reap benefits from the outcomes.

The project team recognized the importance of regular communication with all the stakeholders to understand their expectations as also to engage them for using its varied features. eAbgari based its approach and methodology on the principles of USAGE that involved:

Uniformity	Uniform interpretation of law & procedures
Simplification	Simplification & Standardization of Backend & Frontend processes
Accessibility	Services at the doorsteps of Citizens/Licensees – any time any where
Good Governance	Robust framework for enforcement activities and revenue reconciliation
Empowerment	Empowering the Citizens with information in transparent manner

eAbgari engages with its stakeholder through various channels viz:

- A dedicated comprehensive web based Portal <https://wbexcise.gov.in> for delivery of services.
- Helpdesk, email services and Document Management system to manage physical letters
- An Online Grievance Module is available for the benefit of members of citizen, through the eAbgari website.
- Proactive dissemination of Information through SMS. (More than 10.5 lakhs SMS have been sent to the stakeholders)
- Seminars and Workshops conducted by eAbgari implementation team throughout the state for spreading awareness of the functionalities available through eAbgari
- Training provided to departmental officers/officials about the functioning and facilities available through eAbgari
- E-tutorials and User Manuals for accessing various functionalities of eAbgari have been published on the web portal
- Constant interaction/feedback with the departmental officials working with eAbgari of the field formations.

- Regular training and interactive sessions are held with stakeholders both centrally and also at the district level offices.
- Efforts have been made to popularise the project with the innovative use of social media like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.



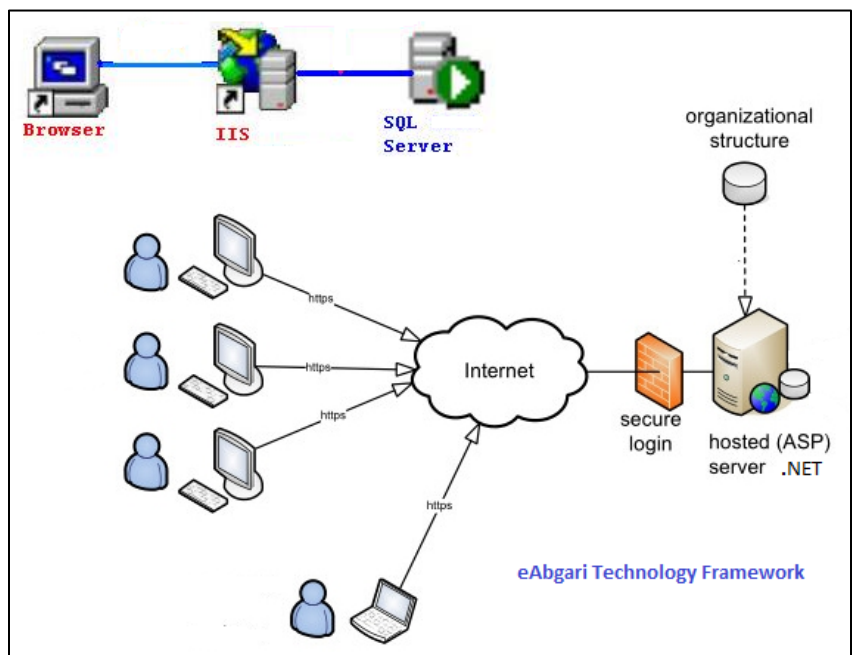
### Technology Platform used

eAbgari is developed as web enabled application and hosted in the National Data Centre (NDC). The stakeholders access it through web browser (client application).

The project is developed with ASP.NET 4.5 as Frontend and MS SQL Server 2014 as Backend Database. Database is mounted on Windows Server 2012.

The related ICT solution also constitutes of Java Script, CSS, Open source reporting library iTextSharp, NIC SMS gateway, Android based Java Application, Adobe Flash Player, IIS Web Server 7.0, XML and Service Oriented Architecture (SOA).

eAbgari is accessible through web browsers from PCs, Smart Phones. The entire solution is hosted in a state of art Data Center with a robust infrastructure. As the developed system is a web based one, deployed at a central location, it is easily accessible by all the stakeholders, anytime and anywhere. eAbgari is designed in such way so as to allow flexibility to scale up horizontally or vertically based on future needs and



requirements of stakeholders.

## Interoperability

As the eAbgari system is a web based one, deployed at a central location, it is easily accessible by all the stakeholders, anytime and anywhere through any web browser from any platform.

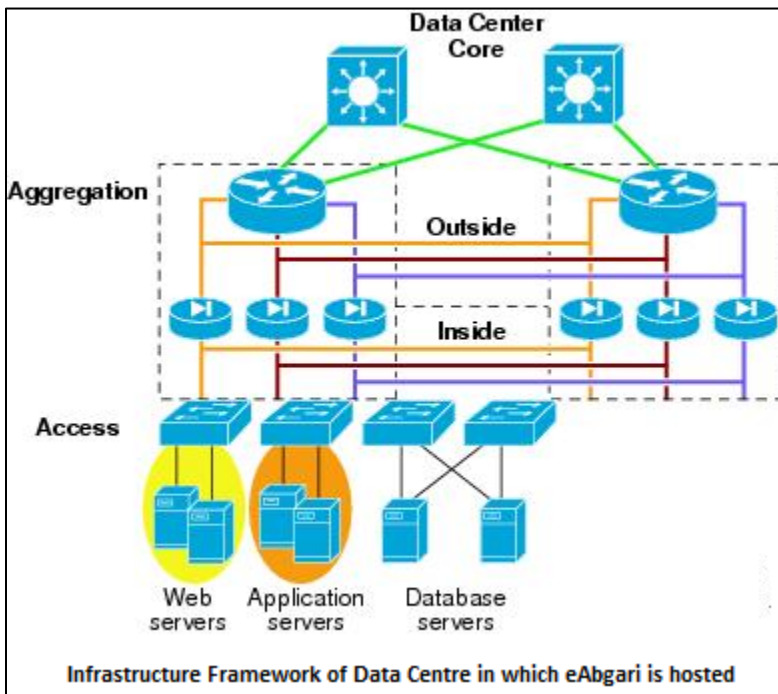
eAbgari reaches to its stakeholders through whatever device they have in front of them, wherever they are using a Windows/Mac/Linux PC, an Apple iPad or an Android phone – Online or through Mobile App.

The contents of eAbgari are rendered to the stakeholders through web browsers in the form of html/html5, PDF, multimedia file formats (picture, video files).

Besides, through integration with NIC SMS Gateway, messages/alerts & process tracking information are served through PUSH/PULL SMS.

## Security concerns

e-Abgari is developed & deployed as per guidelines for Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP). It is hosted at National Data Centre (NDC), NIC (Hqrs.), New Delhi and it is made available at <https://www.wbexcise.gov.in>. As per NDC policy, eAbgari is made live only after getting Cyber Security Clearance Certificate from CERT-In empanelled agencies (i) STQC, (ii) KPMG followed by Cyber Security Division (CSD), NIC(Hqrs.).



The major features of NDC are Storage Area Network (SAN), Rack based Infrastructure, Automated Backup & Restore, State of art Security, High Speed Redundant Internet Connections ensuring high availability and quick scalability. NDC has Disaster Recovery facility with DR sites located in NIC, Hyderabad. Asynchronous replication over WAN using FC-IP protocol and seamless connectivity with DR site over 34 Mbps leased line minimizes any negative impacts to eAbgari operations.

eAbgari data is co-located in NDC servers in a highly secured environment, where all the security policies are under implementation. N/w Monitoring S/w (NMS) is in place. Firewalls and anti-virus Servers are functional to protect application & database against virus & hacking.

eAbgari Portal uses standard Web technologies and techniques such as secure sockets layer (SSL), HTTP redirects, cookies, JavaScript and strong symmetric key encryption (MD5 Hashing) both in code level & database level, role-based access to deliver the service. All HTML and URL outputs are encoded.

It is security-audited initially by CERT-In empanelled agency STQC and re-audited by KPMG to ensure that it is not vulnerable to emerging application security threats. For faster processing needs and security measures, eAbgari is developed to allow view-based access control.

Besides, in the organizational level, following measures are taken:-

- Excise Department has established definite security roles and responsibilities to identify which employee needs to have access or modification rights to the business information and set up responsibilities for those employees.
- The Department has set up an access control list, which allows eAbgari administrator to control which stakeholder has access to the system or certain parts of the system.
- User credentials are sent to the users through SMS at his/her registered mobile number. Users cannot proceed to work with the system unless he/she changes the system generated password. Besides, eAbgari follows password policy as prescribed by NIC Cyber Security Division.
- It is ensured by Excise Department to use Internet security programs (antivirus software) on each computer. Scheduled updating of antivirus software is mandatory.
- Regular training programs for user awareness on cyber risks are conducted by the Training Cell of Excise Directorate.

### **Any issue with the technology used**

eAbgari is developed as web enabled application with centralized architecture to make it accessible 24x7 by its stakeholders from any location.

The major issue faced during implementation of eAbgari is related to: -

- Lower bandwidth & intermittent Internet connectivity and
- Interrupted power supply in different excise locations throughout the State, particularly in rural areas.
- Providing Seamless e-Services to thousands concurrent Stakeholders 24x7
- Providing multiple real-time transaction status reports at various levels

To overcome aforesaid challenges, following measures are initiated: -

- Mobile App to capture eAbgari transactions in in text format with the facility to store it temporarily in Mobile Device Storage and upload the data when Mobile Network is available
- Off-line preparation of data for uploading to Central Server as per user convenience
- State of the Art Web Server, Application Server and Database Servers installed at NDC with disaster recovery facilities are being used for providing seamless e-Services to the external stakeholders.
- Measures are taken at application level to generate database *view*-level MIS reports on real-time transactions.

### **User convenience**

The entire services under the project are delivered over the Web through the department's website hosted at <https://www.wbexcise.gov.in>.

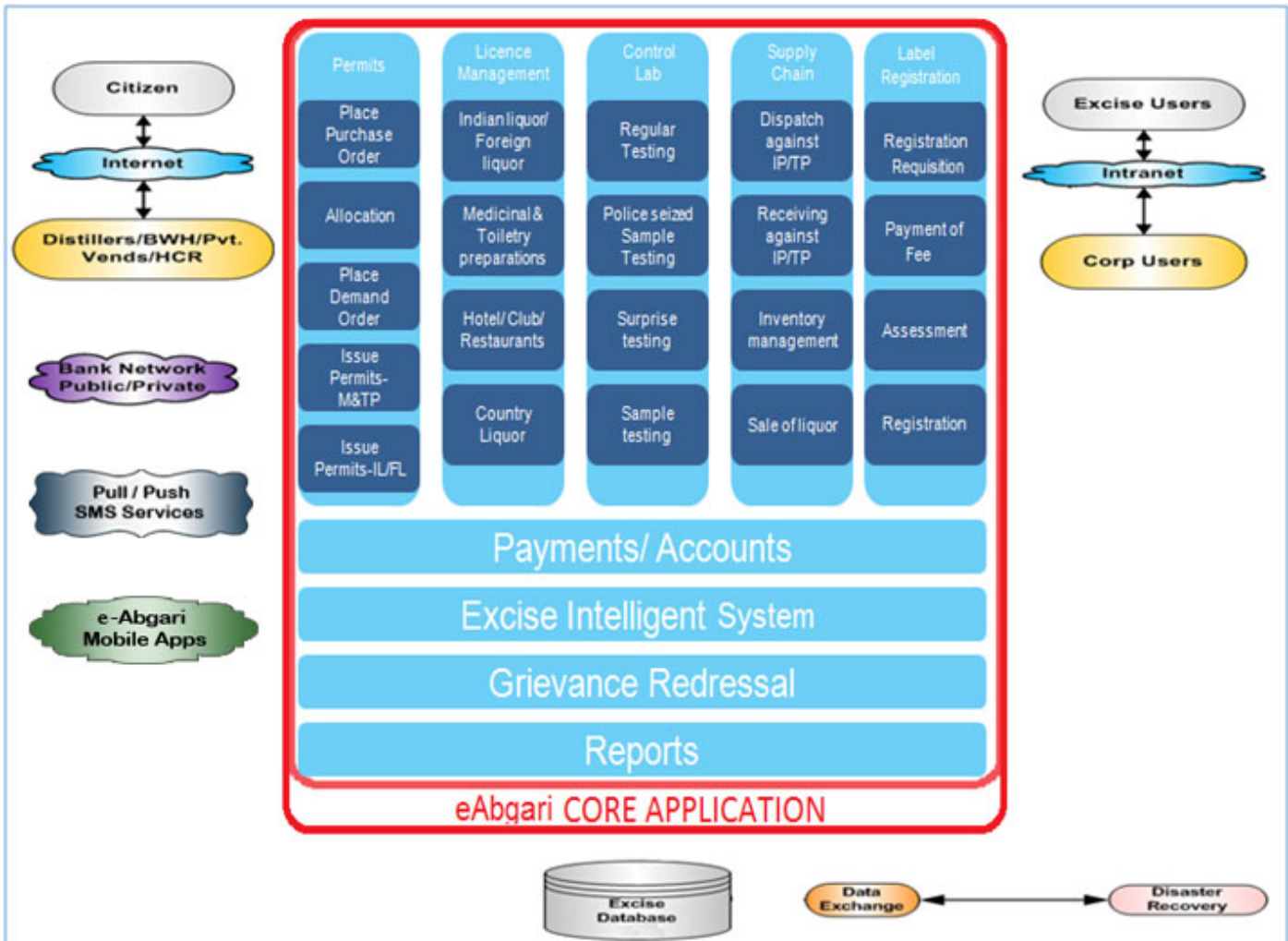
Also, SMS Gateway services are integrated with the eAbgari project and stakeholders receive SMS alerts / notifications on status of service requests round the clock.

Financial Year	Count of e-Services rendered ( <i>data from eTaal</i> )
FY 2015-16 [April to March]	48,89,25,277
FY 2014-15 [April to March]	71,92,328
FY 2013-14 [April to March]	7,05,582

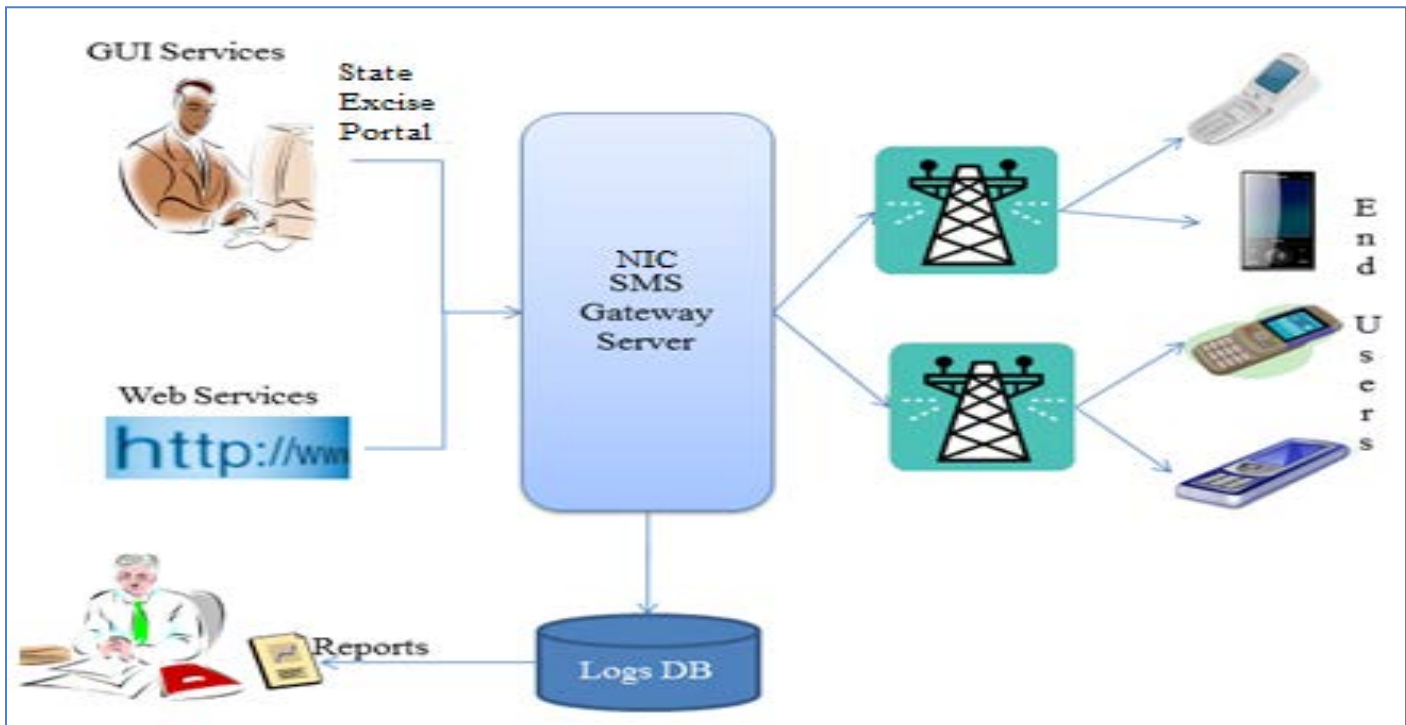


Financial Year	Portal Hit Count	Login Page Hit Count
FY 2015-16 [April to March]	54,39,572	26,31,037
FY 2014-15 [April to March]	15,32,293	7,51,725
FY 2013-14 [April to March]	5,43,312	1,81,828

The services under the eAbgari project being delivered over the Web, there is no time restriction involved. Users can access the services 24 x 7 from the comfort of their homes or offices.



Pendency checker through smart dynamic dashboards enable the departmental office to monitor and track status of service requests across the hierarchy.



**Integration with NIC SMS Gateway for PUSH & PULL SMS Service to deliver Process Status**

eAbgari has increased the speed significantly with which data is input, processed and generate output. This in turn facilitates to handle the process transaction in efficient manner.

Process / Scenario	Then (2012-13)	Now
Issuance of Permits / Passes	15 – 30 days	3 – 48 hours
Label Registration of Packaged Liquor	20 – 45 days	3 – 72 hours
Permission for importing life-saving drugs	20 – 30 days	3 – 48 hours
Payment of duties and fees	Time consuming, cumbersome and during office hours on working days	Instant and 24 x 7
Status of Service Requests by stakeholders	Lack of transparency	Instant – both online and through SMS

**Cost effectiveness**

- A significant feature of the project is that it did not involve significant additional infrastructure creation exclusive to the project. The existing ICT infrastructures available at the State & National levels are used for the implementation of the project. Internet Data Centre (IDC) of NIC(Headquarters), New Delhi and the State owned MPLS are backbone infrastructure of eAbgari project.
- Desktop PCs and peripherals, procured through budgetary allocations made by the Government, have been made available at all district, range- and circle-level excise offices. The total cost of procurement, installation and maintenance of computers and peripherals at the Excise department offices throughout the state, from FY 2012-13 to FY 2014-15, has been approximately Rs.5 crores.

- The department did not engage the services of an external agency to develop or implement the project. Engagement of additional manpower specific to the project has been limited to hiring a set of software developers and software support personnel to develop, test, operationalise and troubleshoot the software, under the close supervision of IT Cell of excise department, and to train departmental personal and the department's external stakeholders to implement the system. The total cost incurred over the last three years towards engagement of such personnel, has been less than Rs.1 crore.

This methodology of in-house software development has minimized the gap between the user department and the software development team, commonly seen in most e-Governance initiatives involving external agencies, and thus helped to avoid the recurring expenses towards frequent changes in software design needed in line with the government decisions.

- The web-based model of service-delivery has ensured that the department's external stakeholders incur minimal costs in accessing the services offered through the project. Accessing the services require only basic IT hardware (computers / smartphones) and internet connectivity.
- While the measures described above have ensured that the cost of development, implementation and operating the system is kept at the minimal, the benefits accruing to both the government and the department's external stakeholders have been significantly higher.
- Using the web-based delivery systems built into the project, citizens and business can access the department's services faster and at a lower cost, resulting in reduced process cycle times and increased business outputs.
- Cost-benefits accrue to the government by way of reduced service-delivery and transaction costs and optimum utilization of resources. With many of the routine administrative tasks now handled through the software, administrative manpower which was earlier engaged in those routine tasks, can now be redeployed for manual-intensive tasks like carrying out enforcement operations. Remote monitoring capabilities and electronic validation processes built into the system has greatly reduced the need for the officers to physically visit manufactories, vends, banks etc. for inspections and verification, and has helped the department to plug revenue leakages
- As indicative example of how the reengineered processes have reduced costs is the way applications for the registration of brands of liquor was being handled earlier, and is being handled now.

In the earlier scenario, making an application for registering a brand of liquor for manufacture or sale in West Bengal would require the applicant to submit a paper application with multiple documents and 36 copies of the labels; payments for the application required the applicant to go to his bank. The applications would then be cycled through a minimum of 9 administrative "desks" – from the application-receipt centre through the office assistants to the decision-making officials to the typists and the document-dispatch section - to the letter dispatch over a period of 7 to 30 days, and the outputs would need to be sent through couriers to 20 administrative districts.

In the present scenario, the similar application is made online, and fees for the same is made through online banking channels. The processing of the application involves just two officials, and the output is electronically transmitted to the applicant and to all the administrative units. The entire process, from the preparation of the application to the dissemination of the output to all concerned stakeholders, is completed within 1-3 days.

The comprehensive IT-led process re-engineering exercise has led to the increase in the collection of Excise revenue by the department from Rs. 2101.95 crores in 2011-12 to Rs. 4014.01 crores in 2015-16.

## Capacity Building and Organizational Sustainability

A comprehensive capacity-building exercise, designed to train departmental personnel and the excise licensees of the department to use the new system, preceded the implementation of the project. The related approach also focussed on attitudinal change, technological skills enhancement, adaptability to respond to stakeholder's requirements and commitment to provide superlative services. The exercise is now an ongoing process, and is integral to the success and sustainability of the department's e-Governance initiatives.

The department started with creation of teams for successful implementation of eAbgari, preparation of detailed project reports for each of the activities like software development, data digitization, site preparation, process reengineering, capacity building, change management etc., creation of ICT infrastructure, training to departmental manpower resources & stakeholders.

The measures adopted by the department towards this end, include the following:

- Prior to the launch of the project, departmental personnel across the entire organizational hierarchy, were imparted basic computing skills through a series of training sessions conducted with the assistance of NIC. Over 90% of the departmental officers, from the rank of Sub-Inspectors of Excise to Deputy Commissioners, were trained under the initiative.



project.



For a majority of those trained, these sessions were their first direct exposure to the use of modern ICT tools. Master trainers were identified across excise districts across the state.

The exercise was instrumental in raising computer awareness among the departmental staff, and was critical to creating the knowledge-foundation for the implementation and sustainability of the

Besides, motivational programs for all levels of state excise were also conducted.

- A team of ten software developers and software support personnel are contractually engaged to develop, test and implement the software-component of the project, under the supervision of NIC. These personnel were also tasked to train the department's officers and licensees to use the software.
- Prior to the launch of any new software module, the IT Cell of the Excise Department, in conjunction with the Training wing of the department, holds multiple workshops to train the department's officers and on the use of the software module.
- A specially-selected team of officers have been trained on Training-of-Trainers basis to provide hand-holding support to the external stakeholders.
- A dedicated team of departmental officers and Software Support Personnel has been put in place to provide telephone- and email-based support, as well as on-site support to the stakeholders
- User Manuals for the software modules are available for download on the departmental website.

From organizational sustainability standpoint, the excise department has taken necessary measures to ensure the following:-

- Excise Officials earmarked as eAbgari Project champion are not transferred during the entire project period.
- Creation of IT cells with suitable technical manpower in central location to provide service to all sites on call basis.
- Necessary budgetary provisions towards recurring costs of all types like maintenance, consumables etc. are made by the excise department.
- Advance and timely action are being taken to renew/revise service contracts wherever applicable so that there is no dislocation in service.

Besides, special attention was given by the department to incorporate following features in eAbgari to ensure sustainability of this project:-

- Demand-driven IT system which increases the degree of adoption by various stakeholders
- Development of the system in modular fashion
- Designed in such way so as to allow flexibility to scale up horizontally or vertically based on future needs and requirements of stakeholders
- Successful implementation of Stock Inventory Management System on the principles of 'Stock Point' and 'Stock In' & 'Stock Out'
- Monthly e-Return System to involve excise licensees in eAbgari data collection (which may subsequently be reconciled with real time data).

### **Innovation**

- Use of Web based mechanism instead of intranet for dissemination of the project ensuring universal access.
- Use of smart pop ups for dissemination of all necessary information.
- Use of smart built in validations in order to ensure compliance to the statute.
- Work flow based processes removing superfluous layers within the administrative process chain.
- Standardisation of processes through built in validation checks minimizing discretionary human intervention.
- Use of GI tools like GPS based mapping of Excise Licenses across the State.
- Use of BI tools for generation of intelligent MIS.
- Pendency checker for tracking process pendency at all hierarchical levels.
- Online dynamic dashboard for excise officials / licensees.
- Free auto SMS alerts / notifications through Push SMS to stakeholders.
- Application tracking (status, remark trail) on the click of a mouse.
- Extracting process status information or validating authenticity of permits / passes / packaged liquor through free SMS Pull service.
- Checking authenticity of Bar-coded Permits / Passes of in transit consignments through eAbgari mobile apps by excise officers using smart phone devices.

### **Impact**

- 24x7 Service time Window for licensees - no more bank/government office time constraints for submissions of application, requisition, payment of excise duties/fees

- Reduced Cost of Compliance for excise licensees – time and cost - no more standing in queues, any time submission, no more stack of papers, no more multiple copies of returns
- Locational independence for compliance - just a click away, through internet access anywhere - services adding to transparency and reduced person dependency
- e-Abgari portal works as a mentor for licensees/applicants for licenses - what, how, when - user friendly guide for licensees and citizens regarding all aspects of West Bengal State Excise
- Availability of Information - copy of latest act, rules, notifications are available instantly on portal, copy of notices and acknowledgement sent to licensees to their e-Abgari inbox
- Tracking of service delivery of department - licensee can track the status of his application/requisition from portal which results in reduction in visits, time & cost
- Quick Service towards RTI and to stakeholders - with availability of all information in a single, central system, excise authorities can render quick services to all concerned
- Reduced cost of collection for each rupee of Excise Revenue generated - less time to reconcile, reduced follow-ups, prompt collections
- Real-time supervision & monitoring of work done at different levels in all excise offices by the Excise Commissioner - availability of real-time work task information at all levels of hierarchy – completed, pending, ageing, etc.
- Real time complete data - latest positions of revenue collection, generation and availability of uniform and accurate data
- Sharing licensee ledger with licensee - improved transparency, self-verification by licensee about stock inventory, duties/fees, returns, etc.
- Policy making and decision making - MIS, detailed analysis, slicing-dicing available which assists the department in reviewing policies and decisions
- Ensuring licensee's satisfaction – maximizing impact - electronic services available on 24 x 7 basis, dedicated cell available for quick redressal of queries / problems / requests, application tracking system available for online requests – reduces phone calls / visits required to excise offices
- Exchange of Information - data available on electronic format can be exchanged between different government departments / agencies
- Increase in compliance - due to availability of all information, cross checking of information, increased transparency results in increased duty/fee compliance
- Reduction in time barred cases - reduction of time in scrutinizing all information, reduction of time in gathering information for statutory compliance on monthly, quarterly/half yearly/yearly basis, more time available to focus on assessment, refund and recovery
- Opportunity for process improvement - with information being available centrally and online checks available, number of manual checks going down gradually
- Dynamic routing of documents that have been electronically filed or uploaded to the concerned official within e-Abgari, based on the type of service request
- Reduction in costs – less time to process files based on documents, to scrutinize requisitions in details resulting in netting of more revenue, reduced consumption of stationery , reduced expenditures towards courier / postages
- Electronic workflow systems to augment speed and ensure service delivery
- Reduction in Activity Cost, total process cycle time & waiting time for the Licensees and thereby increasing throughput of the system besides attaining increase in revenue
- Storing of all approved documents of state excise as part of electronic records, including provision of access to electronic records for the stakeholders
- Increasing efficiency of scrutiny in issuance of permits/passes by system-verification on availability of adequate bond value, label registration of brands, auto-calculation of duties/fees etc.
- Enhancing identification of defaulting licensees

- Reduction in opportunities for corrupt practices by allowing ‘any where’ and ‘any time’ access for excise licensees & members of citizens from the Internet and eliminating the human interface i.e., licensee/citizen and department interaction during grant of license or issuance of permits/passes
- Online Tracking of Status of different processes viz. Grant of License, Issuances of Transport Pass, Import Permits
- Providing alerts to higher authorities when the services are not rendered within the stipulated period
- Enabling quicker responses to licensee/citizen grievances
- Online Reconciliation of Revenue, unit-wise, on real-time basis and to get better results in terms of arresting revenue leakages
- Integration with State Payment Gateway GRIPS and Commercial Tax Application of West Bengal
- Preservation of knowledge for state excise employees in a centralized and easily accessible repository comprising of acts, rules, circulars etc.
- Simplification and standardization of government processes and procedures, elimination of unproductive/ non-value-adding work, and reduction in paperwork

## **Result Achieved / Value Delivered to the beneficiary of the project**

### **To organization**

- Administrative processes have been standardized and scope for discretion minimised.
- Holistic and integrated governance model.
- Transparent and accountable administration.
- Minimal human intervention and reduced chances of error.
- No burden of physical document management.
- Digital archiving of documents / information and easy data retrieval process.
- Intelligent M.I.S data available for effective administrative intervention and policy formulation.
- Ease of transaction by liquor manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers with the Government leading to enhanced business and augmentation of State Excise revenue. The collection of Excise revenue has gone up from Rs. 2101.95 crores in 2011-12 to Rs. 4014.01 crores in 2015-16, registering a CAGR of 17.6 %, mainly on account of better monitoring and regulatory practices.
- Effective enforcement activities on account of enhanced monitoring and reduced risk to public health from spurious and counterfeit intoxicants.

Feedback and stakeholder statements: -

***H.K Dwivedi, IAS***

***Principal Secretary to the Government of West Bengal***

***Finance & Excise Department***

“Excise is a very important directorate in terms of the it contribution to the total revenue collection of the State and since it deals with a sin commodity, a demerit good, the regulatory aspects are also very important keeping the overall health aspects of the general public in mind. What we have introduced is e-Abgari, all the processes now of the Excise Directorate are online, starting from a licensee applying for a license, renewal of licenses, import permits, export permits, internal work flow mechanism for grant of permits, and right from the production till the last retail stage, all the processes have now been made on a web enabled online process. This has given us a host of data that has enabled the Excise Directorate to go in for better monitoring activities as well as this has also made the ease to business as far as licensees are concerned. This computerised programme resulting in e-Abgari has really made their life easier, has also resulted in better efficiency of the administration.”

## To citizen

- Reduced risk of public health hazards owing to enhanced monitoring and effective enforcement activities of the department.
- Delivery of life saving drugs to CCUs within 90 % reduced time and ease of availability.
- Reduced discretion of local offices and faceless governance.
- Overall and drastic reduction of service delivery times.
- Availability of all relevant information regarding the statue, rules and procedures and ease of business with the Government.
- Availability of service request status information both online and through SMS.
- Ease of transaction of business with the department for liquor manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. Licensing and procurement of life saving narcotics medicine by Hospitals / CCUs made easy and hassle free.
- Procurement of spirits for medicinal and academic purposes by Hospitals and Educational Institutions made easy.
- Round the clock and universal accessibility of eServices offered by the department over the World Wide Web.

Feedback and stakeholder statements:-

***Sri Sekhar Sharma***

***Deputy General Manager, Pharmacy Operations***

***Apollo Gleneagles Hospital – E.M Bypass, Kolkata***

“Now we are thankful to the West Bengal Government – Excise Department, many of the times we are in stock out position, but, after getting this e-Governance process started by our West Bengal Excise Department we never face any problem in procurement of narcotic medications. Now I think, previously it was taking around 15 days completing all the processes, now it is 24 hours to 48 hours, we are getting the medications, and we are really thankful to everybody involved in this total journey to make this process easier for us. Thank you so much.”

***Sri Nishu Nigam***

***Director, Transway Exim Pvt. Ltd. [Foreign Liquor Manufacturing and Wholesale business]***

“Since the eGovernance has come in, now we are accessing most of our documents through an internet based website. For example, we now need to pay our money for excise challans, over a banking website, the eChallan is printed through the comfort of our office, which we forward to the excise officer who allows us de-bond the material as well as issue the foreign liquor, and thereafter when we need to register the labels of foreign liquor, so the registration work is also now done through excise portal and we are very happy that the time taken for registration now has been drastically reduced; earlier it used to be something like 30 days because everything was done physically and manually, but now everything is done on computers and so it happens in something like 2 days or maximum 3 days. The Import Permits can be raised through the comfort of our office, we can raise requisition from the office itself; it is done online through the excise portal, and this also takes maximum 24 or may be 48 hours and within 48 hours we get the Import Permit; earlier it used to take something like 7 – 10 – 15 days. Now, thanks to the website that has been put up by the Excise Department, the Excise Pass can be drawn from the website itself, and the entire time taken to draw an excise pass has been drastically reduced. And we are getting the service of the department more or less 24 x 7. 24 hours – 7 days a week, we can access the site and we can have most of our work done on the website, because the internet is open all the time. So, overall we as businessmen are very happy, we are very satisfied with this Excise Department site which is very very beneficial to us. We are very thankful to the Government for activating this.”



## Other stakeholders

- Employees of the department no longer need to take the burden of physical document management.
- Record retrieval and data compilation is easy and error free leading to reduced burden for employees.
- Other Government departments / organisations like the Commercial Taxes Directorate have greatly benefitted from the project due to data sharing on manufacture and distribution of taxable goods that fall jointly under the purview of both the departments.
- Online payment of State Excise Duties and Fees leading to reduced burden on Banks.

Feedback and stakeholder statements:-

***Binod Kumar, I.A.S.***

***Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Department of Health  
[erstwhile Commissioner, Commercial Taxes, GoWB]***

“eAbgari is a classic example of how I.C.T based Government Process Re-engineering can facilitate easier and more effective co-ordination between Government Departments. We no longer work in silos. Data sharing mechanisms built into eAbgari has not only helped the Excise Directorate but also the Directorate of Commercial Taxes to plug revenue leakages and ensure greater tax compliance.”

***Saurav Bhadra***

***Superintendent of Excise, Nadia***

“eAbgari has opened an ocean of facilities for us by way of allowing diverse MIS, user friendly applications, and has significantly decreased the procession time for excise related licenses, permits and passes. All required data are at a single click-away. Besides, it has also ensured transparency to a large extent.”



***TanayGuha,***

***Deputy Excise Collector – Durgapur Range, Burdwan***

“eAbgari online module promotes transparency in transaction of all kinds of liquors from the production unit to the consumers, provides all the officers the very user friendly access to keep vigilance over the liquor movements, supports to upload daily reports, smooth processing of license renewal & proposal of new license, monitoring the consumption & revenue status, strengthens the trail proceeding in court by getting chemical expert’s opinion, verify the monetary transaction through GRIPS, smooth disposal of irregularities found in licensed premises etc i.e. single window that provides better governance each time.

## Extent to which the Objective of the Project is fulfilled

Process / Scenario	Then (2012-13)	Now
Issuance of Permits / Passes	15 – 30 days	Same Day
Label Registration of Packaged Liquor	20 – 45 days	Same Day
Permission for importing life-saving drugs	20 – 30 days	Same Day
Payment of duties and fees	Time consuming, cumbersome and during office hours on working days	Instant and 24 x 7

Status of Service Requests by stakeholders	Lack of transparency	Instant – both online and through SMS
Enforcement activities (Illegal Cases detected)	49,602	51,616 (2014-15)
ePayment of duties and fees	0 %	100 %
Online transactions	0 %	1,04,38,644 (during 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> years)
Excise Revenue	1,759 Crores	4,200 Crores (Estimated for 2015-16)
Government Employees		

## Replicability

While conceptualizing eAbgari, NIC in consultation with Excise Directorate took a modular approach because it went with the policy of ‘starting small and scaling fast’ instead of a ‘big bang’ approach. It is designed in ‘plug & implement’ fashion. As each module is designed, developed and tested, they are just plugged into the service framework.

This flexible, modular method to software development and project implementation and the adoption of a web-based delivery model makes the project easily replicable across a range of geographies, user-classes and commodities.

While designing, it is ensured that s/w development team use standard coding practices. The object oriented methodology followed in development of eAbgari has allowed reusing the existing code at object and functioning level. Each of the functions & related attributes are divided into granular levels for ease in maintenance and reusability. Besides, special care is taken to include features such as multi-tenancy, configurability and integration with various gateways.

eAbgari is nominated by West Bengal for inclusion in *eGov AppStore* with the intention to be a part of National level common repository of productized applications that can be re-used by excise departments of other States.

*Recently, 2 states have approached with the purpose to implement eAbgari in those states. These are: - Orissa and Tripura. As a next course of action, eAbgari is demonstrated to the excise authorities of Orissa & Tripura.*

Besides, the Grievance Redressal System of eAbgari is already rolled out across other administrative departments in the state as per decision of West Bengal government. The Court Case Monitoring System developed under eAbgari is being reused by the Education department of West Bengal.

## Other distinctive features / accomplishments of the project

1. The Excise Department deals with a sector that has a significant social and public health import. Given the socio-cultural context in which the department operates, the project had to accommodate the social

sensibilities associated with liquor, and to ensure that liquor is made available to consumers through legal and safe channels and is consumed in a socially-regulated manner. At the same time, the project aimed to make it easier for the liquor industry to transact business with the department, and to maximize the collection of liquor-related taxes by the government. eAbgari has been successful in maintaining the delicate balance between facilitation and regulation in a sector which is a policy minefield for any welfare-oriented government.

2. The focus of any state excise department is normally on collection of information related to sales and revenue. In eAbgari project, the central focus is on loss of revenue and entire system is built around this concept by making data available at appropriate levels and provides analytic capabilities using business intelligence methodology.
3. The primary objective of eAbgari is to collect data related to entire West Bengal excise ecosystem. Hence, apart from revenue & sales data, the focus is also on to collect data related to breach cases, criminal cases, and production by manufactories, trading account details, etc. Access to this data is provided to all excise officers in controlled manner. This has created transparency in the system as data is available at central location and single version of truth is maintained.
4. In eAbgari, special emphasis is given to collect data from the lower most point in the excise ecosystem. Similarly, the data can be viewed by any excise officer for the area under his jurisdiction. This has introduced a culture where every individual officer is made responsible for his information. For close monitoring, dashboard is created at supervisor level.
5. The other and perhaps the most unique feature of eAbgari has been its low cost financial model. The project did not involve any significant infrastructure creation exclusive to it. The existing I.T hardware and network connectivity created through budgetary allocations at the Excise offices were re-purposed for the implementation of the project. The department did not engage the services of an external agency to develop or implement the project. Engagement of additional manpower specific to the project has been limited to hiring a set of software developers & software support personnel to develop, operationalize and troubleshoot the software under the supervision of NIC. Evidently, eAbgari may be the model for cost-effective solution in comprehensive transformation of government processes.
6. Within 24 months of initiative towards comprehensive transformation of West Bengal state excise through eAbgari, the department has adopted various IT systems thereby increasing the efficiency in delivery of services to its stakeholders. This is the true indication of the team work shown by all excise officers and their commitment towards this initiative.
7. The e-Abgari project has bagged the CSI-Nihilent e-Governance Award in 2015.