



# #FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge

## Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)** has announced **#FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge to accelerate adoption of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in Government.**

## Key Points

### ▪ Free and Open Source Software (FOSS):

- It **doesn't** mean software is **free of cost**.
- The **term "free"** indicates that the **software does not have constraints on copyrights**.
- It means that **source code of the software is open for all** and anyone is free to use, study and modify the code.
- It **allows other people also to contribute to the development and improvement of the software** like a community.
- The Free and Open Source Software may also be referred to as **Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS)** or **Free/Open Source Software (F/OSS)**.
- **Examples** of FOSS include MySQL, Firefox, Linux, etc.
- Another category of software is **'Closed Source Software'**.
  - The software which uses the proprietary and closely guarded code.
  - Only the original authors have the authority to access, copy, and alter that software.
  - In this case one does not purchase the software, but only pay to use it.

### ▪ About the Challenge:

- It will harness the **innovation potential of the FOSS community** and start-ups **to solve critical issues in Government Technologies (GovTech)**.
- It calls upon FOSS innovators to submit implementable open source product innovations in CRM and ERP with possible applications for Govtech in Health, Education, and Agriculture etc.
  - **CRM** stands for **"Customer Relationship Management"**.
  - **ERP** stands for **"Enterprise Resource Planning"** and refers to software and systems used to plan and manage all the core supply chain, manufacturing, services, financial and other processes of an organization.
- It is a key component of **GovTech 3.0**, which is about building secure and inclusive **Open Digital Ecosystems (ODEs)**.
- The participants are eligible for incubation support, prize money, mentorship by domain experts, institutional support from eminent organizations for incubation of ideas and listing of solutions on **[Government e Marketplace \(GeM\)](#)**.

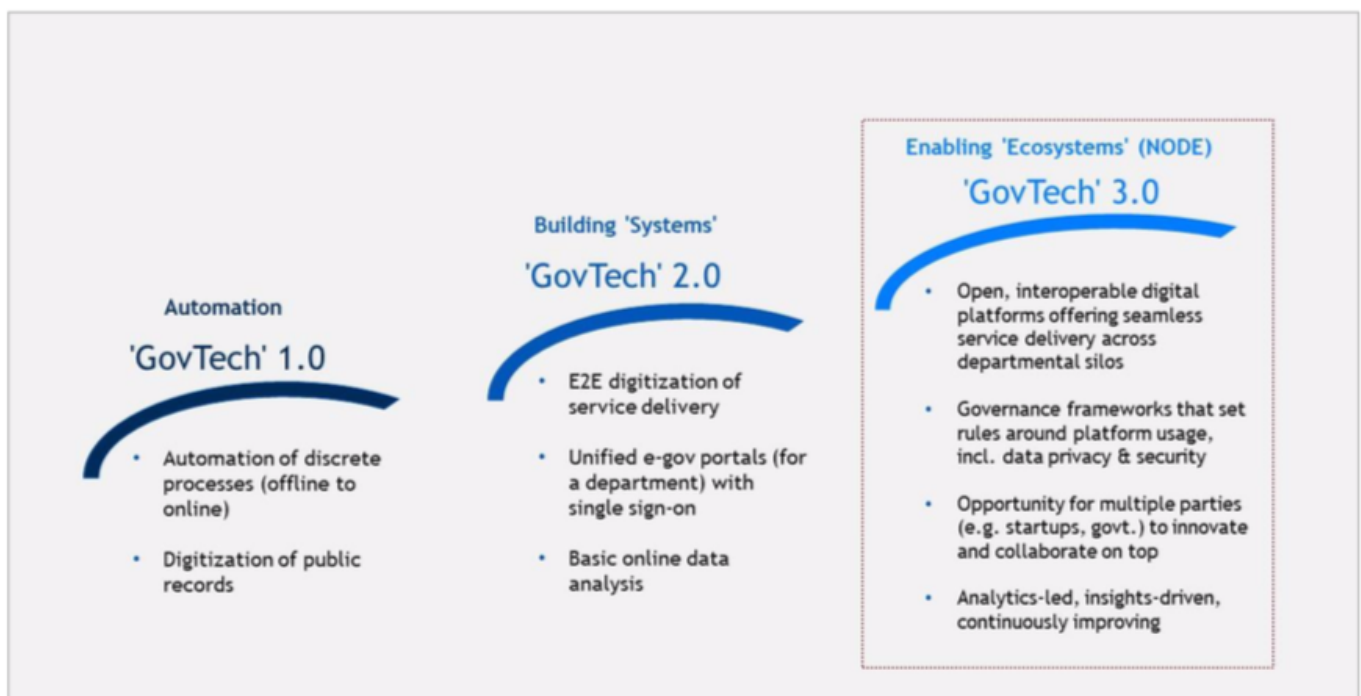
### ▪ Significance:

- India is well positioned to become a vibrant hub for **Free and Open Source Software (FOSS)** innovations, due to the large number of 4G data subscribers in India.

- **96%** of the subscribers access the digital world via open-source based mobile operating systems (primarily Android).
- India's largest-government projects (including [Aadhaar](#)) and many technology start-ups have also been built using FOSS.
- **Other Related Initiatives:**
  - The Government of India had issued a **Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software in 2015**.
  - **Free and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE) Project:** It is a project **promoting the use of open source software in educational institutions**. It does that through instructional material, such as spoken tutorials, documentation, such as textbook companions, awareness programmes, such as conferences, training workshops, and internships.
  - The government **has also made the android version of the [Aarogya Setu](#) app open source**.

### GovTech 3.0

- **GovTech1.0** was the era of “computerisation” of manual processes such as putting income tax forms online.
- **GovTech 2.0** was about building systems which digitised end-to-end processes, for example, the government's “**e-office**” file management system.
- GovTech 3.0 is **focussed on Open Digital Ecosystems (ODEs)**, the underlying philosophy suggests that the government should focus on creating the “digital commons”.
  - It **envisages the government becoming a facilitator by creating digital infrastructure on which innovators can collaboratively build solutions** for the public good.
  - ODEs are: “open and secure digital platforms that enable a community of actors to unlock transformative solutions for society, based on a robust governance framework”.
  - Several path-breaking ODEs are already in play in India: **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** in the financial services space; the National Digital Infrastructure for Teachers called **DIKSHA**; etc.



Evolving paradigms of digital governance or 'GovTech'

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