October 31, 2026

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MeitY cloud empanelment: who qualifies and what it requires

MeitY cloud empanelment is the approval India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology gives the cloud services government departments may buy. Under its July 2026 call, the applicant must be incorporated in India and operating there for at least three years, keep all data, processing and backups in India, and pass an audit. Empanelment lasts five years.

MEITY CLOUD empanelment is a place on the list of cloud services Indian government departments may buy from. MeitY grants it only after a detailed audit by its Standardization Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate (sections 2 and 4 of its July 2026 call). Applications are open all year and go only through MeitY's AMBUD platform (sections 8 and 1.2).

KEY FACTS

DATA PROTECTION

Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

DATA RULES

Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025

IT LAW

Information Technology Act, 2000

UPDATED

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What is MeitY cloud empanelment?

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MeitY has empaneled cloud services since 2015, under three models: public cloud, virtual private cloud and government community cloud (section 1.2 of MeitY's July 2026 call). The last two serve only government bodies, public sector undertakings (PSUs) and nationalized banks in India (section 5.1.1, items 1 and 5).

MeitY's own list, posted July 29, 2026, names 28 empaneled providers, with the date each empanelment runs to (MeitY's list of empaneled cloud service providers). On December 12, 2025, the government told the Rajya Sabha the figure was 26 (Unstarred Question No. 1509). MeitY's other rules, from data protection to the directions of CERT-In, India's cyber security agency, are in our MeitY guide.

Who can apply for cloud empanelment?

An empanelment applicant must be one legal entity incorporated in India, operating there for at least three consecutive years. It, or its holding company, needs positive net worth and at least ₹10 crore of cloud or data center revenue in India over the last two financial years. One of them must already sell infrastructure as a service (IaaS) in India.

Eligibility (MeitY's July 2026 call, Annexure 6)

Criterion	Requirement	Source
Incorporation	Incorporated and registered in India under the Companies Act, 2013 or the Indian Partnership Act, 1932, and operating there for at least 3 consecutive years	Criterion (i)
Net worth	Positive in the previous 2 completed financial years in India	Criterion (ii)
Revenue	At least ₹10 crore from cloud or data center hosting in India over those 2 years	Criterion (iii)
IaaS in use	Already delivered in India, with 99.5% assured uptime measured monthly	Criterion (iv)
Each data center	In India and operating, with at least 100 operational racks or 1 MVA of IT load dedicated to the provider	Criterion (v)(a)
Standards	Tier III or above; ISO 27001:2022, 20000-1:2018, 27017:2015 and 27018:2019, each valid at least 1 year from applying	Criterion (v)(b) and Annexure 14
Record	Not blacklisted by a central ministry or department for cloud or data center services, and not under legal action with one for corrupt, fraudulent, coercive, undesirable or restrictive practice	Criterion (vi)

A company incorporated abroad can't apply itself, since criterion (i) requires the applicant, as a single legal entity, to be incorporated and registered in India. Only one holding company may be cited, and it may meet the net worth, revenue, IaaS and record tests (Annexure 6).

Must government data stay in India?

Yes. MeitY's July 2026 call requires empaneled services to be hosted in India, with all data, processing and backups kept within India's boundaries and jurisdiction (section 5.2.4(k), items 37 to 39). Network and security operations centers must be in India (5.2.4(h), item 5), and no legal framework outside Indian law may apply to running the service (5.2.4(l), item 5).

For any government body using them, the provider gives CERT-In complete access to the IT infrastructure (the call, section 5.2.4(h), item 6).

MeitY gets logical and physical access to the provider's facilities, records and databases within 72 hours of a request, for inspections protecting non-public government data (section 5.2.4(k), item 34).

The call still lists section 43A of the Information Technology (IT) Act among its legal requirements (section 5.2.4(l), item 1). The DPDP Act omits section 43A (section 44(2)(a)) from about May 13, 2027, eighteen months after the Gazette of November 13, 2025 (G.S.R. 843(E), para (c)). For the

rules on sending other personal data abroad, see Cross-border data transfer under India's DPDP Act.

How does the empanelment process work?

MeitY cloud empanelment runs in eight steps under section 4 of the July 2026 call: the application on AMBUD, MeitY's checks, the Evaluation Committee's recommendation, the STQC audit, the committee's review, the Secretary's approval, the Letter of Empanelment and listing on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

1. Apply on AMBUD.

Upload documents for four criteria: pre-qualification, technical, compliance and standards (the call, section 4, step 1).

2. Post the earnest money or a declaration.

Give a ₹10 lakh deposit as a bank guarantee from a commercial bank, or sign the Annexure 17 declaration if you can't (section 7, item 1).

3. Answer MeitY's clarifications on time.

MeitY may ask in up to three rounds, with 15 days to reply to the first, 7 to the second and 5 to the third. Miss one and MeitY may reject the application (section 4, step 2).

4. Pass the STQC audit.

Once MeitY tells you the evaluation result, send STQC all the audit documents within one week (section 8, item 4(g)). Pay STQC's audit fees too. STQC then audits your data centers and services against the same four criteria (section 4, step 4).

5. Accept the Letter of Empanelment within 15 days.

The letter names the services, models and data centers you may serve government from. If you don't accept it within 15 days of receiving it, it's annulled (section 4, step 7; section 8, item 6(d)). Elsewhere the call gives 30 working days from the notice (section 7, item 14(k), and the Annexure 1 cover letter), and it doesn't say which governs.

6. Register and list on GeM within 15 days.

MeitY de-empanels the services if you don't register on GeM within 15 days of the letter's issue, or don't list the empaneled services there within those 15 days (section 9, item 11(a)).

The call sets no time for MeitY's review or approval. For the audit, it says STQC audits "within a shortest possible time" (section 4, step 4). Each buying department sets its own audit and contract terms (section 4).

How long does MeitY cloud empanelment last?

MeitY cloud empanelment is valid for five years from the date the Letter of Empanelment is issued (section 8, item 8). It renews automatically if the provider declares, in an Annexure 21 undertaking, that nothing the call lists has changed (item 9). Otherwise a full STQC audit comes first, three months before the empanelment expires (item 8(i)(b)).

The undertaking is due three months before the empanelment expires. Without it, MeitY treats the listed changes as made, and a full STQC audit follows (the call, section 8, item 9). These changes rule out automatic renewal:

- New cloud services from MeitY's bouquet
- New data centers
- A new security requirement from MeitY, CERT-In, the Ministry of Home Affairs or security agencies
- A security incident, such as a data breach, hack or ransomware attack
- A change in ISO or other international standards

The call reads two ways on timing. Section 8, item 9 says an existing empanelment "will be auto renewed after three years", while item 8 and its Table 1 put renewal at the end of the fifth year. On audits, section 2 says each provider undergoes "a surveillance audit periodically every year", while item 8(ii) puts it "after completion of 3rd year of empanelment". The call doesn't say which reading governs.

How IndusDesk helps with cloud empanelment

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Frequently asked questions

Do private companies need a MeitY-empaneled cloud?

Not under MeitY's July 2026 call, which empanels cloud services for government organizations to buy on GeM (the call, section 4, step 8) and sets no rule for private buyers. Sector regulators' own cloud rules weren't among the documents read for this page.

What customer records must data centers, cloud, VPS and VPN providers keep, and does it cover company VPNs?

Data centers, virtual private server (VPS), cloud and VPN providers must record validated customer names, hire periods, IP addresses, contacts, purpose and ownership. They keep the records five years after the registration is canceled or withdrawn, or longer if a law requires (CERT-In directions, direction (v)). The VPN rule covers providers of proxy-like services to the general public, not company VPNs (CERT-In's FAQ, Q34; more in our CERT-In directions guide).

Must a cloud provider keep its logs in India for 180 days?

Yes. CERT-In's direction (iv) requires logs of all information and communication technology (ICT) systems for a rolling 180 days, kept within Indian jurisdiction. CERT-In's FAQ says copies may

also be stored abroad if they can be produced in reasonable time (Q35), and that providers serving users in India keep logs in Indian jurisdiction (Q36), but only the direction binds.

Sources

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- MeitY, posted July 29, 2026: Details of MeitY-Empaneled Cloud Service Provider (CSP): Cloud Deployment Models, Cloud Services with Data Centre Locations
- Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1509, answered December 12, 2025: Developing a secure national cloud infrastructure
- Act No. 22 of 2023: The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, section 44(2)(a)
- G.S.R. 843(E), November 13, 2025: Dates on which the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 come into force, para (c)
- CERT-In, No. 20(3)/2022-CERT-In, April 28, 2022: Directions under section 70B(6) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, directions (iv) and (v)
- CERT-In, May 2022: Frequently Asked Questions on the Cyber Security Directions of 28.04.2022, Q34 to Q36

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