

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR PILOT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PAPERLESS GUJARAT HIGH COURT PROJECT *(Developed in house under the E-GujHC Project)*

1. Purpose and Scope:

The High Court of Gujarat under the power vested in it under Article 225 lays down the SOP for pilot implementation of the paperless e filing project. This SOP establishes the procedural framework for the pilot phase of the Paperless E-GujHC Project. The project aims at transitioning from physical to digital case management through AI-assisted filing and scrutiny to ensure greater accessibility and efficiency in the administration of justice.

2. e-Filing:

- 2.1. **Scanning Standards:** Learned Advocates or Parties-in-person shall upload clean, legible, scanned copies of case files in proper order to the **e-filing Paperless Portal** developed under E-GujHC Project.
- 2.2. **Format and Legibility:** All documents must be clearly legible. As per **Rule 346** of the Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993, digital copies must correspond page-to-page with the originals and should ideally be typed on durable paper with a 2-inch margin before scanning.
- 2.3 **Definition of e-File:** For the purposes of this Pilot Project, any document and set of Documents scanned and uploaded bearing the valid physical signature of the Learned Advocate or Petitioner as the case may be and accepted by the Registry, shall be treated as an **“e-file”**.

3. Affidavits and Authenticity:

- 3.1. **Validity of Signatures, Oaths and Affirmations:** The scanned copies of the original documents and affidavits which bear the signature of the Learned Advocate or Petitioner, as the case may be, shall be treated as legally valid Document for the purpose of Pilot Project.

- 3.2. **Mandatory Declaration:** The authorised Advocate or Party-in-person shall make following declaration in the prescribed format on the portal, certifying the authenticity of the e-filed documents”

“I hereby declare that I have personally verified from the original physical Documents and the scanned document/file uploaded herein is a true and exact copy of the corresponding physical originals. I further undertake to produce the physical original before the Hon’ble Court as and when directed or required.”

4. AI-Assisted Scrutiny and Registration:

- 4.1. **Pre-Scrutiny:** Upon submission of the e-file, the **AI Software** developed under e-GujHC project will perform an automated pre-scrutiny of the e-file to identify the office objections and display the probable objections to the advocate or filer, who may either choose to correct the defect or may proceed to file with objections. The system will not block the filer to proceed with filing due to AI generated objections.
- 4.2. **Human Verification:** A Filing Number and Registration Number shall only be generated after **Human Verification** of the AI-generated scrutiny report by the Registry’s Examiner or Verifier.
- 4.3. **Registrar’s Authority:** The Registrar or authorised Deputy/Assistant Registrar shall have authority under **Chapter II** of the Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993, to admit or refuse proceedings based on conformity with the rules. The advocate /filer cannot claim that submission of e-file is valid only because it is shown as valid by AI.

5. Limitation and Objections:

- 5.1. **Effect on Limitation:** The period of limitation shall continue to run against the petitioner until all **mandatory office objections** are removed and a **Filing Number** is generated.
- 5.2. **Registration Number:** The final Registration Number will be generated only after the removal of all other secondary objections.

5.3 **Time Lines:** Consistent with **Rule 65** of the Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993, the advocate shall remove the objections within 15 days of notification to avoid the matter being placed before the Court for dismissal.

5.4 The e-file bearing registration number shall be available for the advocates in the portal.

6. Judicial Interface and Hearings:

6.1. **Hon'ble Judges' Dashboard:** Once a Registration Number is allocated, the e-file shall be automatically synchronised and made available on the **Hon'ble Judges' Dashboard**.

6.2. **Valid Hearings:** Any judicial hearing conducted using these e-files shall be deemed a **valid and legal hearing** for all purposes of the law.

6.3. **Record Preservation:** In accordance with the amended **Rule 164** of the Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993, all judgments and final orders arising from these hearings shall be permanently preserved **physically as well as digitally**.

7. Legal Framework and Interpretation:

7.1. **Applicability of Rules:** **The Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993**, shall apply to all e-filing processes **mutatis mutandis**.

7.2. **Construction:** Unless the context otherwise requires, any reference to “e-filing” in this SOP or associated portal documentation shall be construed as a “filing” as provided under the Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993.

7.3 This Standard Operating Procedure will be treated as part of the Gujarat High Court Rules, 1993.

7.4 This Standard Operating Procedure may be suitably modified with advance intimation to all the Stake Holders as and when required.