

## ICA Country Report 2004

### ISRAEL

#### Identification of strategic and operational goals

The year 2004 indicates a milestone in the development of IT in the Israel administration. The plan for IT development for the next few years had been approved by the Israel government, the 'Merkava' project, a Government-wide system for managing Financial, HR, Logistics and Real Estates operations across the Government of Israel, which started in 2002 and has reached the stage of implementation.

The new ERP platform for re-inventing the Israel Government. – 'Merkava'

It is a Global plan based on SAP software and considered by them to be the world-wide leading solution. It is already working in production in 4 governmental agencies where additional 15 agencies are planned for 2004 with the rest (75 agencies) not being implemented until 2006.

'Merkava' is a long-term program designed to introduce significant improvement into the operations of the Israeli Government for the benefit of the state's citizens. 'Merkava' will offer governmental offices managerial solutions and information based on a ready-made software package, epitomizing the best knowledge and experience accumulated in public and business organizations in Israel and abroad. The 'Merkava' program forms a critical tier in the overall governmental initiatives of 'Accessible Administration', using information technology as a leverage to achieve national targets and as a far-reaching improvement of all the Government elements in the state.

The 'Merkava' program will include a number of projects, some of which are application projects and others are infrastructure projects. The projects in the 'Merkava' program will be divided into two major types: projects that concern the preparation of organizational systems (Human Resources, Financial and Logistical Resources, Assets, Real Estates, etc...) for an agency management and unique projects for headquarters-staff management (General Human Resources Authority, General Accountant Office, Government Housing Authority). The project preparing the system for agency management will include implementing the organizational system [OFAN] and 'rollout' projects to implement the system in the different agencies.

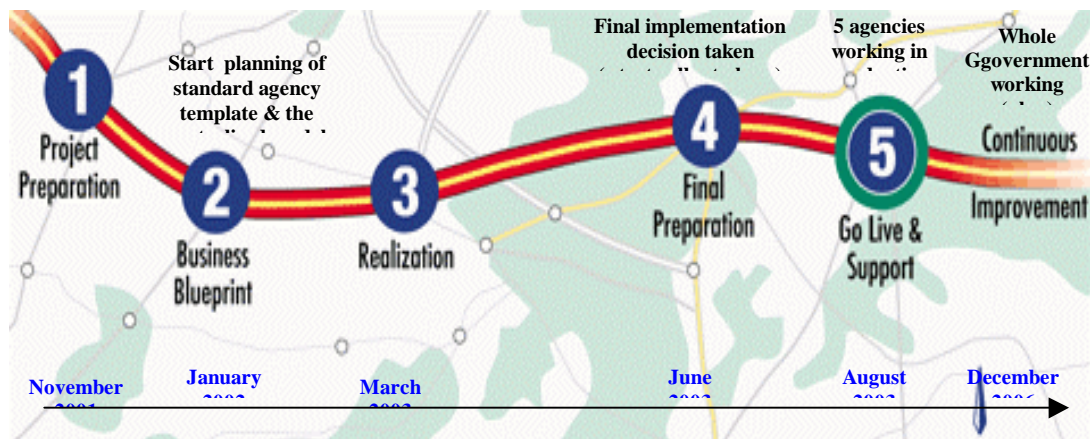
The program will enable reduced costs in executing governmental activities, especially in the field of physical assets, inventory, procurement and maintenance. Improving the level of service by shortcut procedures and improving the skills of Government employees and officials by offering them advanced tools. Removal of inter-organizational barriers in treating subjects that require collaboration between units in the organization, collaboration with other Governments (globalization) and improved exploitation of information resources by finding standard solutions that will fit a wider variety of needs.

The new policy enables the following:

- Enables the various ministries to concentrate on their unique core processes, which are the essence of each office.
- Enable the government to provide all IT services from a 'one-stop shopping' gate for the citizen as a consumer.
- Use 'economy of scale' in its relations with suppliers.
- Encourage inter- and intra-ministry integration and collaboration in its services.
- -Assist in building networks and alliances among disconnected groups in government administration.
- Supply a secured network for the whole government (a project called 'Tehila').

Through its three-layer structure of organization, 'Merkava' develops a government-wide perspective of its administration and services.

## Merkava Milestones

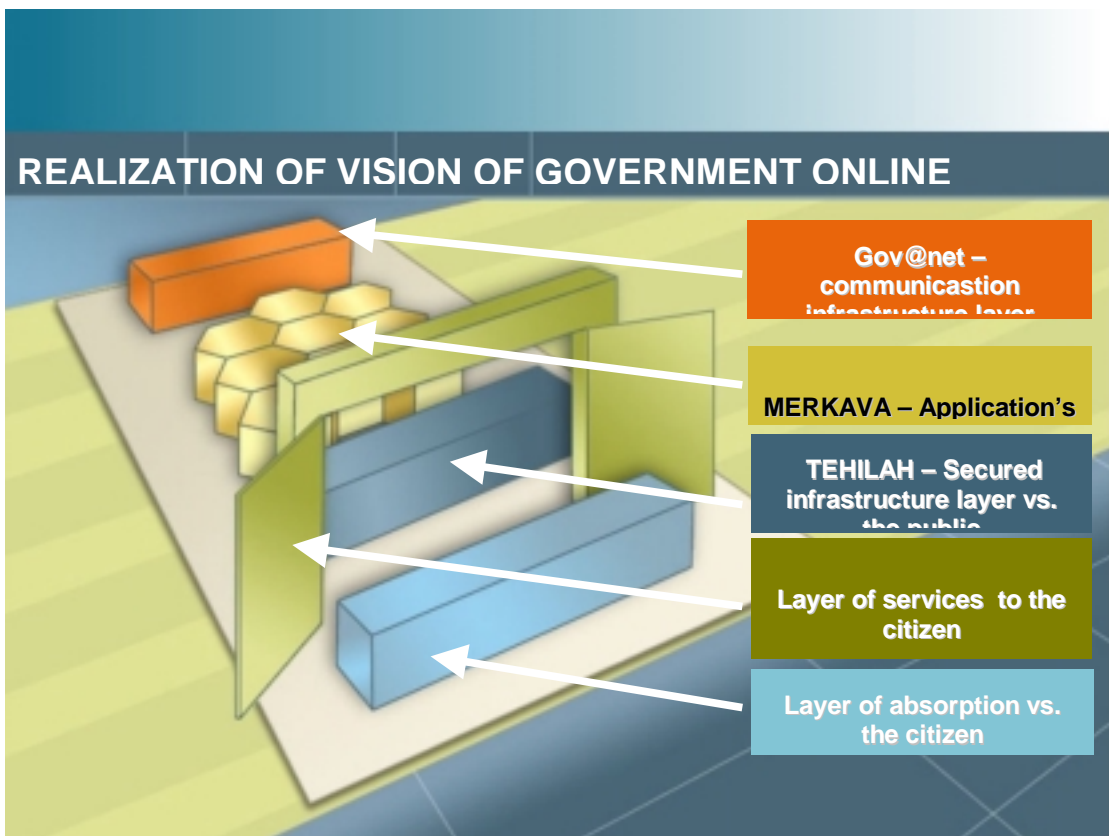
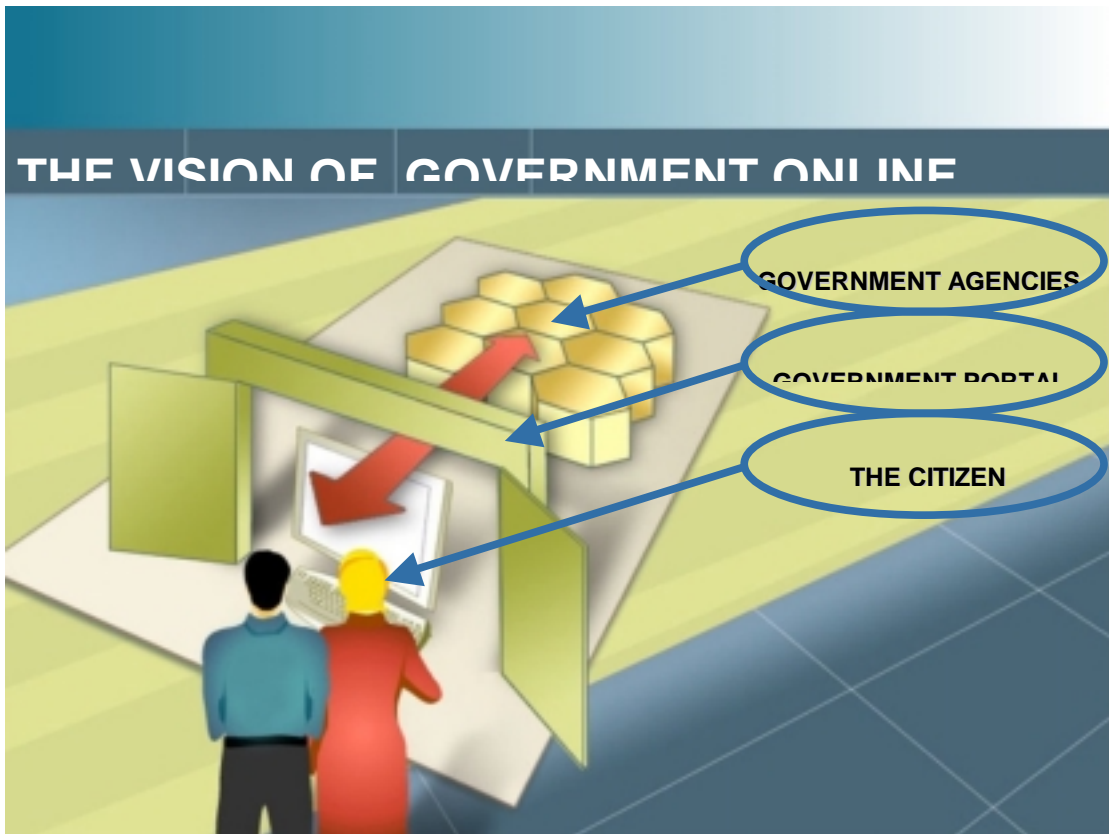


### Organising for e-Gov

#### 1. Structural change

- These changes and transformation of IT units affects the structure of government and will bring about a change in the organizational culture of the whole government administration. There are many obstacles such as fear of change, fear of worse service to the citizen from the human point of view and legacy information systems from the technological point of view.
- The implementation stage has moved forward and the first three ministries, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance (including Civil Service Commission, Government Estate Agency, Governmental Vehicle Administration) and the Ministry of Justice have started using this technology with all its implications as of September 2003.

While the 'Merkava' project is being executed, government IT activities must and do continue. We will specify some of these continued processes.



### **Communication Infrastructure Layer - The Intranet Network**

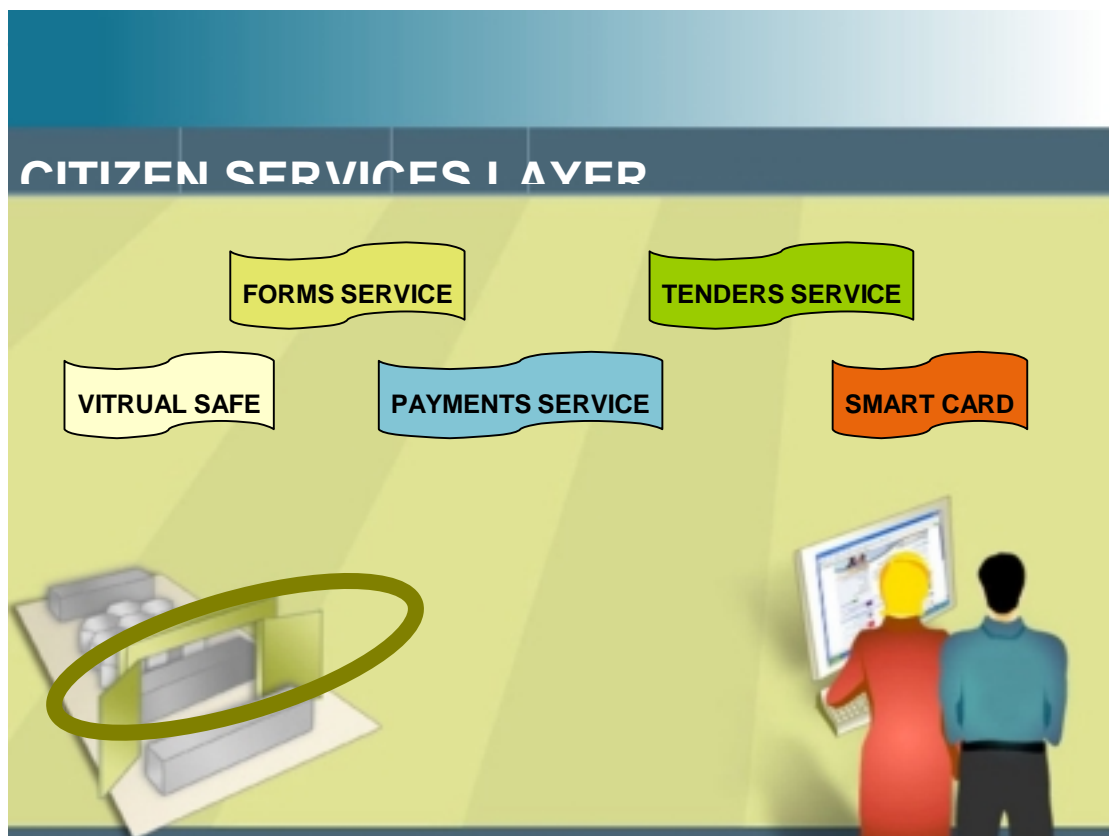
The Intranet Network will create an advanced Infrastructure Layer that will link between all government agencies, will consolidate existing networks of government agencies into one net (saving a lot of money) and establish a secure E-mail systems to transmit messages within and between government agencies at the restricted/secured level. The Intranet Network will link the government to outside agents from one point only (banks, post office), and will add some conference discussion possibilities by video and IP telephony.

### **'Merkava' – Application's Layer (cross organization)**

'Merkava' project is an overall lateral system in all government agencies. The project as explained in the beginning of the report fits the existing requirements in the government in the areas of strategic management and control and supplies services to agencies and governmental support units.

### **'Tehilah' – Secured Infrastructure Layer**

For more details, please see the chapter: 'Identifying and building additional critical infrastructure'.



### **Smart Card and Electronic Signature**

For more details please see the chapter: 'Developing government wide architecture and standards'.

### **Payments Service**

For more details, please see the chapter: 'Developing gateways which will process certain applications for all agencies and ministries'.

### **Tender Service and Public Tender**

The system of Tender Service enables publication and execution of all government and local government tenders in a concentrated manner (advantage to the size), online acquisition of tenders and online reply to them, execution of public tenders for ministries (land, purchases), immediate publication of winners, estimate of 10% to 30% savings on purchasing costs.

The Tenders System enables maximum transparency to each business and citizen. Public tender policy for the procurement of commodity items remains as was. The annual tenders fall under the policy that calls for a tender about once a year, for items such as printers, PCs, 'off the shelf' software, network products and other telecommunication devices. This method of procurement is constantly being reviewed and improvements are routinely being introduced. With the frequent technological changes in commodity items and the changes in prices (usually lower), quotations for many items are sometimes being done three or four times a year. This policy's aim is to minimize the bureaucratic procedures that surround the purchasing of small standard products, and at the same time, reduce costs due to 'Economy of Scale'.

The chief state accountant in the Ministry of Finance requested the establishment of a list of registered suppliers to purchase support services of manpower in the technological, information and media monitoring fields for ministries and support units. The tender was for the establishment of auxiliary lists of registered suppliers in various specialized professional fields, development and maintenance – as detailed in the tender and as specified in the main lists of the chief state accountant.

The choice of suppliers for the general list was made on the basis of minimum conditions and evaluation of the proposal cost. The choice of suppliers for the auxiliary lists was made on the basis of minimum exclusive conditions for the sub-list and inclusion of up to 15 suppliers in each sub-list, with the lowest offer.

Nevertheless, it should be stated that, for major IT projects, the Israeli Tender Law requires that any office must issue a mandatory bid, unless a special committee exempts the agency from the bid. The law and its procedures are necessary in any outsourcing project.

### **Forms Service**

For more details, please see the chapter: 'Communicating and marketing to the public'.

### **Virtual Safe**

For more details, please see the chapter: 'What new and/or innovative activity not outlined above is under consideration'.

### **Layer of absorption vs. the citizen**

Under this issue the Israeli Government operates by taking care of establishing centres for computer studies nationwide, including Internet stations, establishing online learning set-ups in the internet, training youth to properly use technologies of information in periphery areas, establishing of a national digital library which will include a large collection of books, encyclopedias and information pools of publications in order to enable to everyone quick access to information.

## **2. The National Committee of Technology and Information**

The Israel government has established a central IT committee 'The national committee of technology and information'. The committee includes representatives from the academy, IT providers, industry and the major ministries.

This committee's major role is to function on a nation-wide basis to harness information technology and communication so as to achieve the social goals of the state of Israel. The committee will determine the recommended solutions goals for the national computation and support developing a more progressive and established society. A society that will introduce new dimensions to the quality of life of citizens and the Government to ensure individual rights and protecting privacy.

The committee's policy is to strengthen the infrastructure that will help all citizens to develop new personal abilities allowing study to widen horizons, enlarge abilities, maximise achievements and grant the tools to direct the student's life path and improve its quality. The committee's actions will focus on underprivileged populations, emphasizing the reduction of inequalities, preventing discrimination and producing equal opportunities.

Furthermore the committee will outline a comprehension policy nation wide, and will form a co-ordinated and consulting body to the political organs that take decisions at different junctions in the life of the state. The committee will advise and develop in other directions, co-ordinate and communicate between the organizations and offices, establishing a constant dialogue between these bodies while keeping the policy determined by the government. The committee will upgrade the state standards to those of the advanced countries, and will place Israel among the leading IT countries.

### 3. Forum of CIO in Government Administration

The Forum of CIO in Government Administration is continuing to operate. It acts as a consulting group to the IT policy makers in the Ministry of Finance. The exchange of information among all IT managers is essential and it is also very helpful in learning from one another. The introduction of e-government projects on an inter-ministerial basis requires co-operation and co-ordination between the various offices and the members of the Forum help in this process. In the implementation stages of projects, they act as the essential link in helping to bring these IT programs to a successful conclusion.

#### Funding

The planned budget for the implementation of the 'Merkava' project is 150 million dollars. Another 2.5 million dollars is planned for specific e-Government applications. The sum of 50 million dollars is planned for the year 2003 for that project and 55 million dollars for the year 2004. Some discussions are made during preparations of the 2004 national budget to enlarge the amount to 150 million US \$ in order to urge the assimilation of the projects among more ministries and governmental offices.

The funding of the 'Merkava' budget will come from deducting 10% each year from the IT budgets of the various ministries. This amount will be available for each ministry while coming to implement its part of the 'Merkava' project. The total budget for all governmental projects is given below in NIS.(1 US \$ = 4.5 NIS)

<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>					
<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>BUDGET UNTIL 2003</b>	<b>BUDGET 2004</b>	<b>BUDGET 2005</b>	<b>BUDGET 2006</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<i>MERKAVAH</i>	70	60	120	125	375
<i>IINTRA-NET INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	25	1	2	3	6
<i>INTER GOVERNMENTAL PORTAL</i>		1	2	2	5
<i>GIS INFRASTRUCTURE</i>		1	1	1	3
<i>PAYMENTS SERVICES</i>		5	6	6	17
<i>GOVERNMENT PORTAL</i>		2	2	2	6
<i>VIRTUAL SAFE</i>		2	4	2	8
<i>PUBLIC TENDERS</i>		2	1	2	5
<i>SMART CARD/ ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE</i>		4	4	4	12
<i>FORMS SERVICES</i>		2	3	4	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>95</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>150</b>

## Changing laws, regulations and policies

### 1. The Committee

The Civil Division of Advice and Legislation in the Ministry of Justice started back in 1999, enquiring judicial aspects of the electronic trade, including legal adjustments according to the changes in the technological environment. This enquiry was done in collaboration with other ministerial offices. Over time there became the need to execute the work. The Minister of Justice appointed in early 2001, a Committee in order to check the judicial problems accompanying the electronic trade. The Committee was requested to examine the legal problems within the field of the contracts, laws of damages, spiritual assets, the private international law, consumer protection, protection of privacy, means of payment, and problems in other areas that the committee may find concerning the subject.

### 2. Operation of the Committee

The judicial problems facing electronic trade have two special characteristics: It is a new field throughout the world, and the judicial solutions have international influence, as the electronic trade has no boundaries.

The Committee examined, the possibility of applying the existing legislation in every subject in the areas examined about the electronic trade, directly or by interpretation, or maybe there is a need for special legislation. Since this is a new field, with global characteristics, there was a need to learn about the different law issues in other countries. In the field of electronic trade there is a lot of judicial material to compare, since many countries throughout the world have many laws to arrange properly the different aspects of the subject. In the light of the large amount of material, the Committee chose to focus on the European Community law and on the Federal American law and, once in awhile, for special topics, they also examined laws in other European countries and in Canadian law practice.

**The Committee decided to conduct hearings on the subjects as needed in order to find law solutions for problems that arose in everyday life. The committee also took in consideration the 'maturity of legislation' of the different aspects of comparison law.**

### *3. Israel's Electronic Signature Act and its implementation*

The advancement of computer technology and academic research has led development of civilian encryption (as opposed to confidential military encryption) to a level that widespread simple use of technology can supply secure and reliable communication.

Legislators in many countries, including the US and the EU have legislated laws that give legal validity to the use of electronic signatures in the context of electronic communication.

Israel also has enacted its Electronic Signature Act in 2001. The law sets the minimum standards for the legal validity of electronic signatures. The law defines a regulatory framework for the regulation of Certificate Authorities for electronic signatures, the Registrar of Certification Authorities in the Ministry of Justice. The law also defines liability with regard to the person signing an electronic document with an electronic signature, the person relying on the electronic signature and the Certificate Authority.

‘Secure Electronic Signature’ is the basic electronic signature and ‘Certified Electronic Signature’ is the advanced electronic signature. Both signatures are valid and admissible as evidence but differ in their ability to replace handwritten signatures where those are required by law. The technical difference between these signatures is that the ‘Certified Electronic Signature’ has an electronic certificate issued by an approved Certification Authority.

There is no obligation to be a registered CA, unless the CA wants to issue electronic certificates for use instead of handwritten signatures where those are required by law.

Two Certification Authorities have received a license to issue ‘Certified Electronic Signatures’, which produce electronic signatures that are equal in legal effect to handwritten signatures.

The use of electronic signatures for authentication and non-repudiation enables a variety of government services over the Internet, and is a major part of the E-government initiative in Israel.

Recently, Israel's Security Regulation Authority has finalized the legal measures for a project of online electronic filing, using ‘Certified Electronic Signatures’ as the cornerstone of the filing system, enabling full legal status to the electronic reports and signatures. The project is in its first phase of implementation and, when this phase is finished, electronic filings will be the substitute for all paper filings to the Securities Regulation Authority.

The Israel Government has started a process to issue ‘smart’ identification cards embodying electronic signatures, to facilitate better government to citizen and government to business communications and services.

#### **4. International Cooperation**

As electronic communications are done across borders, it is important that a similar legal framework is in place to support electronic communications and ensure their legal validity. Such an option is available in article 22 of the Israeli act, which empowers the Registrar to give digital certificates issued by a foreign Certificate Authority legal validity. Such an option is also available in article 7 of the European Directive 1999/93/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 on a Community framework for electronic signatures ('the directive'). This section allows mutual recognition of certification services between the EU and other countries. Israel has offered to start co-operation in this area with the EU in the context of the Israel EU association agreement.

#### **Identifying and building additional critical infrastructure**

Information security

The Ministry of Finance has undertaken to run a national IT security channel project called 'TEHILAH'. Its objective is to supply all government employees with a secure Internet connection. It enables a secure connection between government offices and also allows the public to access information and prevents any attempt to enter the system illegally. The project is operated and protected by a government secured Internet service provider.

Security procedures for transforming data from one site to another have been provided by the operator of the project. It employs the best protection tools available in the market.

There are many attempts to breach and enter the government's network, however, due to those security tools all attempts have failed.

The 'TEHILAH' project enables an establishment of payment systems infrastructure, forms, electronic signature apparatus vs. the public, establishment of secure interfaces program between governmental data systems and the public. It will enable a secure Internet surfing by each employee and receipt and dispatch of E-mail.

#### **Communicating and marketing to the public**

##### **1. e-Government in Israel**

The Israeli government's policy for the introduction of e-government is to enable the public to enter freely and draw information and services via the Internet by connecting most government sites online. The target date for the 'Government Online' project is the end of 2005.

The Freedom of Information Law approved by the Kneset [parliament] requires the government to enable the citizen to access all non-classified information on its activities. All offices must put on their web sites an annual summary report as well as various other public reports.

At present the Israel Government provides access to 150 sites, which include information about all government activities, including connections to the local authorities sites. The sites include data and information about various aspects of the scope, responsibilities and activities of all offices as well as information on the economy and the social aspects of the country.

The following are a few examples of the contents included in the sites:

- General information about government departments
- Reports on studies of social and economic value as well as various publications needed by the people
- The annual budget of the Government
- The State Comptroller's annual reports on the activities of all government offices
- Investment requirement as well as other commercial and industrial information
- Reports of conclusions and recommendations of government committees
- General economic data on the Israeli economy
- Tax information guide
- Emergency information in the case of mass casualties from terrorist acts
- Pay-Gov system

All information can be accessed via the new Internet governmental gate.  
[www.first.gov.il](http://www.first.gov.il)

Information can be reached in both languages Hebrew and English.

Last year there were over 1.5 million requests for information via the Internet. More than 50% of all Israeli families have the ability to use online communications to access national government sites. There are over 1.5 million customers.

It is already possible for the public to receive forms via the Forms Service. For example, Internal Revenue, Customs, Social Security, Civil Service applications for government jobs. There are over 500 forms available via the Internet. Signed forms still have to be delivered to the specific office as before. However, with the recent passage of the law for electronic signature [ES] recognition, the ability to send certain signed forms via the Internet will be implemented soon.

The Forms System is a central one and as such enables each business and citizen to forward requests and forms online from home or place of work. Each one has the ability to follow the handling status of the form. The system includes a search engine for all forms available in government and local government websites.

Some of the forms, which do not need signature, can be filled in online via the Internet and sent back for further treatment (request for changing address, the request for birth certificate etc.).

All available forms can be reached through the governmental form service <http://www.forms.gov.il/>

The Government has appointed an Internet Committee to co-ordinate all online activities in the national administration. The policy is based on the idea of avoiding duplication and thus saving funds.

The promotion of the use of online services is guided by the Internet Committee. It brings to the attention of the public the option of getting services online. The Committee steers the implementation of these services by issuing standards for communication and helps establish sites and online services. Seminars and lectures have been and are being given to educate and train both the public and the civil servants.

### **Improving national portals**

An Inter Ministerial Committee has been appointed to check the logical and technological problems in creating a governmental portal.

The Committee has started to outline the technological details (characteristics, requirements, standards) of portal products together with gathering the requests of a governmental portal, and at the same time, has outlined all government systems. By these preparations the committee is in a position to understand the technology and prepare a basic definition regarding the services to be provided by the portal.

As a result of this process, a Design Document was prepared proposing several applications and uses for a governmental portal, such as defining the work desktop for the manager. The committee suggested the use of the portal as a linkage between all governmental services.

Recently, the Committee has started a process of defining the system that will be introduced soon. It will define the subjects of the first pilot with main emphasis on the managers' work desk.

Decision regarding the technology was made in favor of the SAP-portal.

The government portal project (entry portal for Internet government services) was completed, include the development of infrastructure systems and the program for this central web. Updating of web data has been carried out. Surfing to the web can be done by this address:

[Http://147.237.72.69/FirstGovTopNav/FirstGovOnlineServices](http://147.237.72.69/FirstGovTopNav/FirstGovOnlineServices)

Authentication procedures

Biometrics

The government has appointed an Inter Ministerial Committee to study the logical and technological aspects of the biometrical identification. The biometrical ID is planned to be in the smart cards that will be issued in the future. One of the reasons for this operation is the requirement of the US government that each person who will arrive to the USA will hold his biometrical characteristic ID.

### **Developing gateways which will process certain applications for all agencies and ministries**

#### 1. Pay Government

As reported last year the Pay Government project is in production. The project enables the citizen to make payments to the government via the Internet. The system includes acceptance of payments for taxes (vat, income tax), charges, fines, etc.

It also includes purchasing of publications, tenders, services, maps, books, self-education courses from all ministries and other payments for government services. The project is a joint venture of all government offices and is co-ordinated by an Inter Ministerial Committee, headed by a representative of the Accountant General Office. The Committee includes also a representative of the Ministry of Justice in order to facilitate the changes needed in the laws and by-laws so that the Pay Government system can operate legally and properly.

Total payments so far 236 millions dollars via the Pay Government system in 254,603 transactions.

The following services have been started during the first quarter of 2004:

- Advance payments of income tax.
- Issue of land registry extract (Ministry of Justice).
- Advance payment of VAT.
- Payment of annual fee to the fellowships registrar.
- Payment of annual fee by fiscal services.
- Paying royalties to chief scientist of 'Tmurah' foundation.
- Payment of communication frequencies fees.
- Payment of insurance companies fees.

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Payments for situation room and ministry employees.
- Completion of development of the electronic receipt for payments including receipt of income tax certificate.
- In advanced stages of development: Link to Discout Bank, Mizrachi and the Merkavah and Bchan systems.
- In various development stages another 18 new systems.

A Clearing Office was made via that Internet site which enables payments without any sum limitation. That is being done via the Internet sites of the Israeli commercial banks and with their full co-operation.

## 2. Government Information Gateway

The Israel Government Information Portal enables the search for Internet addresses of the various government sites and addresses of senior government officials. It also enables one to draw information about government tender bids – from getting the tender, the dates for submission, the final tender as well as the reasons for winning.

More information is available at the following address: [www.info.gov.il](http://www.info.gov.il) or [www.itpolicy.gov.il](http://www.itpolicy.gov.il) . Information can be reached in both languages Hebrew and English.

## **Developing government wide architecture and standards**

### Smart Cards

Distribution of Smart Cards, including cards for identification and Electronic Signature, for businesses and citizens which will enable identification and signing from far away to the Internet government service counters. The card will enable people to obtain personal information in a secure and discreet manner from government institutions.

The Ministry of Finance has carried out in 2003 in New York the largest Internet on-line tender by Smart Card and Electronic Signature – \$ 1.6 billion.

The set-up of smart cards systems has been completed in the following ministries: Finance and Justice. The development and compatibility of the smart card has been completed for systems of Microsoft, NOVELL, Cisco and Check Point. The system development has been completed for support requests from the state for the settling education administration and some 200 cards have been distributed including electronic signature. The examination of the tender for approving entities of electronic signature have been completed and two suppliers were chosen: Securenet and Comsign.

The ministries where the process of examination and adaptation of the smart card and electronic signature is taking place are: Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Industry Trade and Labor, Social Affairs, etc. The planning of a central system for the

identification and government electronic signature project has been completed. A total of 4,000 smart cards have been distributed in the first quarter of 2004.

### **Organising and managing information for sharing across the government**

The project 'Merkava' is the most characteristic of cross government sharing information.

Another new example is a project named 'MAGAL' - National Geographic Knowledge. This project is an initiative of the National Committee of Technology and Information Knowledge. The plan is intended to exploit the immense potential embodied in geographic knowledge and its use, in order to support the national economy to manage effectively state infrastructure and improve services to civilians. The plan is based on developing a national wide view of knowledge systems in Israel. Another layer in the plan is an organizational move to establish a Magal leading crew, which will combine authorized key men from geographic knowledge consumers and their providers. The third leg will be the planning of a new generation of the needed infrastructure to manage services provision in the highest level, for all the bodies using geographic knowledge.

The initiative of MAGAL is intended to improve planning capabilities, determining a GIS policy of decision making at all government ministries, local authorities and other public organizations (the electric company, water, road, port administration and the Israel Land Administration which is in charge of the management of more than 93% of the land in Israel). The aim of that is to establish standards for creation of a common language between the units, so all users will define the same geographic entity and location, synonymously. In this manner all government ministries can coordinate properly the management of the physical, economical and social entities of the state. Decision makers can perceive wide and integrative picture from different sources, which will bring about generating added value to the overall national knowledge.

Other aspects of the 'Magal' plan:

1. Executive integration between different authorities.
2. Combination of geographic location from different organizations will efficiently shorten the efficiently set-up and execution of infrastructure projects.
3. Improving the preparations to emergency situations.
4. Setting up of a uniform and coordinated policy for spreading information to the public.

Obtaining feedback from the public

The Israel government's web site [www.info.gov.il](http://www.info.gov.il) contains the section 'Contact Us', enabling Internet surfers to put in writing their opinions. They have the opportunity to

raise suggestions and requests. That is done online by filling in a form and sending it by E-mail.

Based on the cumulative data, surveys are done and the conclusions are learned for future notice. The amount of appeals to government sites grew up by 50% during the year 2003 compared to those during 2002. There were over 1,500,000 appeals to government sites during the first half of year 2003.

E-governance including E-voting and obtaining comments on proposed laws and regulations

The Israel Parliament ['Kneset'] has its own web site. The site includes all minutes of the plenary and its committees. There are discussion groups set according to subjects - the citizen can express views on the subject including proposed new laws and they will be sent to the proper committee or member of the house.

The citizen can ask questions related to a specific ministry, committee or member and any of them must by law answer the public on the issue raised.

No plans for online voting are foreseen in the near future.

### **What new and/or innovative activity not outlined above is under consideration**

The following are pilot projects dealing with e-Gov:

#### 1. National Medical Record.

A National Medical Record is not a technological project, but a national project of concentrating medical information and administrative information focused and relevant to the caregiver at the right time and place by information technology. As such, the state is charged with initiating, creating and supervising it, and its managers have to carry out a thorough analysis of the subject, to examine all consequences, to accurately define the applicable methodology, to characterize the processes and only after that to examine the way of technology materialization.

A National Medical Record is a linkage between all existing medical records in all medical establishments by rules and standards set by the state. Concentration of medical information created about the patient in various locations (clinics, hospitals, laboratories and institutes) and its presentation to the caregiver at the place of treatment. Concentration of clinical and administrative data – Minimal Data Set, are essential in order to ensure continuity of treatment to the patient, reduce medical errors by the caregiver and create an integrated medical picture. Presentation to an authorized caregiver while strictly ensuring security of information as part of professional confidentiality – this is a National Medical Record.

The required resources for carrying out the project are estimated at 80 millions NIS over a period of 3 years. These resources comprise all parts of the project starting with management, consultancy, software, hardware, etc. A budgeting/financing plan will be forwarded separately.

## 2. 'Shachar' – The Welfare Portal.

The 'Shachar' program is meant to improve the capabilities of the workers and managers in welfare services, in all authorities, to handle those requiring service. The solution is based on an organizational info portal which is at the info front, which will collate all data and info needed by those people carrying out their function, through the professional community and all systems, documents and Internet webs and will present to them the situation picture in a way to enable decision-making and doing their job quickly and at the required quality. 'Shachar' will assist the employee and the welfare team to communicate with various factors within and outside the organization, to improve the team work essential to solving problems, to make direct use of the collective experience accumulated and forward quickly and efficiently the required information to the various authorities, all in order to ensure the best treatment. 'Shachar' will first serve all the workers in the field but will also serve as a reliable information basis for the managerial and strategic level in all organisations. Another component in the program is a designated portal for the citizen to enable him to obtain concentrated information on rights and duties and will assist him in his contacts with the authorities by simplifying forms, obtaining status of his application, etc.

The portal and the integration technology Netweaver will assist in creating an overall process to solve the citizen's problem dividing organizations and applications. In the frame of this integration, data and messages will be transferred between the applications of the various authorities. Verification and updating of common data will be done once for all authorities. Info required will be shared between authorities for problem solving. It will be possible to see and notice at which stage the process stands. All this will shorten the overall length of the process of problem solving.

## 3. Virtual Safe Project.

This project is in the initiation stage. We are talking about an online registered mail. Virtual personal file secure and confidential for each business and citizen and dispatch of messages and approvals electronically signed from government to businesses and citizens (registered mail).

The 'SAFE' system will serve ministries for safe transfer of messages between government and businesses and citizens by using a smart ID and advanced technologies. The holder of the SC will be able to draw on a form via the Internet, fill in the details, sign it electronically and send it to the right official who will check the form's validity, sign it electronically and acknowledge its acceptance or even its validity and approval of specific requests. It is expected that over 1.500.000 private safe boxes will be issued to the public.

## 4. Digital Gap

The philosophy behind the aim of narrowing the gap between the 'have' and the 'have not' countries is becoming more and more of a challenge to the IT countries. There is, however, a digital gap within our own countries. It is felt that overcoming this gap

can be achieved partly by introducing computerization to the schools and community centers in the required areas.

A very good examples of narrowing the gap in some towns in Israel are: the towns of Maalot-Tarshicha in the north of the country (a mixed Arab – Jewish town), Dalyat El Carmel (a Druze town), Kiryat Malachi (a mixed new immigration town including immigrants from North Africa, former U.S.S.R. states and Ethiopia).

The project is called 'Galileo'. Many families in these towns were given or sold computers and the city administrations (with the help of outside donors) established the network infrastructure connected to a central city server, enabling the citizens to be connected to an Internet provider at a very low cost. An interesting result from the first five years' experience has been a rise in the number of high school graduates in these towns.