

## **STAGES OF e-GOVERNANCE**

At this point, some of you might say:

### **Okay, we convinced. Now how do we 'start' e-Governance?**

Many governments initiate projects haphazardly, without any careful planning that takes into account what stage must precede another for the succeeding one to be successful. Common sense reveals that there are 4 general stages, which is not cases, must follow each other.

### **Stage 1: Information Technology Frameworks**

Deployment of a basic Information Technology framework is a prerequisite for any foray into e-Governance. By basic we mean:

- a) Computers in some minimum number and with some minimum capability
- b) Interconnectivity of those computers (networking)
- c) Basic bandwidth for applications like internet access and email
- d) A communication platform – such as an intranet

The development of an Intranet – an internal 'internet' – for the employees and constituents of the Government agency – for centralized access to collaborative work tools and information will dramatically increase efficiency by creating a tap on common knowledge pool as well as providing productivity tools.

The choice of computers is relatively easy, however, the software is more critical a component than the hardware. The price of a PC is pushed up by the cost of license for commercial software. Open Source software which is available without fee for license, can help enormous amounts of money as well as save government from a very dangerous strategic error.

### **Stage 2: Digitisation**

Once technology has been deployed and a network put in place, the next step is to make sure that all content and processes of the administration is digitized. Processes and systems should ensure that digitization and tagging of documents becomes a habit, not one isolated project. Digitisation and tagging ensures that time is saved in mundane tasks like locating files. If the digitization process does not take place, the purpose of implementing e-governance is defeated. How can you talk about providing better services to the citizens unless the department is internally equipped to provide those services?

### **Stage 3: Citizens Access**

Once the digitization process has become a process, the next logical step for an administration is to make the information available to the citizens. One way of doing this is through a 'Citizens Portal' essentially involve transforming the information produced by the Government to make it interactive, attractive and user – friendly, and then allowing it to be accessed by citizens. This can change the experience that citizens have with the administration and also increases the productivity of the officers by saving their time from routine requirements of the general public.

#### **Stage 4: Content**

Even though Governments are one of the richest source of information, the content generated by the government fails to involve the citizen. This is very dangerous because ultimately, after all the computers and networks and state wide fibre optic connections are ready, the thing that will ensure the success or failure of e-governance is the content that flows through those networks. Managing this last link to the citizen is a challenge and unfortunately, has been one in which Government around the world have been singularly unsuccessful in.