

Section 5

Promoting IT in Administration and Public Services

1. Promoting IT in Local Areas

The MPHPT has been promoting comprehensive digitization of local communities, through activities to close the gaps in info-communications and telecommunications, as well as intangible activities utilizing information and communications, with the view of improving education, welfare, and other services for residents, improving the efficiency of public administration, and rectifying the digital divide. In addition, the MPHPT held the “Study Group on Production of Local Information on the Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting” from September 2002, which discussed the various problems that could occur when local governments utilize terrestrial digital broadcasting for publishing administrative and other information, and compiled a report in March 2003.

2. Revitalizing Local Economies through Utilization of IT

The MPHPT promotes a concept of IT business model districts based on the “Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Policy Management and Structural Reform 2002” (Cabinet decision in June 2002). This is a concept to designate the local governments that are enthusiastic about promotion of IT businesses and realize an attractive business environment for IT businesses prior to other areas, in order to accumulate IT businesses and revitalize local economies through establishing local development models of IT businesses and applying those models to other communities. In April 2003, eight districts were designated nationwide as IT business model districts. The MPHPT also promotes development of Okinawa through IT.

3. Accomplishing an e-Government

With regard to acceptance of online administrative procedures, all administrative procedures (approx. 52,000 procedures) including applications and notifications by individuals and companies will be made accessible around the clock from home and office computers via the Internet by the end of fiscal 2003, in principle. In the area of legal systems, the three laws for providing online administrative procedures, namely, the “Law Concerning the Use of Information and Telecommunications Technology on Administrative Procedures (Online Administrative Procedures Law),” the “Law Concerning Preparation of Related Laws for Enforcing Online Administrative

Procedures Law (Preparation Law),” and the “Law Concerning Digital Signature Certification of Local Public Entity (Public Individual Certification Law)” for further computerizing the central and local governments passed the 155th session of the Diet in December 2002. Among these laws, the Online Administrative Procedures Law and the Preparation Law (partially excluded) went into force in February 2003.

The digitization of government procurement procedures (excluding public works) is promoted by the Liaison Meeting of Ministries and Agencies for Promoting Digitization of Government Procurement Procedures (Excluding Public Works), which is lead by the MPHPT and attended by all ministries and agencies, according to the “Future Measures based on the Study Findings of the Virtual Agency (Task Force Jointly Formed by Ministries and Agencies)” (decided by the Advanced Information and Telecommunications Society Promotion Headquarters in December 1999). The MPHPT developed an online bid system using the Internet for the bid tendering/opening in fields such as commodities, etc., and launched operation of the “electronic tendering and bid opening system for non-public works” in October 2002.

The Japanese government, which is advancing computerization of administration in a comprehensive and organized manner based on the e-Japan Priority Policy Program and other programs, developed and reorganized the conventional “Liaison Meeting of Ministries and Agencies for Promoting Computerization of Administration” into a new framework in September 2002 to secure a more firm foundation for driving computerization as the whole government and to promote the digitization of administration more powerfully. This new framework was established under the IT Strategic Headquarters as the “Liaison Meeting of the Chief Information Officers (CIOs) of the Ministries and Agencies” (hereinafter referred to as the “CIO Liaison Meeting”) consisting of the CIOs of the respective ministries and agencies. Toward the next phase of e-Government building, the CIO Liaison Meeting summarized “Toward Formulation of an e-Government Building Program (tentative)” in March 2003, which will be the basic policies for the programs to be implemented from fiscal 2003 until the end of fiscal 2005.

In order to implement prompt and precise disaster emergency activities in large-scale disasters and other

states of emergency, collection and transmission of information will be indispensable. Therefore, the MPHPT engages in establishment of advanced information and communications network systems in the fire/disaster prevention field in response to the rapid progress of information and communications technology, based on the e-Japan Priority Policy Program-2002, etc.

4. Achieving e-Local Governments

The Local Government Wide Area Network (LGWAN) is an administration-dedicated network that connects local governments. The LGWAN, which is a communication network that connects the intranets of local governments and enables advanced information distribution, is intended to facilitate the communications between local governments and allow advanced use of information through information sharing. The LGWAN was further connected with the Kasumigaseki WAN in April 2002.

The MPHPT has been implementing the “e-Local Government Promotion Pilot Project,” as a three-year program starting in fiscal 2001. Based on the findings of the project in fiscal 2001 and 2002, the basic specifications for the general-purpose reception system (version 2) was formulated by the Liaison Meeting of Ministries and Agencies for Promoting Computerization of Local Government Affairs, etc. in March 2003.

In order to achieve e-Local Governments including provision of online administrative procedures, such as applications and notifications, the MPHPT announced the

“Joint Outsourcing/e-Local Government Strategy” in May 2002. This strategy aims at upgrading public services for residents, reforming the operations of local governments, and revitalizing local economies through promotion of local IT-related industries, by standardizing and unifying the operations of multiple local governments and effectively utilizing the know-how and systems of private companies.

The Basic Resident Registers are presently used to authenticate a person’s state of residence as the basis of various administrative services provided by municipalities, and they are helpful for rationalizing administration and improving the convenience of residents. The basic portion of the Basic Resident Registers Network System went into operation in August 2002, and it became possible to provide personal identification information to administrative organizations. The system has been contributing to reducing the burden on residents and increasing administrative efficiency by eliminating the need to attach a copy of the resident register when applying for a passport or the need to submit notification of the current status to receive mutual pension benefits. Starting in August 2003, copies of resident registers will be issued in a wide area, the procedures pertaining to moving residence will be simplified, and Basic Resident Register cards will be issued.

Furthermore, the MPHPT implements actions toward establishing geographic information systems and promotes digitization of local culture, such as creating databases on the traditional culture of local communities.