



Section 5

Promoting IT in Administration and Public Services

1. Promoting IT in Local Areas

In order to establish an environment for the building of e-local government and to correct the digital divide, the MPHPT is making efforts toward the realization of a system of highly accessible administrative services utilizing the data broadcasting and interactive functions possessed by terrestrial digital broadcasting, which began in the three major metropolitan regions of Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka on December 1, 2003. In fiscal 2003 the MPHPT built an administrative service supply system utilizing terrestrial digital broadcasting in Gifu City and verified the usefulness and problems of the system through a demonstration test in which about 150 households used it to access administrative services, such as the booking of public facilities. In fiscal 2004 the MPHPT is scheduled to implement a demonstration test toward realizing the supply of administrative services enabling application and notification that require personal certification.

Also, local governments are appearing that, in response to the development of wide-area local administration, connect the local public networks built by municipalities with the information highways, etc. constructed by prefectures and use them to promote e-local government through joint outsourcing and to develop applications related to education, long-distance medicine, disaster prevention, etc. Against this background, the MPHPT in December 2003 convened the “Study Group on the Promotion of IT in the Regions”, which is studying such issues as the construction of public networks nationwide, the joint building and joint operation of applications, and the development of human resources to support the spread of IT in local areas.

2. Revitalizing Local Economies Through Utilization of IT

By designating local governments that actively promote IT business as IT business model districts and realizing attractive business environments for the IT business there ahead of other areas, the MPHPT is endeavoring to concentrate the IT business and is promoting the revitalization of local economies through the establishment of local development models of IT business and the application of these models in other areas.

3. Accomplishing e-Government

In July 2003 the Liaison Meeting of the Chief Information Officers (CIO) of the Ministries and

Agencies (CIO Liaison Meeting) decided on the e-Government Building Program that stipulates concrete efforts by the government relating to the building of e-government during the three years from fiscal 2003 to fiscal 2005. On the basis of this program, the government is tackling business reform to improve the convenience of the public and services and respond to the spread of IT.

As part of its efforts based on this program, the government in January 2004 revised the functions of its e-government portal site (e-Gov: <http://www.e-gov.go.jp>) that provides a general search function of administrative information supplied by ministries and agencies, information on administrative procedures, searches for ordinance data, and so on. The government increased convenience and improved services by, among other things, introducing information on administrative procedures by event (marriage, employment, etc.) and integrating information on the organization and business content of ministries and public comment (the solicitation of opinions and disclosure of results).

Also, as a result of advancing the online supply of procedures in line with the Action Plans Relating to the Electronification of Administrative Procedures, Etc. compiled in ministries and agencies, by the end of fiscal 2003 the government had put almost all of the procedures relating to application, notification, etc. handled by administrative organizations of the state online.

Furthermore, since the e-Government Building Program called on the government to make efforts in a strategic and cross-sectional manner toward the simplification, greater efficiency, and rationalization of administrative operation through the optimization of business and systems, the government conducted a systematic rearrangement of the business and systems of the government as a whole by the end of December 2003, and in February 2004 the CIO Liaison Meeting selected 72 areas in which positive effects could be expected from the optimization of business and system integration as subjects for the formulation of optimization plans.

In addition, since the gathering and transmission of information is essential to implement prompt and precise disaster relief activities in emergency situations, such as large-scale disasters, the MPHPT, on the basis of the e-Japan Priority Policy Program-2003, etc., is making efforts to build advanced information and communications network systems in the fire and disaster prevention fields in response to the rapid progress of information and communications technology.

4. Achieving e-Local Government

The Local Government Wide Area Network (LGWAN), which is an administration-dedicated network connecting local governments, was connected with the intranets of prefectures and ordinance-designated cities in October 2001 and with the Kasumigaseki WAN in April 2002, and by mid-2003 all local governments were participating.

Also, in August 2002 the Network System for Basic Resident Registers went into operation, making it possible to have a common national personal identification information consisting of name, address, date of birth, gender, residence certificate code, and changes in this information. Thus, it became possible to provide personal identification information to any administrative organization. At the same time, the requirements to attach a copy of the certificate of residence when applying for a passport and to submit notification of current status when receiving a mutual-aid pension were abolished. In August 2003 the Basic Resident Registers Network

System went into full-scale operation with the beginning of wide-area issue of residence certificate copies, the simplification of procedures relating to moving residence, the issue of Basic Resident Register cards, etc. Furthermore, a public personal certification service utilizing the system was begun in January 2004. Thus, the system is playing an important role as the basis of e-government and e-local government.

The Basic Resident Register card, the issue of which began in August 2003, is an IC card that is issued by the mayor to those who want one. As well as serving as a public identification certificate, the card can be used in a variety of ways that take advantage of the high-level security functions and information processing functions of IC cards. For example, the card can be used as a secret key for public personal certification services and as a means of preserving an electronic certificate, as well as for automatic certificate-issuing services allowed by municipal ordinances and everyday administrative services, such as the booking of public facilities.

Section 6

Promoting Network Contents Distribution and Developing Human Resources

1. Promoting the Production, Distribution, and Preservation of Network Contents

The Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters, which was set up in the government in March 2003 on the basis of the Basic Law on Intellectual Property, pointed out the importance of contents in the realization of a state based on intellectual property and established, under the headquarters, the Task Force on Content, which conducted multidimensional studies on such subjects as promoting the creation, protection, and distribution of contents and issued a report in April 2004. The “Bill concerning Promotion of Creation, Protection and Exploitation of Content” was submitted to the 159th session of the Diet as legislation submitted by Diet members and was enacted in May 2004.

Regarding the facilitation of processing copyrights and other rights, which has become an issue relating to contents, and the establishment of safe, definite, and diverse distribution technology, under the cooperation of the public and private sectors, the MPHPT since fiscal 2002 has been conducting trials on the development and demonstration of a copyright clearance mechanism and the development and demonstration of broadband con-

tents distribution technology.

Also, in response to the increase of illegal and harmful information on the Internet, in order to enable users to easily judge the safety of information, the MPHPT from fiscal 2004 is carrying out surveys and research with the aim of promoting the establishment of a Contents Safety Mark system (tentative name) so that site operators can indicate the safety of their own sites.

2. Developing Human Resources

The field of information and communications is a rapidly developing field with a high degree of technological power. In order to maintain and strengthen the international competitiveness of existing industries by utilizing information and communications, high-level information and communications engineers are essential.

In fiscal 2001 the MPHPT introduced the Supporting System for Training of ICT Human Resources with the aim of developing human resources with expert knowledge and skills in the information and communications fields. Also, with the aim of ensuring and improving the safety and reliability of networks, the MPHPT in fiscal 2004 introduced the Business of setting up information communications security personnel training centers.