

BUILDING AN INTEGRATED E-GOVERNMENT
DATA PROCESSING DEPARTMENT



**BARBADOS
INTEGRATED
GOVERNMENT
“Access Barbados”**

Within many countries Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are being utilised to enhance and transform Government processes, particularly in the provision of services. Similar to the application of terms such as e-Commerce and e-Business to describe the use of ICTs in the conducting of business processes, the term **e-Government** has been used to describe the use of ICTs to support government processes. These processes typically encompass the electronic exchange of information and data among stakeholders such as Government Ministries, departments and agencies; members of the general public; and businesses or organizations within the private sector.

This article focuses on the implementation of the Barbados Integrated Government (B.I.G) portal which is currently being developed by the Government of Barbados through its Data Processing Department (DPD). The article will describe the current work being done as the Government of Barbados moves to the initial launch of its integrated portal.

As the chosen title of the portal suggests, the Barbados Integrated Government portal will focus on a more integrated approach to the implementation and use of information and communication technologies within Government. In this regard, the portal will serve

as a single access point whereby Government employees, and the general public, can gain access to Government services and resources that have been (or will be) implemented using information and communication technologies. This includes the provision of access to existing ICT applications for example by providing highly secure online access to permissible services of the Land Tax and Land Registry departments for payment of land taxes and searching of land registry records respectively; or ensuring secure access by Government employees to their own individual personalised information such as their career history or leave status.

This level of integration within the portal also goes beyond the provision of access to existing Government ICT applications, by focusing on the specific needs of Ministries, departments, agencies, Government employees, and the general public. For example at the Ministerial/department/agency level, the portal will facilitate increased collaboration and communication among Government departments by providing access to tools such as file-sharing and web-conferencing applications. As part of a longer-term objective of the portal, it is expected that tools such as these will enable vertical and horizontal integration across all Government departments. For example access to a file-sharing application will ensure in the future that forms can be moved electronically within a secure environment, such that processing of a single form does not require physical visits to multiple departments by members of the public, but one department can act as a single point of contact.

At the level of Government employees, the portal will provide access by each individual employee to his/her personalised information, and facilitate building linkages with other Government employees to accomplish work tasks (such as forms processing), or for social exchange (through provision of a social calendar and 'classified ads' section).

For the general public the integrated portal will provide a single point of access to Government resources. For example the portal is focused on transforming traditional methods of access to contact information for Government human resources through the

development of an electronic searchable directory which will supplement existing paper-based directories.

Moreover the development and implementation of the Barbados Government portal represents an integrated effort among several departments and agencies as the Data Processing Department (DPD) has long realised the importance of building strategic collaborative links across Government in order to promote an effective exchange of knowledge and ideas. In this regard the DPD has coordinated with more than fifteen Government departments that have contributed significantly to the portal project by providing resources to the DPD in the development of the portal. These departments include:

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| (a) Archives | (j) Office of Public Sector Reform |
| (b) Licensing Authority | (k) Personnel Administration
Department |
| (c) Ministry of the Civil Service | (l) Registration Department |
| (d) Government Information Service | (m) Statistical Department |
| (e) Inland Revenue Department | (n) Training Administration Division |
| (f) Land Tax Department | (o) Treasury Department |
| (g) Land Registry | (p) Telecoms Unit |
| (h) National Library Service | |
| (i) Ministry of Commerce, Consumer
Affairs & Business Development | |

These departments, and others who may assist in later phases of the portal project, are focused on the fulfilment of the long-term objectives of the Barbados Integrated Government which include: (a) improving of accessibility to Government services and resources; (b) fostering greater collaboration and cooperation among Government departments; (c) improving the underlying technical infrastructure; and (d) strengthening local communities. These goals therefore focus on the requirements of two primary groups of end users, namely: (a) general public – this group includes, but is not limited to, citizens, non-nationals, businesses, and other non-governmental organizations; and (b) public servants – specifically employees of the Government of Barbados.

This first phase of the portal project which started in September 2005 represents a continuation of the pilot phase of the portal which was completed in the last financial year. The first phase of the portal project is expected to be completed at the end of this financial year, that is March 31st 2006, with successive phases (where additional services will be added) to be extended over another two year period.