The Integrated E-Government Programme (i-Gov) is a government operated information and communication technology (ICT) project with the overall aim of integrating all the services provided by the various agencies of the government of Qatar into a unified system. The intention is to make all government interactions, information and transaction services, available electronically through a single access point, for all “users” (citizens, residents, visitors and businesses). The integration and standardisation of all government systems, infrastructure and processes is required to achieve this goal.

There are also important secondary goals. The integration of e-government services, and other positive knock-on effects of the programme, will increase the availability, accessibility, productivity and effectiveness of the provision of government services to users; increase the efficiency of government through the streamlining of systems and innovative use of ICT; assist with cooperation between different government agencies; improve the transparency of government processes; and increase the involvement of end-users in the provision of services.

i-Gov was established and launched in 2006 as one of nine major programmes under the Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology (ictQATAR), a government organisation established in 2004 to accelerate the process of creating an information-based society. i-Gov was conceived and structured to support Qatar’s national development goals. The Qatari National Vision (QNV) was crafted to provide a strategy that could guide the country until 2030 in terms of human, social, economic and environmental development. It recognised that improved ICT would benefit all sectors, further political reforms and help Qatar become a fully developed nation. ictQATAR is therefore well positioned to support the QNV through the use of ICT, with the following objectives: to enrich the quality of life in Qatar by connecting people to technologies; and to encourage modernisation, increase economic efficiency; help create a capable and motivated workforce, broaden access to social services, and create a sustainable knowledge-based online society through the identification and implementation of appropriate ICT programmes.

With these objectives in mind, the i-Gov programme was established. Specifically, i-Gov is expected to make government more efficient, creating productivity and competitiveness gains for businesses, enhancing investment opportunities and improving services to individuals. i-Gov will create demand for ICT products and services, encouraging the development of the sector as well as its resources and talent. i-Gov has also established a Marketing and Awareness initiative which will help sell technology, raising its usage. In these ways, i-Gov will tackle the lack of skilled manpower and the development of technological capability, which are key development challenges.

The major achievements of i-Gov to date have been (examined in detail in the following section):

- The establishment of a single access point in February 2008 for all interaction with the government. The portal is called Huqoomi (www.gov.qa) and it has enabled the provision of hundreds of online services through a single website/portal.
- A total of 1.4m e-transactions were conducted through Huqoomi by the end of 2008. More than the 1.3m e-transactions carried out in Qatar between 2003 and 2007.
- The introduction of numerous online government services. There are now over 300 information services,

\* Information services solely involve the provision of information by government entities to users rather than transaction services which involve a two-way exchange, such as the provision of a document or license.
“i-Gov is expected to make government more efficient, creating productivity and competitiveness gains for businesses, enhancing investment opportunities and improving services to individuals.”

- Increased channels of communication between the government and its citizens. Mobile, e-mail and SMS are all now used as a result of i-Gov initiatives.
- A comprehensive project-management reference manual has been created. The manual sets out common architecture, standards and procedures for developing all government ICT systems, facilitating improvements in integration and efficiency.
- Efficiency and transparency gains have been made within government.
- A strategic master-plan for 2006 to 2011, involving the implementation of 54 initiatives, has been created by i-Gov in collaboration with numerous “stakeholders” (government entities, users and other parties who will be involved with initiatives). The master-plan aims to improve the infrastructure and legislation of the ICT sector, bring new government services online and it sets out a project development model for each initiative.
- A governance model has been created for the i-Gov, improving the chances of success by involving the highest levels of government and allowing for end-user participation in decision making processes.
- A total of 17 i-Gov initiatives are currently in progress and an additional 12 i-Gov initiatives are planned for launch in early 2009.
- Shared government infrastructure projects have been initiated, such as a government network, data centre, resources planning and a government contact centre. These projects represent the backend required for the full functioning of Hukoomi.
- Malomatia has assisted the expansion in private ICT sector activity through i-Gov partnerships with the private sector. Malomatia is a programme that aims to foster ICT skills, entrepreneurship and develop local SMEs by acting as a delivery arm for the i-Gov programme and learning and retaining skills from the international consultants.

and over 60 transaction services available through Hukoomi.

- i-Gov has illustrated creative planning and management through its development of a number of temporary solutions to maintain the momentum of the programme while a permanent solution is established.
- i-Gov has helped foster a focus on the users and a pan-government approach in relation to the provision of e-services.
Description of Key i-Gov Features

**Background**
The Qatar ICT sector has developed rapidly in recent years from a relatively low base. The current contribution of the ICT sector to Qatar’s GDP is 1-1.5% or around $1bn, although this is expected to double to 3%-4% in the next five years. Internet penetration reached 50% in 2008 which leaves Qatar second behind Kuwait in the region. Impressive advances have been made in some international indexes such as the Network Readiness Index, an international ICT report conducted by the World Economic Forum, which has moved Qatar up the global rankings from 40th in 2005 to 29th in 2008. The only Middle Eastern countries to rank higher were Israel (25th) and the UAE (27th).

E-government in Qatar was first launched in 2003 with a number of online services becoming available such as: the issuance of entry visas, birth certificates and health cards; the renewal of driving licences; Islamic charity payments; and payments of traffic fines and utility bills. The original e-government organisation was integrated into ictQATAR in 2005. The planning process for i-Gov began in 2006; it was operational by early 2007 and is targeted for completion in 2011. The e-government environment is likely to be further enhanced in the near future by a new e-commerce law that was drafted in 2007 and is currently in the early stages of vetting, expected to be issued in early 2009.

**Objectives**
The overriding objective of i-Gov is to make government more efficient and accessible to users of its services. There are two prevailing focuses introduced by ictQATAR to help it meet its objectives. Firstly, a focus on users, and secondly, a complete pan-government approach. As i-Gov initiatives are implemented, the government will become more integrated and collaborative, operating as a single entity rather than various agencies running their own systems and procedures. This will also increase the transparency of government in the way it functions, its policies and the predictability of its service delivery, assisting business and society to become more effective in their own objectives.

The principal objectives of i-Gov can be summarised as:

- **To improve government services** to users through more efficient and effective government services and greater accessibility for all.
- **To increase internal government efficiency** by streamlined processes and coordinated cross-government initiatives.
- **To improve governance and transparency** by clear processes and participation of users in decision-making.

**Plan and Structure**
i-Gov is based on an outsourcing model whereby ictQATAR acts as a commissioning agent and enabler of solutions which outsources the development and delivery of initiatives to partners in the local and international private sector. This leaves staff free to focus on policy, oversight, directing the programme and coordinating initiatives and different government entities. It also encourages the development of local private ICT partners and brings international expertise, skills and experience into Qatar. These elements are all essential to keeping government streamlined and enabling it to take on more future projects.

i-Gov also endeavours to involve the stakeholders and service providers at all stages of initiative development. For example, if ictQATAR wishes to implement a standardised government employment and recruitment initiative, the Ministry of Labour will be intricately involved at each stage of the initiative development.
The master-plan designed by ictQATAR foresees the implementation of 54 initiatives in a series of four separate waves from 2006 to 2011:

- The original planning envisioned an initial wave of initiatives that would begin implementation from 2006 and would mainly set about establishing the infrastructure, standards, basic awareness and capabilities training that would enable the full integration of e-government. The initial phase also involved bringing basic services online, such as visa and residency services and government procurement services.

- The second wave initiatives began in May 2007 and included creating necessary legislation, security requirements and making a number of additional services available online such as the personal documents services (IDs/Passports) and export/import services.

- The third wave of initiatives began in November 2007 and included the extension of infrastructure to improve accessibility of government services, with initiatives to install self-service terminals and mobile phone/SMS systems, as well as the introduction of a number of more specific services such as public library services and legal services. Many of the transactional services are yet to be actually launched from this wave of initiatives, other than the zakat and charity services.

- The final wave of initiatives began in November 2008 and included final infrastructural requirements such as a data warehouse and the introduction of other services that have required more time to implement, for example, building permits services and inheritance services.

The master-plan also separated each of the 54 initiatives into sub-categories, initiatives that:

**Address the ICT “Environment”** through legislation, policies, guidelines and standards, such as the e-commerce policy, security policy, and data protection policy, and also through marketing and awareness campaigns.

**Address ICT “Readiness”** through the construction of infrastructure and development of capabilities that will become available to all government entities. This sub-category involves the backend elements that are necessary to offer government e-services through a unified system such as a government network to interlink different entities; a centralised, secure government data centre; and payment platforms, self-service terminals, Hukoomi, and creating cross-government login details for users.

**Address ICT “Usage”** by increasing the number of actual e-services available online such as businesses registration, visa services and resident permits.

ictQATAR leads the projects in the first two sub-categories although it will contract out a large amount of the work done. Most initiatives are in the third sub-category and are usually led by the government agency relevant to the service, in which case, ictQATAR will establish project steering committees involving the lead agent and other stakeholders. ictQATAR will still provide oversight, technical advice and ensure objectives are met, taking on the role of the programme management office for the delivery of the master-plan.

**Governance Model**

ictQATAR has developed an effective governance model for i-Gov involving the highest level of government and a broad range of stakeholders, giving the programme full political top-down and bottom-up support. This is achieved through the regular meeting of various levels of management committees listed below. The higher levels
of these committees have adopted a rigorous approach to portfolio management, prioritising projects according to how well they are expected to achieve overall government objectives and ensuring that there is a clear economic business case established early on in the development of each project.

**Sponsor Group** - a high-level group which includes the Heir Apparent and the ministers of finance, labour, interior and the secretary general of ictQATAR. The group meets every six months to review overall strategy, plans and progress.

**i-Gov Steering Committee** - chaired by the secretary general of ictQATAR, this committee includes the directors of the General Information Management Office (GIMO), Strategic Planning and the i-Gov programme manager. It meets monthly to discuss and resolve external stakeholder issues.

**Programme Management Committee** - chaired by the director of GIMO and includes the i-Gov Programme Manager, GIMO Platform and Operations Managers, and the section manager of the i-Gov project management office. The committee meets every two weeks to review progress and discuss deliverable and directional issues.

**Project Steering Committees** - these committees are chaired by the lead organisations within a specific project which will either be ictQATAR or a government entity. Their purpose is to oversee the progress of specific projects. The committees will include representatives from different entities and GIMO projects managers who are able to give directional advice to external stakeholders.

**Project Delivery Teams** - composed of stakeholders and ictQATAR members, with the latter providing the technical knowhow. They are in charge of project delivery.

**User Committees** - meetings relating to cross-governmental initiatives which are attended by relevant experts and the stakeholders in the initiative. The meetings provide progress reports and reviews and ensure the quality of project deliverables. For example, in the user committee for the Government Network initiative, seven experts from government entities, who are specialised in government networks, meet to contribute to project development, represent their departments and provide feedback.

There are also quarterly ICT forums which are attended by all government Chief Information Officers and ICT managers. The i-Gov programme officers share progress reports with respect to new initiatives, improvements, policies, requirements and experiences with the attendees and receive feedback. This encourages broad participation, an exchange of information, expertise and knowledge as well as the development of a professional IT community.

**Initiative Development Model**

ictQATAR has set out standard guidelines for i-Gov for the development of each initiative to ensure that the best strategies are identified. The development process is separated into three phases which constitute a well-defined project lifecycle. During each phase relevant stakeholders will be involved, collaborate and share their expertise to ensure success and create an ICT environment that is as standardised as possible. The phases are:

**Strategic Articulation** - assessing the current status of the area being targeted; benchmarking potential strategies against at least five best practices from other countries; selecting a target model for the initiative; and developing the model to include a project proposal, justification, definition of the programme requirements,
costs, budgeting and timeline. In terms of the i-Gov programme, for most of the initiatives, this stage mainly took place during 2006 and 2007.

**Procurement** - issuing a request for proposals; defining the requirements; and delivering the identified solutions. Delivery always includes operational support for at least one year to encourage the development of a sustainable private sector. Through the Government E-Procurement initiative, which aims to standardise all government tendering via electronic processes, i-Gov is enabling the role of central contracting and procurement agency on behalf of the entire government.

**Execution** - further project design, implementation, testing of software and hardware and monitoring of the initiative. Most active i-Gov initiatives have now reached this development stage. Hukoomi was implemented in February 2008 and a total of 17 initiatives reached the execution phase in 2008 out of a total of 54 initiatives that are planned for completion by 2011. A further 12 initiatives are expected to begin execution in early 2009 with more than 21 initiatives expected to be launched later in the year.

Additionally to the lifecycle, common standards, methodologies and templates have been constructed for i-Gov, for the development of initiatives and for reporting and managing the updates that are applied to them.

The initiatives are also being implemented in a series of four waves. This helps encourage a continuous stream of creative strategies to cope with the enormous challenge of fully utilising technological capabilities in a constantly changing environment. The phased approach also enables different aspects of development to be tackled at different times, balancing initiatives that target policies, processes or systems or that tackle the environment, readiness or usage.

The majority of existing initiatives are expected to become fully operational during 2010 while additional initiatives and current plans cover the period until 2015. During 2010 and 2011 a second generation of initiatives will be developed which will cover the period until 2020, maintaining the momentum for the creation of new initiatives and helping Qatar achieve its long-term goals for 2030 as outlined in the QNV. This strategy will again enable ictQATAR to meet the challenge of implementing projects in an environment in which technology solutions and available infrastructure are changing rapidly and the objectives and priorities of government agencies and needs of users are also evolving over time. The strategic master-plan is structured so that it can easily be adapted over time to the changing environment.

“**The strategic master-plan is structured so that it can easily be adapted over time to the changing environment.**”
ictQATAR has set itself highly ambitious targets through i-Gov and there is currently a great deal of activity behind efforts to move towards the realisation of the programme’s goals. Analysing the progress of i-Gov to date can be done by examining the broad range of achievements made within the programme and then showing how these have contributed to the progress of i-Gov in terms of its objectives.

Principal Achievements

As outlined in the Executive Summary, a number of major achievements have been made since the launch of i-Gov in December 2006, often involving the coordination of up to 70 different government agencies by ictQATAR. The principal achievements are as follows:

**Hukoomi Launch**

Hukoomi was launched in February 2008 as a portal to provide a user-friendly front-end single access point, giving users 24-hour access to all the government services and information that are needed to live and work in Qatar. There are currently over 300 information services and over 60 electronic transaction services available through Hukoomi. To support the launch of Hukoomi, linking and hosting services for 48 government entities have been established.

Hukoomi is a readiness initiative within i-Gov and is fundamental to the programme. Most of the i-Gov initiatives will be integrated into the portal in the next 3-4 years. The portal also acts as a gateway to government and all government agencies are already contactable through the site.

Intra-government collaboration has been essential to the launch of Hukoomi and a liaison has been appointed from each government entity with responsibility for the information and services provided from that entity. A content management update policy and process has been designed to ensure that content remains updated and that government entities take responsibility for the provision of information.

The launch of Hukoomi is only the first phase of the initiative’s development. Later phases of development will encourage government entities to integrate further with Hukoomi systems, streamlining the provision of services through the site. In the first quarter of 2009 the second phase of Hukoomi’s development will be launched and will include: the addition of a number of new government entities into Hukoomi; the enhancement of the look, feel and usability of the portal; new dynamic sub-portals to increase the flexibility of the way in which services are delivered; a focus on increasing user participation and collaboration to reveal more about user needs and views through forums, online surveys and blogs; communication channels such as e-mail, mobile and SMS; a focus on visitor information services such as hotels, cinema and theatre bookings and mobile location based services such as listing nearby restaurants; and the addition of legal services with government regulations becoming accessible in both Arabic and English.

**E-Transactions**

Hukoomi was established so that all online e-government transactions would be conducted through the portal. Since its launch in February 2008 until the end of 2008, 1.4m e-service government transactions have been completed. This is a remarkable increase from the 1.3m e-government transactions that were conducted in the five-year period between 2003 and 2007. The majority of the Hukoomi transactions were for resident permits. Other popular services have included visitor visas, health cards, bill payment and payment of traffic violations.
“There are currently over 300 information services and over 60 electronic transaction services available through Hukoomi.”

Services Online

There are currently over 300 information services and over 60 electronic transaction services available through Hukoomi. Information services are offered across a broad spectrum of government-related areas and often provide the information and documentation necessary to transact government services where online transactions are not yet available. The i-Gov master plan envisions that all the informational services will also be online as transactional in coming years. In terms of the actual transaction services on offer, the government of Qatar is a regional leader.

Examples of complete transaction services currently provided through the portal, with online electronic payment and full processing, include: resident permits; bill and fine payments; driving licence applications; visa applications; exit permits; health card applications; and seven commercial registration related services. All of the Hukoomi services can be seen at www.gov.qa on the “View All Services” link on the sidebar under “Services”. If planned increases are implemented there will be over 10 times the current number of services on offer by 2015.

The Commercial Registration initiative provides the necessary e-services, guidelines and interactive information for setting up a business in Qatar, including commercial registration, permits and all licences required to begin, renew and closeout business operations. The first phase of the project has been completed and it is now possible to register new companies online. The current phase of development will make the full range of business registration services available online including entity approvals and licensing and permits for various commodities. The establishment of a business has been greatly simplified and streamlined through a single point of access rather than the former requirements to contact numerous government agencies.

Some other government services that will be available online through the i-Gov programme are: Building Permits Services; Consumer Protection Services; Copyright Protection Services; Environment Protection Services; and Legal Services to Residents and Businesses.

Accessibility

The i-Gov programme has increased the number of channels of communication between the government and its citizens. Mobile, e-mail and SMS are all now used as a result of i-Gov initiatives such as SMS Mobile Notification and Communication Systems.

Reference Manual

A major achievement carried out during the preparation stage of i-Gov was the creation of a lengthy comprehensive reference manual outlining the architecture and standards for all ICT related initiatives across the entire government. The manual provides a blueprint for government ICT framework, infrastructure, application standards and policies and enables the standardisation of systems, processes and technical solutions across the entire government, assisting integration. There is an agreed process for updating the manual so that it will be adaptable to changes in technology and to changes in the structure of government. The manual is currently being reviewed by the council of ministers and is likely to become enforceable in law, obliging all government agencies to comply with its instructions.

Efficiency and Transparency Gains

All i-Gov initiatives will enhance the efficiency and trans-
parency of government but the following initiatives are of particular note for their clear and direct impact in this area:

**Government E-Procurement** - This initiative, which will be operated through the Hukoomi portal, has created an automated government e-tendering system, which was launched in December 2008, enabling the whole e-tendering process from evaluation through to selection to take place online. The system has initially been launched with two pilot agencies, ictQATAR and the State Audit Bureau, who are currently using the system for all of their tenders. The system will be rolled out to other government entities during 2009. This initiative will substantially increase the transparency of the tendering process by clearly setting out each step of the process online. It will also increase efficiency by making it easier to update tenders and submit documents.

**Government Resources Planning** - This initiative involves the automation and integration of human and finance resource planning systems across all government entities with the specific aim of consolidating the workflow and increasing transparency and efficiency. Once implemented users will benefit from greater efficiency in processing transactions and decision makers will benefit from greater capacity to plan and control resources.

**Employment and Recruitment Services** - This initiative has established the official job recruitment site for the state of Qatar. Once automated, the service will save time, work and resources when identifying the right candidate to meet a vacancy. The initiative will also offer services such as CV writing, career guidance and provide information on labour laws, employment and recruitment regulations, procedures and pre-employment training opportunities. It will also standardise procedures and increase the transparency of the operations of the government.

**Customs Clearance Services** - This initiative will create an automated, paper-free and streamlined system which will provide essential information to residents and businesses regarding Customs clearance procedures. The initiative will also provide a one-stop service for the approval of trade declarations. Again, there are clear efficiency and transparency gains to be made.

**Strategic Master-Plan**

The creation of a strategic master-plan by ictQATAR for the implementation of the entire i-Gov programme is a major achievement in itself involving vast amounts of work. The master-plan, was created in collaboration with numerous stakeholders and outlined the introduction of four phases of 54 initiatives for the period from 2006 until 2011. The master-plan is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the changing environment of new technologies and government reform.

**Governance Model**

The establishment of a strong governance model with high level and broad representation is another major achievement of ictQATAR and helps ensure political support for the i-Gov programme. The model is described in more detail in the next section.

**Active Initiatives**

There are now a total of 17 initiatives in progress and a further 12 are planned for launch in early 2009. The majority of the initiatives in progress have reached the implementation phase of development. The strategic articulation development stage has been completed for 14 initiatives, although not all initiatives require strategic articulation.
A number of infrastructural initiatives have been launched to provide the backend required for the full functioning of Hukoomi and to transform the existing government ICT infrastructure, networking and ICT capabilities.

**Shared Infrastructure**

To support the full integration of government e-services, it is necessary to construct extensive new infrastructure which will permit the effective inter-operation of combined government ICT procedures. A number of infrastructural initiatives have therefore been launched to provide the backend required for the full functioning of Hukoomi and to transform the existing government ICT infrastructure, networking and ICT capabilities. The following initiatives are examples of shared government infrastructure projects and have involved extensive cross-government collaboration:

**Government Network** - This initiative involves the introduction of a cross-government state-of-the-art data network, separate from the public network, connecting government entities and providing a secure and reliable communications platform for the sharing of data, applications and services. The network will contain different levels of security classification; support both voice and video traffic flows; and provide secure linkages to the public internet and to the Government Data Centre. The completion of this project is expected in 2-3 years’ time. In the meantime, an interim solution will be provided by Qtel as described in the next section.

**Government Data Centre** - This initiative is establishing an ICT centre to house critical computer systems and infrastructure for the use of all government entities. The data centre will host and support the systems of i-Gov and other government entities. It is necessary for the secure and reliable provision of services such as a common payment platform and a government-wide authentication service. It will be constructed with the latest available technology but is not expected to be ready until the end of 2010. In the meantime an interim solution will be provided. The centre will also offer application operations, hosting services, a service desk, database management and ICT management and support.

**Government Contact Centre** - This initiative will be shared by many government entities and provide a single point of contact, by e-mail, phone or fax, for the entire government. Each separate government agency will retain its own support and customer services, and the contact centre will connect users with these services. The contact centre will also provide support for Hukoomi’s online services. A tendering process has been completed for the operation of the contact centre service with a contract awarded in May 2009.

**Government Resources Planning** - This initiative to improve management of all government resources is described in the above section.

**Payment platform** - This initiative is establishing a common payment platform for all government entities which will allow users to pay by a variety of e-payment methods for all government services. Each government entity will use the same payment providers which will create a single revenue channel for the whole government. The project is coordinated with Qatar Central Bank, which is the bank regulator and has connectivity with all other banks. The initiative will be launched in second quarter of 2009 and will take 4 months to implement. Payment through the platform by credit card, debit card and account transfer, will therefore be possible by mid-2009.

**Public Key Infrastructure** - This initiative aims to deliver a scalable key management platform for government, business and citizens. For many government and private e-services a more secure means of authentication than a username and password is required. With a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) system in place, smartcards could be used throughout Qatar as part of a nationwide system for authenticating identity for all kinds of government and private services. The added security will increase trust and confidence in the delivery of e-services. There is already a PKI system within the ministry of interior for identity cards which are used for
identity authentication at airports and elsewhere. The government therefore plans to use the same system and identity smartcards as the ministry of interior for use in the provision of other services and possibly even for use in ATMs. The next phase in the creation of a nationwide PKI system will begin in February 2010 and involves improving technical aspects of the PKI infrastructure.

**Information Security Governance Project** - This initiative aims to develop laws and regulations for the government, finance and ICT sectors that will ensure a secure environment for information communication. It will also develop a framework for governing and managing information security in the government sector. The first drafts of the government information security policies have been written and will enforce certain standards across the government. The policy relates to data access, classification, accreditation and authentication and will be mandated in 2009.

**User and Pan-Government Focuses**

To provide overriding direction for the iGov programme, ictQATAR has identified two principal focuses to inform decisions and strategy at all times. Firstly, the programme focuses on improving services to users. This focus has helped change attitudes within government to a more customer-first approach, which has in turn helped improve the quality and availability of services, as attested to by the numerous newly accessible e-services instigated through the i-Gov programme. The second focus of the programme has been on improving inter-government collaboration. This has also been successful as evidenced primarily through the government shared infrastructure programmes.

**Interim Solutions**

A major ictQATAR achievement has been to identify short-term temporary solutions that have enabled i-Gov to move forward while long-term final solutions have been impossible to implement. Many of the shared infrastructure solutions will take years to execute fully and interim solutions have been identified to enable earlier provision of services. Similarly, major government reforms and technological advances often result in ICT programmes being put on hold before they can be launched. Rather than wait for such changes, ictQATAR aims to introduce flexible and dynamic interim solutions that can be adapted to future changes in government and technology. An example of the successful application of an interim solution is the Government Data Centre initiative which involves the construction of a long-term state-of-the-art internal government data centre that will take around 2.5 years. Therefore, in the meantime, an agreement has been reached with Qtel to provide a temporary hosting solution for the entire i-Gov infrastructure that has allowed the programme to move forward.

**Malomatia and Private Sector Expansion**

Malomatia is a programme, launched in the summer 2008, that aims to build up domestic ICT capabilities, entrepreneurship and develop SMEs within Qatar. There is a severe lack of local ICT talent within Qatar and within the government which undermines the ambitious projects that the state wishes to implement. This has been solved by the hiring of international consultants and vendors. However, the solution has not addressed the underlying problem of the lack of talent or succeeded in retaining skills within the country.
The potential to develop local capabilities is central to the social and economic development goals of Qatar. Additionally, it is essential to the sustainability of ICT programmes in the country. The lack of a strong private ICT sector is also a major challenge which ictQATAR has attempted to tackle through the launch of Malomatia.

The purpose of Malomatia is to function as a delivery arm for i-Gov and other ICT projects. Key skilled individuals are being placed in the organisation, from i-Gov and other ictQATAR programmes, which will then provide services such as project management, ICT system design and business consultancy to the private sector. By working with the local private sector and using international consultants as little as possible, the organisation will develop skills and create partners for i-Gov within Qatar. This will increase the level of entrepreneurship of the ICT sector and enhance its ability to deal with the changing environment. Malomatia is professionally managed and benchmarked against best practices of global IT companies and has aspirations to develop skills that would be applicable abroad. Therefore, once Malomatia has established delivery solutions, it expects to be able to sell its services regionally and aims to issue shares for partial private ownership in a few years’ time.

Along with Malomatia, new services for businesses, such as the recently added capability for businesses to register new companies online and the new Customs clearance services are illustrations of how the i-Gov programme is helping to bring the government together online for economic benefit, specifically for the private sector and domestic and foreign investors, and to facilitate international trade.

There is evidence that the prospects of the ICT sector are improving as a result of the support provided to the sector through i-Gov. A 2008 Business Monitor International report forecast that Qatar’s ICT sector would outperform the region with average annual growth of 11% per annum for the period 2008-12 and a market size of $550m by 2015.

Progress Towards Objectives

In terms of the three i-Gov objectives outlined in (objectives section above) the following progress has been made:

Improve government services to users - i-Gov has improved government services in a number of ways: Hukoomi has increased ease of access considerably by providing a simplified single point of access for government; payment methods are being simplified through initiatives such as the Payment Platform and Customs Clearance Services; numerous high-quality government services have been made available online to a variety of users; government procurement and recruitment services have been made available online; information on all government entities has become easily available; a support centre and an online discussion forum have increased the potential for user participation; means of communication with the government have been broadened to include mobile, e-mail, SMS and self-service terminals; and there is greater and simpler access to government news, events, publications, e-services and surveys.

Increase internal government efficiency - Increased efficiency can be achieved through government wide collaboration to streamline processes and systems and will enable government agencies to improve the delivery of services to users. i-Gov has achieved increased collaboration and efficiency in a number of instances. Firstly, information has been shared with initiatives such as Government Procurement, Public Key Infrastructure and Government Information Security Governance. Secondly, ICT services, applications and infrastructure have all been shared leading to time, cost and opera-
tional savings as with initiatives such as Government Resource Planning, Government Network and Government Data Centre. Thirdly, the provision of a reference guide for government ICT policy has helped standardise key internal business, technical and ICT processes, increasing the potential for collaboration, as with initiatives such as Architecture and Standards and Legislative and Regulatory Update (e-law).

Improve governance and transparency - i-Gov has implemented a number of initiatives that offer citizens transparent access to government information. Firstly, clear and complete display of applicable procedures and consistent case handling are encouraged through initiatives such as Employment and Recruitment Services and Business Setup Services. Secondly, clear and complete display of government responsibilities and consistent case handling are encouraged through initiatives such as Government Procurement and Customs Clearance Services. Thirdly, clear and complete display of user's rights and duties and consistent case handling are encouraged through initiatives such as Consumer Protection Services, Legislative and Regulatory Update and Visitor Information Services. i-Gov has also encouraged citizens to take an active role in public life and administration through initiatives such as Policy Making and Support Services, Participative Governance Services, Copyright Protection Services, Environment Protection Services and Consumer Protection Services. The governance model, as outlined in the previous section, is clear and inclusive, contributing to better governance and increased transparency.

Concluding Statement

i-Gov is an ambitious programme in its early stages of development which has nonetheless made some significant advances since its launch. Through methodical development processes and the structure provided by a well planned framework, ictQATAR has ensured the robust development of the i-Gov programme along with other ICT programmes. The major achievements, the launch of Hukoomi and the establishment of the Reference Manual, are essential foundations from which a comprehensive and fully integrated e-government solution can be established. It has been necessary to construct extensive backend infrastructure, networks, data centres, legislation, systems, processes and support services, to launch the Hukoomi portal, which further illustrates that it is a foundation that can be built on. As the achievements of i-Gov clearly show, ictQATAR has already brought the government together; increased the efficiency and transparency of government; and improved services to users. Should the programme succeed in its full implementation, Qatar would become a world leader in the field of e-government service provision.

In addition to its achievements, i-Gov has established itself as integral to the national development of Qatar through its use of ICT to help realise the country’s ambitions by: enriching the quality of people's lives through better government services; encouraging modernisation and increasing economic efficiency by increasing the capabilities and efficiency of the government and private sector through better use of ICT and improved ICT resources; and encouraging the creation of a knowledge based society through the more widespread use of ICT.

About ictQATAR

The Supreme Council of Information & Communication Technology (ictQATAR) connects people to the technologies that enrich their lives, drive economic development, and inspire confidence in the future. ictQATAR is entrusted with two primary authorities: as the country’s independent and fair regulator of the telecommunications market and as the government body that nurtures innovative technologies to benefit those who live and work in Qatar. www.ictQATAR.qa