

# e-Sampark: A Multi-Service Single Window Operations Project

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## Introduction

As per the IT policy, all departments of public administration are to be computerised, with the departments dealing directly with the public to be taken up first. Accordingly, significant work has been done in the Licensing and Registering Authority, Transport, Registration of Births and Deaths, and the Police Department. Other departments like Excise and Taxation, Estate Office, Health and Education and Food and Supplies are also currently being taken up for computerisation. Relevant applications in all these departments are being identified and prioritised. The budget for all these projects is to be drawn from the funds available with the departments themselves. As per the Government of India guidelines, 1 to 3% of each department's budget is to be allocated for e-governance.

Under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), a detailed proposal for further augmenting the e-governance plan with respect to capacity building has been prepared and sent to the Government of India for funds. Work on its implementation will be started immediately after approval of this proposal and final allocation.

The application of IT for providing information and facilitation to the residents of Chandigarh is through:

- e-Sampark
- e-Jan Sampark
- m-Sampark
- e-Gram Sampark

## Overall Background

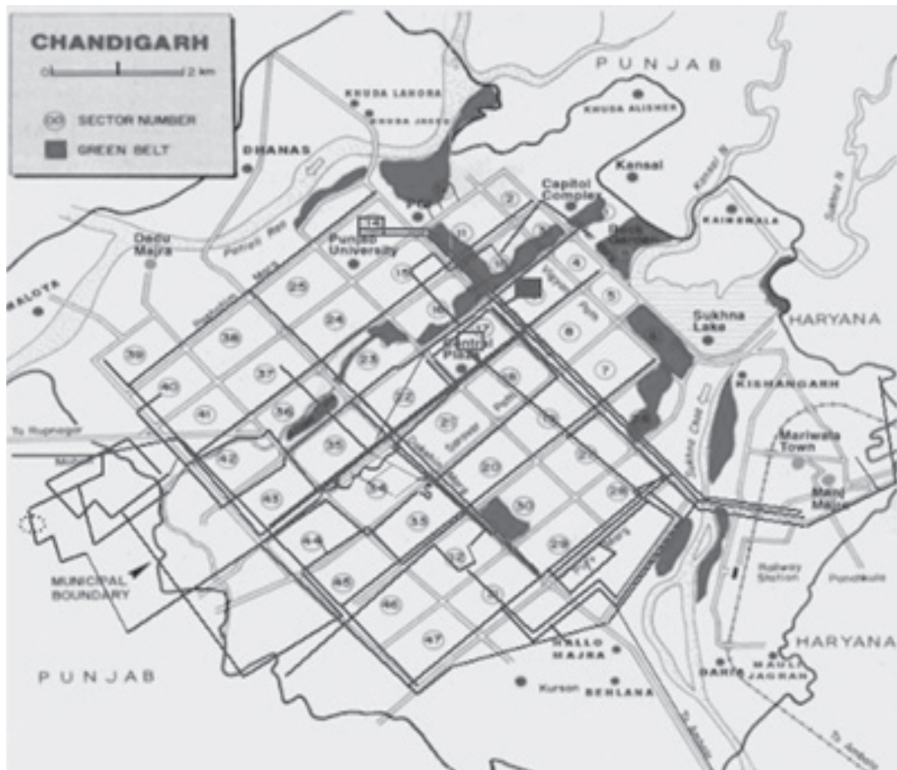
### Optic Fibre Cable (OFC) Backbone Network in Chandigarh

The Chandigarh administration has taken a number of initiatives to create the necessary infrastructure required for the promotion of the IT industry. The main issue that faces IT companies and IT-enabled services is that of connectivity. This has been met by establishing a OFC Backbone Network,

which now covers the whole of Chandigarh. Chandigarh administration's Wired City Plan has been implemented with the laying of OFC ducts in the city by Spectra Net Limited, HFCL, Reliance, Power Grid and Bharti, at their own expense. Permission has been given to various companies for the laying of OFCs in the city by the administration in accordance with the National Policy.

Chandigarh is already among the first cities in the country to have optic fibre connectivity with Delhi, through the network of Power Grid India Limited. A map is shown in Fig. 1. Every point in the city is within 1 km of the OFC Network, thereby enabling companies to provide internet services to consumers through a high-speed broadband network. They are also in a position to do so, as per the National Policy. The network has enabled the implementation of e-governance projects of the administration, as sufficient bandwidth is available through the OFC Network.

State-Wide Area Network Project (SWAN) is also under implementation with the support of the Department of IT (DIT), Government of India, and NIC. This project will provide broadband connectivity to all the government buildings of the Chandigarh administration spread across the city, which will also include all the e-governance projects in the city, i.e., e-Sampark, e-Jan Sampark and the upcoming e-Gram Sampark centres.



**Fig. 1** A map of Chandigarh

Similarly, plans are also on to make this city Wi-Max-enabled. Trial runs will start shortly in accordance with the approval of the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India. Once the trial runs are over, Wi-Max would be integrated with SWAN, as and when the same is introduced.

## Project e-Sampark

Project e-Sampark was initiated to bring together the services of all the departments (Table 1) under a single umbrella and give the citizens of Chandigarh a ‘multi-service’, ‘single-window’ experience, apart from eradicating the undue harassment met by the citizens due to lack of transparency. The places where e-sampark has started is shown in Fig. 2. Their proximity to various collection centres is listed in Table 2.

Table 1 List of Services

Sr. No.	Department	Services
1.	Excise and taxation	Payment of taxes
2.	Chandigarh transport undertaking	Issue of bus passes
3.	Social welfare department	Issue of senior citizen card Issue of disability identity card Disbursement of pension for old-age persons, widows and disabled persons
4.	Engineering department	Payment of electricity bill
5.	Births and deaths registration department	Issue of birth and death certificates
6.	Municipal corporation	Payment of water and sewerage bills space bookings
7.	Chandigarh police	Tenant registration Domestic servants registration General, sticker and postal challan
8.	Government of India services and others	Passport application submission Telephone bill payment Chandigarh Housing Board – sale and receipt of forms

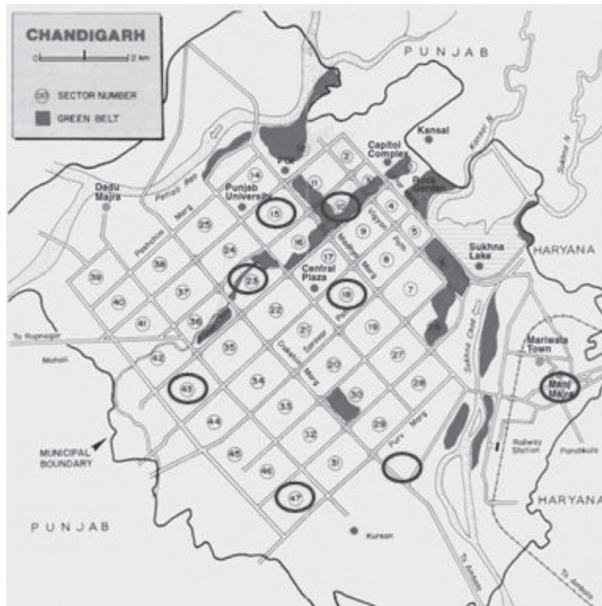


Fig. 2. e-Sampark Locations

## Vision and Objectives

The vision behind this project is to create a knowledge-based society through extensive use of IT as a medium for effective interaction between the administration and the public so that exchange of information and access to government departments is speedy and easy, leading to a better quality of life. The objectives of this project are:

- Provide hassle-free one-stop solutions to citizens
- Minimise multiple interaction points for the citizen and hence reduce wastage of their valuable time
- Provide better turn-around-time in receipt, processing and issue of services
- Transparency in delivery of services

Project e-Sampark is a Department of IT (DIT) initiative for the development, integration and maintenance of a web portal for various departments of the administration for providing 'one-stop shop' for 16 G2C services through eight e-Sampark centres. It not only provides online transaction processing through its centres and a web-enabled portal but is also a major source of information dissemination.

Before this initiative, the common man had to make multiple visits for a single transaction, apart from standing in long queues and waiting for a few days to few weeks for the end result. At times, he had to face harassment due to lack of transparency.

After this initiative, the administration was successful in providing a one-stop solution at the e-Sampark centres. Various services, which were earlier provided from various independent locations and quite often resulted in duplication of work, are being delivered at a single location at these centers. The processing time has been minimised as the efficiency of the service delivery system has been optimised by making it IT enabled, thereby eradicating the long queues and waiting hours for the public.

**Table 2** Proximity of e-sampark centres to various collection centres

Sr. No.	e-Sampark Centres	Location
1.	Sector 10	Near existing electricity bill collection centre
2.	Sector 15	Existing electricity bill collection centre
3.	Sector 18	Existing electricity bill collection centre
4.	Sector 23	
5.	Sector 43	Existing electricity bill collection centre
6.	Sector 47	Existing electricity bill collection centre
7.	Mani Majra	Existing electricity bill collection centre
8.	Industrial Area, Phase - II	Existing electricity bill collection centre

## Benefits Accrued

- One-stop solution to citizen for multiple tasks, resulting in eradication of frustration to the common man while dealing with many functionaries.
- Reduction of wastage of time of a citizen as multiple tasks are being performed at these centres.
- Citizen-centric centres having state-of-the-art facilities, apart from central location
- 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. service on all days except Sundays
- Better turn-around in receipt, processing and issue of services
- Transparency in delivery of services
- Easy maintenance of MIS leading to quick reconciliation of treasury collections.
- The project is so designed that any citizen-centric service of any criticality can be provided through it. The criteria for making new services available through the e-Sampark centres is based on the requirement generated by citizens, which is available through the feedback received and the citizen satisfaction surveys conducted. Departmental initiative is also taken into account and then an interface for the de-

partment is provided to initiate the services. It is given due publicity by way of audio coverage, pamphlets and notices. The department is also given access to the central data base for monitoring the progress and generate various MIS reports. From 11 services of 7 departments, the project has graduated to providing 16 services through 3 delivery channels apart from increasing the number of counters from 3 centres (12 counters) to 8 centres (32 counters). It can also be replicated because of the robust nature of technology involved and wide array of services that it can provide.

## Current Status

- 15 G2C and 3 B2C services are being provided at 8 centres spread across the city.
- Construction of ninth centre is under progress.
- Since launch in September 2004, Rs 408 crores of government revenue has been collected in 19.26 lakh transactions.
- Number of transactions have touched 1.25 lakhs per month.
- Rs. 126 crore of revenue has been collected in the first 4 months of 2006–2007 compared to Rs 36 crore for the same period in 2005–2006.

Select private services are also being launched to make the project self-sustainable. Phone bills of Connect and Spice are being collected and more similar services are under process of initiation.

e-Sampark services are also being extended to the Gram Sampark Programme where 17 Gram Sampark Centres are being constructed covering all the UT villages.

Jan Sampark Services from these centres are also being provided for information and facilitation services to citizens including registration of grievances and applications under the Right to Information Act. Seventy such centres are being planned apart from extension of these services to 17 Gram Sampark centres.

## m-Sampark

This initiative by the Chandigarh administration enables citizens to access information on a whole range of e-Sampark services from their mobile phones by simply sending an SMS.

To avail the m-Sampark services, all that a citizen is required to do is to SMS 'SMENU' to 8888. A menu of services available will be sent back to him via an SMS, from where he or she can get the required information.

The basic idea behind launching the m-Sampark service was to ensure that the citizen can get information about e-Sampark services from all pos-

sible information access mechanisms. With the wide reach of the cellular phone, it is really convenient for the citizens to know of the different services through their cellular phones in the absence of internet connectivity.

The services provided through m-Sampark currently are :

- **SBILL** : Get the electricity/water bill details on SMS.
- **SLOC** : Get the address of the Sampark centres across the city.
- **SSERV** : Get a list of the services provided by Sampark centres
- **SDOC** : Get a list of all the documents accepted for age proof and residence proof

## e-Jan Sampark Project

The Chandigarh administration is committed to bridge the digital divide by extending the application of IT for the benefit of the common man. After the successful launch of the Sampark centres and in the second phase of the e-governance initiative, the administration has identified its aim as: to provide the information about services of various departments and also to provide information and facilitation to residents regarding private services and other Government of India services from the 70 e-Jan Sampark kiosks, which are set up in each sector and each village of Chandigarh. The e-Jan Sampark project enables residents to access information and avail of services from the kiosks with ease, and without any harassment. These centres also enable citizens to submit their grievances at a common centre and avail their quick redressal thereafter.

The Jan Sampark project's objective is that the benefits of ICT reach the masses, especially those who are without IT connectivity, by providing easy dissemination of information services to a citizen and to deliver useful non-transactional services, e.g., registration of grievances and applications seeking information under RTI for all departments at an easily accessible common place.

## e-Jan Sampark Vision

- Bring the administration closer to all the sections of the society especially the underprivileged.
- Provide a single, efficient information dissemination system to the citizen for availing government services by minimising multiple interaction points for the citizen and hence reduce the wastage of valuable time
- Provide for better turn-around time in receipt, processing and issue of services
- Provide information services in a comfortable environment and make availing of information services a pleasant experience
- Registration of grievances

- Giving substance to Right to Information Act

Every e-Jan-Sampark centre supports multi-service delivery (information delivery and non-transactional services), which is a judicious mix of all the possible government services, information and other localised services that are needed by a citizen.

With these centres the benefits of ICT reach people without PCs and internet connectivity and also saves their valuable time and money consumed in travelling to government offices.

The type of services provided include:

- Information services
- All procedures and forms for all departments, which are frequently used by a common man, e.g., how to apply for a birth/death certificate including procedure for late entry, how to lodge a FIR, various forms and procedures concerning public offices such as RLA, Estate Office, DC Office, Municipal Corporation, Engineering Wing, etc.
- Education- and health-related information services, e.g., daily updated information regarding availability of blood in the blood bank of government medical hospitals, exam results, information about availability of educational and health-related facilities in each sector, etc.
- Transport- and tourism-related inquiries, e.g., bus routes, information relating to tourism activities.
- Inquiries relating to passport status, railway booking status, train timings, etc.
- Providing access to all government web sites.
- Other information like utility services available in each sector, etc.

These services are provided free of cost except when the citizen needs printout. The same is available at a nominal cost per page.

- **Grievances Redressal Services:** Citizens are also able to submit their grievances relating to any department at these centres. NIC has created a Grievance Monitoring System under which, whenever any grievance is received at the Jan Sampark centre, the same will be scanned and forwarded immediately via e-mail to the nodal officer of every department that has been specially appointed for the Jan Sampark services. The hard copy of the grievance submitted by the citizen will also be sent to the nodal officer of the concerned department. A timeline would be given to the concerned nodal officer for the redressal of the grievance, and under this Grievance Monitoring System, the head of department would also be able to monitor the redressal of grievances online.
- **Right to Information (RTI) Services:** On the lines of the receipt of the grievances, a provision has also been made for the submission of applications under the RTI at the Jan Sampark centres alongwith the statutory fee in the form of a demand draft or Indian Postal Order (IPO). All such applications will be received and the same will be delivered to the central public information officer of the concerned department the same day. The applications will be received at the

Jan Sampark centres with the prescribed fee of Rs 10 per application in the form of a demand draft or IPO in the name of the concerned department from which the information has been sought, and the application alongwith the fee will be forwarded to the central public information officer (CPIO) of the concerned department. It will be his duty to reply directly to the citizen alongwith the desired information required by him, as per the RTI Act. If any further amount needs to be paid by the applicant, it would be the duty of the CPIO to request for additional fee (as per requirement) from the applicant directly. Besides replying to the applicant directly, the CPIO must also file the Action Taken Report in the RTI Application System created by NIC. The Jan Sampark centre would only be providing the facilitation services for the receipt of RTI applications so that a common man need not visit each and every office. The responsibility of submitting the information sought by the applicant will be of the CPIO of the concerned department who will ensure that the information is supplied to the applicant as per the provisions of the RTI Act.

## Roll-Out

The e-Jan Sampark services are available from e-Jan Sampark kiosk in Sector 20. The e-Jan Sampark services are also available from the Sampark centres situated in Sector 10, 15, 18, 23, 43, 47 Industrial Area and Mani Majra.

The other sites in Phase I where e-Jan Sampark Services are available are:

Sector 9, Sector 11, Sector 17, Sector 22, Sector 32, Sector 35, Sector 38, Sector 40 and Sector 45

The remaining sectors in Chandigarh are also covered by the establishment of similar e-Jan Sampark centres. These services are also available in all the UT villages from the Gram Sampark centres.

## Expected Benefits

- Government services closer to the citizen
- Giving substance to Right to Information Act
- Better information dissemination
- Transparency and efficiency in government–citizen interface
- Life simpler for the common man

## e-Gram Sampark: Rural Knowledge Centre

Continuing its commitment to bridge the digital divide, especially among the rural population, 17 e-Gram Samparks have been set up across all the

villages of the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Citizens will be able to use all the 15 G2C services that are presently available to the Sampark centres situated in the urban areas. As these centres provide rural citizens with an opportunity to have access to a huge amount of information, using broadband connectivity, these centres will emerge as rural knowledge centres for the rural population, especially the disadvantaged. Information services in these centres are provided free of cost, on the lines of Jan Sampark services. These centres also help the rural citizens in registering their grievances, apart from helping them fill their applications under RTI.

With the help of the Department of Rural Development, these centres have been set up at 17 locations. These include *panchayat* buildings lying unused. These centres also have safe drinking water facility, clean toilets, etc., as are available at the Sampark centres and Jan Sampark centres in the urban areas.

The villages covered under this initiative are:

• Palsora	• Daria
• Maloya	• Makhan Majra/Raipur Kalan
• Dadu Majra	• Raipur Khurd
• Kishangarh	• Behlana
• Mauli Jagran	• Hallo Majra
• Khuda Alisher	• Khuda Jassu
• Sarangpur	• Dhanas
• Kaimbwala	• Kaimbwala

## Future Plans

- **Total e-Governance:** All departments of the administration would be automated, and information relating to each of the services provided by these departments would be available online and also through the e-governance centres. Two-way payment transactions and information transactions would be possible and government-to-citizen (G2C) and citizen-to-government (C2G) services would be totally e-governed.
- **Multi-Service Smart Cards:** Each resident of Chandigarh would possess a multi-service smart card that would enable him to carry out transactions with any department of the administration and of the Government of India. The card would also be a driving license, a registration certificate, a birth certificate, a voter ID card, a PAN card and an identity card.
- **Broadband On Demand:** Each commercial and residential facility in Chandigarh would be connected, including the last mile, by optic fibre, and residents would be able to access the internet, intranet, etc., from anywhere in the city.

- **Wi-Fi zones:** All prominent locations in the city would be Wi-Fi zones, where wireless technology would be used to provide high-speed broadband connectivity.
- **Network society:** All commercial, residential and government buildings will be interconnected and networked, so that the flow of data and information would be unhindered and without barriers.
- **Touch-Screens:** These would provide information to residents and visitors to Chandigarh, at all commercial, educational locations and public places. Tourist-related sites would also have such touch-screens. The private sector would be encouraged to set up these touch-screens throughout the city.
- **EduSat:** The Edusat project will comprise two-way audio–video interactive communication network, primarily for enhancing science communications. Under this project, the Society for Promotion of IT in Chandigarh (SPIC) has been selected by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, as a field centre for the installation of the Satellite Interactive Terminals (SIT). SPIC will provide a talkback terminal, which will be responsible for providing space for equipment and accessories installation, mobilisation of participants and minor maintenance.

As this network is a two-way communication system, the subject experts or teachers who conduct the classes from the teaching end can interact with the people or students who attend each SITs. Students of each SIT can also interact with teachers and ask their doubts or questions.

## National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)

Technology can be a great leveller if its availability and accessibility is fair and equitable. It enables two human beings from entirely different walks of life and strata of society to stand on common footing, empowering a society from its grass-roots. This was one of the underlying philosophies of the NeGP.

The realisation of the benefits of e-governance and thus NeGP is well captured in the governance agenda of the current government, wherein e-governance is not seen as the ‘use of IT’ in governance but as a ‘tool’ for ensuring ‘good governance’.

Chadigarh’s e-governance vision is as follows:

‘To serve all residents, businesses, local governments and employees of this knowledge city by creating a technology-enabled community, and embrace innovation in every aspect of government service to ensure anytime anywhere services.’

The vision statement clearly articulates the key themes of the city’s future e-governance direction, which are:

- Be people-centered by focusing on adding value to the customers
- Focus on development of the society by leveraging information
- Promote creation and sharing of information and knowledge through various channels

The e-governance roadmap of the UT has been driven by the need to achieve the above-mentioned overall vision of the UT. As part of the roadmap, the UT administration identified 17 priority departments for participation in the e-governance roadmap preparation. This identification was done based upon aspects such as degree of citizen interface, development priority of the state, NeGP focus and the revenue generation potential for the UT.

The key strategic goals that can be derived from the vision statement are:

1. **Convenience and satisfaction:** Provide services anytime, anyhow, anywhere
2. **Integration and efficiency:** Provide services that are integrated, customer-centric and operationally efficient

## The Strategy

The basic strategy of the Chandigarh administration is to ‘transform governance: e-governance for e-society.’ The UT administration is setting out a change agenda for the governance by transforming Chandigarh into an e-society: though guaranteeing quality services for all, and improving access to those services.

The strategy for UT defines the central role of e-government in this agenda.

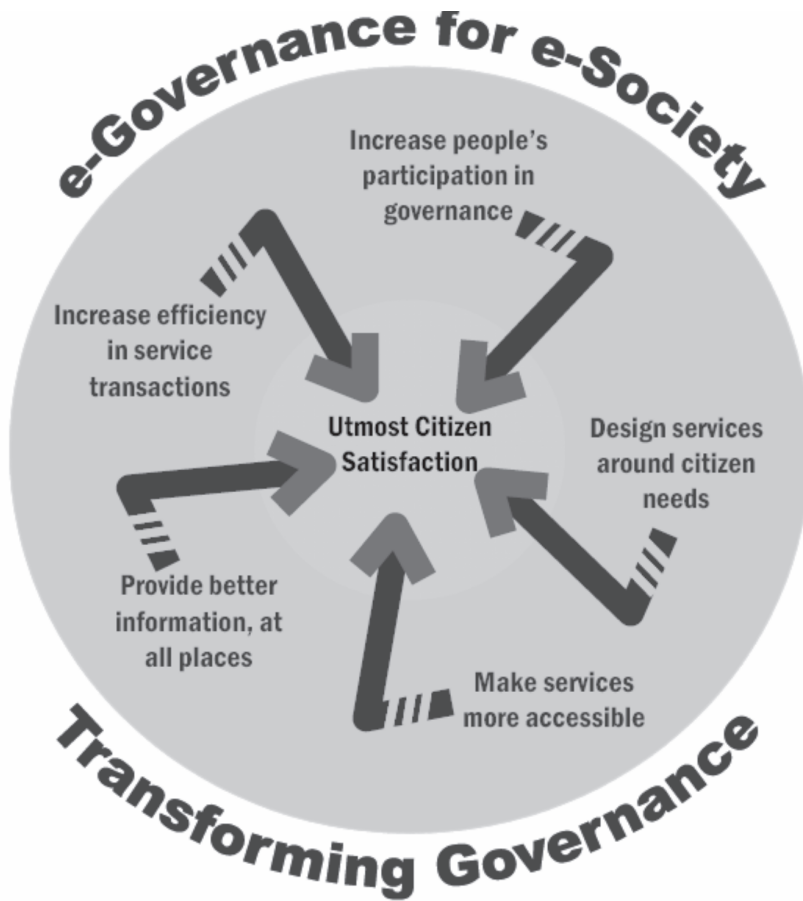
Modern technology can be used to transform the relationship between citizens and administration as it offers ways to (Fig. 3):

- Design services around citizen needs
- Make services more accessible
- Provide better information, at all places
- Increase efficiency in service transactions
- Increase people’s participation in governance

All this will lead to utmost citizen satisfaction, which is the primary purpose of the e-Governance initiative of the UT, as well as the aim of NeGP.

## Impact of e-Governance

e-Enabling can have a significant impact on the service life cycle and save energy for the citizen. The e-governance impact for the afore-discussed



**Fig. 3.** *Ways in which e-governance can increase citizen satisfaction*

types of services and the various stages of the service life cycle is presented in Table 3.

The aim of the participating departments is to increase the depth of delivery so that more and more services can be moved from Type II and Type III to Type I and the entire service life cycle is automated.

**Table 3** Impact of e-governance on services

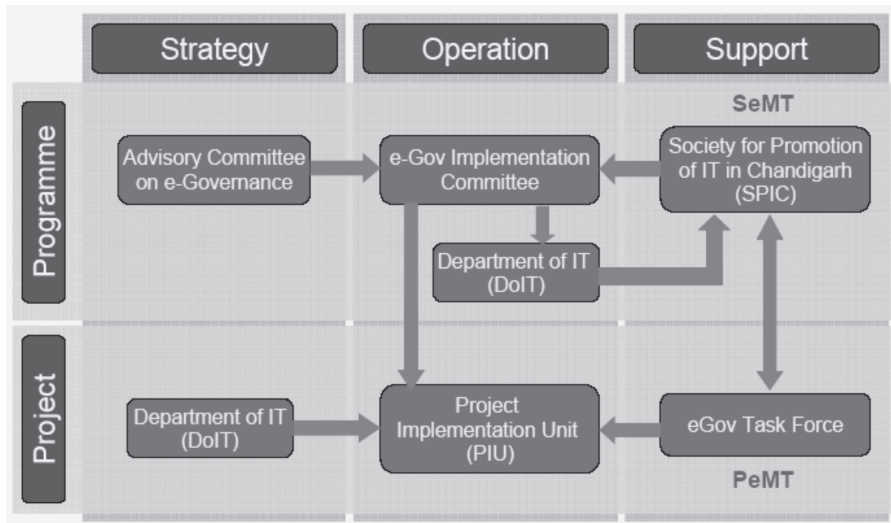
Impact of e-Governance		Transaction without personal interface (Type I)	Transaction requiring personal interface / verification of original documents (Type II)	Transaction requiring personal interface / field verifications (Type III)
Information	Information Availability / Dissemination	High	High	High
	Availability of Forms	High	High	High
Transaction	Submission of Application	High	High	Medium
	Service Delivery	High	Low	Low
Monitoring	Tracking of Application Status	Not Applicable	High	High
	Filing Complaint	High	High	High

## Institutional Framework for Implementation of the Roadmap

The institutional structure of the Chandigarh administration to implement and execute e-governance projects, and effectively build capacity is detailed in the following flow chart.

### Departmental Service Centres

**Registration and Licensing Authority (Transport):** A solution developed by TATA InfoTech, as BOOT operator, was operational for 5 years, which is now being maintained by the Department of IT through SPIC. It is a smart-card-based solution in operation since 2000 covering both registration of vehicles and issue of driving licenses to citizens.



**Sampada (Estate Office):** With this facility, a citizen can check the status of his property details online, as all the payments with respect to any property in Chandigarh is registered online as and when the same is made to the Estate Office.

**District Courts, Chandigarh:** A centralised solution is in place under which all the 19 courts of the District Courts complex have been networked to each other. The data is being used to generate cause list, cause details, judgments, etc. It is being used by staff and advocates for their day-to-day working. A web site is under implementation that will help the citizens to know the status of their cases in the District Courts within the comforts of one's house, which will also help in the decrease of rush of the citizens to the courts.

**Community Police Resource Centre (Police):** A single-window counter for public interface has been provided at Chandigarh police headquarters catering to various requirements like grievances, passport verification, etc.

**Citizens Facilitation Centre (Engineering):** A centralised control room has been established by the engineering department whereby any grievance/complaint relating to engineering department can be lodged and followed up. These facilities are also available on a toll-free number, through which a citizen can register his complaint and also know the status of the complaint. A special officer has also been deputed for the monitoring of the redressal of the grievances through this centre.

**Registrar, Births and Deaths:** Mahindra British Telecom (MBT) is the BOOT operator to implement a solution in the office of the registrar, births and deaths for the convenience of public. The facility has also been extended

to the e-Sampark centres, from where citizens can avail the services for the issue of birth and death certificates.

**Chandigarh Housing Board (CHB):** A solution has been provided for the benefit of CHB beneficiaries regarding various details about the dwelling units. It includes installment details, current status of payment, plans, etc. The CHB has also built up a data centre, which caters to providing customised solutions for all the allottees of the dwelling units of CHB. It also provides accounting solutions to them. This endeavour has increased the transparency in the functioning of CHB as each and every detail pertaining to the property is available at the click of a mouse, and a citizen does not have to face undue harassment.

## Conclusion

The Chandigarh administration is working to fulfill its vision of a knowledge-based society. It envisages a society where every citizen would be able to access the benefits of IT. The result is a speedy and high-quality interaction between the administration and the public. Speedy and high-quality exchange of information and ready access to government departments is a reality. The basic strategy of the Chandigarh administration is to 'transform governance: e-governance for e-society'. The UT administration is setting out a change agenda for the governance by transforming Chandigarh into an e-society – though guaranteeing quality services for all, and improving access to those services.

As a part of its e-governance plan, the administration is also coming up with fresh initiatives in the field of health care, power supply, transport, infrastructure, etc., to make Chandigarh a 'World City'.