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Strategic Analysis and Development of Electronic Government Strategies for the Palestinian Municipalities

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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to:

My Dear and Lovely Mother for her constant support and prayers.

My Father for his encouragement and prayers

My Kind Husband Raed

My Beloved Brother Eng. Anan

My Dear Daughter

My Friends and Colleagues

Everyone, who helped and supported me

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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إقرار

أنا الموقع أدناه مقدم الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

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Strategic Analysis and Development of Electronic Government Strategies for the Palestinian Municipalities

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التحليل الاستراتيجي وتطوير استراتيجيات الحكومة الالكترونية في البلديات الفلسطينية

أقر بأن ما اشتملت عليه هذه الرسالة إنما هي نتاج جهدي الخاص، باستثناء ما تمت الإشارة إليه حيثما ورد، وإن هذه الرسالة ككل، أو أي جزء منها لم يقدم من قبل لنيل درجة أو لقب علمي أو بحثي لدى أية مؤسسة تعليمية أو بحثية أخرى.

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DECLARATION

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CMP	Computerization Master Plan
DM	Dubai Municipality
E-Commerce	Electronic Commerce
E-Democracy	Electronic Democracy
E-Document Exchange	Electronic Document Exchange
e-Government	Electronic Government
E-procurement	Electronic Procurement
E-Jordan	Electronic Jordan
E-Learning	Electronic Learning
E-Management	Electronic Management
E-Seal	Electronic Seal
E-Service	Electronic Service
E-Signature	Electronic Signature
EU	Europe Union

G2B	Government to Business
G2G	Government to Government
G2C	Government to Citizen
GDN	Government Data Network
GIN	Government Internet Node
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSI	Government Secure Intranet
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
MOICT	Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government
MTIT	Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology

OSS	One Stop Shop
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PLC	Palestinian Legislation Council
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PPP	Public Private Partnership
ROI	Return On Investment
SAP	Strategic Action plan
SGN	Secure Government Network
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

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ABSTRACT

e-Government is considered as one of the modern tools, which emerged from the escalated development in the Information and Telecommunication Technology sector. e-Government has been adopted in order to make the governmental services around the world, at both the national and municipal levels, better, faster, cheaper, more convenient, more transparent, more efficient, more accountable, and more accessible to their beneficiaries; the citizens and businesses.

To achieve those e-Government benefits, there are specific requirements that must be addressed, which form the bases towards the success of developing and implementing e-Government. Those requirements are categorized into organizational, human and psychological, technical, political and legal, financial and economic, and promotion requirements.

Palestine is one of the Middle East countries that tries to implement and develop e-Government initiative, which was launched in 2005 and was expected to take several years to be completed.

Most of the research and studies on e-Government field focused on development and implementation part and ignored the strategic planning and management part, although this is a basic and an important part of e-Government. Most of the research on the strategic part of e-Government

concentrated on the national level; few studies were accomplished on the municipal and local levels.

The aim of this thesis is to develop e-Government strategic framework for the Palestinian municipalities. This aim is achieved according to the strategic analysis for the Palestinian e-Government current situation for the national and then municipal levels. The strategic analysis process is based on the data collected through the combination of the documents from the published documents on the official websites or the governmental agencies themselves, and from interviews with the Palestinian e-Government experts including employees of the public and private sectors.

The strategic analysis process resulted in identifying the SWOT -the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses), and the external factors (threats and opportunities)- that affect the Palestinian e-Government at the national level then at the municipal level. The SWOT analysis forms the basis in suggesting the vision, the mission and then concluding strategic goals for the national and municipal levels.

The findings for this research were achieved through the matching process between the internal and external factors for e-Government at the Palestinian municipal level, which is called the SWOT matrix. SWOT matrix contributed in formulating set of feasible strategic solutions needed to be implemented in right way to achieve e-Government's municipality strategic goals.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

During the last decade, the revolution in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) became the most exciting and interesting topic. In addition, access of the public to information technology, thereby, to information from a variety of sources, has changed power structures at the national and international levels. The communication, transmission and distribution of information are no longer limited by space and time. The fast and easy access to information is greatly facilitated by the internet, computers, mobile phones and many other telecommunication and technology tools.

This revolution was reflected on the people's life and how people and business interact with government. Nowadays, it is not enough for the classical government to develop its methods to face the daily changes; in fact, it is necessary to review its form radically and innovate other new ones. Those changes are being transformed into an increasingly utilized new form of government, called Electronic Government (e-Government).

Chen et al. (2006) defined e-Government as "a cost effective solution that improves communication between government and their constituents by providing access to information and service online, also it's a permanent commitment made by government to improve the relationship between the private citizen and the public sectors through enhanced, cost effective, and efficient delivery of services, information and knowledge."

In other words, as Bdran (2004) indicated, e-Government is a default copy of classical and real government with a difference that e-Government lives in networks, information systems and technologies, and simulates the function of the classical government that exists in the physical manner in different governmental sectors. In addition to serve the most and basic important element in the society, i.e. the citizen, e-Government envisaged as helping national economy and improving the country image.

e-Government strategy outlines the goals, processes and actions to achieve transparency, accountability and good governance, efficient and citizen-centred, and enabling citizens and businesses to access government services and information as efficiently and effectively as possible through the use of internet and other channels of service delivery and communication.

In Palestine, like other nations and countries, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is trying to embrace e-Government, put critical information online, automate many processes and interact electronically with the people. There are several requirements needed to the success of e-Government initiative. Moreover, there is a number of obstacles and threats, which may hinder and delay e-Government initiative in Palestine strategically and technically at the national and local levels.

Developing e-Government strategic framework for both national and municipal levels is so important to e-Government success. Since, there is no strategic framework developed at the Palestinian municipal level, this thesis concentrates on formulating e-Government strategic framework for the Palestinian municipalities.

1.2   Significance of the Study

The Electronic Government is an interesting and important topic for research. In addition, the development of e-Government strategic framework is the most important field in e-Government domain, since it identifies the methodologies and actions needed to achieve e-Government strategic goals.

The government uses e-Government tools as a new mean for management and solutions to the problems in different sectors.

The significant of the research that it concentrates on e-Government in Palestine, specifically on strategic framework development in the Palestinian municipalities. The development of strategic framework for e-Government in the Palestinian municipalities can be used as a basis for preparing complete strategic and action plan, and for future elaborations and researches in this field. This is expected to have an effect on the development of the society especially the Information Technology sector and how it is important to put the first lines in making strategic planning and adding a value for this domain.

This research will highlight e-Government strategic framework development in the Palestinian municipalities, by comparing to the similar aspects in the international level and in developing countries, and formulating the strategic framework for adapting, using and applying e-Government as a mean for improving the performance and service level in the Palestinian municipalities. In addition, it introduces the analytical means in that domain; the threats and opportunities, strength and weakness

points, objectives, critical success factors and requirements, which affect in e-Government and its strategic framework.

1.3   The Study Problem

e-Government development is an important issue in the ICT sector in Palestine. e-Government continuous improvement needs to develop strategic framework, in order to achieve e-Government intended strategic goals and contribute in improving the ICT sector current situation.

It is noticed that there is an effort at the national level in studying, searching and developing e-Government from the technical and strategic aspects. However, at the municipal level, there are little efforts and ideas, especially when those compared to the developments in e-Government at the local and municipal levels in other nations, including the Arab cities in the nearby countries, such as Dubai, Amman, Al-Manama and Doha e-Government. This research will be trying to complement the efforts on the national level with those on the municipal level and concentrate on developing strategic framework for e-Government in Palestinian municipalities.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to introduce and develop e-Government strategic framework in Palestinian municipalities, in addition to the following:

- Analyzing the current situation of Telecommunication and Information Technology sector in Palestine.

- Analyzing the Palestinian e-Government status quo at both the national and municipal levels, and display the Palestinian achievements in e-Government domain.

- Exploring and analyzing the published strategic plan for e-Government at the national level.

- Identifying the intended strategic goals and requirements, as well as the future strategic framework needed to achieve e-Government in the Palestinian municipalities.

1.5   Contents of the Study

The contents of the rest of this research are summarized as follows:

Chapter 2: The chapter has clarified the concept, importance and benefits of e-Government, and strategy. Furthermore, a set of comparative studies on e-Government strategic framework for different countries at both the national and municipal levels are introduced.

Chapter 3: This chapter outlines the methodology followed in the study.

Chapter 4: This chapter introduces a general overview of the Local Government in Palestine.

 Chapter 5: A set of requirements for e-Government are clarified in this chapter. Those requirements are clustered into organizational, human and psychological, technical, political and legal, financial and economic, and promotions requirements.

Chapter 6: The chapter describes the current situation analysis for e-Government at the Palestinian national level. A SWOT analysis is introduced and lead to propose the vision, mission and main strategic goals at the national level.

Chapter 7: The major contribution of this chapter is to present the analysis for e-Government at the Palestinian municipal level, introducing the SWOT analysis and main key issues, and suggesting the vision, mission, and set of intended strategic goals.

Chapter 8: The core contribution of this research is introduced in this chapter. The chapter presented the developing for e-Government strategic framework for the Palestinian municipalities.

Chapter 9: This chapter presents the study's summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

E-GOVERNMENT LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the aim of this research is clarifying the strategic analysis for e-Government at the national and municipal levels, in addition to developing e-Government strategic framework, which are missing for the Palestinian municipal level.

The main concern of this chapter is to provide needed background and information to understand the research subjects, and to achieve their main objectives.

This chapter firstly reviews many definitions and concepts for e-Government and describes the term strategy. Secondly, it outlines the goals of e-Government. Thirdly, it clarifies concept of strategy, SWOT Analysis, SWOT Matrix and finally, e-Government Strategy. Finally, this chapter presents a set of comparative studies for e-Government at the national and municipal levels in Arab and other countries.

2.2 e-Government Historical Background

Heeks (2002) indicated that the term "e-Government" was used for the first time as expressed the idea of science fiction in the novel which has the same title "e-Government" by novelist John Berto in 1975. Its subject was about a comprehensive government that governs and control people through computer network.

Actually, the real use for the e-Government globally was in 1995, where it was first utilized when the Central Post Office in the State of Florida started implementing the concept on its administration. In this context, the U.S. President Bill Clinton said that "The deal of all American people with the computer is a national imperative". In this regard, his deputy took a campaign to assure the utilization of information technology and to increase the awareness related to its relevance among the American citizens, so that each member of American people can fully interact with other different sectors socially, economically and politically (Heeks, 2002).

On June 24, 2000, the U.S. administration has launched several initiatives for e-Government, described by the U.S. President Bill Clinton as (Red Tape Cut), as a metaphor for the start of a new phase in the life of the American people (Heeks, 2002).

The official birth of e-Government was in the European Union conference in held in March 2000, where the EU adopted the decision putting all available programs of e-Government to be utilized, and make it available to all Europe on the (Internet), and the preparation of all needed plans (Heeks, 2002).

It should be noted that Finland was the first European country legislated laws for the regulation of e-Government work in 2000. Since that date, the spread and the organizing of e-Government and its applications began to be globally (Heeks, 2002).

The United Nations and in the cooperation with the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) prepared and issued a report in late 2001, which included the indicators of arranging the countries globally in

e-Government domain, as well as the effectiveness of e-Government for economic growth. USA was the first one the list, followed by Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Norway, Canada, and the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany (Al-Iraqi, 2008).

2.3   The Concept of e-Government

2.3.1 Definitions of e-Government

There were several views and perspectives of experts and researchers on what the Electronic Government is, since e-Government concept is new in the field of knowledge.

Cook et al. (2002) defined the Electronic Government as "e-Government has four dimensions in relation to major functions and activities of governments: (e-Service) which is the delivery of government information electronically, (e-Management) which is the use of ICTs to improve management and communication within and outside government structures, (e-Democracy) use of ICTs to enhance the citizens participation in democratic activities and (e-Commerce) online transaction of goods and services".

Zhiyuan (2002) introduces e-Government as "a way for governments to use the most innovative information and communication technologies, particularly web-based Internet applications, to provide citizens and businesses with more convenient access to government information and services, to improve the quality of the services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in democratic institutions and processes. e-Government presents a tremendous impetus to move forward in the 21st

century with higher quality, cost-effective, government services and a better relationship between citizens and government".

Another perspective was introduced by Bhatnagar (2002) that the Electronic Government is the participation and offering services to the citizens in order to increase the sense of responsibility and decrease the corruption.

e-Government is defined also as "a generic term for web-based services from agencies of local, state and federal governments. In e-Government, the government uses information technology and particularly the Internet to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services. The interaction may be in the form of obtaining information, filings, or making payments and a host of other activities via the World Wide Web" (Sharma and Gupta, 2003; Sharma and Palvia, 2007).

Kanaan (2009) suggested that e-Government is "the carrying out of governmental activities using information and communication technology tools in order to deliver better services to citizens, business and government entities (including government employees)".

The World Bank (2009) defined e-Government as "the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be

less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions".

Although this wide variety in e-Government definitions and views, there is a common view. e-Government refers to use information and communication technology tools to enhance the provisioning of services from government side to citizens, businesses and other government agencies with less effort, time and cost with more transparency.

2.3.2 The General Objectives of e-Government

The main objectives of e-Government is to bring the government closer to the citizens by providing them with easier access to information through personal computers, telephones and other sources, it also aims at increasing mechanisms to create more accountability and transparency in the public sector.

According to the Jordan Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (2001), the basic goals for the Electronic Government include the following:

- Achieve efficient and greater return on investment, and support the economic development.
- Raise the level of customer satisfaction with securing comfortable accessibility to the government services, gaining the users' trust and reducing cost of services.
- Delivery of the customers' required services.
- Achieving integration between the related services.
- Getting more users for the services.

- Increasing the effectiveness and efficiencies of the government sector internal processes and operations, moreover increasing the government transparency and its responsiveness.

2.4 The Concept of Strategy

2.4.1 Strategy Definitions

The term strategy came from Greek concept "strategia", which means "generalship", and it has used in military and adopted later in business.

Various definitions for strategy term were indentified and introduced from different point of views.

Hart (1967) defined the strategy as "The art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy".

Steiner (1979) clarified the strategy concept with the following:

- ❖ Which top management does that is of great importance to the organization.

- ❖ Strategy refers to basic directional decisions, that is, to purposes and missions.

- ❖ Strategy consists of the important actions necessary to realize these directions.

- ❖ Strategy answers the question: What should the organization be doing?

❖ Strategy answers the question: What are the ends we seek and how should we achieve them?"

Moreover, Andrews (1980) discussed the term strategy as "The pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organization it is or intends to be, and the nature of the economic and non-economic contribution it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities".

Zimmerman and Tregoe (1980) defined the strategy as "The framework which guides those choices that determine the nature and direction of an organization".

Mintzberg (1994) indicated that the strategy is "a plan, a pattern in actions over time, position and perspective, and argued that the strategy emerges over time as intentions collide with and accommodate a changing reality. Thus, one might start with a perspective and conclude that it calls for a certain position, which is to be achieved by way of a carefully crafted plan, with the eventual outcome and strategy reflected in a pattern evident in decisions and actions over time".

Porter (1996) defined the competitive strategy as "a combination of the ends (goals) for which the firm is striving and the means (policies) by which it is seeking to get there".

The strategy in military view as "maneuvering troops into position before the enemy is actually engaged. In this sense, strategy refers to the

deployment of troops. Once the enemy has been engaged, attention shifts to tactics. Here, the employment of troops is central. In both business and military views, strategy bridges the gap between policy and tactics. Together, strategy and tactics bridge the gap between ends and means" (Nickols, 2004).

From the previous mentioned definitions, strategy is all different views mentioned; it is a term that refers to a set of ideas, experiences, perceptions, actions and methodologies that help in achieving set of intended goals.

2.4.2 The SWOT Analysis Concept

SWOT Analysis as indicated by Pealow (2011) is a tool, which provides a systematic approach to identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to assist the strategic planning process.

By analyzing the external environment (threats and opportunities), and the internal environment (weaknesses and strengths), the output information from this analysis can be used to generate better strategic framework for the organization, department or team (Norton, Kaplan and Barrows, 2008).

2.4.3 The SWOT Matrix Concept

David (2007) defined the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Matrix as "an important matching tool that helps managers develop four types of strategic solutions: SO (strengths-opportunities) Strategies, WO (weaknesses-opportunities) Strategies, ST (strengths-threats) Strategies, and WT (weaknesses-threats) Strategies. Matching key external and internal factors is the most difficult part of developing a

SWOT Matrix and requires good judgment, as there is no one best set of matches."

The four strategic solutions resulted from SWOT matrix clarified briefly by David (2007) as following:

- Strengths and Opportunities (SO): use the internal strengths to take advantage of the available opportunities.

- Strengths and Threats (ST): use internal strengths and take advantage of it in order to reduce the impact of the external threats.

- Weaknesses and Opportunities (WO): use the available opportunities and take it advantages to improve internal weaknesses.

- Weaknesses and Threats (WT): minimize the weaknesses and avoid the external threats.

2.5 e-Government Strategy Concept

e-Government initiative to be implemented requires a comprehensive strategy that is not only measured on global best practices, but also responding to existing political and economic conditions. For e-Government to become a reality, governments are advised to develop a strategic framework, which articulates the government's vision, mission, targets, methodologies and milestones, technical approach and standards for e-Government systems.

2.6   Comparative Studies

In order to acknowledge the development process for e-Government and its strategic framework, different case studies and initiatives for e-Government strategic solutions and policies are presented, which have been developed by some countries at the national level, including the following samples the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Cyprus, United Kingdom, and Republic of Korea, and at the local and municipal level, including Dubai, Amman, Kusamo and Uskudar municipalities.

2.6.1 The National Level

2.6.1.1 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

➢   **e-Government Initiative**

According to Alsheha (2007),"YESSER" is the name of the Saudi Arabia's e-Government program and about the word "YESSER" itself; is the Arabic word for simplify. This initiative was launched in 2005 and implemented within the following five years.

➢   **e-Government Strategy**

The Vision:

The vision statement for the program which identified within YESSER initiative (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, 2003) was: "By the end of 2010, everyone in the kingdom will be able to enjoy – from anywhere and at anytime – world class government services offered in a seamless, user friendly and secure way by utilizing a variety of electronic means"(Al-Shehry, Rogerson, Fairweather and Prior (2006)).

The Strategic Goals:

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (2003) identified in its YESSER initiative the strategic goals for this program, which were needed to achieve the vision statement, were:

- Raising the productivity and efficiency of the public sector.
- Providing better and more easy-to-use services for individual and business customers.
- Increasing return on investment (ROI).
- Providing the required information in a timely and highly accurate fashion.

To achieve the above goals, there were needs to implement three types of projects that were mentioned with Al Ghoson (2010) which included: Infrastructure projects, E-Services projects and National application projects.

➤ **The Benefits of e-Government in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

According to Alsheha (2007), the benefits of e-Government in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia include:

- Enhance the program's abilities.
- Increase its effectiveness and usefulness to all residents of Saudi Arabia.
- Improve the public sector organizations' productivity.
- Provide the businesses and citizens with government services in simple and convenient way such as the necessary information in timely and highly accurate style.

➢ **The Challenges of e-Government in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Al-Fakhri et al. (2008) discussed the challenges that Saudi e-Government program faces and concluded that they include the following:

- The lack of knowledge about e-Government between public; citizens, business, organizations, government entities.

- Lack of the current regulations and legislation related to implement e-Government.

- The lack of trust in accomplishing tasks online amongst Saudi government employees because of the lack of security and privacy for the information.

- The government structure is not appropriate to implementing e-Government program.

- The lack of studies and research in Saudi Arabia regarding e-Government.

- Resistance to change and the fear of reducing the role of employees in accomplishing work because of using e-Government.

- The lack of ICT skills and the shortage of qualified employees in dealing with IT.

- Lack of knowledge to the English and computer language.

- The absence of a supervisory within the Government because of using e-Government.

- The interference in providing the same services among the government agencies.

- The small number of people using Internet in Saudi Arabia.

- The lack of financial resources.

2.6.1.2 Jordan

➢ **e-Government History**

Ministry of Information and Communications Technology in Jordan (2006), indicated that e-Government is a national initiative launched by King Abdullah II in September of 2000, then The Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (MOICT) tried to start e-Government program but actually the program in Jordan remains on paper till later.

During its initial phase, in 2001, the Program was guided by a comprehensive "e-Government Blueprint and Roadmap".

In 2003, the official site of Jordanian e-Government should be launched, but actually it was rescheduled to be launched in the year 2006. However, in 2006 a new e-Government strategy was published indicating that the official site was to be launched in the mid of 2006, but again the site failed to be launched in that date, and eventually launched by 2007 (Jordan e-Government Program, 2006; Wanous and Mofteh, 2008; and Al-Omari, 2006).

➢ **e-Government Strategy**

The Vision

Jordan e-Government Program (2006) identified the Jordanian e-Government's vision was that "e-Government in Jordan is dedicated to delivering services to people across society, irrespective of location, economic status, and education or ICT ability. With its commitment to a

customer-centric approach, e-Government will transform government and contribute to the Kingdom's economic and social development."

The Mission

The Jordan e-Government Program (2006) concludes the Jordanian e-Government's mission, which was "To manage the transformation of the government towards a more "customer centric" approach in the delivery of services by means of appropriate technology, knowledge management and skilled staff to implement e-Government initiatives and programs that are relevant and affordable to the citizens of Jordan. e-Government Program is a major contributor to the Government of Jordan's administrative reform."

The Requirements

To accomplish this mission and achieve the vision, Jordan e-Government program (2006) mentioned the following requirements to be existed before the deployment process:

- Modernizing Legal framework and regulations concerned with e-Government program implementation.

- The existence of E-Services applications for the government sector.

- Develop and enhance the needed government technological infrastructure.

- Re-engineering the business process effectively.

- Improve the public sector Awareness with the new initiative by giving needed training and knowledge.

- Public sector organizations restructuring and re-engineering, change management acceptance.

- Resources, ICT and business local skills availability to implement and use e-Government.

- Cooperation among government entities in e-Government initiatives decision making.

- Internet accessibility.

- The documentation and sharing process between the local sector entities to their process, services, data, business requirements and strategic solutions.

- The participation and support from the private sector to e-Government program.

- Regardless of political changes and government officials reshuffle, the continuity and stability of e-Government project.

Strategic Goals

Jordan e-Government strategy goals as illustrated in Jordan e-Government Program (2006):

- Improve governmental services delivery, efficiency, speed and quality to consumers, government entities, businesses and organizations, and improve the responsiveness to the customer needs; services and information.

- Develop and enhance Jordan competitiveness.

- Increase government accountability and transparency.

- Improve government performance and efficiency.

- Save cost and time, and increase ease of interacting with government.

- Promote development of Jordan's ICT sector within government, business and citizens.

- Develop skills within the public sector.

- Improve information security.

e-Government Strategies

The Jordan e-Government program (2006) had initiated major strategies in order to improve the delivery process of services and government efficiency, those strategies including:

- Completion of comprehensive information security roadmap for the Government of Jordan produced as part of the Security Assessment Project.
- Provision of nearly 7,900 training opportunities including programs on ICT literacy, project management, vendor certified training programs and IT professionals.
- Definition and prioritization of e-Government Portfolio of cross-governmental services for the Second Wave of e-Government Program.

➤ **e-Government Challenges**

As illustrated by Jordan e-Government Program (2006); Wanous and Mofteh (2008); Mohammad, Al-Marabeh and Abu Ali (2009); Al-Omari (2006) and Kanaan (2009), there were such risks and limitations that e-Government program faced:

- The high cost of e-Government for government of Jordan.
- The existence of conflicts for decisions made by different government departments.
- The resources within the government of Jordan entities didn't have the required skills to implement and use e-Government, and there aren't enough funds to train and improve their skills.
- Resistance to change.
- Rapid changes such as technology changes; where e-Government strategy is not adaptable for those changes.
- There is no guarantee of security and privacy for the information provides to/and from the public.
- Lack of focus which comes from the Synchronization for the launching and adoption process for several E-Initiatives in Jordan has launched several E-Initiatives at the same time;
- The absence of well-established E-Society.
- The lack of infrastructure.
- Digital Divide which exists within the Kingdom, especially between rural and urban areas.
- Lack of awareness from the public.

As a result from the above review, it seems that Jordan is still very far from delivering comprehensive online services to both citizens and business.

2.6.1.3 Cyprus

➢ **e-Government Strategy**

The Vision

The Cyprus e-Government vision was "to deliver one-stop services to the public via the web or through other electronic channels".

Based on e-Government initiations success; several government ministries, departments and services tried to offer online services to the public-a dynamic government-with improving the services quality (European Commission, 2009).

e-Government Components

The European Commission (2009) also mentioned the main e-Government infrastructure components in Cyprus within the IDABC e-Government Observatory as:

- The Governmental portal.
- Government Data Network (GDN) and Government Internet Node (GIN).
- E-Procurement System.

e-Government Benefits

The Cypriot Government benefit from e-Government experience as considered by Kokkinaki, Mylonas and Mina (2005) to enforce existing rules and regulations, improve productivity and communication between employees, reduce operational costs, produce paperless office and provide the capability for distance-working. E-Government initiatives were classified into Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Citizen (G2C) initiatives.

After hard working in e-Government implementation and by the end of 2005, the public doesn't need to visit any government department to obtain different services, and in the later years, Cyprus e-Government achieved its vision. However, the development process is still ongoing on e-Government domain strategies and implementation and the most crucial factors that would determine the success or failure of an e-Government is the ability of the citizens to access it at any given time from anywhere (Fallahi, 2007).

By analyzing the Cyprus e-Government strategies and implementation, we can conclude the strengths with the clear vision, the goals that could be applied, realism and transparency in different strategy phases, the adoption for review strategy for what's achieved and what's not. Moreover, the subsequent analysis strategy to guarantee the availability for required development elements, the availability for adequate infrastructure, the availability of the environment's components, where each component was aware for the importance of cooperation to overcome the obstacles that form a barrier to the achievement and development, governmental laws and

legislation, community culture, awareness and education rate, information confidentiality and security e-Government and finally the media and its role in citizens awareness with e-Government role. Moving to weaknesses, Cyprus was well below the EU average rate with respect to the availability of online public services (Kokkinaki, Mylonas and Mina, 2005; Nicosia, 2007).

2.6.1.4 United Kingdom

➢ **e-Government Strategy**

The Vision

E-Government United Kingdom vision is to enable the United Kingdom to better using of technology throughout the government to meet its national objectives.

e-Government Requirements

Achieving this vision requires three key transformations as mentioned by Spencer (2003):

- Services accessed using IT designed to achieve the public or business needs, presented through modern and organized channels.
- Government must be transformed to shared service culture.
- Government's professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and technological change.

➢ **e-Government Infrastructure and Achievements**

The main items within e-Government Infrastructure, as illustrated with e-Government Factsheets by European Commission (2009) and Spencer (2003) are:

- The portal: the citizen portal which enables the public from access to the online public service, and the business portal which provide access to the business service and information.

- Network: GSI (Government Secure Intranet), which forms a secure link between central government departments, and this infrastructure became later the central one for e-Government.

- E-Identification Infrastructure, Government Gateway: which is a major authentication infrastructure that enables users to perform secure online transactions.

2.6.1.5 Republic of Korea

➢ **e-Government Strategy-First Phase**

The Vision

E-Government vision and strategy initiatives consists of two phases, the first one achieved with President Kim Dae-jung administration and the second under President Roh administration, each will be explained briefly:

Starting with President Kim Dae-jung administration, his initiative's vision was providing the public (business and citizens) with the best quality administrative service electronically by the government, which was

done after establishing the most suitable ICT environment required to provide the business activities which then maximizes and enhances the productivity, transparency, and democracy with government (EGov Magazine, 2008).

e-Government Strategies-First phase

The strategies needed to achieve the vision as Obi (2004) and Kim (2007) mentioned: Administrative processes redesign and reshape, establish information and communication technology infrastructure and establish unified bases for presenting public sector services.

The main initiatives and projects, which required to be implemented within e-Government program under President Kim Dae-jung administration, which form the basic framework for an advanced e-Government and core businesses for various ministries as illustrated with Chung (2003):

The Government for Citizen (G4C) System, Social Insurance Information Sharing System, Home Tax Service System, Government E-Procurement System, National Finance Information System, National Education Information System, Local Government Information Network System, Personnel Policy Support System-Approval and E-Document Exchange, E-Signature and E-Seal System and finally the Government-wide Integrated Computer Network(Republic of Korea's e-Government site, 2010).

➢ **e-Government Strategy-Second Phase**

The Vision

The second phase of e-Government program, which was initiated under President Roh administration in May 2003, its vision and strategy is summarized as follows (Kim, 2002):

"Providing custom-made service that meets the demands of the people, Electronic processing of administrative work and joint sharing of information and Securing safety/trust and universal access".

e-Government Strategies-Second Phase

Republic of Korea's e-Government mentioned the following strategies needed to achieve the initiative vision and objective (Kim, 2002):

- Strengthen performance management system.
- Maximize existing system utilization and carry out new projects after thoroughly evaluating the economic efficiency and its effects on the nation.
- Establish unified environment.
- Share implementation experiences and finding/expanding model cases to maximize investment effectiveness.
- Promote the advance of e-Government within their organizations to be competitiveness with the domestic and foreign markets.
- Develop the resource skills.
- Establish governance structure.

As a conclusion, the political leadership and its strategies are crucial for successful e-Government implementation.

2.6.2 The Municipal Level

2.6.2.1 e-Government in Greater Amman Municipality-Jordan

Since its beginning, Greater Amman Municipality had tried always and continuously to improve its works for citizens' convenience and better services provision. Within this framework, and to cope the considerable development of Amman city and work load accompanied with, it tried to establish Information Technology Department in 1983. Later in 1995 after the Internet service entered Jordan, it realized the great importance of the Internet, and start thinking of how to employ the Internet in serving public.

Due to the importance for Greater Amman Municipality, and the numerous services that it provides to a large number of citizens, it was decided the Great Amman Municipality will be one of the six biggest government institutions in the National Project for e-Government (Abd Al-Nour and Ziadat, 2003).

Greater Amman Municipality tried to accomplish several citizens' systems through implementing e-Government project, which were illustrated in Greater Amman Municipality (2010) such as:

- Careers licenses system.
- Vehicles systems.
- Buildings systems.
- Biddings systems.

- The financial systems.

- Tax system.

- Unified national traffic violations issues and collection systems.

- Social guarantee system.

- Land and real estate system.

- Geographical Information system.

To implement the mentioned systems, Greater Amman Municipality coordinated with the ministries related to such systems; where, for example, the tax system was coordinated with the Ministry of Finance (Abd Al-Nour and Ziadat, 2003).

e-Government Projects

Al-Haiajneh (2004) introduced Greater Amman municipality e-Government Projects objectives, which include:

- Achieve balance between all society sectors.
- Increase the government revenue through the reducing the cost and facilitating services provision for the citizens.
- Build the technical infrastructure needed to introduce electronic services.
- Provide number of Greater Amman municipality services for citizens, business and other government entities electronically using the internet.
- Develop and improve the internal procedures related transactions processing and completion.

- Provide public with electronic services through new channels such as telephone and cellular.

- Increase the citizens and employees awareness from using e-Government services.

e-Government Implementation Phases

Al-Haiajneh (2004) explained Greater Amman Municipality e-Government project implementation phases to be as follows:

There are five stages over five years project implementation period, they are:

- Pilot Projects-Fast Track; where several services implemented and introduced over Greater Amman Municipality website.

- Develop managerial control style, design major technological foundation and identify required resources. This stage needs three months to be accomplished.

- Procedures and services re-engineering. This stage needs from 12-15 months to be implemented.

- Select and build major information systems related to Back Office systems, Documents Administration systems, documents transaction and portal. This stage needs from 18- 21 months to be accomplished.

- Build payment gateway, transaction analysis over telecommunication network and build plans to guarantee work continuity. This stage needs about 15 months to be completed.

e-Government Success Factors

Also Abd Al-Nour and Ziadat (2003) identified Greater Amman Municipality e-Government project success factors to include:

- Improve the access process for electronic services.
- Ensure the services transparency and security provided to public, business and governmental entities.
- Focus on the advanced and the most influential services on people.
- Saving on all entities; citizens, business and government entities.
- Provide the necessary supportive legislations for the project.

e-Government Obstacles

Greater Amman municipality e-Government project obstacles as mentioned by Abd Al-Nour and Ziadat (2003) to include:

- The limited spread of using the internet among public.
- The limited infrastructure and its increased cost.
- Poor distribution of using e-Government services in places rather than others.
- The inconsistency between citizen privacy and country security.
- Lack of trust with payment process through the internet.

e-Government Achievements

The main Greater Amman Municipality e-Government achievements as indicated by Abd Al-Nour and Ziadat (2003), and Greater Amman Municipality (2010) include:

- Greater Amman municipality automation process, however 80% of municipality internal work became computerized.
- Join the Secured Government Network.
- Provide several electronic services.
- Establish Information Technology centers.

2.6.2.2 Dubai Municipality e-Government-The United Arab Emirates

➢ **Dubai Municipality e-Government History**

Geray and Al-Bastaki (2005) indicated that before 1999, Dubai Government and Municipality provided customers with services through traditional means; they had to apply directly to different departments within government by compiling and submitting a set of documents which sometimes needed several interactions before achieving the appropriate services, which leads to delay and bureaucracy. Then Dubai Government decided to utilize the ICT to facilitate the provisioning of services process, so that the Dubai e-Government was announced as a major strategic initiative in year 2000.

Sethi and Sethi (2008) mentioned that between the date of the announcement; 2000 and till October 2001 the technical infrastructure was setup for government services to be provided electronically and to be ready for the launching process for e-Government portal (www. dubai.ae) with 14

E-Services offered by each government, which increased year after year to be more than 2300 E-Services by 2008.

One of the essential technical infrastructures, the Information Network (GIN), was one of the initial steps which aimed to connect the government departments with each other through the accessibility to the Internet. Year after year, the number of participants in e-Government initiative connected with each other increased to reach thirty members by 2006.

All government departments built a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) which indicates the E-Enable services per quarter until 2007. In 2005, the Dubai e-Government E-Services division undertook a number of initiatives such as providing E-Services Quality Framework Definition and Implementation Guidelines to all departments; E-Integration initiative. In the mid of 2006, Dubai e-Government accomplished and launched the Dashboard project, which aimed to provide detailed analysis, altering and reporting for all transaction done by E-Integration Platform to decision makers involved in analyzing and planning government activities.

Two major initiatives were announced in 2007 by e-Government; the first one being "full-scale evaluation of government websites regarding more than 30 quality standards, and the second initiative was checking the quality of eServices announced by different departments". Then Dubai Electricity achieved the transformation process for its services to be provided electronically by mid 2007.

The concentration on E-Integration resulted in a vision need to be achieved by 2010. The development process of strategies still continued to meet the last set vision (Sethi and Sethi, 2008).

➤ **e-Government Strategy**

Dubai e-Government Vision

Dubai e-Government Vision was identified in 2001, with three main components as Geray and Al-Bastaki (2005) mentioned; core purpose, core values and the envisioned future. "Core purpose refers to the ultimate underlying and driving goal of Dubai e-Government. It is a guiding principle that endures the test of time and can never be completely achieved but rather only pursued. Core values are the shared beliefs, values and the main characteristics of the Dubai e-Government initiative that hold its members together. Envisioned future refers to short term and medium term concrete objectives pursued by Dubai e-Government" (Dubai Municipality, 2010).

Dubai e-Government Mission

Its mission was introduced as "achieving a virtual government through provisioning of high-quality customer focused eServices for individuals, businesses, and government departments" (Sethi and Sethi, 2008).

Dubai Municipality's e-Government Strategic Goals

As illustrated by Geray and Al-Bastaki (2005) and Al-Banna (2003), the main goals for Dubai Municipality e-Government were:

- Decreasing in the time and cost of services' transactions for both the customers and government entities, and allowing the users to request information and services anytime, anywhere.

- Provide the customers -both the internal (DM) and external customers-with tangible and measurable benefits which returns immediate results and feedback, and allows the (DM) to focus on value added services and activities to the public and Dubai Government.

➢ **Dubai Municipality's e-Government Features**

Dubai Municipality's e-Government features mentioned by Al-Banna (2003):

- Decrease the bureaucracy and fill the gap between Dubai Municipality and the customers through customer friendly e-Government services.
- Allow customers to reach different and several E-Services with a single user ID and password.
- Allow the customers to request new services through the internet.
- Using several communication tools to service delivery and interact with customers such as internet, email, SMS and call center.
- The customers get E-Services training for free to motivate them using online services more frequently.

➢ **Dubai Municipality e-Government Challenges**

Al-Banna (2003) found that Dubai Municipality e-Government challenges were:

- The lack of e-Government, using technology and internet awareness for both public and Dubai Municipality entities.
- Resistance to change from internal and external customers.

- Creating and prioritizing an accurate service log according to importance from an e-Government perspective with the increasing number of services provided, made a challenge for Dubai Municipality e-Government.

- The coordination with other local government agencies.

Despite the recent beginning of e-Government initiatives in Dubai, the progress until now is not only impressive, but also rated as one of the best e-Government initiative in the Middle East, and among one of the best in the world with the provisioning of quality of services (Horlesberger, El-Nawawi and Khalil, 2007).

2.6.2.3 e-Government in Kusamo Municipality-Finland

The first step in Kusamo e-Government initiative was in 1987 with long-term investment decision in the utilization of information technology in the municipality; however, the project started with municipality internal works computerization, which aimed to develop the utilization of information technology in the municipality works. In 1990, the "One Stop Shop" initiative was developed to introduce all municipality services through one window, and this achievement was considered the most important one in e-Government project implementation. Then, the development of network within the municipality started by 1995, and continued the improvement process till 1997. A team was formed within this period to develop several services as illustrated by Al-Haiajneh (2004) and Lunnas, Kopra and Tanner (2002), such as:

- Information Highway project.
- E-Learning project.

- Geographical Information System Project.

- Digital map for the city.

- Information management strategy in the city.

Al-Haiajneh (2004) and Lunnas, Kopra and Tanner (2002) mentioned that other several services were provided between 1997 and 2004, including operating the approved services. Moreover, the achievements within this period include:

- Information technology strategic plan for the city until 2010.

- Activate the integrated regional network with three other cities nearby Kusamo.

- Connect 10500 users through the network.

➢ **E-Government Strategy**

Kusamo e-Government Vision

Kusamo vision, highlighted by Lunnas, Kopra and Tanner (2002), was to "e-enable the services provided by public organizations in the city, and to create a customer centric local authority".

Kusamo e-Government Critical Success Factors

Lunnas, Kopra and Tanner (2002) resulted in several success factors such as:

- Kusamo has developed a clear vision and clear goals around its local e-Government activity.

- Strong leadership from the top of the organization.

- Collaborative work and sharing information between municipalities, private companies and different sectors that work together.
- Training the staff to be enabled and involved with using and implementing the municipality e-Government project.
- The availability of ICT infrastructure.

2.6.2.4 E-Government in Uskudar Municipality-Turkey

Usdukar Municipality started its e-Government initiatives by E-Transformation Turkey project in 2003, and then launched in the central level in Turkey. However, e-Government project launched in Uskudar Municipality later by 2005 with E-Transformation project, which aims to provide citizens with electronic information, activities and services through the Internet (Balaban, 2009).

Uskudar Municipality e-Government Strategic Goals

Balaban (2009) mentioned several Uskudar Municipality e-Government goals, including:

- Reduce the municipality costs and expenditures through the saving process from (human resources, papers, postage, storage), to be about 83,500 pounds per year.
- Reduce the municipal operation and activities to be just a few minutes instead of days or sometimes weeks.
- The outcome from using e-Government programs increased year after year, such as, the tax payment rates increased by over than 150% in 2006 in comparison with 2005 due to the facilitations that

were done through the utilization of e-Government project in the municipality.

- Recording the cadastral geographic data in Geographical Information System (GIS).

- Provide integration between the governmental entities such as the integration performed between Uskudar Municipality, the Land Registry and Cadastre Directorship.

- Achieve the electronic workflow and digital signature.

- Access more easily to the municipal information and services.

e-Government Requirements

The requirements for Uskudar Municipality e-Government project implementation as illustrated by Balaban (2009) include:

- Provide the municipality employees with continues trainings to be kept up-to-date on the innovations in e-Government domain.

- Get the required experience with common international works in that domain, through exchange information and experience with foreign municipalities through mutual visits, workshops and joint activities.

e-Governmnet Services

The services and projects provided through e-Government Uskudar Municipality (Uskudar E-Belediye, 2010) include:

- Public e-services.

- Mobile Municipality.

- IVR (Interactive Voice Response system).

- Digital Archive and Document Management Systems.

- Electronic workflow.

- Digital signature.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this research is to conduct strategic analysis and develop e-Government strategic framework for the municipal level. This chapter describes research methodologies and approaches in order to achieve the research goals.

3.2   Research Methodological Approach

Selecting the methodological approach is a very important decision, which the researcher must do. While there are two major research approaches; the quantitative and the qualitative. The choice of the approach depends on the research problem, objectives and assumptions.

This section will highlight some issues regarding the quantitative and qualitative research, their features, and the reason behind the selection of qualitative approach in this research.

3.2.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research stipulates that reality is not so problematic when conclusive results are feasible (Holliday, 2002). It is more concerned with the precise relationships among variables rather than exploring every possible variable, and the approach tries to control variables in the environment (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). This type of research is simply insufficient to rely on in order to understand the intricacy of the current

problem scope; also it's too structured to prove flexible to meet the research objective.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research

As indicated by Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research is "any kind of research that produces finding not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification". According to Hull (1997), the purpose of this methodological approach is "to understand human experience to reveal both processes by which people construct meaning about their world and to report what those meanings are".

This research methodology is considered to be deeper than quantitative research. It was required to find out the qualities that draw the main boundaries for the research. It's a descriptive method, and a multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Moreover, this method studies things in their natural setting, attempting to make interpret in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Newman and Benz, 1998).

Qualitative research states that important variables will emerges as the study progresses. On the other hand, in quantitative research, the researcher has to set forth in advance what variables are to be tested. The most important ones are chosen. Table 3-1 provides a summary of the key typical differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

Table (3-1): The Key Typical Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research Approaches.

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
• Count occurrences	• Focus emerges
• Control variables	• What variables involved
• Deductive process	• Inductive process
• Sample is taken randomly and larger in nature	• Non random (selective) sample and smaller in nature
• Relationship among variables	• Capture all variables
• Initial focus	• Deeper study
• Established instruments	• Tailored methodologies
• Testing existing one	• New understanding
• Theories are developed, or compares patterns with other theories	• An instrument is used to measure the variables in the study
• Direct clear and less time	• Takes long time

3.3   Type of Sampling

There are two types of sampling; the purposive and random sampling. The appropriate sampling type for this research is the purposive sampling, because the target people have some appropriate characteristics needed to get the required information and data (Zikmund, 2000). Also under this category of sampling, there are two kinds of purposive sampling; the judgment sampling and the quota sampling. Judgment sampling is used when a limited number or category of people have the information and data needed for research and study (Sekaran, 2003). Therefore, judgment sampling is selected to this study.

In this research, a sample of 13 experts and high-rank employees at the municipal and national levels was selected. The same person may be interviewed more than one time. Those sample members chosen as subjects as they have the best source of needed information on e-Government in

Palestine in general and in the Palestinian municipalities, at specific, as their experiences and interests are related to the strategic analysis, planning and development of e-Government.

In this research, a sample of 6 among the Palestinian municipalities are selected to be analyzed through their websites or through a number of interviews with specific officials there, specifically the IT and the strategic planning officials, in order to get the information required. This selection was based on the size of the municipality and the achieved development.

3.4   Data Collection Methods

This research utilizes the qualitative research methodological approach in order to achieve the research objectives. Data collection is presented in this section.

Several methodologies have been used to collect relevant information from the various sources, including the following:

➢ Review of relevant literature: performing literature review, including electronic and desk research, and review of studies, and examination of the available studies, articles and books on e-Government, as well as available documents, whether published or unpublished, by the Palestinian officials or bodies.

➢ Analysis of Municipalities' Websites: Analyzing a number of Palestinian municipalities websites, in order to assess the level of development towards e-Government at the municipal level, and what each of the selected municipalities achieved in the matter of delivering services electronically, including the number of

electronic services provided to different beneficiaries through the websites and portals.

➢ Conducting Interviews: These are powerful data collection and gathering tools. There are several types of the interviews utilized in the research methodologies, including the structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

In this research, the unstructured interview form was adopted to get the needed detailed information and data for the strategic analysis and strategic framework development process for the e-Government on the municipal level.

A consent letter addressed from the university to the officials or interviewees was delivered upon request of the participant.

The researcher scheduled a number of unstructured interviews and meetings -that will give overall picture of e-Government current situation, strategic concepts and approaches- with Government agencies personnel, such as the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT), including e-Government General Directorate, The Ministry of Local Government (MOLG), and several Palestinian municipalities officials, such as Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, Qalqiliah and Al-Bireh. Detailed internal/external environment information were gathered, and several important key issues were discussed and considered such as leadership, change management, strategic analysis and strategic planning, the national and municipal levels,

and the requirements and the available support for e-Government development.

In this approach to interviewing, the one to one conversations between the interviewer (researcher) and participants (interviewees) were conducted. The researcher had a list of questions or topics to be discussed, with minimal control over the order in which the topics are covered, and over the respondents' answers. In unstructured interviewing, neither the specific questions to be asked, nor the range or type of possible answers are pre-defined (Swansea Consultation Partnership, 2009).

The key to successful unstructured interviews is learning how to probe effectively; that is, to stimulate an informant to produce more information without injecting the researcher's words, ideas or concepts into the conversation.

In total, 13 unstructured interviews were conducted with key persons, who have experience in the domain of the research. Since unstructured interviews often contain open-ended questions and discussions may lead to less concentration from the researched side, while trying to take a note and could miss another, this approach will result in poor notes. It is best to tape-record interviews and later transcript these tapes for analysis. This allows the interviewer to focus on interacting with the participant and follow the discussion.

One step should be conducted before recording the interviews, which was related to taking the permission of the participants

(interviewees). For this research, the researcher was ready with the consent letter and took the permission from the experts and officials to record their interviews.

The researcher phoned or emailed each participant to confirm the meeting date, time and location of the interview. Prior to each scheduled interview, the researcher made a follow-up phone call or sent an e-mail to remind the participant of the meeting's date, time and location.

The interviews were conducted by the researchers in different Palestinian cities; Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Al-Bireh and Qalqiliah.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested making each interview similar to dialogue and conversation, in order to make the interviewees feel informal and comfortable in sharing information and talking about their understandings and experience. Also it is important to the researcher to build rapport with each participant through natural and conservation and exchange of information.

The challenges of using the unstructured interviews include requirement of a significant amount of time to collect the needed information (Patton, 2002). There is no set format for conducting conversational interviews; each interview tends to be unique. This makes it difficult to generalize views, systemize and analyze the data. Results cannot necessarily be extrapolated. It may take several conversations before obtaining a similar set of information from each informant (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004).

➢ **Transcription and Translation**

As with notes taken and detailed recording, a necessary component of interviews is related to transcription and translation, since these form the basis for analyzing the data. Unstructured interviews, which were conducted in Arabic and recorded on tape recorder, where later transcribed into the Arabic language. The researcher read the transcripts several times to ensure accuracy of correlation between recorded and written transcripts. Then each participant was given the opportunity to review and confirm the final draft of their answers if he /she requested this to happen, as was the case for a number of interviewees from the e-Government General Directorate. The Arabic transcripts were then translated into English.

The resulted information from the interviews were categorized under specific determined item and purpose, based on relevant keywords.

The information and data gained from each interviewee on a specific issue would be under a comparison process with the information and data gained from the others on the same purpose. If there was consistency in the gathered data, it would be adopted to be used, but if not, the researcher should have scheduled a new meeting with each interviewee giving contradicting remarks. The researcher then would be more concentrating on the contradicted issues and would determine a set of questions to achieve the right information.

3.5   Information Analysis

After the previous steps of information collection and gathering, the adopted information will be analyzed and categorized under external and internal environment factors on e-Government. This process will be done in order to identify and conclude the strengths and weaknesses for the internal environment; whether on the national level (i.e., the ministries and their related institutes and organizations), or on the municipal level (i.e., the municipalities and local councils). In addition, the threats and opportunities from the external environment will be identified through SWOT analysis.

Based on such analysis, strategic formulation would results in the identification of e-Government mission and vision, and strategic goals for national and municipal levels.

The researcher would therefore reach the matching process. This would be done for the four concluded external and internal factors; the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Each internal factor would be matched with an external factor to identify four types of strategies; SO, ST, WO and WT. This combination process would be performed through developing the SWOT matrix tool.

SWOT analysis and SWOT Matrix are usually used to define all feasible strategic solutions. After thorough assessment for these, strategic solutions that could be applicable to our case in the Palestinian municipalities are considered for further research and elaboration.

By this, the research would have developed and formulated the strategic framework for e-Government for the Palestinian municipalities.

3.6   Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview on the research methodology and highlights the importance of qualitative technique in this research. It also illustrates data gathering procedures including unstructured interviews.

The analysis stage methodologies, which is imperative and significant in order to draw a meaningful conclusion, has been illustrated. The components of the methodological procedure will be utilized in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 4

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PALESTINE

4.1 Introduction

Local government plays a vital role in representing the interests of its citizens, delivering and commissioning local services and promoting the society.

Bradury (2010) defined the local government as "A governing institution which has authority over a sub-national territorially defined area". This authority in Palestine and around the world comes from its elected basis, and its role has been considered in terms of its relationship with central level, which is responsible for delegating and devolving power to the lowest level, and achieves the localism.

In Palestine, similar to other countries, the local government also has an essential role in making sure that their communities' services delivered to the citizens are efficient and effective. To achieve this goal, local government will be more transparent and accountable to its citizens.

4.2 The Local Government in Palestine

4.2.1 Historical Background

Palestinian local government has evolved through different historical eras as clarified by Abd Al-Atei (2005). Palestine was subject to the foreign powers; specifically these were the Ottoman Turks, the British, the Jordanians in the West Bank and the Egyptian administration in Gaza Strip,

and finally, the Israeli occupation. All these powers together were unable to find a system, which can represent the interests and the true ambitions of the Palestinian people.

Oslo Accords which were signed in September 13, 1993 led to the birth of the Palestinian National Authority in May 1994. From that time, the National Authority was in charge of a large number of civil affairs and some security affairs. For example, the national authority has full control over Areas "A" (the major cities and villages) while Israel retains full control over Areas "C". Concerning "B" areas, which comprise most of the Palestinian villages, the National authority has control over the civil affairs while Israel retains control over security affairs. More importantly to say is although the national authority has absolute planning responsibility in "A" classified areas; this is the responsibility of Israel in "C" classified areas.

The Palestinian local government system is based on two levels. The first level stands for the central government represented by the Ministry of Local Government, which has a direct interaction with the municipal and local councils through its offices in the different directories. The local authorities themselves represent the second one.

According to the Ministry of Local Government and the local committees' law, which was issued in 1997, there were two kinds of local authorities: the municipalities and local councils. Most of the Palestinian towns and villages are located in "A" and "B" areas. However, some of the boarders of these areas lie in "C". In addition, most of the official borders of the municipalities are recognized and acknowledged, but the situation is quite different in the local councils such as borders are neither recognized

nor acknowledged. In addition to these two kinds of local authorities, there are internal systems, which give legality for other kinds in the local authority such as, the joint local services, the regional planning committees and the Palestinian Union of local committees.

Since 1994, the Ministry of Local Government has re-classified all the local committees to determine their financial and administrative capacities. Based on this, it was clear that they were in need for a direction from the ministry, so the municipalities, which existed in 1967 and had the experience of local administration, were classified. However, the municipalities, which were officially formed after the establishment of the National Authority, were classified to "A", "B" and "C" classes, according to its size and number of population.

4.2.2 Local Government Objectives

The local government sector has several objectives to be achieved, as mentioned within the Strategic Framework for the Ministry of Local Government in Palestine (2010-2014). Those objectives include the following:

1. Provide democratic, transparent and accountable government for local communities.
2. Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
3. Promote social and economic development.
4. Promote a safe and healthy environment and encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

4.2.3 The Responsibilities of Local Government in Palestine

The responsibilities of the local government system in Palestine were determined within the strategic framework of the Ministry of Local Government in Palestine (2010-2014). These include:

1. Enabling the local institutions of having high and efficient institutional capacities.

2. Raising the efficiency of the government to make it able to plan, supervise, and direct of the local government sector.

3. Achieving more participation, democracy and transparency in the sector of local government and its institutions.

4. Enhancing the concept of cooperation between the local committees from one side and the private and public sectors in the other side in order to create local development and enhancing financial autonomy for the local committees.

4.2.4 The Strategic Trends for Palestinian Local Government Level

Based on the Strategic Framework for the Ministry of Local Government (2010-2014), and the local government responsibilities determined above, the following are the local government sector strategic trends:

1. Increasing the decentralization in the municipalities and local councils.

2. Promoting the institutionalization of the community participation.

3.   Encourage Public Private Partnership approach (PPP's) at the local government level to contribute in efforts of achieving sustainable local development.

4.3   The Municipalities

4.3.1 The Notion of Municipality

According to Business dictionary (2010), municipality was defined the smallest administrative subdivision which has democratically elected representation and limited self-governance rights and corporate status, the municipality governed by the mayor and a council. The term "municipality" is used in some countries to refer to the municipal administrative building known elsewhere as the town hall or city hall, and the largest municipalities can be found in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Greenland, and Iceland.

The Palestinian Local Government Committees Law for the year 1997 defined the local committees and municipalities as recognizable identity with financial autonomy, determine and define their functions, privileges and authorities within the law rules.

There must be a council responsible for managing and supervising the local committees and municipalities, their members were determined according to the regulation and system issued by the Minister and Council of Ministries, and mayors and municipal council members were elected according to the elections law.

As indicated within the Palestinian General National Plan, Summary of the Cross-Sectorial Strategy for Palestinian Local Government and

Administration Sectors, 2011-2013, the Palestinian National Authority is mostly interested in the local level and the municipalities, and this is reflected in the expansion in the number of municipalities, which increased to be 134 units. This is a large number when it is compared to the period prior to PNA, as there were 28 municipalities at that time.

4.3.2   Municipality Duties

The Palestinian Local Government Committees Law for the year 1997 determined the duties, authorities or privileges for the Palestinian municipalities, which had been categorized to include the following points:

1. Development and supply of services roles: including providing the citizens with the infrastructure services such as the electricity, water, and sanitation. This privilege includes the provisioning, cancelation, controlling, price determination and developing those services.

2. Organizational role: including organizing and licensing services, such as city, public markets and streets organizing and planning, construction, traffic management, and city landscaping, organizing the manufacturing and crafts, and organizing and controlling the parking, land and maritime transport, the organization role include building demolition when needed and cemeteries and cancellation.

3. Environmental and health role: including environmental and health preservation and control.

4. Control and monitoring role: including organizing, monitoring and controlling on the cafes, restaurants, markets, shops, billboards,

clubs, hotels, and weights and begging prevention, also monitoring the animals used in the transport process.

5. Cultural and sports role: including building parks, yards, cultural and social clubs, general libraries, schools and gardens in cooperation with civil society institutions and government control.

6. Managerial role: including managing the local institutions and municipalities properties and funds.

4.4   The Relation between the Central and Local Levels

The Ministry of Local Government in Palestine defines the relation between the central level and the local committees. The municipalities, which form the largest units between the local committees' types, have a complementary relationship and role with the central level, which was determined within the Palestinian Local Government Committees Law for the year 1997, and is summarized with the following points:

1. Prepare the general policy for Palestinian Local Committees Councils.

2. Provide supervision for those councils and municipalities jobs and functionalities.

3. Determine their privileges and services that may provide for citizen.

4. Organize general projects and budgets.

5. Provide financial, administration and legal control.

6. Provide control over the procedures for the council's formation process.

4.5 Conclusion

It is very important for the researcher to understand the local level aspects before analysis of the sector. The relationship between the central level and the municipal level is illustrated. The authorities and privileges given to municipal level from the national level represented with Ministry of Local Government are explained.

CHAPTER 5

E-GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Introduction

To set the concept of e-Government from strategic and development sides, there are several basic requirements, which form the bases towards the success of starting e-Government at all levels. These requirements differ from one place to another according to the differences between countries, people, and even between the government agencies and institutions. The situation is quite different in countries like Palestine, which is still behind in adopting and implementing e-Government in all aspects, especially at the municipal level. Such countries must have more efforts to achieve these requirements, which are considered the critical success factors of e-Government.

5.2 The Requirements

5.2.1 Organizational Requirements

e-Government is not just a technical aspect; e-Government implementation requires change management (Papantoniou et al., 2001). There are a number of organizational requirements, which affect the launch and the deployment for e-Government at the municipal and national levels, and those organizational requirements include the following:

- **Organizational Structure**

It is necessary to consider the organizational structure. The clarity of government agencies' or municipalities' objectives and the managerial

divisions, which are determined by an announced reliable and organizational hierarchy, is largely necessary to facilitate the use and the implementation of e-Government in an efficient and effective way.

The use of modern technology and the application of e-Government at the central and municipal level would not be successful with the absence of a developed and clear organizational structure. In case of this absence, there would be a random and unplanned use of these applications and technological systems, which will lead to an instant and limited success.

In addition, the use of modern telecommunication and technology must coincide with the presence of a modern management, which is capable to set strategic and organizational plans. It must be able to carry out managerial control and efficient coordination and utilize modern communication. The concern about the organizational aspects and using the techniques and applications of e-Government initiatives will efficiently lead to modernizing and updating the governmental and municipal performance by reducing the number of the assigned tasks and providing different ways of communications between the administrative units (Al-Sabeil, 2005).

- **Work Procedures**

The existence of a highly qualified organization administration helps in adopting modern technologies and telecommunications. However, the different procedures and work styles-the simple and the complex one as known by service supplier and beneficiaries- that are used today in the government institutions and organizations including municipalities, are considered important and basic in the organization administrative, as they

represent the stages of service delivery and completion. There is a great necessity to use the different e-Government initiatives and modern technological projects and systems, because they help the governmental institutions and municipalities to achieve their goals faster, more easily and with less expenses through facilitating the work procedures for all the parties (Al-Sabeil, 2005). The administrative reforming represents the first step towards a successful transition to e-Government as mentioned by Tsekos (2003). Although this reform and re-engineering is highly demanded, it is more important to have new procedures and processes that can lead to radical changes in the administrative work techniques, especially those related to businesses and citizens.

Therefore, there is a need to conduct specialized studies on the different work procedures and keep updating them frequently. It is also necessary to design the required forms, records and reports in a way that makes it possible to efficiently use modern telecommunications and technologies especially through e-Government program.

Al-Sabeil (2005) summarized several important factors related to work procedures that must be considered before and through the implementation of e-Government as follows:

- An exact and clear definition of the transactions because accuracy and clarity are basic requirements to get these transactions automated.

- Reduce as much as possible the number of documents and requirements to access and achieve a certain service. The large

number of documents and required papers hinder the developmental process and service delivery.

- Delegate decision-making; in order to achieve the daily tasks, transactions and services, they must be assigned to lower level employees. This contributes to a quick and beneficial use of e-Government and achieves distant control.

- Providing user manuals and guidebooks for the customers in order to achieve an easy access to the services and transactions. Those guidebooks must be available in the Government and municipalities' websites and portals with all necessary illustration and procedures.

- Continuous development for the work procedures in order to cope with e-Government and technology updates.

- **Centralization and Decentralization**

The degree of centralization or decentralization is a key component in e-Government, because it affects the level of interaction and coordination between the several types of government; the central government and the local agencies.

Concerning the large number and wide spread of municipalities and local government units represented by a central and local administration, there is a strong need to implement e-Government, which requires the following:

- Defining the roles, responsibilities, tasks and authorities for both the central and the local government, such as the municipalities, in a documentary form without giving room for diligence or improvisation, overlapping, duplicity and slow achievements.

- Defining the type and the size of the information in addition to the manner of its transmission to and from the central office, the branches and the beneficiaries.

- Defining the type of technologies and the priorities of its using to guarantee a quick and high quality performance.

- Delegating the decision making authority. e-Government works on quick decisions making between the different central government agencies and the central and local governments, especially after adopting the Electronic Signature officially and legally. Delegating the decision making to the municipalities in their internal issues, their services delivery, and transactions completion.

- Defining remote control and monitoring mechanisms by the use of modern telecommunications and technologies applied within e-Government (Al-Sabeil, 2005).

- **Strategic Vision**

The transition to a successful and efficient e-Government requires a clear and well-defined vision, mission, and accurate priorities within a clear frame of criterion, which coincide with the modern development of information technology and telecommunications. Based on such vision, the whole mechanisms and suitability of the project will be determined

regarding the roles and the functions of e-Government and its impact on the people life, the society, and the country.

The strategic investment in e-Government requires the availability of clear investment plans and definite roles and goals related to all the existent and available human and financial resources. Based on this, there should be quantitative and qualitative criteria to measure the productivity and acceptable performance. In addition, and according to Al-Hadi (2006), to achieve clear mission, vision, plans and objectives, there must be:

- Establishing a high-level committee that is responsible for developing strategic plans for e-Government at the national and local levels.

- Formulating and preparing short and long-term plans for e-Government.

- Asking for consultants and researchers assistance in the field of strategic plans formulation.

- Activating the interoperability on the central and local levels before the launch of e-Government. The interoperability process leading to a consistency and integration between the connected information and data among governmental agencies. The interoperability is defined by Lallana (2008) as "the ability of constituencies to work together. At the technical level, it is the ability of two or more government information and communications technology (ICT) systems or components to exchange information and to use the information that has been exchanged to improve governance".

- Determining unified channels to enter e-Government by implement-ing the portal, which is considered as unified website for all government institutions, accessed through the Internet.

- Using the private sector in the implementation and development of several stages in e-Government according to its ability.

- **Organizational Transitions and Change Management**

The stage of shifting the government from utilizing the traditional procedures those are currently used to e-Government requires great intensive effort and patience.

Change management is addressing the changes being faced by modern public administrators, both internally and externally, and adapting to new environments in an orderly and professional way.

Change management, in the context of e-Government, is all about how members of the public service make the transition from the traditional approaches to management, pre-information and communication technologies era, to new means of administering in an evolving and in-transition environments. The latter principle is one of the many ways in which change management is different for the public sector. Change management must be considered as an important and critical principle, and a pillar in both the e-Government strategic framework and development; without which any new initiative or project will certainly fail.

In both the municipal and national levels, change management is an essential step. It must have a complete plan to deal with, which will be used

to help both the national and municipal levels to adapt with the new environment.

This shift requires the following certain steps:

- Understand current areas of strength and weakness in the national level and municipal level. Engage all stakeholders in dialogue around aspirations, and new environment. Define what must be done and who must change to close gaps. Appoint strong leadership to oversee the program. Monitor stock-take and adjust Change.

- Support and fund from high administrative levels represented by the executive and political leadership. This support was achieved at ministerial level in Palestine, with the adoption of the national strategy of Telecommunication and Information Technology and Post, and e-Government initiative and strategic plan in 2005 (The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology, 2010). Since this transition doesn't cancel the human element, there is a need for qualified staffs and workers to start and implement the project.

- Re-engineering the government managerial processes. This means using a methodological managerial approach which is able to reconstruct the whole systems radically by a reformatting and designing the basic processes of the government, so as to achieve a faster and less expensive services and to solve the already existing problems before moving to an electronic environment. In this respect, the main problem faced was the documentation process. However, if there is no effective documentation system that holds

and archives all the government documents in its best and appropriate place, it is very dangerous to start the change towards e-Government (Arab, 2007).

- Human resources development and training will be an important factor in change management.

- Understand current areas of strengths and weaknesses on the national and municipal levels. Engage all stakeholders in a dialogue around aspirations, and the new environment. Define what must be done and who must change to close gaps. Appoint strong leadership to oversee the program. Monitor, stock-take and adjust change.

5.2.2 Human and Psychological Requirements

The human elements are very important in preparing, developing and implementing and e-Government initiatives. According to Al-Aboud (2005), there are several human requirements needed to achieve e-Government, which include the following:

- There should be a serious intention and to start e-Government from leadership, government, citizens and business. Setting a layout that comprises the general features for an intended plan is largely vital and necessary for any activity.

Concerning e-Government, this intention is very serious due to its different consequences; e-Government requires considerable finance and efforts. e-Government initiative is a strategic project that requires establishing a high level committee, which is responsible for the coordination and control process over e-

Government different stages, and consists of different governmental levels.

The first level must be at the governmental level, which follows with each Ministry level, then down to the lowest institutional levels. This committee must adopt e-Government and must be responsible for providing the needed capabilities required for e-Government. In addition, this committee has to set the main and secondary plans, and define a unified gateway for all ministries at the central level, and one for each municipality at the local level.

At the municipal level, there should be a committee from representatives of the Ministry of Local Government and the Municipality.

- Public acceptance of e-Government and getting people's trust by carrying out their businesses and transactions electronically is considered an important factor in having successful implementation of e-Government.

- Capacity building and development with training. This means training all staff on how to use computers, internet, and networks and how to deal with the databases and the information that are needed to be qualified to develop and utilize from e-Government. It is better to have this training with the support of certain institutes and specialized training centers, which maybe directed and supervised by the government.

- If necessary, recruit qualified skilled professionals in e-Government field, such as programmers, developers, strategy expertise and administrators.

- Outsourcing if necessary from private sector or from outside Palestine.

5.2.3 Technical Requirements

The technical requirements have a basic and essential role in e-Government projects. Without such requirements, e-Government might fail to achieve its functions and goals. The technical requirements include the following:

- There should be a suitable infrastructure, which includes a modern telecommunication network; wired and wireless, and have the ability to transmit data between the government institutions like the different municipalities, ministries and others, from one side, and other governmental institutions, business and people from the other side.

  The telecommunication network should be improved to suite the number of population, with increasing number of subscriber and users of the Internet. In this respect, the Ministry of Telecommunication and Technology supports either the direct access to the internet without subscription regardless of the location or the service provider at low prices, it also made the calls all over Palestine as local calls (Maslamani, 2010).

- Provide some technical and technological items which could help to facilitate the way people deal with e-Government, taking into consideration their cultural background, such as unifying all government and administrative websites and portals, unifying the use and access method to those websites and establishing one

comprehensive website which can be a guide to all centers of the government in the country, the central and the local one.

- The availability of the required electronic equipments, such as the personal computers, mobile phones and laptops, and networks to achieve the greatest benefit from e-Government services.

5.2.4 Political and Legal Requirements

The political and legal requirements are very important and critical to continue the work in e-Government initiative, without those requirements, e-Government initiative could be stopped or delayed.

The political and legal requirements include the following:

- Provide a legal framework to the electronic activities, and identifying their negative and positive consequences and imposing punishments in order to keep privacy.
- Acknowledging the electronic signature as a method of identification and recognition.
- Continuous revision and modifications for the laws related to e-Government, especially with country circumstances changes.
- The use of some electronic security methods, such as the smart card as an identification method.
- The availability of legal acts and legislations, which facilitate the work of e-Government and make it legitimate and credible with all its legal consequences. However, different projects to develop and update all laws and legislations related to information technology and telecommunication are stated by the Ministry of

Telecommunication and Information Technology and Post, within the Medium Term Action plan (2009-2011).

- Political and leadership support is an important requirement to achieve and implement e-Government. When this is achieved, many other requirements could be achieved simply and quickly.

5.2.5 Financial and Economic Requirements

There is a great need to a long term financial plan in order to provide Palestine with the needed fund to provide the required information technology; software or hardware, infrastructure and networks, e-Government staff salaries and the other needed costs for e-Government initiative to be achieved.

Since the technologies, both software and hardware, are updated and developed continuously, there is a need to update them in e-Government initiative. The integrating and interlocking nature of these technologies necessitates their complete availability at the same time instead of gradual provisioning. In addition, there should be enough financial support to cover the training and the qualifying of the staffs. Moreover, this is what the Palestinian National Authority attempts to achieve through the international fund support for infrastructure projects like e-Government despite the draws backs of the current political situation, or by Public Private Partnership (PPP) strategy, which can be used to provide e-Government with the needed resources from the private sector.

5.2.6 Promotion Requirements

The following are several important requirements to prepare the public for the new environment of governmental services delivery. Those requirements include the following:

- It is necessary to spread the electronic culture and information society between public. All related studies, research and development should also be supported, and there must be a rehabilitation and training for human resources (Arab, 2007).

- Utilizing media resources to promote e-Government, and increasing public participation from different institutions, worker unions and other non-governmental societies to take decisions related to e-Government through mutual discussion and exchanging opinions and new ideas on how to develop e-Government, holding conferences, seminars and hosting experts to prepare a popular atmosphere capable of dealing with e-Government(Al-Hadi, 2006).

- Raising the public awareness of the importance of e-Government in developing the government performance, through adopting different programs in the media about this subject (Maslamani, 2010).

- Setting comprehensive marketing and promotion plans about the use of e-Government by presenting its advantages and its importance.

5.3   Conclusion

The organizational, human and psychological, technical, political and legal, financial and economic, and promotions requirements are very important in order to achieve the success for e-Government initiatives. These requirements must be considered before the start of both the strategic analysis and defining the strategic framework stages.

CHAPTER 6

# THE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR PALESTINIAN E-GOVERNMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

6.1 The Current Situation of the Information Technology (IT) in Palestine

The Israeli occupation for decades and the increased poverty in Palestine made many people unable to fulfill their basic needs. The deteriorated economic situation was followed by continued settlement activities and the establishment of the apartheid wall around the population communities and the erection of checkpoints, the confiscation of Arab land, the demolition of house, and the closure of the territories prevented the free movement of people and goods through the crossings. This situation created an intense desire to override the geographic boarders and benefit from the telecommunication and information technology.

The continued development of tools and applications of telecommunication and information technology in Palestine has increased the number of the computer users to reach a 49.2% of the population in 2009, according to the statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for the year 2009. Moreover, the number of internet users has also increased to be 28.5 % of the population in 2009, in comparison with 1 % of the population in the year 1999 (Saidam, 2010).

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010), there are several effective factors, which are summarized hereafter. Firstly, the increasing number of users for the mobile devices to be 82% of the

population in 2009. This high percentage is due to the new operator in November 2009 and the reduction of service cost of mobile telecommunication. Figure 6-1 displays the percentages of the Palestinian families that utilize different ICT tools as indicated by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010).
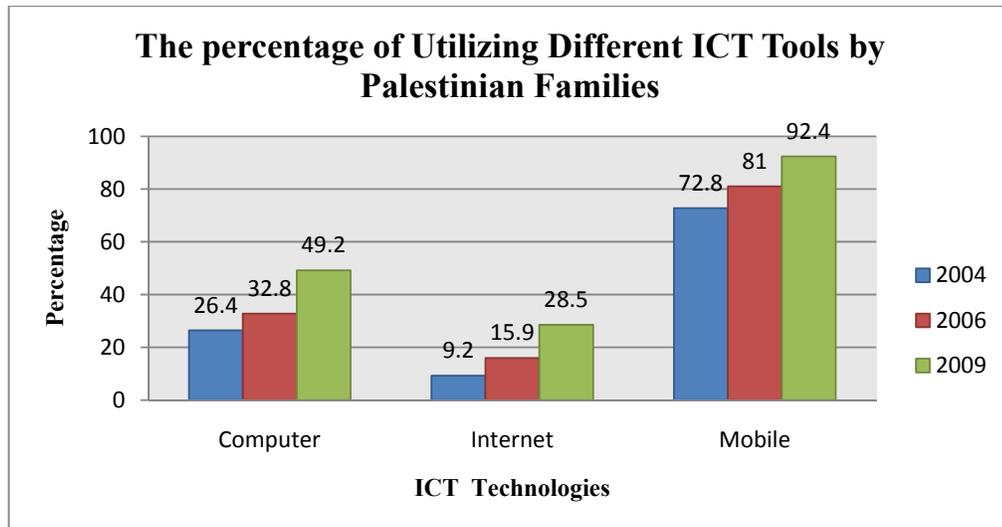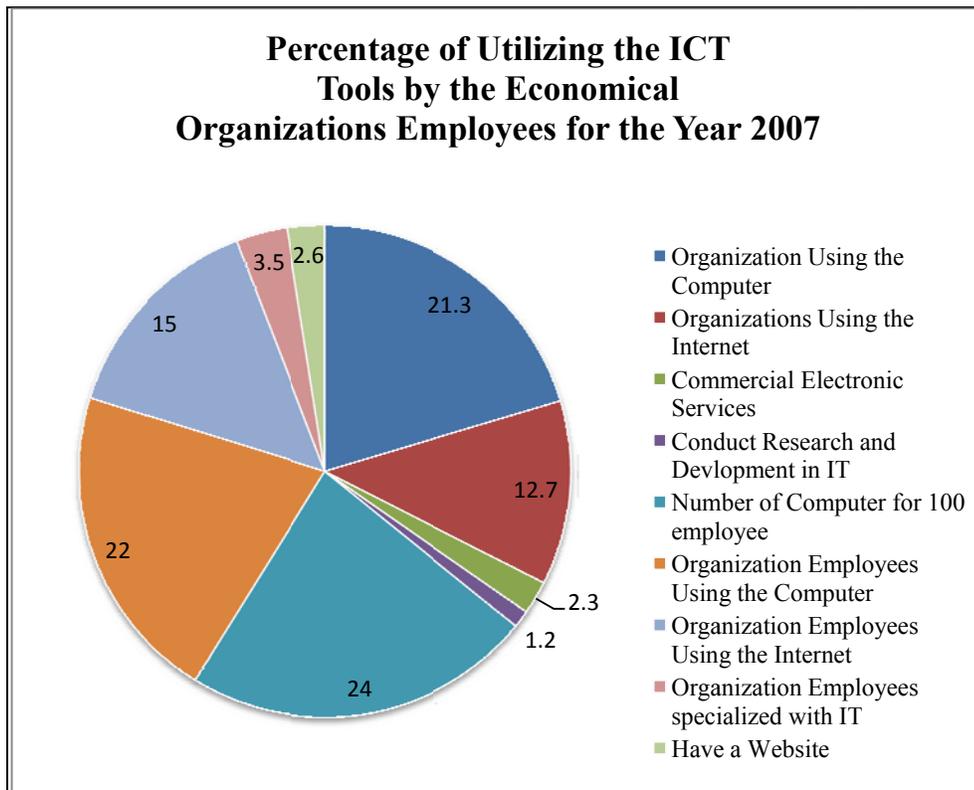

Figure 6-1: The percentage of Utilizing Different ICT tools by Palestinian Families.

The percentages of using ICT tools by individuals (more than 10 years old) are summarized in Figure 6-2.
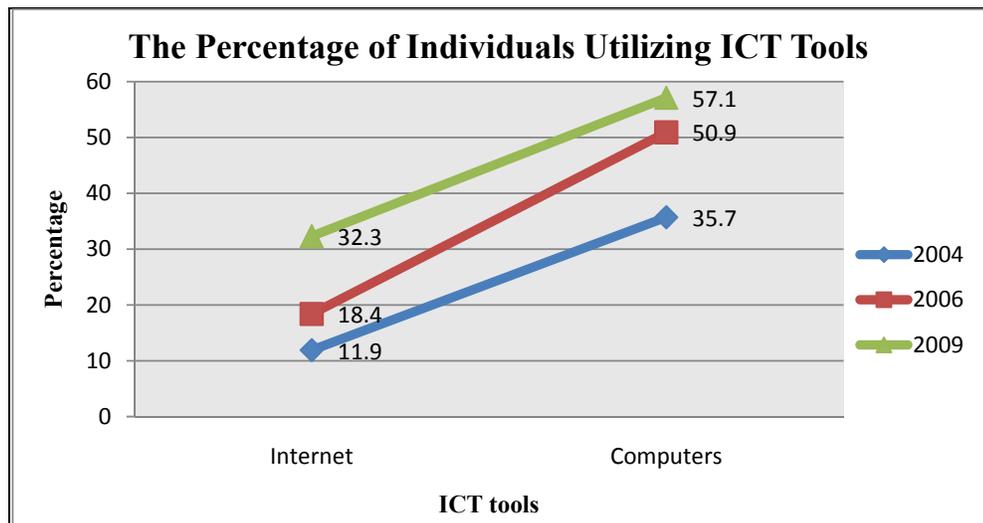
Figure 6-2: The percentage of Utilizing Different ICT tools by Palestinian Individuals

Figure 6-3 summarizes the percentage of utilizing the ICT tools by the Palestinian economical organizations employees for the year 2007, as introduced by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010).

Percentage of Utilizing the ICT Tools by the Economical Organizations Employees for the Year 2007

Figure 6-3: The percentage of Utilizing Different ICT tools by Economical Organizations

Compared to Palestine, Tunis shows an accelerated development in the percentage of families that use the computer and internet. Palestine shows a considerable development in the percentage of using ICT tools but this is still less than that for Tunis especially, for the year 2009.

Figure 6-4 displays the percentages of families in using ICT tools in Tunis.

The Percentages of Development in Using ICT Tools in Tunis
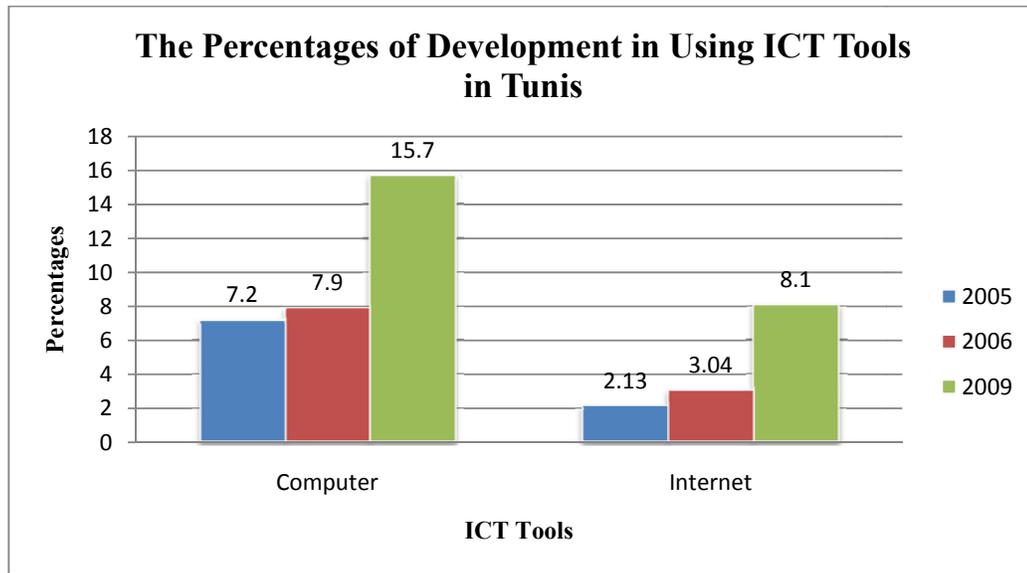
Figure 6-4: The Percentages of Development in Using ICT Tools in Tunis.

The Percentages of Using ICT Tools in Jordan (2009)
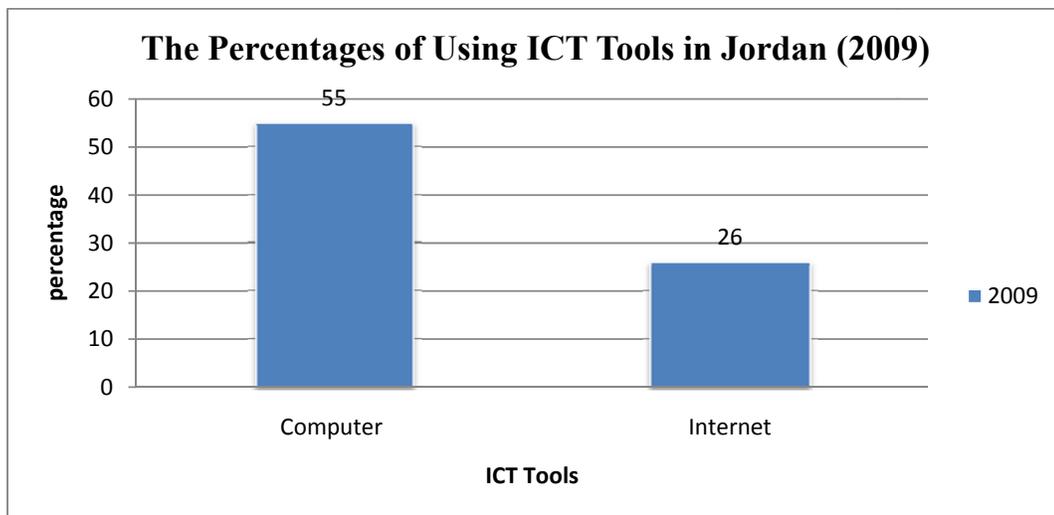
Figure 6-5: The Percentages of Using ICT Tools in Jordan.

On the other hand, Jordan achieved high percentages in using of ICT tools by families in the year 2009, as illustrated in Figure 6-5.

As well as the large number of Palestinian companies, which work in the field of telecommunication and information technology, there are about fifteen companies, which work to provide telecommunication services and to develop different programs and training for the individuals and

institutions. In addition, many international telecommunication and technology companies have become active in Palestine. The increasing spread of local and international telecommunication and technology companies helps and benefits with their experience and expertise in the development of Telecommunication and Information technology field.

All these mentioned factors together contributed to the high development of the telecommunication and information technology, and made it the basic way of interaction between the Palestinian people in general and with the regional and international surroundings. They also contributed to the actual connection between the different academic and civil institutions both in the public and the private sectors.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA), represented by the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology, has realized the importance of e-Government and its main role to help Palestine achieve its goals and its economic ambitions. Therefore, the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology gave e-Government, a priority over other projects and initiatives, which the ministry wants to implement. This was reflected in the number of consequent decisions taken by the cabinet and the formation of special committee to carry out the implementation of e-Government especially at the national level (The General Directorate for the Electronic Government, 2009).

The Strategic Plan for the Palestinian Electronic Government (2005) mentioned four basic principles that must be considered and followed, when the development process for the services that will be provided for the

citizens occurred using e-Government initiatives and projects either in the planning or implementation phases. These principles include the following:

- The centrality of the citizen: the citizen must be the core of any plan or program within the country, and the services must be oriented according to the citizens needs. The principle of the bilateral relation between the government and the citizen should be the basis of any service because the government and the citizen are two faces for the same coin, in addition to the simplification of the relation between them.

- Connecting the society: building more networks to increase the proficiency of the government and creating a powerful society. Building a sense of trust requires easy points of accessibility, which guarantee the delivery of government services to the benefits of the citizens.

- Encouraging and helping citizens: raising the capacities and the efficiency of the citizens in a way that makes them able to take decisions. Simply, the government is concerned of creating a real meaning of legitimacy and having a civil community in order to increase the opportunities of having communication with others.

- Enhancing the values and the public beliefs: in order to keep a good picture of the governments in the eyes of its citizens, there should be a continued assessment of the performance of the government especially the delivery of services that the citizens consider the best.

6.2   The Current Situation for the Palestinian e-Government

Before 2003, there were no plans and strategies on the information technology and telecommunication that suit the Palestinian situation, because there was no clear picture of the importance of the telecommunication and information technology. In addition, at that time there is a strong desire for improvement and development from the low administrative level; this desire was not given enough concern from the decision makers and the high administrative levels.

Most of the ministries, specially the major ministries, have computer departments and public administrations, which were not put in the right way to be used or being employed for the public benefits, as well as, many of those ministries had one or even more than one website, and the content of some of those websites has no real value except for the internal use (Khouri, 2006).

The majority of the ministries, institutions and committees have their own infrastructures including the networks, and those networks did not fit the size or the nature of the work. Additionally, few of them were connected with the other available networks (Khouri, 2006).

There is no general awareness of the vitality for those networks, their types, and the differences between them. There was even no accurate information on how to use them in the right way. The networks were just used for minor and primitive purposes. Most of the available applications were traditional with no specialization of the nature of the ministry's work (Khouri, 2006).

The Palestinian Government had early realized the importance of implementing e-Government. According to Khouri (2006), this appears with starting e-Government initiative as part from E-Palestine project, preparing and publishing the Palestinian Electronic Government Strategic Plan in 2005 by the ministerial committee for e-Government; which consists of eight ministries, supervised then by the Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology Ministry. After that, the establishment of the General Directorate of e-Government as a part of the Governmental Computer Center, which is following the Ministry of Information and Telecommunication Technology. Then, the formation of technical committee, to improve the technical infrastructure for the PNA ministries and institutions and connect them together, to assess the readiness of the PNA for the Electronic Government by holding studies and filling questionnaires about the current situation of the ministries, the institutions and the committees of the government, then direct and supervise the implementation of e-Government initiatives, and to follow and evaluate their result.

Later in 2006, the approval from the Cabinet for e-Government strategic plan had been achieved, and then the start of the Electronic Government had been taken. The strategic plan had a clear methodology that requires from three to five years to be implemented in Palestine, and about three hundred thousand dollars, which was determined in that time and provided from the UNDP according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2007).

Based on Zagharneh (2007) and interviews with official representative from the Palestinian e-Government General Directorate in the Ministry of

Telecommunication and Information Technology, several reasons and obstacles, that project had been frozen for a while.

Those obstacles are summarized with the following points and others mentioned later in this chapter:

- Al-Aqsa second intifada with all its consequent destruction, closures and killing, and the negative reflection for this on the infrastructure development projects and initiatives such as e-Government initiative.

- The general legislative elections in 2006 with its resulting political disturbance and internal conflicts, and imposing the blockade on the Palestinian people after that election.

- The presence of other priorities other than the implementation of the Electronic Government, these priorities comprise the building of schools and hospitals as well as supplying food and medicine.

The first stage of implementing e-Government initiative was included within the first phase of the Medium Term Action Plan for e-Government (2008-2010), which was considered and approved later in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan for the years (2008-2010), as an important initiative and project included within the framework of Electronic Palestine at the level of the country (e-Government, the Smart Card, the National Institute for Telecommunication and Information Technology, the Techno Parks, and many others). This stage was then updated and included within Medium Term Action Plan for e-Government project (2009-2011), as

actions and achievements plan for e-Government (Medium Term Action Plan for e-Government General Directorate (2009-2011), 2009).

This first phase of e-Government project was summarized with several interconnected projects included within the Medium Term Action Plan for e-Government General Directorate (2009-2011), and mentioned within the National Strategy for Telecommunications, Information Technology and Post in Palestine (2011-2013) prepared by Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology. These projects include:

1. Building the organizational structure for the General Directorate of e-Government Project, which includes: preparing the organizational structure of e-Government general directorate, encourage the institutional transformation needed, i.e. support change management, establishing the needed departments, units and directories and providing them with the required specialized staff, human resources, training and capacities, Providing the required technical and legal consultation for the implementation of e-Government with both local and international experts, and establishing a pan-ministerial committee for e-Government.

2. Rehabilitating the infrastructure project, which includes developing and increasing the efficiency of the governmental network, increasing the internet speed, introducing new services, connecting different governorates with the main centers in Ramallah and Gaza, the rehabilitation of the post offices, connecting them with computerized networks, and training the employees.

3. Gathering the governmental services applications and forms, and information about systems used project, and the following will be achieved:

- Preparing a special form to determine governmental transactions and services.

- Preparing a special guidebook for filling and completing the transactions.

- Preparing the code numbers and other classifications, which are acknowledged by the governmental institutions and transactions in cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

- Preparing and building automated system to enter all the data related to the citizen transactions and services.

4. Facilitating the administrative procedures project, by preparing and issuing the specification guide to facilitate the administrative procedures, re-engineering some governmental processes and automating some governmental services.

5. Gathering information and establishing, studying and analyzing the databases for the different governmental institutions and other related institutions. This is in addition to establishing a national data center project, with the aim to describe, analyze and set unified criterion for the databases and connecting them. The unified database for e-Government, represented by building, developing and managing an integral national database system that provides a

good support to designate policies and make decisions. It contributes as well to raising and improving the proficiency in all levels. Then, developing specifications and standards for the government interoperability framework between governmental agencies.

6. Identification of the national initiatives project, which includes:

   - Determining the national initiatives.

   - Gathering the initiatives of the private sector and other sectors.

   - Studying and combining these initiatives within e-Government project in a way that suits the acknowledged criterion and specifications.

   - Implementing national initiatives under the supervision of, and in coordination with, the general directorate of e-Government.

   - Studying the solutions and the proposed systems from the private sector and acknowledging whatever serves the project within limited criterion.

7. Building electronic portal for e-Government, include the following:

   - Design stage: the specifications of the Electronic Portal design were done and the preparation of the financial and technical study was completed, in order to start the implementation for project.

   - Start designing the Electronic website, with the support provided from the Governmental Computer center.

- The deployment for the certified systems, and then publish the provided services by the government on the website.

8. Establishing a computer emergency unit, this unit is very important part in e-Government project because of the possible bad political conditions, or the natural circumstances.

9. Updating the laws and legislations related to information systems and electronic transactions; include the Electronic Signatures and E-Mails, the Personal Data Protection, the Individual Ownership Protection, the Electronic Commerce and the Internet, the Privacy, and Cyber Crimes Laws.

10. Training, advertising and publishing project, which include:
    - Training all the groups who are in charge of the project.

    - Re-training the staff in the governmental institutions on the application and systems of the new services and establishing incentives to develop the capabilities of public sector employees.

    - Advertising about the available services on the websites.

    - Supervising the societal training and building a public awareness of the new services

11. The Assessment plan project, include the following:
    - Preparing the assessment and follow up plan to the project implementation.

    - Preparing indicators to evaluate the project.

- Carrying a comparative study of similar projects in other countries.

According to this Medium Term Action Plan (2009-2011), they plan to finish most of the initiatives by 2011.

6.3 SWOT Analysis of the Palestinian e-Government

Analyzing the current situation of the society of telecommunication and information technology in Palestine concludes several internal and external attributes that leads to have an effect on the objectives for e-Government project in Palestine, and achieving a successful strategy for e-Government.

6.3.1 The Strengths

The points of strength represent a number of internal factors that must be leveraged in order to achieve a big success and a quick implementation of the Electronic Government, those include the following:

1. The availability of leadership support and interest in the Telecommunication and Information Technology sector development in general and in particular that related to e-Government, and giving it a priority over other projects especially in the last two years. This interest existed at the national level, however this interest is absent at the municipal level, which will be mentioned later in the next chapter.

2. Availability of documents and plans those were prepared in advance to carry out the first stage of the Electronic Government, such as the strategic plan for the Palestinian e-Government 2005,

and the Medium Term Action Plan for e-Government General Directorate (2009-2011), the National Strategy for the information Technology and Telecommunication and Post in Palestine (2011-2013), and the Strategic plan for e-Government 2010 is under preparation with a policy document for e-Government.

3. Availability of some systems, applications and automated data and information in some government institutions and ministries. The largest ministries include: the Education and Higher Education, the Health, the Information and Telecommunication Technology, Interior and Transportation ministries. On the local level, the largest municipalities include Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron and Qalqiliah Municipalities. The local level sector will be discussed later.

4. An increased public awareness of the importance of telecommunication and information technology at a local, national and governmental level, and the increased use of the internet, computers and new technologies as mentioned previously in this chapter according to the statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

6.3.2 The Weaknesses

Also from analyzing the Palestinian situation, there are a number of internal factors that negatively affect the Electronic Government, and hinder the development process. These drawbacks have to be early detected, treated and corrected. These are:

1. Lack of fund needed for e-Government initiative. However, the budget allocated for e-Government is not enough to continue.

2. Lack of qualification staff to work on e-Government initiatives, moreover, there is no ability to recruit needed experts and resources to complete e-Government project.

3. There are neither clear policies nor long term plans that govern the Government institutions and their projects work, nor reliable budgets that support development and research, and implementing projects and initiatives like e-Government on the long term, and set the necessary infrastructure needed for the project in most of the ministries. However, the financial support from the government leadership and donor is available only for the short-term implementation.

4. The resistance to change and the conservative attitude from the employees of the public sector, where implementing e-Government is considered as new environment that the government employees must adapt and deal with, and break the usual routine in their work environment.

5. The lack of cooperation between the ministries for e-Government project especially regarding those databases, information and transactions will be used. This lack of cooperation comes from the feel of fear and lack of trust from dealing with their information with other national ministries and institutions. Sometimes those government institutions give inaccurate information and data, and result in having no unified government database to keep

computerized copies of all the documents, forms, and government services and transactions. In return, it was difficult to carry out the government solutions and decisions that are related to the Electronic Government implementation.

6. Unavailability of a legal and legislative environment that organizes the electronic services and e-Government environment, and lack of the legal experts, and need to coordinate with and recruit external one to do the tasks in the legal domain.

7. The complications of the administrative transactions and procedures in delivering services for the public sector. In order to be able to automate those services, there is a need to re-engineer those procedures and utilize the programming tools to simplify them.

6.3.3 The Opportunities

There is a need to utilize the available opportunities in a way to implement the concept of the Electronic Government and achieve the determined goals, and the available opportunities, which include the following:

1. The large concern of the international community to develop the Palestinian economy through financing a number of projects, provide the technical support for proposed projects such as e-Government, and providing training and consulting for the ICT sector.

2. The government is concerned to impose the laws and control the security, which is reflected in its concern with different projects such as e-Government project, after being neglected and giving the priority to the political situation and lawlessness.

3. The low level of illiteracy in Palestine, and the spread of the technical and technological education, and establishing a number of specialized centers especially in the universities.

4. The active participation of all the concerned parts: the public sector, the private sector, the universities, the organizations of the civil community and the Palestinians in the Diaspora, with their knowledge, experience and profits in the national economic improvement and development through the participation in developing national projects such as e-Government project.

5. The availability of high scientifically and technically Palestinian qualifications to work on updating and implementing the strategic plan, implementing and developing the project of e-Government, and to work in the new automated environment after deploying e-Government.

6. The presence of new companies specialized in information and telecommunication technology; open source companies and international companies agents that contribute in the enhancement and improvement of the infrastructure needed to implement e-Government and the development of e-Government.

6.3.4 The Threats

There are a number of external factors that negatively affect the projects of Electronic Government, which include the following:

1. The presence of occupation with all its negative consequences, especially the division and the geographical split of the Palestinian Territories and the lack of stability, and the continued political split in the Palestinian territories, which lead to the instability of the economic situation, discourage any investment from the private sector, and external investors, and the donors didn't fulfill their commitment of developing the Palestinian society. There is also the direct aggression on all the components of the telecommunication networks and the institutions of the government and civil community from the occupation.

2. The difficulty of entry of the imported equipment, which are required to develop the networks and infrastructure of telecommunication and information technology sector and its projects, which leads in delay in implementing those projects and one of them e-Government project.

3. The absence of the Palestinian Legislation Council (PLC) that hinders the preparation and adapting the laws and legislations that are related to security issues.

4. The absence of the telecommunication regulator in Palestine.

6.4 Assessment for the SWOT Analysis

Though there is number of obstacles that stand in the face of the Electronic Government, and hinder its implementation, the current situation is still encouraging according to the estimation of the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology. According to the ministry, this delay facilitated the process of taking the advantages of the experiences from other countries regardless of the fact they were successful or not, and the criteria of success mean planning, preparing the required documents and strategies and overcoming all the difficulties that hinder the process of development.

6.5 The Palestinian e-Government Vision

According to the strategic plan for Palestinian e-Government 2005, the Electronic Government vision was "Provide a better life for our citizens by being a government that:
- Empowers citizens to participate in government.
- Connects citizens, the private sector and institutions to drive economic growth and meet community challenges.

- Delivers real public value through citizens-centric government services ".

However, a vision statement should guide e-Government for any government agency.

Studying and analyzing the current vision for Palestinian e-Government, and with studying several comparison visions for e-Government in several countries such as Cyprus, Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and Republic of Korea. The following vision is suggested:

Every Palestinian -resident citizen or Expatriate from anywhere or at any time- can be provided with the public government services -at the local and national level- in efficient, transparent and professional way utilizing the ICT tools.

6.6   The Palestinian e-Government Mission

The Strategic Plan for Palestinian e-Government 2005 did not mention the mission in its document. The following mission is concluded according to comparison studies like the vision, and suggested that:

Electronic Government is to increase the ability of the citizens to make an easy access to information and services, and to raise their knowledge and awareness by using the telecommunication and information technology tools. The accessibility to the data is only achievable through security frameworks and regulations, and providing a supportive legal and legislative environment that could serve the citizen, government and business.

6.7   The Palestinian e-Government Strategic Goals

Strategic goals are statements of what you wish to achieve over the period of the strategic plan, those goals reflect the vision, mission and the analysis for the environment and formulation of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The following are proposed strategic goals for implementing e-Government initiative in Palestine at the national level. They may be a

basis for the strategic goals to be formalized at the municipal level in Palestine:

- Achieve effective, efficient and productive government sector.

- Provide citizens reliable, satisfied and confident services within transparency, accountability and secure, and protected framework.

- Achieve high contribution to the national economy growth.

6.8 Conclusion

Strategic analysis for the e-Government on the national level is prepared according to the information related to the current situation of e-Government and IT sector in Palestine. It includes the results of analysis in terms of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Moreover, vision, mission and strategic goals are illustrated.

CHAPTER 7

THE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR PALESTINIAN E-GOVERNMENT AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL

7.1   The Current Situation for the Municipal Level

Many of the Local Government institutes have lack of awareness of the concept "e-Government", however, the local authorities, specially the municipalities, deal with e-Government as an internal automation process, having a website or just using the email. More than ten years ago, the Palestinian Local Governments, mainly the municipalities, started the automation for their processes, but in the past few years the tone was accelerated through implementing many projects like the implementation of financial, billing and archiving systems in several municipalities like Hebron, Nablus, Qalqiliah and Ramallah.

Recently, the municipalities-except those with limited capabilities-have a good IT infrastructure and IT literacy, and possess budget and resources to handle e-Government concept. Therefore, e-Government concept started to be adopted by several municipalities, especially the largest Palestinian municipalities, in their plans as one of their main strategic goals that they want to be achieved as soon as possible, and in their efforts, towards providing their services electronically to their beneficiaries, and achieve the E-Municipality, as an important part of e-Government.

According to Ministry of Local Government (2010), and many interviews with official representatives in several municipalities

specifically in Hebron, Ramallah, Qalqiliah and Nablus Municipalities, there is no specific e-Government strategy at the local level. However, achieving e-Government and E-Municipality is included in some municipalities general strategic plans, like the strategic plan of Hebron Municipality, as one of its strategic goals, which the municipality wants to achieve during the next few years.

To get more information about the municipalities' achievements in e-Government matter, several local municipalities' websites had been analyzed; also, several interviews had been done. The websites that were analyzed include those for Ramallah, Hebron, Al-Bireh, Nablus and Qalqiliah Municipalities. The interviews were performed with representatives from Hebron, Qalqiliah, Ramallah and Nablus Municipalities.

The conclusion was that the main and common activities, services and transactions for most local municipalities provided for their customers, might potentially be developed through implementing e-Government initiatives in the municipalities. Those services include the following:

- Electricity Services (apply for services and pay fees and bills).
- Water and Sanitation Services (apply for services and pay fees and bills).
- Building licensing Services (apply for services and pay fees and bills).
- Billboards (apply for services and pay fees and bills).

Those services and others that the municipalities provide must be under the umbrella of Local Government Law issued in 1997, which determined the municipality and council privileges and services within Article 15.

The services that the municipalities provide differ in their quantity and quality from one municipality to the other. However, each of Ramallah, Hebron, Qalqiliah and Nablus Municipalities provides about 80 services and transactions for their citizens whether residing within municipal boarder or outside. Those services are automated. In Ramallah, for example, those services are published through the Public Services Guidebook (2010), within "Ramallah Municipality Centennial Project" and Ramallah Municipality website. This guidebook provides information about each service and transaction, its duration to be achieved, services fees, required document and the legal basis execution procedures.

These entire services gathered and used nowadays in one place in the municipality, which is called the One Stop Shop (OSS) project or the Public Service Center. This project is considered as the first phase in e-Government at the municipal level.

Ramallah Municipality defined the One Stop Shop as the first and only place for citizens to finalize their work without having to visit other departments, by receiving the request from the citizen, specifies its type, and then sends it to the proper department through the program. The OSS consists of integrated computer systems and software, which makes the processing of applications and transactions easy, and ensure its speedy processing. When all procedures had been finalized, the application is back

at the center as a final station where the citizen is informed in writing of the approval or rejection of his/her request.

Based on published information on Ramallah Municipality Website, the OSS project developed within the framework of joint project with German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Betunia as well as Salfeet Municipalities in 2006. Such centers aimed from its launch in those municipalities, and later during 2008-2010, in other municipalities like Hebron, Nablus and Qalqiliah municipalities to develop administrative and financial systems, and provide the municipal services in various areas, and simplify obtaining these services to ensure transparency and high level of responsibility. The delay in implementing the One Stop Shop in other municipalities returns to the lack of financial budgets and the availability of limited capabilities.

Another step to be done by the municipalities is to build their websites, which differ from one municipality to the other according to the content, subject and the quantity and quality of information was displayed through for the citizens.

Through the study, it is found that many Palestinian municipalities have websites. The other municipalities, which do not have websites, seek to build these soon. Several municipalities have misunderstood e-Government concept as mentioned previously at the start of this chapter, that e-Government is just building a website.

While most municipalities' websites are utilized to display general information about the municipality, the city, the activities and news occurred there in all aspects; later a new feature had been added to

Ramallah, Hebron and Al-Bireh Municipalities' websites; the Electronic Portal.

The Electronic Portal is the first phase of providing services electronically in a secure and privacy framework. Now this feature allows the citizens to enter their files and transactions, review and check the fees due, such as those for land, property, and construction applications. This feature is developing to include later, the ability to display all services provided by the municipality and having an access to apply and to get specific services directly through the municipality portal, in addition to making payment electronically through different tools such as the credit card.

Hebron Municipality has a new added feature in its portal; which is applying the Geographic Information System (GIS). Inclusion of GIS, it is one of the most used applications on the computer, which depends on the linkage between geographical maps, graphics and the information associated with these maps, where we can rapidly search for a specific location on these maps and get the necessary data for it (Escobar, Hunter, Bishop and Zerger, 2001).

The users, who want to get access for the electronic services, must be provided with usernames and passwords from the municipality to be able use the municipality portal and its features. This is what each of Hebron, Ramallah, Al-Bireh and Qalqiliah municipalities are trying to achieve until now, individually, toward achieving the E-Municipality.

7.2   The Strategic Analysis for e-Government

It is apparent from the previous section, that there are neither real strategic analyses nor strategic planning for e-Government at the municipal level in Palestine.

The strategic analysis for e-Government at the municipal level in Palestine is prepared. Its components will be discussed later in this chapter. The SWOT analysis, vision, mission and strategic goals had been formulated according to the following:

- Strategic analysis at the national level, which was performed and presented in the previous chapter.

- The strategic analysis for the Local Government sector in Palestine which was defined within the Summary of the Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Palestinian Local Government; and was included within The Palestinian General National Plan 2011- 2013 (2010).

- The analysis of Palestinian local level and municipalities' current situation and future trends.

- The analysis for local municipalities' websites and portals.

- The analysis for the Ministry of Local Government Strategic Plan and these available strategic plans for a number of municipalities.

- The comparative studies for the strategic plans at the local level in other countries, which have similarities with the local level in Palestine.

- The interviews, which were conducted with the local government and municipalities representatives.

Finally, it has to be indicated that the strategic analysis made to e-Government at the central level, have several quite similar aspects to those at municipal level.

7.2.1 SWOT Analysis

Considering all the above indicated sources of information, it is found that a number of factors worth further studying and consideration. Some of these factors are encouraging in a way that e-Government initiative is beneficial and must be considered seriously. However, there are some threats and weaknesses, which can negatively affect any developmental process and hinder its implementation. Those threats should be avoided or there must be strategic framework and solutions to reduce their expected impacts. The internal and external environments that are related to the municipalities with all their different aspects, whether they are negative or positive, must be considered. However, most of the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on the municipal level are quite similar to those in the national level. SWOT analysis results are presented hereafter.

7.2.1.1 The Strengths

1. The existence of an efficient and effective leadership support represented by a number of municipalities Mayors and the council members, who believe in the need for e-Government initiatives and exhibit hard work to achieve this goal, such as those of Hebron and Ramallah Municipalities.

2. The availability of financial supports for the Palestinian municipalities and seeking to get such support. However, this support is available for just the largest municipalities.

3. The availability of qualified staffs in most Palestinian municipalities, especially the largest ones; Hebron, Nablus, Qalqiliah, Ramallah, and Al-Bireh. If needed, there is the ability to bring in professional and experts from outside the municipalities, like bringing strategic experts, but this is according to the municipality financial situation.

4. Availability of systems, applications and automated data and information in largest municipal institutions such as Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron and Qalqiliah municipalities.

5. The availability of documentation processes for the completion transactions' procedures in some municipalities such as Ramallah and Hebron municipalities, which exist within the "public Service Guide Book, 2010" in Ramallah, and as was published in Hebron Municipality website.

6. An increased public awareness of the importance of telecommunication and information technology at the municipal level especially within the officials and employees of the largest municipalities, and the increased use of the internet, computers and new technologies within the municipalities.

7.2.1.2 The Weaknesses

1. The absence of leadership support for e-Government initiative, from the Mayor and council members for specific Palestinian municipalities.

2. There is a sense of resistance and conservatism among the employees, because they believe that the use of computers and internet will be against their personal benefits and privileges, and even reduce their chances of having more role and influence in their work. In addition, the ineffective communication and interaction between the internal employees has its negative effect in every project implemented within the municipality, and e-Government initiatives are among such projects.

3. The absence of clarity for the required procedures to achieve the transactions and services in a number of municipalities, as this is an important phase in e-Government initiatives. The complications of the administrative transactions and procedures in delivering services for the public delay the implementation of e-Government initiatives.

4. Lack of structural hierarchy and weak distribution of human resources.

5. Low degree of decentralization which is given to the municipality from the central level. However, the type of relationship between the national level and the municipal level is not well defined, even within the Ministry of Local Government and the municipalities themselves; is it centralization or decentralization. Therefore, the degree of centralization and dependency according to this misunderstanding dominates this relationship.

6. The absence of financial support for the small Palestinian municipalities.

7. The absence of strategic plans for e-Government initiatives in all municipalities, while it is just mentioned as a strategic goal and

trend for Hebron Municipality as stated in its general Development Strategic Plan (2008-2012).

8. There is no unified database within each of Palestinian municipalities except within a number of the largest ones; Ramallah, Hebron, Nablus and Qalqiliah Municipalities.

9. The decreased number of some services offered by the municipalities through shifting them to other institutions as for the case of electricity, water and sanitation, which is reflected on the municipality revenues and the consequences on the development projects like e-Government initiatives.

10. Difficulty of the co-operation between the municipalities and related institutions like banks and other governmental institutions, such as a need for a specific documents from the ministry to complete a specific transaction, no agreement or readiness from both sides to this cooperation, the same as paying fees and bills through e-pay services.

7.2.1.3 The Opportunities

Some available opportunities must be benefited from, which have good impact on the implementation of e-Government initiatives; those opportunities are summarized as following:

1. The large concern of the international arena to develop the Palestinian economics through suggesting a number of projects; providing the technical and financial support for proposed projects including e-Government initiatives, and providing training and consulting for the information technology and telecommunication

sector. At the municipal level there is a spread trend of twinning with many international institutions which largely contributes to the transmission of knowledge, experience, and funds.

2. The interest from private sector to the investment in e-Government projects and initiatives, and to establish partnerships with the public sector.

3. The government's support, even it is just moral support for the local and municipal level development projects like e-Government initiatives.

4. The high level of computer literacy, and the expansion in the technical and technological education, and establishing a number of specialized centers within the municipal boundaries.

5. The development and growth of the national economy with its reflection on the local sector and municipalities.

6. The continued update and development for the telecommunication infrastructure and networks in Palestine at both levels; the municipal and national levels.

7.2.1.4 The Threats

There is a number of factors outside the internal framework of the municipalities which have negative consequences on the implementation of e-Government initiatives. Notice that the threats that are considered on the national level apply to the municipal level. The threats include the following:

1. The absence of national leadership support and interest in e-Government initiatives and its implementation at the municipal

level. This is besides not giving e-Government initiatives any priority with respect to other development projects.

2. The lack of legislations and acts concerning the electronic services provided to the citizens at the municipal levels.

3. The geographical and political split in the Palestinian Territories and the consequences of the Israeli occupation on the municipal level. This has negative impacts on the ICT sector initiatives and projects, including those related to the municipal level. This is in addition to the direct aggression from the occupation on the ICT infrastructures and institutions of the civil community.

4. The instability of the economic situation discourages any investment from the private sector and from external investors, especially in the ICT sector and infrastructure projects like e-Government initiatives. Moreover, the donors are not fulfilling their commitment of developing the Palestinian society at the municipal level, as there is dependency on donors in most of the projects implemented at the municipal level, and including e-Government initiatives.

5. The insufficient public awareness for the importance, the role and the benefits of e-Government, which in turn creates a low initiation, and a resistance from the public towards any process of change. This resistance has another reason, which is the public fear and lack of trust with keeping and using their data and information in a secure and private environment.

6. Face to face dealing is still strong in Palestine, which means the preference for the citizens to visit the municipality building and not to use computer and internet and remotely access their transactions,

information and needed services. This is because cities are reasonably small sized and usually the municipality is of reasonable distance to the citizen, thus getting the service directly.

7. The delay of e-Government implementation at the national level, which reflects negatively on the municipal level.

8. The absence of the telecommunication regulator in Palestine.

7.2.2 The SWOT Analysis Results

All results concluded from the SWOT analysis are summarized in Table 7-1.

7.2.3 e-Government Key Issues at the Municipal Level

According to the presented SWOT analysis, there are a set of key points are concluded, which are summarized in the following issues:

- The absence of national and municipal leadership support for municipalities e-Government initiatives. This issue is not applicable for all municipalities.

- No awareness for the strategic planning process for the infrastructure projects including e-Government initiatives.

- Insufficient degree of municipality's decentralization from the central level.

- Lack of structural hierarchy and weak distribution of human resources.

- The accelerated growth rate of national economy.

- High international concern and support for the municipal infrastructure projects including e-Government initiatives.

Table (7-1): The Results of SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• An efficient and effective leadership support within the municipality	• The absence of clarity for the required procedures to achieve the transactions and services in number of municipalities	• The large concern of the international arena to develop the Palestinian economy through providing the needed resources for different initiatives such as E-Government	• The presence of occupation with all its negative consequences on the ICT sector generally and especially on E-Government
• The availability of financial supports for the largest municipalities	• The resistance and conservatism among the municipality's employees	• The government's support for development projects at the municipal level such as E-Government	• The absence of national leadership support and interest in the E-Government project and its implementation at the municipal level
• The availability of qualified staffs in the municipalities	• Low degree of decentralization which is given to the municipality from the central level	• The high level of computer literacy	• The insufficient public awareness for the importance, the role and the benefits of E-Government
• Availability of systems, applications and automated data for most municipalities	• The absence of leadership support for the E-Government initiative in several municipalities	• The development and growth of the national economy	• The lack of legislations and acts concerning the electronic services delivery
• The availability of documentation process for the completion transactions' procedures in largest municipalities	• The absence of financial support for the small municipalities	• The continues update and development for the telecommunication infrastructure and networks in Palestine at national and municipal levels	• Strong social relationships in Palestine
• An increased awareness of the importance of telecommunication and information technology at the municipal level from their employees	• The absence of strategic plans for E-Government initiative in all municipalities	• The interest of private sector to invest and support the E-Government initiatives	• The delay of E-Government implementation at the national level
	• No unified database within each of Palestinian municipalities except the largest ones		• The instability of the economic situation
	• The decreased number of some services offered by the municipalities through shifting them to other institutions		• The absence of the telecommunication regulator in Palestine.
	• Difficulty of the co-operation between the municipalities and related institutions like banks		
	• Lack of structural hierarchy and weak distribution of human resources.		

- Lack of legislations and laws related to delivering municipal services electronically.

- A problem with the availability of financial support, and the strategies to provide for e-Government initiative.

- A problem with the cooperation and coordination between the municipality and other institutions such as banks and governmental institutions.

7.3   Strategic Formulation for e-Government

The strategic formulation, which includes establishing a vision, mission and number of strategic goals, will be derived according to the analysis for the external and internal factors that have an effect on e-Government at the municipal level. This will lead to develop the needed strategic framework to achieve the goals and the vision.

The vision, mission and strategic goals will be clarified in the rest of this chapter.

7.3.1 e-Government Vision at the Municipal Level

In general, there is absence of determined vision, mission or strategic goals for almost all Palestinian municipalities' general strategic plan. There are few exceptions, such as for Hebron municipality, which has the stated vision "Our ultimate goal is to become one of the most distinguished cities in the Arab World". Moreover, there is absence of e-Government vision, mission and strategic goals at the Palestinian municipal level, as mentioned previously at the start of this chapter.

According to the Palestinian e-Government Strategic Plan 2005, e-Government vision was "Provide a better life for our citizens by being a government that:

- Empowers citizens to participate in government

- Connects citizens, the private sector, and institutions to drive economic growth and meet community challenges

- Delivers real public value through citizens-centric government services ".

Based on the understanding of this study, to achieve the municipalities' duties and responsibilities, and the citizens' ability to achieve their services in effective and efficient way, the following vision of e-Government in Palestine at the municipal level is suggested to be:

The local community is provided with an easy and quick access to information and services in a way that facilitates their daily interaction with the local government.

7.3.2 e-Government Mission at the Municipal Level

The same factors that had a role in formulating the above-mentioned vision had the same effect on formulating the mission at the municipal level.

According to those factors, the proposed mission for e-Government at the municipal level is suggested to be:

By the next few years, and to ensure that ICT supports the municipality business and services transformation, beneficiaries will be provided with

better and more efficient public services, information and processes, through enabling ready access, and this in turn will enhance the efficiency and productivity of municipality body itself.

7.3.3 The Strategic Goals

To achieve e-Government vision at the municipal level, and according to the SWOT analysis, it is recommended that the following strategic goals are adopted for e-Government at the municipal level, where there is similarity with those for the national level, with limited difference. These include the following:

1. Achieve effective, efficient and productive municipality.
2. Provide the citizens with reliable and confident services; through accountability, transparency, participation, secure and protected, and enabling environment.
3. Achieve municipalities with increased decentralization and independency.
4. Achieve high municipalities' contribution to the national economy growth.

7.4 Conclusion

The result of strategic analysis for the municipal level is quite similar to the national level, with little of differences. Therefore, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as the vision, mission and strategic goals are illustrated. The results of this chapter are very helpful to the next chapter, where the feasible strategies are outlined.

CHAPTER 8

E-GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IN THE PALESTINIAN MUNICIPALITIES

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the proposed strategic goals for e-Government were identified at both municipal and national levels. However, this study focuses on the Palestinian municipal level. This chapter contains a proposed e-Government strategic framework in the Palestinian municipalities, which will be developed according to the SWOT analysis results in the previous chapter, in order to achieve each of the intended strategic goal.

An important matching tool between the internal and external environments -that have an impact on e-Government at the municipal level- is used to develop e-Government strategic framework. This tool is called SWOT Matrix. This matrix clusters the feasible strategic solutions into four options; SO (strengths-opportunities) Strategies, WO (weaknesses-opportunities) Strategies, ST (strengths-threats) Strategies, and WT (weaknesses-threats) Strategies.

8.2 SWOT Matrix

The feasible strategic solutions are identified based on matching among the outcomes of the SWOT strategic analysis are presented in Table 8-1, which summarizes e-Government SWOT Matrix Strategic Solutions. Details on these strategic solutions are presented in the next section.

Table (8-1): SWOT Matrix for the E-Government Strategies at the Municipal Level

	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
	1) An efficient and effective municipal leadership support 2) The availability of financial support for the largest municipalities 3) Availability of municipality's qualified staffs 4) Availability of systems, applications and automated data in the municipalities 5) The availability of documentation process for the transactions and services completion in the municipality 6) An increased awareness of the importance of telecommunication and information technology inside the municipality	1) The absence of clarity for the required procedures to achieve the transactions and services in a number of municipalities 2) Lack of organizational structure and weak distribution of human resources 3) The resistance and conservatism among the municipality's employees 4) Low degree of municipality's decentralization 5) The absence of leadership support for the E-Government initiative in several municipalities 6) The absence of financial support for the small municipalities 7) The absence of strategic plans for E-Government initiative in all municipalities 8) No unified database within each of Palestinian municipalities except the largest ones 9) The decreased number of some services offered by the municipalities 10) Difficulty of the co-operation between the municipalities and related institutions through shifting them to other institutions
Opportunities (O) 1) The large concern of the international arena and donors to develop the Palestinian economy 2) The interest of private sector to invest and support the E-Government initiatives 3) The government support for development projects at the municipal level 4) The high level of computer literacy 5) The development and growth of the national economy 6) The continued update and development for the Telecommunication infrastructure and networks in Palestine at national and municipal levels	**SO STRATEGIES** • Streamlining the work procedures within the municipalities (S4, O4). • Providing cost effectiveness for the municipality and their services through reducing the municipality's and citizens' tasks' cost and effort (S4, O4, O6). • Increasing municipality's staff productivity and qualifications through providing them with regular incentives and training (S3, O1, O2). • Utilizing the available systems and automated data to increase the number of electronic services, and prioritizing the services that the municipality will initially offer online (S4, O1, O4). • Supporting research and development in the area of ICT (S1, S3, O1). • Providing the financial support to the municipality's development initiatives and projects, such as E-Government (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S2, S3, O6). • Developing the technical, human and financial resources and infrastructure needed (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S2, S3, O6). • Reducing the lack of knowledge and use for the ICT tools (S6, O1, O2, O3, O4). • Creating and updating municipalities' websites and portals (S4, O1, O2). • Improving the citizen's access to information and services (S4, O4), (S6, O4). • Attracting the investors (S1, S4, O2). • Increasing revenue for the municipality (S4, O4). • Facilitating the grant seeker applicant for funds (S4, O2, O4). • Encouraging the private sector participation and investment (S1, O4), (S4, O4). • Increasing the municipality revenues through the increased utilizations of automated systems, such as getting the licenses (S4, O4). • Using the automated systems and data in the municipality in order to reduce the municipality's expenses (S4, O4).	**WO STRATEGIES** • Re-structuring the work process and staff in the municipality (W2, O1, O2, O3). • Municipality's Processes and procedures re-engineering (W1, O1, O2, O3). • Increasing municipality's staff productivity (W3, O1, O4). • Improving the coordination between the municipality and the other governmental agencies (W10, O3). • Developing municipalities' strategic development plans related to the using of ICT (W7, O1, O2). • Raising the technical, human and financial resources and infrastructure needed for the small municipalities (W6,O1, O2, O3, O5), (W4, O1, O3). • The reduction for the small municipalities resources (W3, O1, O4).
Threats (T) 1) The presence of occupation 2) The absence of national leadership support 3) The insufficient public awareness for the importance of E-Government 4) The lack of legislations concerning the electronic services delivery 5) Strong face to face dealing in Palestine 6) The delay of E-Government implementation at the national level 7) The absence of the telecommunication regulator in Palestine.	**ST STRATEGIES** • Developing a legal framework related to E-Service delivery (S1, T4). • Raising the leadership support (S1, T2, T3). • The reduction for the lack of knowledge and use for the ICT tools for the citizens (S6, T3). • Building security and trust on the electronic transactions between the municipality and its beneficiaries (S3, T4).	**WT STRATEGIES** • Developing a legal framework (W10, T4). • Developing the municipal leadership to be able to overcome the challenges resulted from the absence of national leadership (W5, T2).

8.3 e-Government Strategic Solutions

Based on the above SWOT Matrix, a set of feasible strategic solutions were concluded. These strategic solutions are clustered with conducting more elaborations to achieve the intended strategic goals related to e-Government at the municipal level. Such elaboration is clarified in the rest of this chapter.

Strategic Goal 1: Achieve effective, efficient and productive municipality

Achieving satisfied citizens and businesses with seamless, easy access and quick response in delivering better services, done through the following strategies:

1.   Restructuring the workflow and staff in the municipality (W2, O1, O2, O3). This will be done through making critical decisions about how to deploy or re-deploy human resources. Municipalities need to do the best utilization for human resources and find the best match of the existing employees with the jobs to be more productive and efficient. This strategy plays a crucial role in increasing the employees' productivity, efficiency and commitment, who will deliver the services to the customers, the citizens and businesses. The restructuring process contributes to the clarity of municipality goals, and determination for the organizational structure with a definition for each role and task within it, and lead to facilitate and improve in the internal municipality works and its external relations and communication with other municipalities, the private sector and the governmental agencies on the central level.

2.	Process re-engineering and streamlining the work procedures and the operations within the municipalities (S4, O4), (W1, O1, O2, O3). This strategy will be achieved through the benefits from the available systems and automated data in the municipality, with the high level of computer literacy between public to understand and deal with any changes will occur. However, the work procedures contribute with clarifying the service provisioning steps, and include the following strategic solutions:

- Clarifying and defining the municipality's transactions required to achieve the specific services, which help get them automated.

- Reducing as much as possible the number of documents, and requirements that are needed to access a certain service.

- Delegation of decision making in order to get the daily tasks, transactions and services assigned to lower level.

- Providing user manuals and guidebooks for the customers in order to achieve an easy access to the services, those services and transactions must be available in the municipalities' websites and portals with all necessary illustrations for use.

- Continuous improvement and development for the work procedures.

3.	Providing better cost effectiveness and efficiency in the municipalities and their provided services (S4, O4, O6). This will be achieved through the following strategic solutions:

- Reducing overhead from fewer offices and less paper management.

- Reducing the costs of coordination and follow-up.

- Reducing the processing time from the administrative side to complete the transactions and deliver the services to the citizens.

- Reducing operating cost through handling the growing workloads without increasing staff, and the digitization for the processes which could make them happen more quickly and accurately.

4. Increasing municipality's staff productivity (S3, O1, O2), (W3, O1, O2) through providing them with regular incentives according to their efforts, rewarding them for completing tasks or motivating them to take new tasks, as well as encouraging them on self-continuous development by different methods such as training.

5. Raising and developing the municipality capacities (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S2, S3, O6) through building administrative, technical, financial capacities.

6. Continuous improvement of services, which will be delivered to the public according to their concerns and opinions (S4, O1, O4).

7. Increasing the number of electronic services available to the public sector, citizens and businesses (S4, O1, O4).

8. Achieving and improving the coordination between the municipality and the other governmental agencies, needed to complete the transactions and service delivery in seamless way (W10, O3).

9. Supporting research and development in the area of ICT in the municipalities (S1, O1).

10. Developing the technical infrastructure in the municipality (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S2, S3, O6). This will include the following strategic solutions:

- Maintaining and updating or reconstructing the existing networks, and this could be achieved through getting international support for the infrastructure projects or through public private partnership strategies.

- Prepare the specifications for the needed municipal networks, hardware and software.

- Provide the municipality with needed infrastructure, including both hardware and software.

11. Providing the financial support to the municipality from municipality revenues or from external support (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5). This will be achieved through developing financing plans for long-term financing options needed to the sustainability of e-Government initiative, providing plans to increase the municipality revenues, or increasing its budget for development projects such as e-Government from its revenues, public private partnership, donors' funds or central level financial support. This is an important strategy to develop e-Government initiatives.

12. Developing municipalities' strategic development plans related to the using of ICT (W7, O1, O2).

Strategic Goal 2: Provide citizens with reliable and confident services; through accountability, participation, transparency and secure, protected and enabling environment

This goal can be realized through the following strategic solutions:

1. Developing a legal framework (W10, T4), (S1, T4) which contains:

- Developing several laws, regulations and instructions necessary for ensuring that information and services must be accessible and securely protected, in order for everyone to have confidence in the material being correct, reliable and subject to the requisite confidentiality.

- The legal framework includes the following laws and regulations:

    - Developing the E-signature Law.

    - Developing the Electronic Transactions Law.

    - Developing the Protection of Individual and Personal Data Law.

    - Developing the Intellectual Property Protection Law.

    - Developing the Internet and IT Laws.

    - Developing the Freedom and Confidentiality of Information in Electronic Communications Law.

    - Developing the Cyber Crimes Law.

- Implementing the laws that will be developed.

- Developing plans to increasingly implement all legal reforms and laws and the remaining ones.

- Disseminating the implemented laws to the public, which will encourage the trust of the citizens in utilizing e-Government application to get their services electronically.

2. Continuous improvement for public delivered services, according to their concerns and opinions (S4, O1, O4).

3. Raising the leadership support (W5, T2), (S1, T2, T3) whether from the national leadership or municipal leadership. This will be achieved through:

- Increasing the municipalities' Mayors and national leaders' awareness of e-Government project, by clarifying the importance and the benefits of applying e-Government in the municipalities, to both the national and municipal levels.

- Developing the municipal leadership to be able to overcome the challenges resulted from the absence of the national leadership.

- Displaying and mentioning success stories and cases from successful local municipalities in starting the work on e-Government initiatives and their initial returns and benefits. This will encourage the leaders to support the implementation of e-Government project, and provide and getting the needed financial, technical and human support.

4. Prioritizing the services that the municipality will initially offer online (S4, O1, O4). The determination for those services will be according to the expected high revenue for the municipality, high volume of transactions, and transactions with high public use. The best selection of services that will be delivered online, will result in improving the municipality revenues, the financial management and the best for the creating a better environment for investment.

5. Providing the technical, human and financial resources and infrastructure needed (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S2, S3, O6). This strategy will be done through several steps. One of such steps will benefit from international, private sector and government concern and support for the infrastructure projects in the municipal level in developing the technical, human and financial aspects within e-Government initiatives.

To develop the technical side implies providing the municipality with needed networks, hardware and software, and building a unified and central database and remove the existing duplication in the data within the municipality. This also implies developing the human side, as there is a need to develop the existing municipality's staff knowledge, skills and attitude to cope with the new change management and to reduce the existing resistance, or recruiting new skilled expertise and qualified staff.

For the financial resource, as mentioned within the first strategy, there must be several methods to get the needed financial support from the private-public partnership strategy or get funds from donors or from central level, or increasing the municipality revenues. All those methods contribute with any municipality's development and infrastructure projects.

6. Reducing the lack of knowledge and use of ICT tools among staff and public (S6, O1, O2, O3, O4), (W3, O1, O4). This reduction for the staff and municipality resources will be through the following strategic solutions:

- Supporting municipality entities with IT training and other necessary skills and knowledge.
- Recruiting qualified staff with relevant skills to work within the municipality.
- Outsourcing expertise and employees to support municipality business.

- Encouraging the municipality skilled and professional resources with incentives to benefit from them in developing ICT expertise internally.

  The reduction of knowledge and use of ICT tools for the citizens (S6, T3) will be through the following strategic solutions:

- Increasing the public awareness on the ICT, through:
    - Organizing for IT training programs.
    - Adopting different programs in the media about the ICT and its role in the community development process.
    - Organizing conferences, seminars aiming at promoting the different ICT tools and the role of e-Government in the facilitate citizens life.
    - Encouraging the Palestinian universities and schools in IT education.

- Increasing internet penetration, through the coordination with the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology to reduce the cost of the internet.

7. Providing services and information online to the public (S4, O1, O4).

8. Creating, updating and enabling municipalities' websites and portals (S4, O1, O2).

9. Improving and facilitating the citizens' access and connectivity to the internet (S4, O4), (S6, O4), and reducing the costs of telecommunications, through the coordination and cooperation processes with the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology and the private sector.

10. Improving the citizen's access to information and public services (S4, O4), (S6, O4), and promoting participation in public decision-making; through the following strategic solutions:

- Providing and dissemination of information, policies and programs, budgets, laws and regulations, and other briefs on key public interest on municipalities' websites.

- Indicating customers' inputs into decision making, through building specific forums to customers' (businesses and citizens) complaints and suggestions.

- Providing municipality services' evaluation and monitoring methods for the citizens and businesses, on its website and portal.

- Developing the municipal voting process to be electronically and through the web, which increases the participation percentage from the citizens.

- The creation of focus groups, workshops, the use of on line surveys and the institutionalization of public-private forums would provide for greater involvement in policymaking, service identification and delivery.

11. Building security and trust for the beneficiaries on open networks by encryption and authentication (S3, T4).

Strategic Goal 3: Achieve municipalities with increased decentralization and independency

The decentralization, which is one of the local government main goals, concentrates on decreasing the dependency of the municipality on the

central level and building its own entity. This will be achieved through the following proposed strategic solutions:

1. Building the municipalities' capacities to enable them to meet e-Government requirements at financial, administrative and technical levels (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S2, S3, O6).

2. Increasing the degree of financial decentralization for the municipalities (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), through the increasing of municipalities' revenues and decreasing their costs.

3. Developing strategic development plans for the municipalities (W7, O1, O2), which include achieving e-Government objectives on the municipal level.

Strategic Goal 4: Achieve high municipalities' contribution to the national economy growth

This goal will be achieved by increasing the municipality revenues, which will be done through the following intended strategic solutions:

1. Attracting and opening opportunities for the investors to invest through creating a business-friendly environment (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), (S 4, O4), by:
    *   Streamlining the interaction and improving the interface between the municipality and the business.
    *   Cutting out redundancies in procedures and emphasizing immediate and efficient delivery of services.

2. Reducing the municipality's expenditure of advertising, printing, distribution, design and other costs (S4, O3).

3. Increasing revenue (S4, O4), as businesses and citizens actually apply for more licenses, because getting services is much easier and more transparent.

4. Facilitating the grant seeker applicant for funds to the municipalities' development projects and initiatives though their websites or portals (S4, O2).

5. Encouraging the private sector participation and investment in the activities of municipalities and their projects (S1, O1, O2), (S2, O1, O2, O3, O5), especially in the Information Technology Sector, and prepare different projects and initiatives to present them and their expected revenues in the future for the municipality, the private sector, citizens and business.

8.3 Conclusion

Developing e-Government strategic framework is an important step towards the implementation of e-Government.

The developed strategic framework is derived from the prepared SWOT Matrix based on SWOT analysis process.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Summary

This thesis has addressed a major challenge of achieving e-Government; the strategic framework to be followed. The main part of the thesis has been dedicated to perform strategic analysis, formulation and conceptualization of e-Government strategic framework.

A number of e-Government definitions from different perspectives have been introduced. Several comparative studies for e-Government at the national and municipal levels have been reviewed. Common requirements and critical success factors for e-Government have been identified from practical point of view. Those requirements were clustered into organizational, human and psychological, technical, political and legal, financial and economic, and promotional requirements.

Status quo analysis related to the current conditions related to e-Government on both the national and municipal levels in Palestine was presented. The SWOT analysis was performed, based on the documents provided by the MTIT and MOLG and specific Palestinian municipalities, interviews with experts and employees from the Palestinian municipalities, MOLG and MTIT and other experts, resulted in proposing and identifying a suggested vision, mission and strategic goals for e-Government at the national and municipal levels. As mentioned previously, the purpose of the thesis is to develop e-Government strategic framework at the Palestinian municipal level for each intended goal.

9.2   Conclusions

- e-Government is considered as one of the most important subjects to study and perform research on. Developing and implementing e-Government strategic solutions faces a number of constraints as summarized hereafter. Firstly, the legal framework needed to work and deliver services in a trusted and secure environment. The financial constraints that are considered as the main challenges to provide e-Government initiatives requirements. Other relevant constraints include the technical and technological constraints, human resources constraints, and organizational constraints related to the organizational structure, system, and awareness.

- During the course of this research, several challenges had been faced, which can be summarized as follows:

  - Lack of the available information and data on the research topics, and the difficulty to access the available ones.

  - Lack of the awareness and the misunderstanding of e-Government between the public, and lack of the awareness for the importance of strategic framework development.

- Strategic Analysis is considered as the foundation for building strategic framework for e-Government at the Palestinian municipalities. This process is based on gathered data and information through different techniques. These data and information will be analyzed through the SWOT analysis methodology to understand the external and internal affecting factors -the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats- on e-Government at both the national and municipal levels.

- The Strategic Formulation process, which reflects the outcome of, and depends on, the strategic analysis, establishes and formulates the strategic framework, and include at specific the vision and the mission and results in determining the strategic goals for e-Government at both the national and municipal levels.

- Developing e-Government strategic framework is an important part in e-Government initiatives that are proposed according to the intended strategic goals.

- The developed strategic solutions are derived from the preparation of the Matrix based on SWOT analysis. The most prominent strategies include:

  - Developing a legal framework necessary for ensuring that information and services must be accessible and securely protected, in order for everyone to have confidence in the material being correct, reliable and subject to the requisite confidentiality.

  - Exhibiting leadership is a key strategy for success. e-Government development process could not be effective, nor important or applicable, if e-Government initiatives are not adopted by the national and municipal leadership.

  - Encouraging the private sector participation and investment in the activities of municipalities and their projects especially in the Information Technology Sector.

  - The re-structuring process of the municipality is one of the important strategies, where e-Government satisfies the municipality aspiration to the electronic presence, and to initiate

to restructure their departments to reconsider the municipalities'
constituents, quick response and more effective.

- The re-engineering process for municipalities' actions or
procedures. This process is a must strategy for e-Government at
the municipal level before automating processes, as it will have
an impact on the service delivery time, cost and effort for both
the employees and the public.

- Building the needed human, technical and infrastructural, and
financial capacities is also considered one of the main strategic
solutions to achieve e-Government at the municipal level.

- Each initiative or program related to e-Government at the municipal
level must be considered and dealt with as a project, which needs
proper management to be successful, specifically, strategic
management, which includes strategic analysis, strategic
formulation, and strategic implementation and follow up. e-
Government projects like other projects, their management
comprises planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling.
The importance of management for e-Government summarized with
achieving desired goals and objectives using available resources
effectively and efficiently.

- This study has filled a gap in one of the important constituents of e-
Government, as it deals with the development of e-Government
strategic solutions at the Palestinian municipal level. No previous
research has been done to develop the strategic framework for e-
Government at the municipal level. The developed strategic
framework provide the researchers and practitioners with a new
perspective of e-Government at the strategic level and give a new

understanding. They can build on developed strategic framework and proposed vision, mission and strategic goals for further elaboration and to conduct studies aiming at efficient structures of e-Government at the Palestinian national level.

- The development of e-Government strategic framework allows for incremental development of e-Government at the municipal level, and reduces the risk of failure resulted from the resistance to change and lack of cooperation needed to make e-Government in the municipalities successful.

9.3 Recommendations

After analyzing the Palestinian municipalities' e-Government current satiation, and concluding a set of proposed strategic solutions to develop e-Government at the municipal level, the following recommendations are suggested to be considered:

- It is recommended to use the prepared strategic framework to further develop a comprehensive strategic plan and detailed action plan for e-Government in the Palestinian municipalities.

- It is highly recommended to improve the awareness of e-Government benefits and the importance among the public, the national and municipal institutes' employees, the governmental agencies and the businesses, as this is necessary for pushing e-Government to be developed, implemented, then to succeed. To achieve this, it is recommended to increase the human resources capabilities, by providing them with proper training on new systems to be more qualified to deal with the new environment. Provide the public,

employees and businesses with awareness and training sessions with the importance and the benefits of e-Government, and how to use its applications.

- It is recommended to formulate strategic plans for the municipalities' development that consider the ICT as an integral part of the development process.

- In order to facilitate the development and implementation of e-Government at the municipal level, it is recommended to put more pressure on the national level to get the needed support; whether financial, technical or human, to develop and implement e-Government initiatives at the municipal level.

- It is recommended to speed up the ratification on the proposed laws related to the electronic services delivery for the public and the business.

- It is highly recommended to expedite the completion of needed prerequisites and requirements; whether legal, technical, human resources, or financial on the national and municipal levels.

- It is recommended to speed up the implementation of e-Government at the national level.

- It is recommended to hold new or activate current agreements with other countries to benefit from their experiences in e-Government domain at both the national and municipal levels.

- It is recommended to put a good communication plan and change management strategy to address the expected resistance by the public and the municipalities' staff, address the fear of change and technology, and ensure that the employees are able to use the new automated systems completely.

- It is recommended to put alternative and emergency plans to be used immediately in case of the presence of technical or administrative obstacles and problems which may hinder the use of e-Government.

- It is recommended to re-engineer the processes of municipal services delivery for the public before putting them online.

- It is recommended to re-structure the municipalities and their departments to be appropriate with implementing e-Government.

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جامعة النجاح الوطنية

كلية الدراسات العليا

التحليل الاستراتيجي وتطوير استراتيجيات
الحكومة الالكترونية في البلديات الفلسطينية

إعداد

نبال عودة يوسف أبو جابر

إشراف

أ. د. سمير أبو عيشة

قدمت هذه الأطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في الإدارة الهندسية
من كلية الدراسات العليا في جامعة النجاح الوطنية في نابلس – فلسطين.
2011

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الملخص

تعتبر الحكومة الالكترونية واحدة من الأدوات والتطبيقات الحديثة الناتجة عن عملية التطوير في قطاع تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات. وقد تم تبني الحكومة الالكترونية عالمياً، ووطنياً ومحلياً، وذلك لجعل الحكومات أفضل، أسرع، أكثر راحة وشفافية، أكثر كفاءة، ومسؤولية ووصولاً للمستفيدين من خدماتها وهم المواطنون وأصحاب الأعمال.

ولتحقيق الغايات والفوائد السالفة الذكر، فيجب على الحكومة توفير مجموعة من المتطلبات التي تشكل القاعدة وراء نجاح تطوير و تطبيق أي مبادرة أو مشروع للحكومة الالكترونية. وقد تم تقسيم هذه المتطلبات إلى: تنظيمية، وإنسانية ونفسية، وتقنية، وقانونية وسياسية، ومالية واقتصادية، وأخيرا متطلبات ترويجية لمبادرات الحكومة الالكترونية.

تعتبر فلسطين واحدة من الدول العربية التي حاولت ولا زالت تحاول تطوير وتطبيق مبادرات الحكومة الإلكترونية، والتي انطلقت وتم تبنيها عام 2005، وكان من المتوقع أن تحتاج عدة سنوات لإنجازها.

لقد تم التركيز في معظم الدراسات والأبحاث في مجال الحكومة الإلكترونية على تطوير الحكومة الإلكترونية وتنفيذها من ناحية عملية، وتم تجاهل والتقليل من شأن التخطيط والإدارة الإستراتيجية على الرغم من أهميتها الكبيرة. أما تلك الأبحاث والدراسات المختصة بالناحية الإستراتيجية للحكومة الإلكترونية، فقد تناولت المستوى الوطني، والقليل منها أخذ المستوى البلدي والمحلي بعين الاعتبار.

ومن هنا كان تطوير استراتيجيات الحكومة الالكترونية في البلديات الفلسطينية هدفاً لهذه الدراسة. وقد تم تحقيق هذا الهدف بناءً على تحليل الوضع الراهن للحكومة الالكترونية في فلسطين بدءاً من المستوى الوطني ووصولاً إلى المستوى المحلي والبلدي.

تمت عملية التحليل للبيانات والمعلومات التي تم الحصول عليها من الوثائق الرسمية المنشورة على المواقع الالكترونية الرسمية أو تلك التي تم الحصول عليها من الدوائر الحكومية، أو من خلال المقابلات مع مختصين وخبراء في هذا المجال في فلسطين، أو من خلال عدة مقابلات مع موظفين من القطاع العام أو القطاع الخاص.

وقد كانت النتيجة تحليل وتوضيح لمواطن القوة والضعف، والفرص والتحديات، التي شكلت الأساس في اقتراح الرؤية والرسالة للحكومة الالكترونية، ومن ثم تحديد الأهداف الإستراتيجية على المستوى الوطني وعلى مستوى البلديات الفلسطينية.

وقد تم الوصول إلى نتائج البحث من خلال عملية الربط بين مواطن القوة والفرص أو التحديات، ومواطن الضعف والفرص أو التحديات، والتي أسهمت في صياغة مجموعة من الاستراتيجيات التي تحتاج البلديات إلى تطبيقها بطريقة صحيحة وفعالة للوصول إلى الأهداف الإستراتيجية المرجوة للحكومة الالكترونية في البلديات الفلسطينية.