# CHAPTER 6 OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL IT POLICY

The “e-Japan Strategy” established by the government in January 2001, which centers around a strategic headquarters for promoting an advanced information and telecommunications network society, has been laid out and driven forward by the government. Recently, the “e-Japan Strategy II,” which emphasizes not only infrastructure and rule upgrades but IT use and exploitation, and the “e-Japan Strategy II Acceleration Package” that accelerates the pace of its implementation were drawn up, and the “e-Japan Priority Policy Program” was formulated and implemented as a plan of action. As a result, Japan is being guided from the phase in which it caught up with the world’s most advanced IT countries toward the phase in which it leads the world in building a 21st century IT society. In light of this, the “IT New Reform Strategy” was formulated in 2006. In addition, “IT Policy Roadmap” that accelerates the pace of its implementation and “Priority Policy Program - 2008” which is an action plan were formulated in 2008.

Along with reviewing the trends in this national IT strategy, we will summarize here the trends in IT policy at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) that are based on these.

Further, in the past the term “IT (Information Technology)” was used to refer to the technology related to information and communications, but in recent years, the term “ICT (Information and Communication Technology)” is also used. Here, we will not integrate the terminology, but instead, will use the terms as they appear in the official documents.

## 6-1. TRENDS IN NATIONAL IT STRATEGY

### 1. Background to Present

In Japan’s IT policy, the IT Basic Law was enacted in November 2000, followed by the establishment of the Strategic Headquarters for the Promotion of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society (IT Strategic Headquarters: Directed by the Prime Minister) and the “e-Japan Strategy” was formulated as the backbone of information policy in January 2001. Within that framework, the goal of “becoming the world’s most advanced IT nation in five years (2005)” was set, and structural improvements focusing on infrastructure and rule upgrades were undertaken. Structural improvement measures to become the world’s most advanced IT nation, which could be referred to as the first phase, resulted in the achievement of infrastructure enhancements such as a dramatic rise in the Internet penetration rate accompanying the spread of ADSL, systemic reforms in e-commerce, and the introduction of online administrative procedures plus improvements in related systems and regulations. Having gained those results, the Strategic Headquarters in July 2003 formulated an “e-Japan Strategy II” as it second-phase policy emphasizing IT use and exploitation, and has been addressing cross-sectional issues such as the seven leading sectors of health care, food, daily life, SME financing, knowledge, employment and government services with next-generation infrastructure and international strategies.

In the intervening period, the “e-Japan Strategy II Acceleration Package” was formulated by the government in February 2004 to speed up the implementation of the “e-Japan Strategy II,” crystallizing efforts in six crucial areas toward the development of an international strategy for the IT sector in Asia and elsewhere, the strengthening of security policies (safety and security), the promotion of a content policy, IT deregulation, a general assessment with regard to the achievement of targets set forth in the “e-Japan Strategy” and “e-Japan Strategy II,” and the promotion of e-government and e-municipalities.

Further, it came up with the “IT Policy Package 2005” in February 2005 as a measure from the user’s perspective. This gave shape to an intensive effort in e-government, e-municipalities, health care, education and human resources, daily life, e-commerce, data security and personal information protection, international policy, and research and development.

As a result of these efforts, Japan is achieving globally advanced status in terms of broadband infrastructure upgrades and the expansion of its availability, the spread of sophisticated cellular telephones, and environmental improvements in e-commerce and its dramatic expansion. Through this process, significant progress is also being made on the construction of an IT propulsion mechanism with the establishment of a public-private cooperative system and an IT strategy evaluation system, which is leading Japan out of the phase of catching up to the world’s leaders toward a phase in which it will lead the world in building a 21st century IT society.

In this manner, Japan is one of the most advanced nations in the world for infrastructural improvements at the user level, and has become the world’s most advanced IT nation to have a state-of-the-art market and technical environment. On the other hand, it is confronted with issues of improving national satisfaction with the application and use of IT in the administrative services, healthcare and education sectors, rectifying regional and cross-generational disparities in information usage, promoting security measures, implementing disaster prevention and preparedness measures, enhancing IT use and exploitation, and supporting the international competitiveness of industry in corporate management.

The “IT New Reform Strategy,” a new national information policy strategy that takes this situation into account, was formulated in January 2006. While continuing to implement the IT New Reform Strategy, fields for a stronger emphasis were identified with the outlook beyond 2010 in mind the orientation and specific processes to be used were derived and included in the IT Policy Road Map, released in June 2008. Then, a Priority Policy Program giving those policies from the IT New Reform Strategy and the IT Policy Road Map was planned and released in August 2008 (see Fig. 6-1).

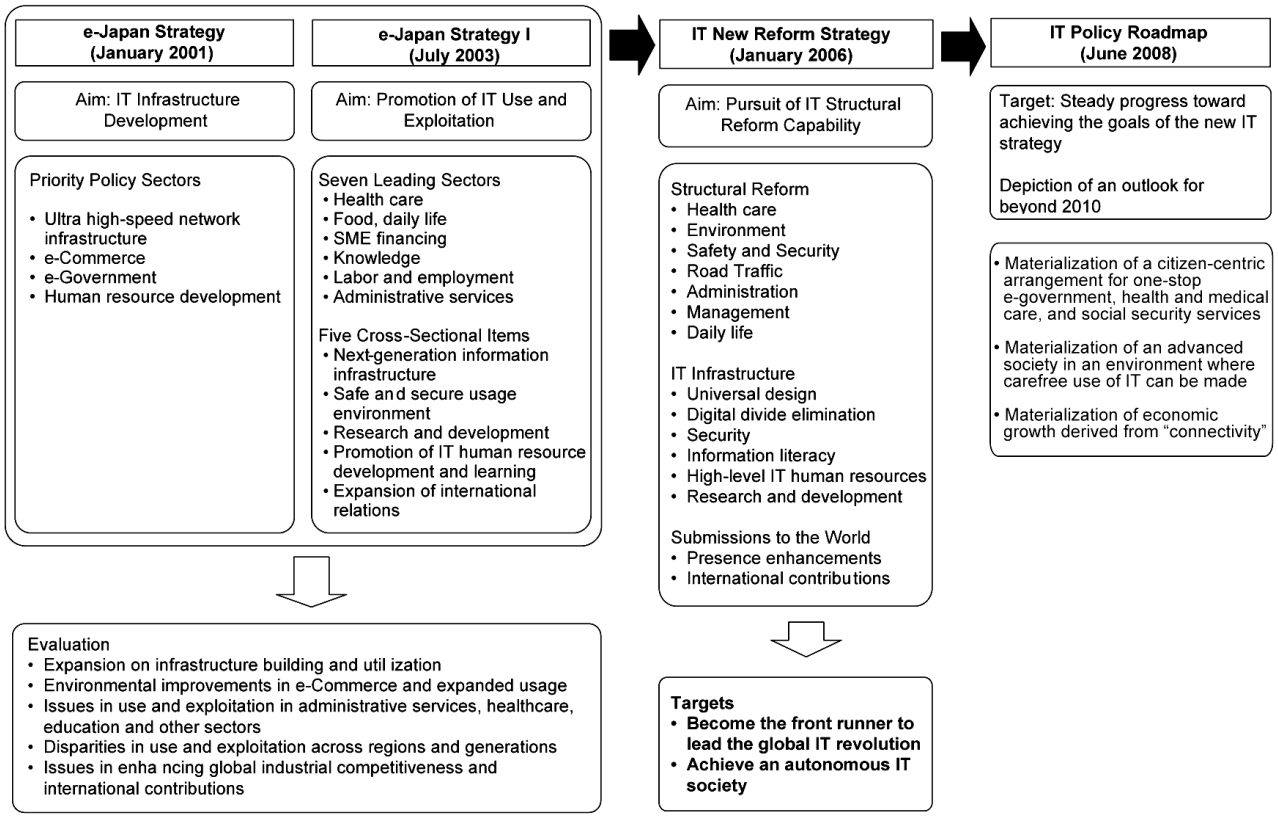


**Figure 6-1 Development of National IT Strategy**

***Source***: *Compiled from e-Japan Strategy, e-Japan Strategy II, New IT Reform Strategy, and IT Policy Road Map.*

The private sector too has provided input in the formulation of national policy for IT. In addition to submitting to the government its opinion on all strategies introduced above, Nippon Keidanren made its own policy recommendations. In recent years, it released "Towards Realization of an Advanced Electronic Society Founded on the Viewpoint of the People" in April 2008. This took up four subjects, electronic public administration, corporate IT management, information security, and development of human resources for advanced information communications. In November 2008, the same organization released "Desiderata for the Promotion Scheme and Legal Framework for realization of Effective Electronic Pubic Administration." By means such as this, Nippon Keidanren, representing the corporate sector, is contributing to policy research.

## 2. IT Policy Road Map

The slogan contained in the IT New Reform Strategy, released in January 2006, is “realizing a society in which everyone, everywhere, all the time, can receive the benefits of IT.” This is the IT policy of Japan and successor to the E-Japan Strategy and E-Japan Strategy II. The target year is 2010 when we will accomplish the IT reform in Japan where we will be able to enjoy sustainable development and to actively participate in the social activities.

The IT Policy Road Map, in addition to seeking to realize the target for 2010 set forth in the New IT Reform Strategy, with consideration also given to the outlook for policy beyond 2010, indicates the orientation and specific steps for the following three areas:

1) Materialization of a citizen-centric arrangement for one-stop e-government, health and medical care, and social security services
2) Materialization of an advanced society in an environment where carefree use of IT can be made
3) Materialization of economic growth derived from “connectivity”

Further, the Road Map favors the aggressive attitude of acting with all deliberate speed, frontloading what can be frontloaded, and starting early what can be started early.

## 3. Priority Policy Program 2008

In order to accomplish the goals given in New IT Reform Strategy and the IT Policy Road Map, the Priority Policy Program 2008, formulated in August 2008, gives specific measures to be advocated swiftly and with high priority. It selectively focuses on policies which “(1) are targeted at actualizing the stated goals of the New IT Strategy, (2) promote structural reform through IT, from a user and public oriented standpoint, and strengthens competitiveness, and (3) have clearly stated aims and deadlines, so that adjustments can be made within the PDCA cycle.” Details are shown in Table 6-1.

Further, “strengthening of the evaluation and enactment system” is again presented as the basic policy for enforcement and development, as mentioned in Priority Policy Program 2007. The PDCA cycle will be steadily enacted by enacting a rigorous evaluation by the “Expert Committee on IT New Reform Strategy” comprised of prominent civilians or the “Medical Audit Committee” or “e-Government Evaluation Committee” established below it and having the results of that evaluation appropriately reflected in priority policy programs that are formulated in the future.

As the “Priority Policy Program – 2008” is steadily implemented and the extent of its accomplishments is continually evaluated in the days to come, it is expected that the goals of the “IT Policy Roadmap” will be reached by further accelerating and front loading its measures according to those conditions.

## 4. Dealing with Cross-cutting Issues in Government

The Cabinet Office has been the principal government office concerned with IT policy issues that cut across ministerial boundaries. During fiscal 2008, it established a study group dedicated to consideration of improving the infrastructure for realizing an electronic mailbox concept, and another study group to draft guidelines for e-government. The former group is examining technological and institutional matters related to the idea of enabling each citizen to have access to his or her own social security records. The latter group is working on guidelines for assuring information security in procedures carried out in e-government, and the improvement of usability.

| Subject | Policy and Orientation | Competent Authority |
|---|---|---|
| The advancement of IT in the medical fields | A cross-boundary grand design for medical fields | Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), Cabinet Secretary |
| | Support advanced preventive healthcare by utilizing health information and high quality medical care realized by medical institutions | MHLW, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Cabinet Secretary |
| | Realize more effective communication in healthcare | MHLW, METI |
| | Realize the Social Security Card (provisional title) | MHLW, METI, MIC |
| | Realize an environment that enables the public to obtain and manage own information including social security information. | Cabinet Secretary, MIC, Ministry of Finance (MOF) , MEXT, MHLW, METI |
| An environmentally-friendly society that utilizes IT | Promote a plan to limit energy consumption by IT equipment. | MIC, METI |
| | Advanced energy management and efficient physical distribution/traffic flow through IT | MIC, METI , Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourist (MLIT), Cabinet Office, National Police Agency (NPA) |
| | Collect, organize, analyze, accumulate, and provide environmental information using IT | Ministry of the Environment (MOE), METI, MIC, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) |
| | Promote electronic manifests (electronic tags to replace documents) | MOE |
| | Promote resource recycling by utilizing IT for improving waste traceability | MOE, METI |
| The world's leading safe and secure society | Reduce disaster damage | Cabinet Office, MIC, MLIT, MAFF, MEXT, NPA, Ministry of Defense (DA) |
| | Enhance history information system for the production and distribution of main foods | MAFF |
| The world's safest road traffic environment | Realize Driving Safety Support Systems | Cabinet Secretary, NPA, MIC, METI, MLIT |
| | Prompt rescue of traffic victims | NPA, MIC |
| The world's most convenient and efficient e-Government | Create e-Government in which convenience and enhanced services can be experienced. | All government ministries |
| | Promote the optimization of operations and information systems | All government ministries |
| | Improve and strengthen e-Government promotional structure | All government ministries |
| | Ensure system reliability / safety and security enhancement | All government ministries |
| Enhanced business competitiveness through the establishment of management by utilizing IT | Realize the world's highest level of corporate management through IT utilization | METI, MIC, MHLW, MAFF, MLIT |
| | Construct and utilize a general-purpose shared infrastructure for electronic commerce | Cabinet Secretary, MIC, METI, MLIT |
| Prosperous lifestyles throughout people's lifetime | By the year 2010, increase teleworkers to 20% of the working population so that an environment can be established in which each individual can maximize their capabilities in a job regardless of their location | All government ministries |
| | Double the number of participants in lifelong learning that utilize IT by FY2010 through the broadband networked environment and terrestrial digital broadcasting | MEXT, MIC |
| | Develop infrastructure that will support social welfare/nursing care/childcare by local communities and develop new technologies that will support an aging society with a low birth rate | MHLW, METI |
| Development of IT society based on universal design | Realization of universal information access and communication | MHLW, MIC, METI |
| | Realize universal movement (self-directive and smooth movement) | MLIT, MIC |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Development of infrastructure that has no digital divide | Eliminate areas with zero broadband connections | MIC |
| | Realize an ultra high-speed mobile telecommunications system | MIC |
| | Full transition to terrestrial digital television broadcasting | Cabinet Secretary, MIC |
| | Realize the advances use/utilization of safe ubiquitous terminals and electronic tags | MIC, METI, MAFF, MLIT |
| The most secure IT society in the world | Through implementation of information security measures in government bodies and local entities | All government ministries |
| | Thorough implementation of information security measures in critical infrastructures | Cabinet Secretary, others |
| | Implement corporate information security measures | Cabinet Secretary, others |
| | Resolve IT usage anxiety in individuals | Cabinet Secretary, others |
| | Create a cross-sectoral information security platform to eradicate cyber crimes | Cabinet Secretary, others |
| | Realize an Internet usage environment that will serve as a model for the rest of the world | Cabinet Secretary, NPA, MIC, MEXT, METI |
| | Promote IT moral education | Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Office, NPA, MIC, MEXT, METI |
| Development of human resources bases with an eye towards the next generation | Improve IT infrastructure in schools | MIC, MEXT |
| | Improve IT utilization capabilities of teachers | MEXT |
| | Enrich educational content to improve academic skills of students | MEXT |
| | Improve information utilization capabilities of students | MEXT |
| Education and human resource development that will produce human resources that will be competent anywhere in the world | Comprehensive measures toward the cultivation of high-level IT human resources | MEXT, MIC, METI, Ministry of Justice |
| | Promote e-learning education using the Internet, etc. | MEXT, MIC |
| Promotion of R&D that will form the foundations for the next generation IT society | Maintain and increase industrial competitiveness through innovative IT technology | MIC,METI |
| | Realize a research and development platform to realize ongoing innovation | MEXT, MIC, METI, MLIT, MAFF |
| | Realize a society where all people can experience the benefits of IT | MIC, METI, |
| Enhancement of the presence of Japan in the international competitive society | Strengthen competitiveness of our country's products and services in the international market | MIC, METI, MEXT |
| | Attain a technical standard originating in Japan | MIC, METI |
| | Strengthening our country's information provision ability | MEXT, Cabinet Office, METI, Cabinet Secretary, MIC, MOFA |
| | Securing an IT communication channel via Japan | MIC, MEXT |
| | Increase of transmission of IT-utilizing information in the field of tourism | MLIT |
| International contribution by providing problem-solving model | Promote strategic and comprehensive cooperation in the IT field | Cabinet Secretary, MIC, METI |
| | Eliminate the digital divide, which is created by the diversity of languages and cultures in the Asian region | MILT, MIC, METI |
| | Establish IT utilization models (such as for the smooth circulation of people, goods, money, services, and information utilizing IT) in Asia | MIC |

**Table 6-1 Principal Priority Policies in Priority Policy Program – 2008 (produced based on Priority Policy Program – 2008)**

# 6-2. MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY POLICY TRENDS

## 6.2.1 Outline of Policies

At the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, with the aim to create new lifestyles through favorable harnessing of information technology and to realize dynamic economic activities, policies such as the following have been proposed or are being implemented.

- Strengthening of IT industry competitiveness

  This policy aims at strengthening the competitiveness of Japan's electronics equipment industries and information service software industries. Specifically, given the implications of technological innovation and intensified international competition, to realize accelerated innovation, reduced costs, differentiated products, development of new markets and more, this policy's objectives include support the changes in businesses that utilize IT, and support the promotion of e-government.

- Strengthening of IT users' competitiveness

  IT has become essential for the activities of businesses and organizations, and in recognizing that harnessing IT influences competitiveness, these policies support their utilization and adoption of IT. Specifically, these policies provide support for business renovation in small- and medium-size enterprises, for promotion of e-government, and more.

- Improving the environment for an information-centered society

  In view of the immense volume and immense range of information circulating and essential in society today, and the recognition that this raises new issues in business, administrative activities and the daily lives of the citizens, these policies aim at realizing a society in which all can participate comfortably and with peace of mind. Specifically, these policies seek to realize information security, as well as establish the core infrastructure for e-commerce, progress in the evolution of the industrial structure, rationalization of market transactions and more.

## 6.2.2 Deliberations Regarding Transaction Practices and Contracts Aimed at Improving the Reliability of Information Systems

Recognizing that the development of the information services and software industries is a driving force for Japan's economic development and enhancement of competitiveness by which these industries should develop, study of this was made by the Information Service Software Subcommittee of the Industrial Structure Deliberation Council's Information Economy Committee (hereafter, the "Subcommittee.") Its report, "Renovation of the Information Service Software Industry: Aiming toward Realization of Appealing Information Service Software Industries," released in September 2006, pointed out such issues as the non-transparency in the transaction structure and industrial structure of the information services industry, including problems of reliability of information systems and factors impeding improvements in productivity.

Further, the Reliability Guidelines formulated by METI which preceded this report, in June 2006, advocated clarification of the content of contracts, and greater visibility in transactions between users and vendors, among other points.

Subsequently, in April 2007 METI published the "Information System Model Transaction Contract."

The main development model used to draft this model contract was a waterfall model, focusing on important infrastructure or core corporate systems. Subsequently, work was done on a model contract for Package-SaaS-ASP transactions, the majority of which are transactions by small- and medium-scale enterprises, and an “revised version” was announced April 2008. Through this expanded scope, greater visibility in information system transactions and improvement in reliability is expected.

Further, in August 2008, to start dissemination of this model contract, the Information System Software Transaction Advancement Consortium was established. In this consortium, in addition to attorneys and others knowledgeable about information service software transactions, organizations made up of users and vendors of information systems participate, and the consortium’s work is expected to result in steady achievement of its objectives.

### 6.2.3 Reinforcement of Growth Through Fusion of Knowledge

In May 2008, the Subcommittee released the “Enhancement of Growth Power through Fusion of Knowledge: the Appreciation of the Value of Information and Reconstruction of the Value Chain.” This is considered as an interim step in activities for developing a new growth model for Japan.

In the construction of a new growth model, IT is seen to have a key role, and the fusion of knowledge in the harnessing of IT is advocated as the growth model. The following are proposed policy directions for realizing this kind of growth model.

- Creation of new industries through IT
- Strengthening industrial competitiveness through IT
- Invigoration of small- and medium-size enterprises and regional economies through IT
- Contributions to Asian economies and environmental communities
- Improvement of the infrastructure for realizing a “knowledge fusion society”

This document is being used to solicit opinions from the public, and is to be revised in light of those opinions. The Subcommittee’s further examination concerning new growth possibilities in Japan is expected.

### 6.2.4 Nurturing of High-level IT Human Resources

At METI, as a matter of importance both from the aspects of strengthening the competitiveness of IT industries and from strengthening of the competitiveness of IT users, the development of high-level IT human resources is being promoted. In July 2007, the Subcommittee released “Toward Development of High-level IT Human Resources.” This document, starting from structural changes in recent years, depicted the concept of “IT human resources of the future,” and proposed these measures to realize it.

- Defining “high-level IT human resources (careers and skills)”
- Establishment and applying methods for developing practical and advanced human resources
- Constructing a highly objective mechanism for evaluation of human resources
- International deployment of a human resources development and evaluation system from Japan
- Creation of a system to support development of high-level IT human resources

Concerning “Defining ‘high-level IT human resources (careers and skills),”

In October 2008, the “Joint Career Skill Framework” was released. Based on this framework, the “IT Skills Standard V3 2008” was drafted and released, in October 2008. Both are to be modified in response to changes in the environment in the future.

Further, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, with coordination with METI, is advancing the development of high-level IT human resources, through its “Progressive Education Program for IT Specialist Training” and a program for strengthening and accelerating the development of IT human resources, among other activities.

### 6.2.5 Outline of Activities in Fiscal 2009

In the fiscal 2009 government budget proposal for METI, the main activities related to information policies are as follows (amounts are shown in parentheses).

- Creation of markets through higher-level use of information (JPY9.8 billion)

  Continuing to exploit Japan’s strengths in the environmental and energy-saving technology, technological breakthroughs will be sought in connection with servers, semiconductors, data centers and more, and through establishment of energy-conservative supercomputer integrated technology, new markets will be created.

- The improvement of productivity and competitiveness of regions and of small- and medium-scale enterprises through the use of IT (JPY3.19 billion)

  Along with promoting efforts to realize growth through raising the productivity of regions and small- and medium-scale enterprises, efforts will be made to promote strategic utilization of IT that embraces the characteristics of regions and small- and medium-scale enterprises.

- Promotion of strategic IT investment and linkage between businesses (JPY700 million)

  The joint development of high-reliability software by cooperative efforts of IT personnel in major industries such as the automobile, electronic appliance, and robotics industries; the further development of EDI; and promoting inter-company linkages through supply chain management by means of harnessing electronic tags and sharing of safety information, all of which will add to competitiveness through the use of IT.

- Creation of high value-added services through the combining of IT and services (JPY4.1 billion yen)

  By combining the next-generation IT technology and service engineering methods, new services with high value-added responding precisely to the needs of individual and enterprises will be created.

- Promotion of development of human resources through tie-ups between industry and academia (JPY2.1 billion yen)

  Through tie-ups between industry and academia, human resources development programs will be established, and by action taken to facilitate university cooperation with industry, improvements will be made to higher education based on the needs of industry.

# 6-3. Orientation of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication Policies

## 6.3.1 Outline of Policies

In December 2004, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications formulated the “u-Japan Policy,” to resolve pressing social issues such as the declining birth rate and aging of the population. The Ministry did this with the recognition that realization of an ubiquitous network society is indispensable, and incorporated systematic ICT policies in it, with the objective of realizing policy objectives by 2010.

The basic policies revolve around three axes:

- A change in importance from broadband to ubiquitous networks

  What is desired is to shift from an infrastructure centered on wired connection to a seamless ubiquitous network environment that does not differentiate between wired and wireless

- A shift from promotion of ICT to resolution of issues

  This shift calls a change from policies that are centered on fields were computerization is lagging, toward a stage of proactive utilization of ICT for resolving social issues of the 21st century

- Drastic strengthening of the utilization-environment infrastructure

  This means an emphasis on the diffusion, penetration and expanded utilization of ICT in daily life, the elimination of anxieties toward privacy, and security, and more.

Thus, the policy seeks to have ITC permeate every corner of life, promote creative utilization, and raise the quality of society as a whole.

Concretely, the following objectives have been set:

- By 2010, the realization of a society in which all citizens which can utilize high-speed or ultra-high-speed networks
- By 2010, realization of a society in which 80% of the citizens consider ITC to be useful in resolving problems
- By 2010, realization of an environment in which 80% of the people can utilize data communications with peace of mind

The Ministry is formulating policies aimed at achieving these.

## 6.3.2 The ICT Growth Strengthening Plan

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, in May 2008, announced its ICT Growth Enhancement Plan. Recognizing that enhancing ICT is an urgent issue for Japan, the Ministry produced a policy package aimed at strengthening the interrelations between ICT and economic development. Rather than start from the perspective of “growth of ICT infrastructure and ICT industries,” the basis for deployment of policy will be the perspective of “promoting a public-private mega-contrivance to achieve growth in industry and regions through the building of an electronic society.”

Specifically, the following policy directions have been advanced for enhancing ICT growth.

(1) Improvement in public and private digital response

- A comprehensive check of issues for ICT utilization as raised by government and citizens
- Identification of fields for emphasis in order to promote greater utilization of ICT

(2) Creation of new digital markets

- Steady progress toward the start of a new all-digital era
- Creation of new data communications services
- Promotion of comprehensive countermeasures against violations of law and harmful data (the “making the net secure” program)

(3) Industrial revolution through power of linkage with ICT

- Creation of new business areas
- Strategic deployment of environmental power
- To promote the fusion of Japan’s “strengths” and ICT
- Major projects to be taken up nationwide
- Introduction of “special zones” to backstop efforts in the private sector

(4) Strengthening of the international competitiveness of ITC industries

- Robust promotion of international development in prioritized technological fields
- Drastic step-up in supporting international standardization
- Strengthening of the system for promoting development of high-level ICT human resources

### 6.3.3 Promotion of E-government by Regional and Local Governments

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is now promoting the establishment of e-government at the level of prefectures and local governments. The activities below are what has been done up to now.

- In response to the IT revolution, preparation of guidelines concerning policies to promote computerization in regional public entities (August 2008)
- An e-government promotion program for local governments (October 2001)
- Drafting of promotion guidelines for electronic local governments (August 2003)
- Drafting of new promotion guidelines for electronic local governments (March 2007)

The new promotion guidelines were produced in anticipation of action by local governments to use e-government technology and methods. The objectives to be realized have been set forth as “realizing a truly convenient, efficient and robust e-government by 2010.”

Further, guidelines aimed at actions to be carrying out or items to be given priority in the future have been enumerated as items to be jointly promoted.

The creation of e-government functions is anticipated to be based on these guidelines, and the Ministry is promoting their use through the providing of advice and information to local governments.

### 6.3.4 Outline of Activities in Fiscal 2009

In the fiscal 2009 government budget proposal related to METI, the main activities related to information policies are as indicated below (amounts are shown in parentheses).

- Fundamental infrastructure improvement to enable universal use of ICT (new promotion guidelines, JPY37.09 billion)

  Measures for the complete switchover to terrestrial digital broadcasting in 2011, and efforts to eliminate the so-called digital divide.

- Strengthening of the international competitiveness of ICT industries (new promotion guidelines, JPY 32.77 billion)

  International deployment by ICT-advanced businesses; engaging in focused research; strengthening of international standardization activities; and strengthening the system for developing high-level ICT human resources, among other steps, will be promoted.

- Industrial and social reform linked to ICT (JPY 13.24 billion)

  To create new information communications services; to realize a society of low carbon dioxide emissions through ICT; and combining Japan's strengths with ITC, among other measures, will be promoted.

- Detailed harnessing of ITC in regional areas (JPY 15.09 billion)

  Strengthening of e-government at the central government and local government levels; promotion of reform of local industries; and improvement of services through ICT.

# 6-4. EFFORTS OF OTHER MINISTRIES

Policies based on the National IT Strategy have been carried out in ministries and agencies other than the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, such as the “IT New Reform Strategy.” The specific policies expressed in the “Priority Policy Program – 2008” specify the responsible ministries and agencies for each part, and specific efforts are promoted. (Table6-1)

This section introduces an overview of efforts related to computerization the medical fields and education, which are often discussed in the IT strategic headquarters as they are intimately related to the life of the citizenry.

## 1. Computerization of the Medical Fields

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare promotes computerization of the medical fields based on an understanding that IT is an important infrastructure necessary for improving the quality of service and efficiency in the medical fields and for the collection, analysis and evaluation (PDCA: Plan-Do-Check-Action) cycle related to these services. In March 2007, the “grand design for computerization in the medical, healthcare, nursing and social welfare fields (IT grand design)” was formulated in order to focus specifically on the computerization in the medical fields. Here, the following targets for realization in the next five years were established based on an analysis of the problems related to the advancement of computerization, as well as on an assessment of the needs of the citizenry, medical institutions, caregivers and insurers.

Activities in fiscal 2008 are concentrated on promotion of the collection and use of health information by individuals. Specifically, study is being made of what is provisionally called a “Social Security Card,” that would enable the quick and safe confirmation of the holder’s national pension data, as well as functioning as the pension handbook, national health insurance certificate and long-tem care insurance certificate. To do this, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare organized the Study Group on Social Security Cards. Study made thus far examined increasing the ease of use of the cards, elimination of anxiety over the protection of personal information, and improvement of the efficiency of operations at health care institutions. The Ministry intends to start use of the card system in 2011 and is preparing for trial use at an early date.

Also under way is promotion of working with regional health care organizations so as to make greater use of IT and achieve both improved service and greater efficiency by use of online prescriptions.

With regard to these inquiries and plans, reports are made to the Health Care Evaluation Committee organized by the IT Strategy Evaluation Specialists Study Group in the IT Strategic Headquarters, by way of promoting communication across ministerial boundaries.

## 2. The Computerization of the Educational Fields

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology conducted efforts to aggressively promote the use of computers and the internet among elementary, junior high and high school students based on the understanding that it was important to foster the “ability to use information” in children, and also made subjects and content related to information compulsory in junior high and high schools. In December 2005, the “Action Plan for the Promotion of Computerization in Education” was formulated and the computerization of the educational field has been accelerated through this. Further, in the Basic Plan for Education, approved by the Cabinet in July 2008, “improvement of information use in schools” is identified as a basic orientation, so the promotion of information use in education has become an important topic.

In July 2008, a report, “Desired State of the Support System for ICT in Schools –Toward a Planned and Organized Promotion of Information in Education,” was released, advocating ICT use in school education, and the Ministry is expected to adopt specific measures in this direction.

Moreover, revision was begun on the Handbook for Information in Education, that had been issued in 2002 and was to be re-released in revised form in February 2009.