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# CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING CROSS-AGENCY INTEGRATED E-SERVICES: THE OBLS PROJECT

*Teaching Cases*

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## Abstract

*This case study describes how the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Infocomm Development Authority, as lead agencies, jointly initiated and managed the implementation of a one-stop business licensing portal called OBLS (Online Business Licensing Service, <https://licenses.business.gov.sg/>) in the Singapore public sector. While the mandate from the top for this strategic cross-agency project was strong, there were many hurdles in the form of people, process and technology that had to be overcome. The case study highlights these issues and challenges, and illustrates how they were successfully overcome for delivering cross-agency integrated e-Service for new business license application.*

**Keywords:** process redesign, e-government, process integration

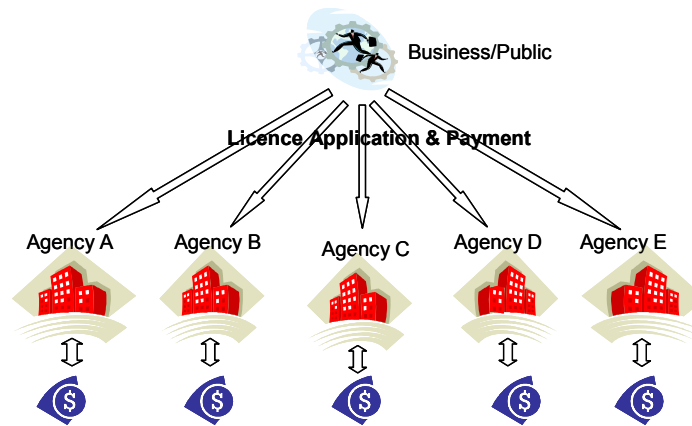
## Introduction: The Need for OBLS<sup>1</sup>

Ranked one of the most competitive countries in the world, Singapore consistently scores high marks in global and regional rankings for factors that matter to business (World Economic Forum, 28 September, 2005 – see <http://www.weforum.org/>). These range from political risk to workforce productivity, from the quality of life to the prospects for making profits. However, starting a business remained somewhat of a tedious and complex process due to the Government's licensing process. Even if an applicant had the required knowledge with regards to license application, he still had to deal with multiple agencies, repeatedly filling-up application forms with the same information, as illustrated in Figure 1. For example, the setting up of a public entertainment outlet required licenses from a number of agencies as follows – Singapore Police Force (entertainment permit and liquor license), National Environment Agency (food), Urban Redevelopment Authority (land use) or Housing Development Board (housing estates), Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, Singapore Civil Defence Force (fire safety), Ministry of Manpower (work permits for foreign manpower), and Central Provident Fund (registration of employees for provident contributions). The entire process from initial registration to final approval for starting a business could take months,

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<sup>1</sup> This case study was prepared by Kanapaty Pelly Periasamy and Siew-Kien Sia of Nanyang Technological University as the basis for class discussion. The case is not intended to serve as an endorsement, source of data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. The authors would like to thank the InfoComm Development Authority and the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Singapore for the research access and funding support. We also like to acknowledge Mr. Lim Wee Kiat, Research Associate with Information Management Research Centre (IMARC), Nanyang Business School, for his research assistance.

often affected by licensing arrangements where the approval of one license depended on the approval of another. An entrepreneur would be stuck if any one of his license applications is rejected.



**Figure 1. Business Start-up: License Application to Multiple Agencies**

As of August 2005, business licensing-related problems such as those mentioned above became non-issues with the implementation of OBLS (One-stop Business Licensing Portal), a joint strategic initiative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) and the Ministry of Finance. The successful implementation of OBLS earned Singapore the “2005 United Nations Public Service Award” in the category of “Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Government: e-Government”.

The idea for OBLS was first conceived by the Pro-Enterprise Panel, a high level joint public-private sector panel chaired by the Head of Civil Service/Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Finance. Feedback from businesses to the Pro-Enterprise Panel had been particularly glaring in its call to “cut red-tape” and address common complaints from business and the public. One measure taken was the OBLS project to deliver a one-stop integrated portal for business startups to apply for the necessary licenses (<https://licenses.business.gov.sg/>). The portal (see Figure 2) would offer quick, easy and convenient licensing services on a 24\*7 basis for start-ups as well as operating businesses to apply for multiple licenses via a single online transaction. The OBLS project synchronized well with the Singapore Government’s e-Government Action Plan II<sup>2</sup>. It was therefore duly adopted as a key initiative under this plan, as noted by Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the launch of the plan on 15 July 2003:

*“A company can register a business and apply for all required licenses by visiting just one Web site. There is no need to fill up different forms at various Government agencies. Like TradeNet, the agencies will need to re-engineer their individual backend processes to provide a customer-centered service. They must strive to make things as convenient as possible to the customer, rather than make things easy for themselves. I urge all agencies to deliver more convenience and more cost savings to the public.”*

Small and medium enterprises in particular, were the main target of the OBLS project due to their large number and as they were generally unhappy with the costs and complexities of the licensing process. The project, while focusing on new license applications for start-ups, also made provisions for progressing into update, renewal and termination (URT) of licenses.

<sup>2</sup> The Government launched e-Government Action Plan I (e-Gap I) in June 2000 with the vision “To be a leading e-Government serving the nation in the Digital Economy”. Its primary objective was to offer all possible Government services online. Significant progress was made in the achievement of this objective via implementations such as the e-Citizen (a one-stop portal that enables citizens to search for and access a diversity of information from Government agencies and conduct a wide range of transactions online with them). e-GAP II was launched as a logical follow-on from the success of e-GAP I by the then Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003. Under e-GAP II, the Government would invest US\$800 million over three years to upgrade infrastructure, develop capabilities, and further improve electronic public services.

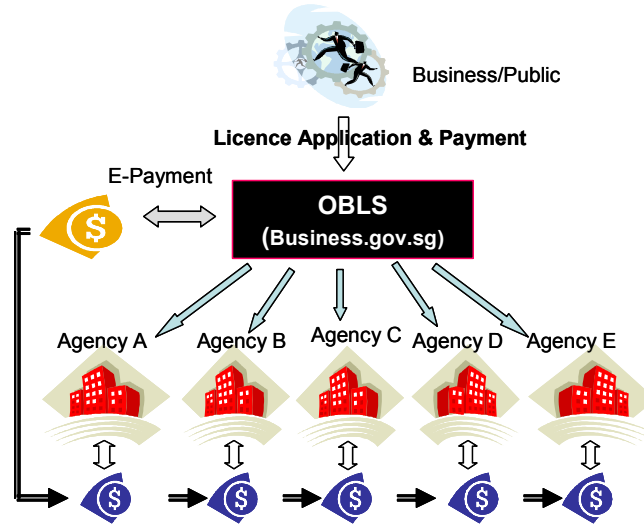


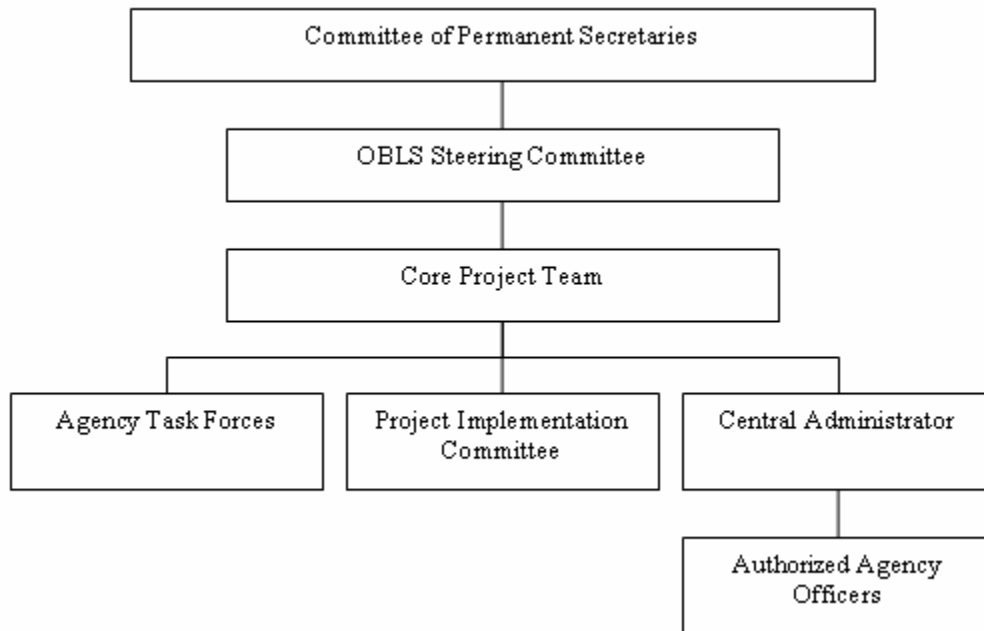
Figure 2. Overall Model of OBLs

### The OBLs Project Structure

While MTI played the role of lead agency for the OBLs project, IDA served as project manager and Ministry of Finance provided the necessary funds. The three agencies worked in close partnership with more than 30 Government agencies to review 154 business licenses. The project’s goal was to deliver a seamless one-stop, end-to-end facility for business registration and license application and renewal. An additional supplementary goal was to eliminate licenses which were no longer relevant or necessary for business start-ups. The initiative was guided by MTI’s pro-enterprise vision for Singapore to become the best place to start a business:

- *“The value of OBLs was in getting the different agencies to look at their own back-end processes and streamline them so that they appear as one to the applicant.”* (Permanent Secretary, MTI).
- *“This initiative is a good demonstration of the ‘Many Agencies, One Government’ vision. To the businesses, they just need to interact with a single portal, while the system does all the work to pull info from and distribute data to various agencies.”* (Director, Electronic Services Division, IDA).

The project was complex and involved many agencies, warranting a formal project structure as shown in Figure 3. At the apex of the governance structure, the Committee of Permanent Secretaries provided the avenue for seeking endorsement and buy-in for the OBLs project.



**Figure 3. Project Organization Structure**

The OBLs Steering Committee, chaired by the Deputy Secretary (Industry) from MTI and co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary (Administration) from Ministry of Finance, was set up to steer and guide the OBLs project. The committee consisted of senior director-level representatives from over 30 key agencies. The role of the Steering Committee was to provide top-level vision, specify deliverables and drive the planning and implementation of OBLs in line with the strategic goals of e-Government Action Plan II. The committee met once every month to review the project.

A Core Project Team, with personnel from IDA and MTI and headed by a senior MTI officer, was set up to assume primary responsibility for the OBLs project from its inception to completion. The team reported to the Steering Committee and liaised with the Ministry of Finance on funding for OBLs. Reporting to the Core Project Team were various Agency Task Forces, the Project Implementation Committee, and the Central Administrator of OBLs.

- An Agency Task Force consisted of selected employees from participating agencies. They assumed responsibility to streamline the business regulatory requirements in their respective agencies and to reengineer and integrate their agencies' licensing processes with OBLs. These groups met regularly with the Core Project Team to resolve project issues on the development and implementation of OBLs. The interactions with these task forces were highly fluid as there could be multiple task forces with different levels of involvement over the different implementation phases.
- The Project Implementation Committee was chaired by MTI, with IDA providing technical advisory support. The committee oversaw the development and implementation of OBLs. As each agency completed its internal policy review and reengineering, a representative from the agency would join this committee to provide input and feedback on the agency's OBLs implementation. The committee met once every 2 months to review and update implementation milestones and discuss specific operational issues.
- The Central Administrator was appointed and supported by MTI and IDA for managing OBLs operations across all agencies. The main role was to ensure smooth usage of OBLs and to keep the portal up-to-date. Selected officers at the agencies, referred to as Authorized Agency Officers, were appointed to maintain information and content on their specific licenses in OBLs. These officers reported to the Central Administrator of OBLs.

The project structure explained above was necessary to cope with the complexities of managing the different stages of OBLs development (e.g. policy review and reengineering, portal implementation, and operational management) for different agencies.

## Project Requirements and Stages

As there were more than 100 licenses, they had to be clustered for effective project execution. The Core Project Team adopted a set of pragmatic business-based criteria to prioritize and define the clusters, as follows:

- Significance and impact of business for which license is sought.
- Number of applications for the license.
- Nature of customer and the license.
- Complexity of license and process, e.g. the complex requirements of Health Science Authority for import of cosmetic products like lipstick .
- Scope for cross-agency integration, e.g. where applicants had to deal with multiple agencies for licenses such as that in the case of food and beverage outlets.
- Agency's readiness and enthusiasm, e.g. the Singapore Police Force and Singapore Tourism Board were undergoing organizational transformation themselves.

On the basis of these criteria, IDA's Telecommunication Dealer's Class license and Individual license, Central Provident Fund's employer registration and Singapore Tourism Board's travel agent license (total of four licenses) were selected and clustered for the pilot phase of "New License" application (see Figure 4). For the subsequent phases, the licenses were grouped according to industries such as Food and Beverage, Public Entertainment, Import/Export, Childcare and Education. Each cluster went through three stages of activities: review of existing licensing policies, reengineering the processes, and implementation of the new online service on OBLs. The value of this approach was noted by the Deputy Director, Enterprise Division, Ministry of Trade and Industry thus:

*"OBLs is not about simply implementing IT and transferring bureaucracy online. We took the opportunity to re-examine the need for all licenses and eliminate those which were not relevant nor significant in the current business environment. For those licenses that have to be retained, we took steps to reengineer the licensing processes. In essence, OBLs reduces red tape for businesses."*

The cost for the whole project was estimated at between US\$4 million to US\$6 million. A staged approach as shown in Figure 4 was adopted: Stage 1 – Conceptualization; Stage 2 – Policy Review and BPR; Stage 3 – OBLs Portal Implementation. Stage 3 was segmented into 2 parts: Stage 3(a), which was conducted in parallel with the later part of Stage 2, covered OBLs implementation for new license applications; Stage 3(b) covered the update, renewal and termination (URT) of licenses. Key project milestones were established for these stages (see Appendix 1).

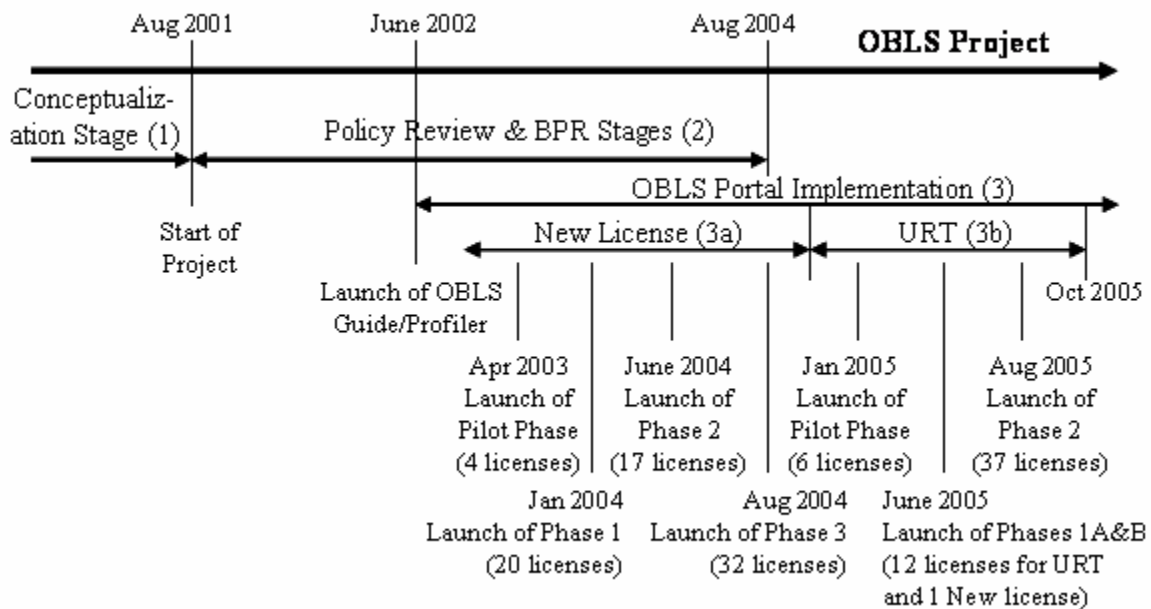


Figure 4. OBLS Portal Design and Implementation

### Policy Review and BPR

The OBLS project started with a fundamental review of all licenses by establishing why a particular license was required and how it was fulfilling its purpose and impacting the business. There was initial reluctance to disrupt the status quo: “There is no problem, why bother?”, “Things have been working fine.”, “We hardly get any complaints from our licensees.”, “Why change when the argument for the policy had been agreed upon in the past?” A few agencies were also reluctant to get rid of licenses recommended for elimination as there were revenue implications. The deeply entrenched regulatory mindset was also strong: “We cannot remove the license – it is in the Act.” “What if something happens as a result of license removal? What if someone gets hurt? Would MTI bear any responsibility if things go wrong?”

Through active discussions in balancing the need to regulate (via licensing) and the interests of businesses, the Core Project Team persisted on a “ground-zero mindset” for implementing regulations: Regardless of current practice, how can licensing, as a regulatory instrument, be made more appealing (i.e., more business-centric and more transparent) with minimum compliance costs? The project team together with the relevant agency(s) reviewed the various facets of each license and critically examined the underlying assumptions that had often been taken for granted:

- What is the rationale of the license?
- What are the requirements for approval of this license? Why?
- How often are these requirements waived? Why?
- Is there a need for physical check before the issuance of license? Why?
- What is the fee charged for the license? Why?
- Is there a need to meet the applicant in person? Why?
- How often is an application rejected? Why?
- How often is enforcement conducted? How often have violators been caught?

Where it was clear that a license was not really needed, the requirement for that license was abolished. If the case for removal was not clear, the license was examined to see if it could be restructured or merged with another license in

the same cluster. There were even occasions which required formal proposals for the amendment of relevant Acts by Parliament. Out of the 154 licenses reviewed in the project, 11 licenses were removed, 2 licenses were converted to lifetime licenses and 7 other licenses were converted to class licensing. A sample set of these results is listed below:

- Horse stable license was eliminated as veterinary-related requirements could be covered under an alternative Act (e.g. Environmental Public Health Act) or by another agency's licensing domain such as the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority.
- Swimming pool license was converted to a lifetime license. Assessment conditions not critical to water quality were also removed, e.g. types of rocks and plants close to pool edge.
- Change of trade approval from Housing Development Board was amended from a formal application to a notification scheme requiring only an acknowledgement from the Board for tenant to commence business in new trade.
- Video/film license from Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts/Media Development Authority was changed from separate individual license for each shop outlet to one composite license covering multiple outlets for three years (instead of two years), with waiver of security deposit.

Where the case for continuing a license was clear, its application procedures/processes were streamlined or reengineered. Activities, steps and sequences were mapped out jointly with stakeholders and carefully examined for bottlenecks, non value-adding or irrelevant activities and tasks. The following four BPR-oriented actions were particularly useful in this regard:

- Eliminate/collapse steps. For example, setting up a travel agency used to require the applicant to fill up a hardcopy application with about 125 fields (personal details, company details, particulars of directors/shareholders, business activities, etc.). With the redesign, the applicant would need to fill in less than 55 fields on OBLs. Most details could be retrieved from PSi's (Public Service Infrastructure)<sup>3</sup> common services.
- Rationalize need for "in-person" application and streamline requirements for supporting documents. For example: online application for Urban Redevelopment Authority's approval to change usage of premises could be done with backend verification by the relevant agencies; number of supporting documents was reduced for Ministry of Manpower's factory registration process; Ministry of Education removed requirement to submit detailed course syllabus for private school registration - *"The more documents we ask for, the more we need to look at them. In many situations, we are also not in the position to review these documents. Such reviews are only performed when the situations justify them and the schools should be able to produce the detailed course syllabus upon request."* (Mr. Alex Tang, Senior Head for Private Schools, Ministry of Education)
- Re-sequence processing steps. For example, Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports' childcare licensing process was redesigned to provide in-principle approval first before site inspection. The hardcopy submission of supporting documents was eliminated and replaced with self-declaration relating to approvals/licenses from the other agencies such as Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority (business registration), Urban Redevelopment Authority (use of premises), Building & Construction Authority (building and construction alterations), and Fire Safety and Shelter Department (fire safety and shelter approval). Online screening, e.g. criminal records, would be performed by using the system at Ministry of Home Affairs. The actual examination of the supporting documents would be done during the site visit by Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports officers.
- Simplify inter-dependency among agencies and use standard, common references. For example, license applications to Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority required prior approvals from other agencies, with the whole process taking a number of months. Such inter-dependencies across agencies were handled through the use of a common reference number such as fire safety number or entertainment license number. Each agency would assess a license application on its own merit (i.e., in accordance with the agency's specific

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<sup>3</sup> PSi: Public Service Infrastructure: A comprehensive and well-integrated centralized software infrastructure to support Internet-based delivery of public services. It builds upon leading-edge industry-standard technologies to provide a scalable, robust and secure software development and deployment environment. It provides easy-to-use application functions that government agencies need to be able to rapidly develop and offer secure e-Services.



requirements) and, if necessary, retrieve relevant information on prior approvals by other agencies by using the common reference number.

Members of the Agency Task Force reviewed their respective agencies' processes with the support and guidance of the Core Project Team. As the project team became more experienced, a license review and reengineering model (see Appendix 2) was developed to quickly scale up the deployment of OBLs across more agencies in phase 3. The project team ran BPR workshops to equip task force members with the necessary know-how to perform reengineering on their own in their respective agencies. When an agency's task force members completed the reengineering study at that agency, they prepared a BPR report for their top management's approval, a strategy which served to get the necessary buy-in from the agency's top management for OBLs. With approval from top management, the task force members could proceed with OBLs implementation at the agency with the support and guidance from the Core Project Team.

## **The Design and Implementation of OBLs eService**

The design and implementation of OBLs commenced about midway during the policy and process review stage. The system (see Figure 5) was designed to offer a one-stop licensing service. An applicant could apply for one or more licenses simultaneously. OBLs would dynamically generate a single integrated application form for this purpose. The user-friendly portal was also designed with other features (e.g. help and advisory services, and ability to attach documents) which would make online license application easy and convenient. Hyperlinks to agency Web sites were also incorporated into the design of the portal. Data capture was at source and verification was automatically done against relevant backend databases of agencies and the PSi<sup>4</sup>. OBLs would 'intelligently' route the captured data to relevant agencies. Once an agency approved (or rejected) the application, an email and/or an SMS would be automatically sent to inform the applicant. The successful applicant could then make a consolidated payment for the various licenses through OBLs; see Appendix 3 for the main OBLs screens.

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<sup>4</sup> The design of OBLs sought to leverage on the Government's PSi common services such as Singpass (a common password to transact online with government departments, [http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg/singpass/about\\_singpass.htm](http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg/singpass/about_singpass.htm)). This integration with PSi enabled data verification and validation, and reduced the need for an applicant to fill in data available from master records kept by the Government or which had already been generated or captured in an earlier transaction by the applicant with an agency. This feature facilitated and speeded up the entry of data into OBLs by a license applicant.

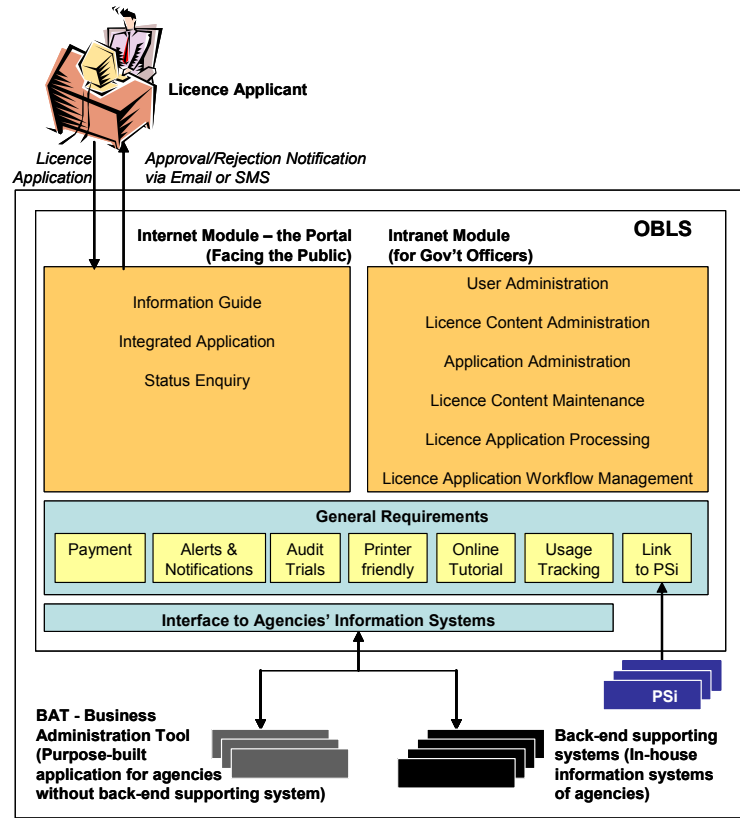


Figure 5. OBLS Application Architecture

Some agencies had fairly comprehensive web sites in place for license applications and were generally contented with what they had. A few of them had made substantial investments in their own license processing systems covering both the portal and back-end system; e.g. the Singapore Police Force had invested US\$2.5 million in their PLUS (Public Licensing Computerized System) system in 2003. The introduction of OBLS meant that these agencies might have to abandon their own Web sites in favor of OBLS and a few of them showed some resistance to adoption of OBLS: *“We are ready to come on board. But our system is so new. Give us some time to justify the investment first.”*

While OBLS served as the gateway for license applications, the actual processing of applications was done by the individual agencies using their own back-end systems. Modifications had to be made to OBLS to integrate it with each agency’s back-end system. The integration could be for real-time or batch processing of license as decided by the agency concerned. The whole infrastructure arrangement demanded not only efficiency and effectiveness on the part of OBLS but also on the agencies’ back-end systems and their link-ups with OBLS. However, it was not always a straight forward task to change the functioning back-end systems of agencies to deliver the desired efficiency and effectiveness; the back-end systems, implemented prior to OBLS, were generally broader in scope and deployment, and were based on the respective agency’s licenses, unique requirements, operations and structure.

In order to ensure that OBLS fitted into the different agencies’ licensing processes, the following changes and development work had to be carried out:

- Some agencies, such as the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, had no back-end systems for processing licenses. A special purpose-built application called BAT (Business Administrative Tool) had to be developed for such agencies and linked to OBLS.
- For a license transferred to OBLS:
  - The agency’s own online license application portal was discontinued. Only license applications through OBLS were accepted for processing.

- The agency's back-end system was modified and linked to OBLs for data exchange in real-time or batch mode as decided by the agency.
- There were a few licenses which could not be supported by OBLs because of special processing requirements or some uniqueness of these licenses. This meant that the agencies handling these licenses had to retain their online license application portals. The OBLs web page was developed to include hypertext links to automatically direct an application for such a license to the relevant agency's license-application portal. For example, the Singapore Police Force transferred most of its licenses to OBLs but retained a few special ones, such as the arms and explosive license, on its own PLUS portal (<http://www.spf.gov.sg/license/>).

## Project Achievements and Challenges Ahead

As of 1 October 2005, the average license processing time for all new applications including those not handled by OBLs was reduced from 21 to eight days as a result of the reengineering exercise and OBLs implementation. 85 licenses were processed in less than a week. Of these, 43 were processed in less than three days. In a few cases, the results were truly dramatic:

- The Energy Market Authority's license application process for electricity generation was reduced from six months to six weeks.
- Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority's fish culture farm license application process was reduced from three months to three days.
- Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority's company registration process required only two hours compared to five days in the pre-OBLs period.

OBLs handled more than 20,000 license applications from its launch till 1 October 2005. OBLs's support of 69 licenses enabled it to serve more than 80% of all start-ups and account for 98% of all transactions for start-up licenses in Singapore. A cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Core Project Team showed that the benefits of OBLs outweighed the costs, with most of the benefits accrued to businesses.

Riding on these impressive results, the Core Project Team sought to progress OBLs into its next stage: Stage 3(b) – URT (update, renewal, and termination) services for licenses. Reflecting on the success achieved so far and the next stage in progress, Mrs. Susan Kok, the Director of MTT's Enterprise Division, noted:

*"We want to be the customer advocate for business enterprises. The business requirements will grow but we need to anticipate and be ready to meet such needs. This is not going to be a one-time exercise."*

Underlying her quiet confidence, she knew that this was only the beginning of another challenging phase. The constant struggle between agency-specific interests and the benefits to the larger government or business communities would be a never-ending battle. Already, she had heard complaints that OBLs did not fully cater for all the different types of licenses<sup>5</sup>. Some agencies therefore had to continue to operate their own online systems alongside OBLs to provide the other licensing services needed by businesses. Feedback from the agencies also indicated that OBLs, being constrained by the embedded workflow coordination between OBLs and the back-end systems of agencies, could not handle exceptions that required special attention such as last-minute license application and late payment of license fee. While such problems would be addressed or at least tweaked over time, the perception by some agencies was that OBLs was "*inferior*" to their own systems, and hence they were reluctant to fully endorse OBLs. There were also agencies which felt that "*OBLs often does things its own way*" without properly considering their unique needs. There were also complaints about the inflexibility in making changes to the system. One agency's officer noted:

*"Even for simple requests, we have to be careful that these changes to our internal application do not require modification in OBLs. There are also occasions when we want to enhance OBLs to improve the interface for data capture but these change requests have to be reviewed and studied by the project team before we can*

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority continued to maintain its own online dog licensing system intended for individual dog-owners while applications for pet-shop licenses were handled via OBLs.

*proceed. Yet, we have gone through a few rounds of system modification and testing for OBLS even though these changes are not related to us."*

Notwithstanding these negative perceptions by some agencies, the value and benefits of OBLS were widely acknowledged by all including those which had adverse views. But one concern remained even amongst the agencies which were very supportive of OBLS: how operating and other costs of OBLS would be met in the long run. The Ministry of Finance had funded the initial costs of OBLS and provided funding to meet the recurring costs for the first 3 years. But this arrangement was set to change as OBLS had to be self-funding ultimately. A senior MTI officer noted the path ahead for OBLS in this regard thus:

*"The strategy is to make the agencies dependent on OBLS. Then they will be willing to pay because they need it. However, it is possible that the benefits accrued unequally to businesses, government and agencies. Depending on the charging model of OBLS, the sharing of the cost burden may not balance perfectly."*

The charging model in place was per-transaction pricing based on projected transaction volume and types of transactions. Arriving at a pricing scheme that was fair for every agency was proving to be a major challenge, as observed by the Deputy Director, Enterprise Division of MTI:

*"If we could do this from scratch for every agency, it would be neat. But because these agencies have their own systems, they compare OBLS (charges) to what they have. The tendency is for them to compare apples with oranges. OBLS has other features like security, interface with PSi, scalability, etc., that are typically overlooked by the agencies when comparing costs."*

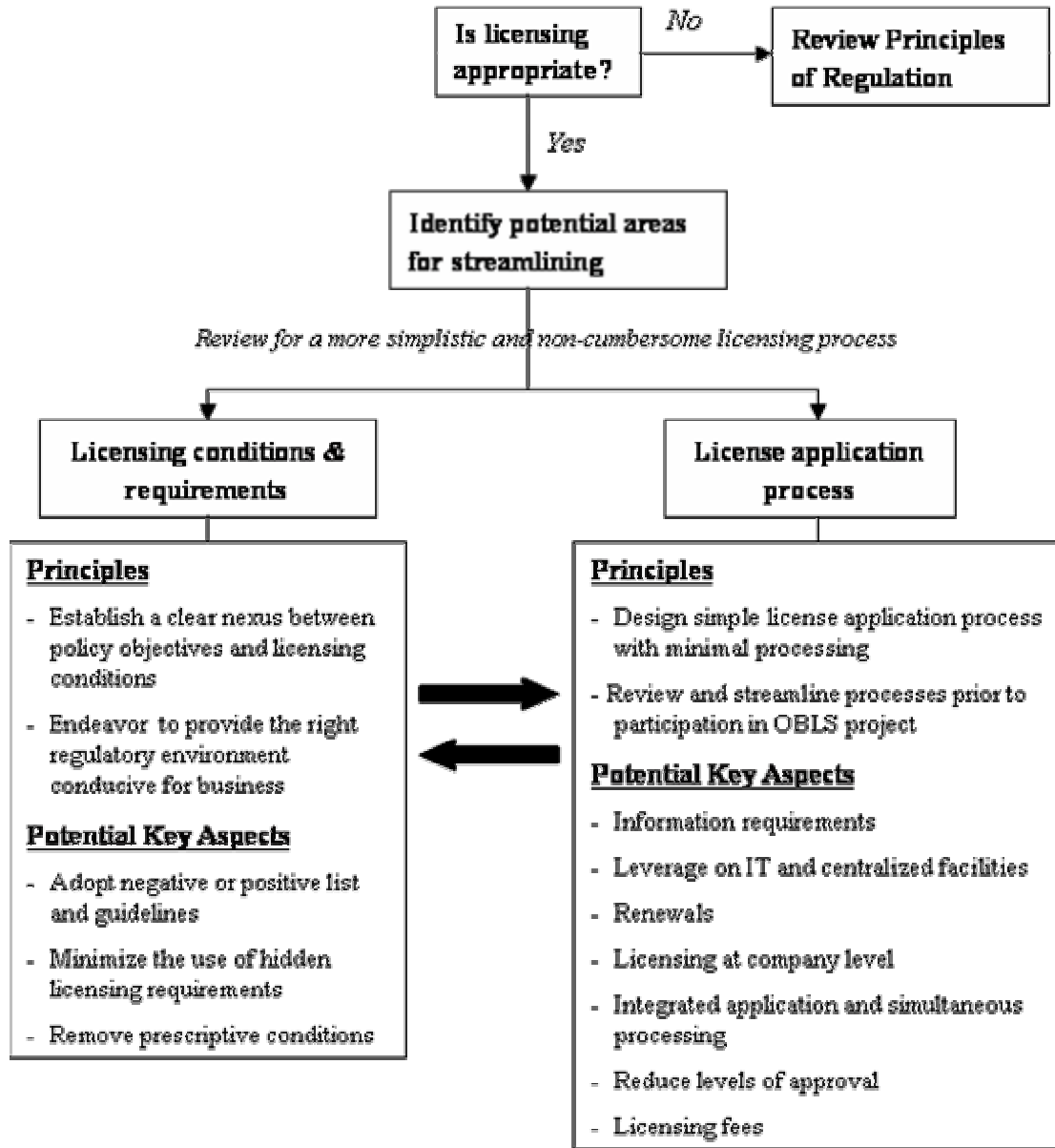
Mrs. Susan Kok, the Director of MTI's Enterprise Division, as the key person responsible for ensuring OBLS's success and further progress recognized the criticality of the pricing issue for OBLS's viability. She was also aware that new issues would emerge as OBLS progressed. In reviewing the challenges that lay ahead and how they could be addressed, she was sure of one thing:

*"The various agencies will need to work as a group and we see ourselves as the glue that brings all the agencies together."*

## Appendix 1: Project Milestones

Time	Milestone
August 2001	Inception of the OBLS project.
September 2001	Commencement of taskforces to review licensing policies and streamline processes for licenses which are relevant to start-ups.
November 2001	Development of workflow, business process design, informational and technical architecture. Completion of review of licenses scheduled for online implementation in April 2003 (Pilot Phase).
June 2002	Launch of the OBLS guide/profiler to advice entrepreneurs on the licenses and permits need to start a business. Application forms were made readily available in downloadable format.
September 2002	Completion of review of licenses scheduled for online implementation in December 2003 (Phase 1).
April 2003	Launch of Pilot Phase: 4 licenses were available for online application.
July 2003	Completion of review for licenses scheduled for online implementation in June 04 (Phase 2).
January 2004	Phase 1 Launch: 20 licenses (including the 4 licenses rolled out in Pilot Phase) were available for online application. Applicants could apply for licenses spanning the media, food & beverage as well entertainment sectors.
June 2004	Phase 2 Launch: 17 more licenses available for online application, making a total of 37 licenses. Applicants would be able to apply for licenses in the public entertainment, food & beverage, entertainment, media, healthcare, education and import/export sectors.
August 2004	Phase 3 Launch: 32 more licenses available for online application. With the entire suite of 69 licenses now available online, 80%, or more than 30,000 businesses annually, can apply for the licenses needed to start their businesses without resorting to offline means.
January 2005	URT (Update, Renewal and Termination ) Pilot Phase Launch 6 licenses from 3 agencies: AVA, Ministry of Manpower and ACRA
April 2005	URT Phase 1A URT Launch: 7 licenses from AVA
June 2005	URT Phase 1B Launch: 5 licenses from 4 agencies: SPF, HDB, MDA and Ministry of Manpower. 1 New License was rolled out.
August 2005 (Projected)	URT Phase 2 Launch: Implementation of modules for the licenses currently available for application for 37 Licenses. (Another 5 licenses to be implemented by year end).

## Appendix 2: License Review and Reengineering Model



## Appendix 3: OBLS Screens

### (a) Main Web site: [www.business.gov.sg](http://www.business.gov.sg)

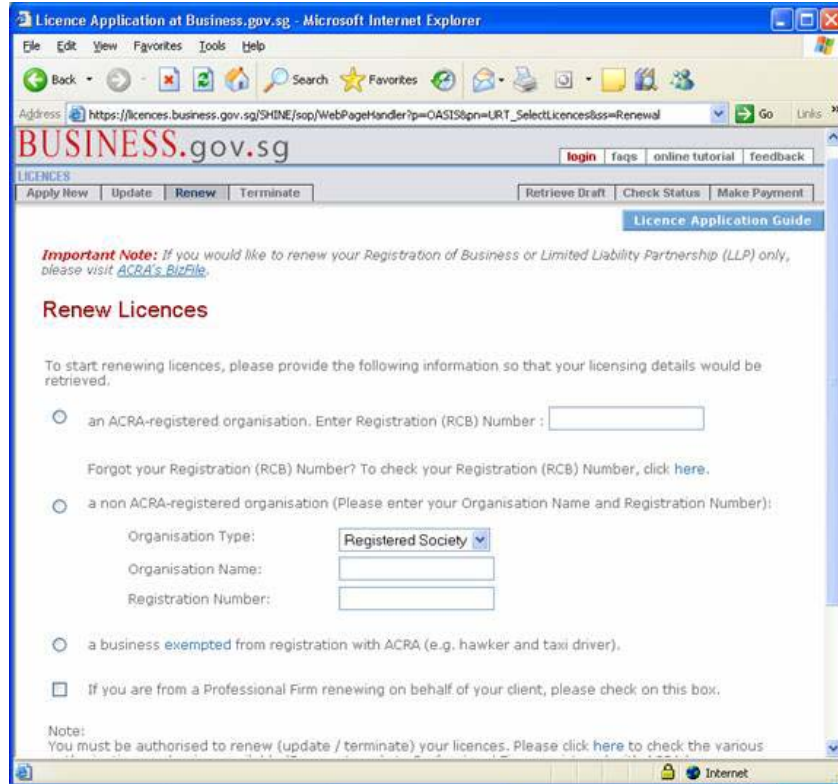


### (b) New Application

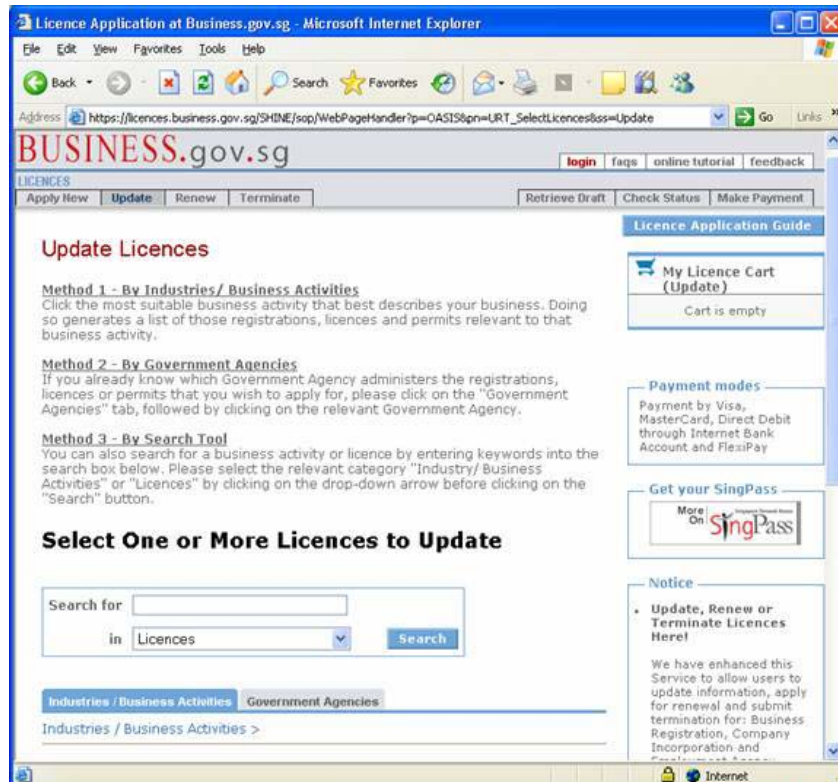




(c) Renewal

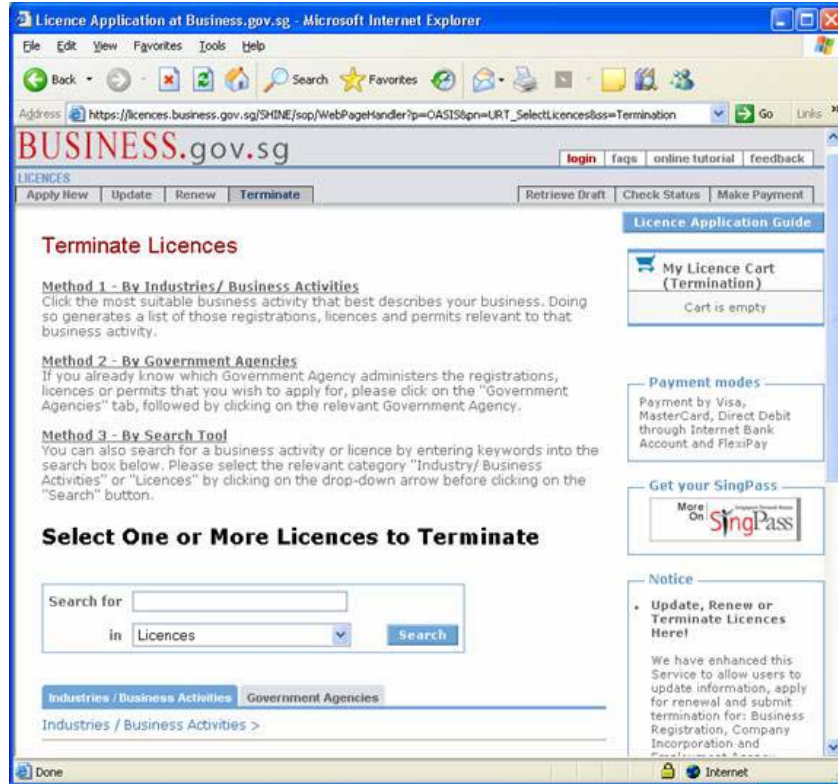


(d) Update Information





(e) Terminate



## Appendix 4: List of Government Agencies

1. **ACRA (Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority):** ACRA is a Government statutory board that aims to provide a responsive and forward looking regulatory environment for companies, businesses and public accountants, conducive to enterprise and growth in Singapore. Its main areas of operations are: facilitating potential businessmen to Singapore, maintaining a high standard of professional standards of auditing and monitoring companies' compliance with accounting standards. Web site: <http://www.acra.gov.sg/>
2. **AVA (Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority):** The AVA is a statutory board established on 1 April 2000 to carry out the responsibilities of the Primary Production Department (PPD). Its main areas of operations are: ensuring food safety, safeguarding animal & plant health, safeguarding animal welfare, promoting agrotechnology, continuing research & development and facilitating trade. Web site: <http://www.ava.gov.sg/>
3. **CPF (Central Provident Funds):** CPF is a Government agency that aims to provide the best national savings scheme for the Republic of Singapore, thus ensuring that Singaporeans can enjoy a secure retirement. Web site: <http://www.cpf.gov.sg/>
4. **FSSD (Fire Safety and Shelter Department):** FSSD is department of SCDF which ensures that the highest fire safety standards are upheld in Singapore. All building planners and owners must submit a building plan that complies with fire safety, shelter codes and technical guidelines, in order to receive a Fire Safety Certificate or temporary Fire Permit. FSSD issues and renews these licenses as well as those for petroleum storage and transportation and users of dangerous or hazardous chemicals and devices. It also backs up these standards by conducting enforcement checks on fire hazards.
5. **HDB (Housing Development Board)** HDB is a Government agency set up in 1960, as a statutory board of the Ministry of National Development. Its mission is to build affordable homes of high quality, in integrated environments that meet modern lifestyle needs. Web site: <http://www.hdb.gov.sg/>
6. **IDA (Infocomm Development Authority):** IDA is a statutory board of the Singapore Government. It operates under the Ministry of Information, Communications and The Arts (MICA). It's main responsibilities are: fostering a competitive world-class infocomm industry in Singapore, preparing residents for living and working in the 'New Economy', spearheading the delivery of citizen-centric e-Government services, regulating the telecoms industry in Singapore, building and operating the Government's IT infrastructure. Web site: <http://www.ida.gov.sg/>
7. **IRAS (Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore):** IRAS is a Government agency that deals with the administering, assessing, collecting and enforcing of tax payments. It also advises the Government and represents Singapore internationally on matters relating to taxation. Web site: <http://www.iras.gov.sg/ESVPortal/Home/index.asp>
8. **LTA (Land Transport Authority):** LTA is a statutory board under the Ministry of Transport that spearheads land transport developments in Singapore. It plans the long-term transport needs of Singapore, taking care of those who drive as well as those who take public transport. Web site: <http://www.lta.gov.sg/>
9. **MCYS (Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports):** MCYS is a Government agency with the aim to build a cohesive and resilient society by fostering: socially responsible individuals inspired and committed youth, strong and stable families, caring and active community and sporting people. Web site: [http://app.mcys.gov.sg/web/home\\_main.asp](http://app.mcys.gov.sg/web/home_main.asp) ; <http://www.childcarelink.gov.sg/>
10. **MDA (Media Development Authority):** The MDA was formed by the merger of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority, the Films and Publications Department, and the Singapore Film Commission (SFC), on 1 Jan 2003. The setting up of MDA is in response to the convergence of different media that requires a consistent approach in developing and managing the different forms of media. The role of MDA is to promote the growth of the media industry and manage content to protect core values and safeguard consumers' interests. Web site: <http://www.mda.gov.sg/>
11. **MEWR (Ministry of the Environment and Water Resource):** MEWR is a Government agency that aims to provide Singapore with a quality living environment and a high standard of public health, protected against the spread of communicable diseases. Web site: <http://app.mewr.gov.sg/>

12. **MITA (Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts):** MITA is a Government agency that aims to develop Singapore into a global city for information, communications and the arts, so as to build a creative economy, gracious community and connected society with a Singaporean identity rooted in her multicultural heritage. Webpage: <http://www.mica.gov.sg/>
13. **MOE (Ministry of Education):** The MOE is a Government organization directs the formulation and implementation of education policies. It has control of the development and administration of the Government and Government-aided primary schools, secondary schools, junior colleges, and a centralised institute. It also registers private schools. Web site: <http://www.moe.gov.sg/>
14. **MOF (Ministry of Finance):** MOF is a Government agency that aims to advance the well-being and development of Singapore through Finance. The main areas of operations are: providing a financial environment conducive to business, ensuring superior stewardship and prudent investment of public funds and formulating policies and frameworks which enhance excellence in the public sector. Web site: <http://app.mof.gov.sg/>
15. **MOM (Ministry of Manpower):** MOM is a Government agency with the aim to achieve a globally competitive workforce and great workplace, for a cohesive society and a secure economic future for all Singaporeans. Web site: <http://www.mom.gov.sg/>
16. **MTI (Ministry of Trade and Industry):** MTI is a Government agency that aims to promote high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, so that all Singaporeans have ample opportunity to improve their standards of living. The main areas of operations are: facilitating the development of industry sectors, protecting Singapore's international trade interest and providing a good understanding of the current state of and outlook of Singapore for policy formulation. Web site: <http://www.mti.gov.sg/>
17. **NEA (National Environment Agency):** NEA is a Government agency formed under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) on 1 July 2002 to focus on the implementation of environmental policies. Under the NEA, the divisions of Environmental Protection, Environmental Public Health, and Meteorological Services work together to ensure a quality environment for Singaporeans, for now and for generations to come. Web site: <http://app.nea.gov.sg/>
18. **SPF (Singapore Police Force):** SPF is a Government agency that upholds the law, maintain order and keep the peace in Singapore. Web site: <http://www.spf.gov.sg/>
19. **SPRING (Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board):** Spring Singapore is an entity within MTI that is entrusted with sustaining Singapore's productivity, growth, and business competitiveness targeting at the small and medium enterprises in particular. SPRING's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises for a vibrant Singapore economy. It encourages enterprise formation and growth, facilitate the growth of industries, enhance productivity & innovation and capabilities of enterprises, and help increase access to markets and business opportunities. Its vision is to nurture a host of dynamic and innovative Singapore enterprises. Web site: <http://www.spring.gov.sg/portal/main.html>
20. **STB (Singapore Tourism Board):** The STB is an economic development agency for one of Singapore's key service sectors - tourism. The mission of the Board is to develop and champion tourism, so as to build the sector into a key driver of economic growth for Singapore. The STB's goal is to create exciting and innovative experiences for visitors, in close partnership with the trade industry, thus etc.hing forever in visitors' minds an image of Singapore as a unique and compelling destination. This involve revitalising traditional segments ranging from sightseeing and attractions to business travel, as well as actively tap into emerging segments such as healthcare and education services. Web site: <http://app.stb.com.sg/asp/index.asp>
21. **URA (Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore):** URA is a Government agency of Singapore's national land use planning authority. It prepares long term strategic plans, as well as detailed local area plans, for physical development, and then co-ordinates and guides efforts to bring these plans to reality. Web site: <http://www.ura.gov.sg/>