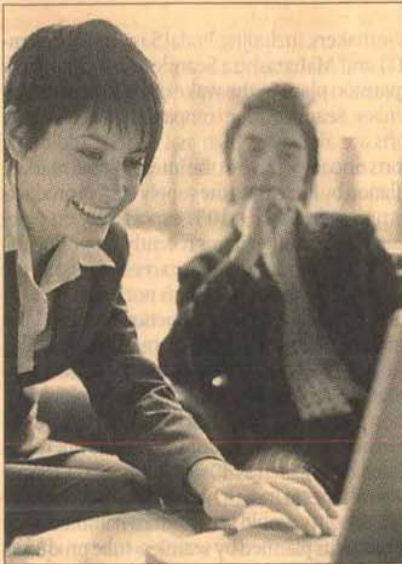


# E-gov set for refresher course

Ministry of Corporate Affairs Working On Restructuring Of Initiative To Further Simplify Process



INFORMATION AT THE GO

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INDIA'S largest e-governance project is set to be revamped shortly. Within two years of introducing electronic filing of documents for corporates, the government is looking to launch the second generation of e-filing process, according to an official. The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) has appointed a committee to work on the restructuring of MCA-21, (that is how the present initiative is known) and hopes that it will submit the report soon.

Prior to 2006, filing and registration of documents by companies, which is a statutory requirement under the Companies Act, 1956 was done manually. This rendered the whole process inefficient since it involved a lot of paperwork. The MCA-21 initiative (simply standing for 21st century reforms) was aimed at enabling electronic filing of these forms. However, the ministry feels that there is still a lot of room for improvement and hence has once again teamed up with Tata Consultancy Services, for

ushering in a newer version of MCA-21.

According to Anurag Goel, secretary, ministry of corporate affairs, once the new systems are in place, companies should find it still simpler and convenient to file corporate information with the ministry. "It would also help the government in easy detection of frauds among other things. Also, considering the newer structures we plan to put in place like limited liability partnerships, there was a need to bring in newer systems of e-filing," he said.

MCA is also hopeful that once MCA-21's second generation is up and operational, public and professionals will get easy access to relevant records and effective grievances redressal. Speaking at the sidelines of a CII Corporate Governance Summit here in Mumbai, Mr Goel also said that the move will also help in effective compliance of relevant laws and improving corporate governance.

Launched in 2006, MCA-21 Project was the flagship e-governance project of the government of India. TCS had been selected as the operator and was to develop the software for this

project covering both filing of forms as well as establishment functions apart from providing IT infrastructure like computers, printers, scanners and other peripherals to all the field offices. Mr Goel said he had spoken to TCS chief S Ramadorai recently and is hopeful of the process kicking off fast.

Thanks to MCA-21, over 7 lakh registered companies in the country now has the option of making all statutory filings, except those related to liquidation and winding up, electronically.

Other uses of MCA-21 portal is that it facilitates inspection of company documents and requisition of certified copies. The central secretariat of MCA-21 is in Delhi and it is linked to four regional directorates in Noida, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and also all the offices of registrars of companies.

Digital signature certificates are required for companies to use the facility. A sizeable section of the directors of companies — there are 14 lakh of them in total—have already obtained the director identification number (DIN) thanks to the electronic facility.