

## ERP-Readiness In Public Sector Institutions

Although the term Enterprise Resource Planning Systems (ERP) was originally coined to describe large-scale integrated industrial and manufacturing business applications software, the term is now increasingly mentioned as a requirement for a variety of businesses, especially service oriented ones. Most, if not all, modern ERP Systems have an e-business component already embedded in one form or another.

By definition, a large number of our public sector institutions are service oriented. They provide services to citizens as well as other institutions. Some are huge organizations with multiple departments employing a large number of staff with different skills and qualifications. So the deployment of ERP Systems becomes essential for the efficient management and operation such institutions. But the obstacles facing them before they achieve a successful implementation, and this is by no means guaranteed, are many:

- Adequate capital and recurring budgets.
- Business and technical staff qualifications.
- IT literacy at all staff levels including upper management.
- IT infrastructure.
- Adaptability of current business procedures to ERP Systems.
- Rules and regulations governing current procedures.
- The changes that need to be carried out.

The analysis and evaluation of the above factors is what ERP-Readiness Assessment is all about. This should be done well before the process of selecting an ERP System is initiated and not after.

The bottom line is simple and straightforward. As they stand, some of our public sector institutions are not susceptible towards the implementation of ERP Systems and a lot needs to be done before they even reach that stage. With the current emphasis on e-Government, such assessments need to be undertaken with added urgency in a practical and scientific manner. There is no point in attempting to automate the business processes of an institution if the overall assessment of that institution is not conducive to the successful implementation of an ERP System.