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Rule of Law Program - Justice and Enforcement

## **Automating the Justice System**

### **WAN Infrastructure Concept Paper**

*For discussion*

#### **I. Introduction**

Assisting the Palestinian justice system in acquiring modern information technology tools is key to both assuring smooth and effective administrative operations, as well as a means of serving the Palestinian public. In 1999, during USAID's first rule of law assistance program, the Information Technology (IT) concept was introduced to the judiciary by providing automation and IT support to the courts. At that time, the IT environment was poor and lacking with only a select number of computers available in the courts and these computers were scarcely used—if at all. Through USAID assistance these courts were equipped with computers and a case automation software program “Mezan” installed, marking the first step to modernizing the Palestinian court system through information technology tools.

While in 1999 introduction of IT tools and software to the courts was a groundbreaking development that proved to have tangible results, today further technical assistance and support is required to take this development to a higher level.

#### **II. Scope of Work and Vision**

The automating of the justice system activity calls for connecting all Palestinian courts through providing connectivity to all Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and court sites throughout the West Bank i.e. 14 locations. This would be accomplished through establishment of one large Wide Area Network (WAN).

#### **Why automate the justice system?**

Successful implementation of this task would allow for the creation of a centralized database of information as well as finance and administration in addition to a clocking system. Through this initiative instead of working several tasks in several locations, this would be done at once thereby promoting good communication.

The advantages of automating the justice system would include:

- Creation of a synchronized database of records between all courts and the SJC.
- Enabling the courts and the SJC to exchange information such as emails and court files.
- Enabling future notifications to be electronically transferred from and to the concerned court within its respective governorate.
- Enabling the public and other institutions to access public information via the Web.

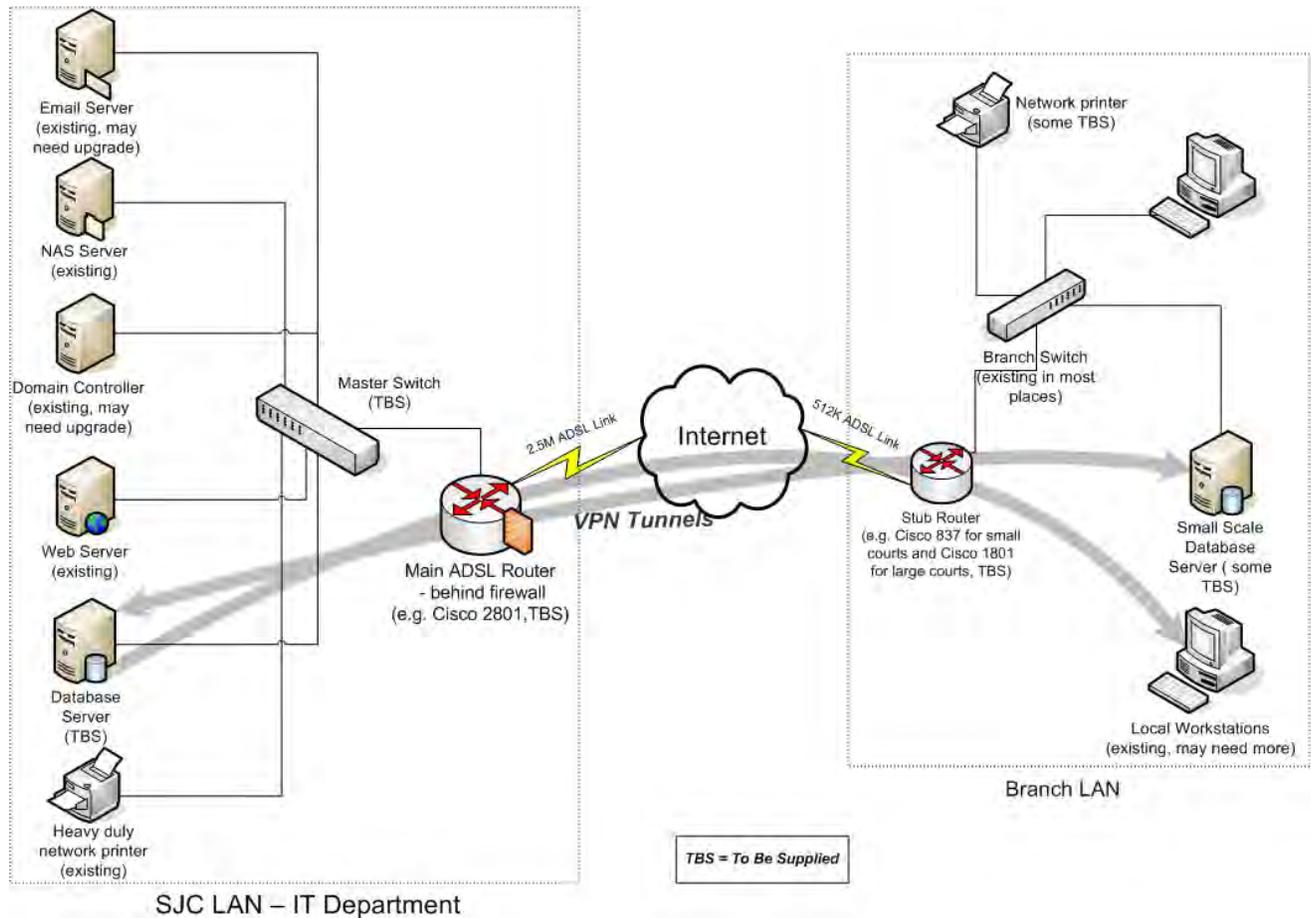
- Exchange of financial and administrative information between the courts and the SJC.
- Enable remote training of employees.
- Exchange time attendance from each court to the administration department in Ramallah to enable time logging for all employees.

**What the steps necessary to accomplish this task?**

NETHAM proposes the following steps to accomplish this task:

1. Needs assessment (the needs are shown in the figure and in the table below)
2. Network topology design (initially shown in the figure).
3. Procurement
4. Installation and testing.

The figure below can serve as a startup design for the network.



The following table also gives a clear indication of the WAN infrastructure needs.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Price/Unit (\$US, estimated)</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Total Price (\$US)</b>
Stub Router (ADSL), normal Traffic	600	10	6000
Stub Router (ADSL), high Traffic	1200	3	3600
Central Router	3500	1	3500
Standard Network Switch	250	3	750
Gbit Managed Switch (IT)	800	1	800
Small Server	2500	3	7500
Medium Level Server	6000	1	6000
Server Upgrades	1000	2	2000
Small Network Printer	500	3	1500
Small Network or Wireless Network	400	4	1600
Link Aggregation Router (Ramallah)	2500	1	2500
Hardware Firewall (Ramallah)	4000	1	4000
<b>Total Hardware Required</b>			<b>\$39,750</b>

**Why would this work?**

The SJC has a strong IT Department consisting of nine staff members that is the best in the SJC. These staff persons have varying degrees of skills and with some training and technical assistance can maintain this network on their own. The SJC is also ready to absorb this assistance.

**Why should NETHAM undertake this task?**

This activity would result in the necessary infrastructure needed for smooth and transparent communication between all the courts and SJC departments. It will also serve as a sound management and control tool as well as a planning tool.

It's worth mentioning that effective automation of the justice system would serve as a vehicle for success of other project activities in notification, enforcement and capacity building and thus all NETHAM components. Once this initiative is completed, it would save project cost for travel and transportation. In the long term this would save costs for both USAID and the SJC.

### **III. Resources**

NETHAM staff will provide most of the technical assistance for this activity. A short-term consultant will be contracted to serve as Network Engineer to work on the design and implementation of the WAN.

### **IV. Timeline**

It will take approximately 2-3 months to implement this activity.

### **V. Budget**

A preliminary budget estimate shows that this initiative would cost approximately \$40,000 in equipment (as shown in the above table) and \$4,500 for the Network Engineer (\$150 per day for 30 days LOE).

### **Conclusion**

NETHAM proposes that the OTI provide funding for the equipment while NETHAM provide the technical assistance.

Upon successful implementation of this task, this initiative could be replicated at the Public Prosecution, and the Bar Association.