



Factsheet:

Access to Base Registries in Cyprus

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Cyprus towards Interoperability

E-Government in Cyprus is understood as the effective usage of ICT systems in public administrations combined with organisational changes and new skills. This implies access flexibility to public services, simplification of internal procedures, improved quality of the information provided to citizens and transparency.

The **Department of Information Technology Services (DITS)**¹ of the Ministry of Finance, which implements the programs and the respective EU Action Plans, is the main responsible for the promotion and implementation of e-government strategies within the public sector. It develops electronic services always taking into consideration the citizens and business needs, mentality and culture. The **Department of Electronic Communications (DEC)**², always of the Ministry of Transport, is also involved in the interoperability process. Its missions is to support and promote the ICT and the digital innovation for the provision of high quality and secure electronic communications services and, furthermore, it has been appointed as the competent authority for the promotion and implementation of the legislative framework for electronic signatures in Cyprus (Legal Framework for Electronic Signatures and Associated Matters Law of 2004 (N.188 (I)/2004)).

To this end, various initiatives have been launched in Cyprus with the common objective of enhancing the public sector capacity by delivering more electronic services.

In 2012, the campaign **Do it electronically**³, aiming to increase the use of e-government services, introduced improvements on the base registries and the electronic services associated with them. For example, the introduction of an application for registering a new business entity⁴, paying income tax⁵, and renewing vehicle registrations⁶. A new campaign has been recently launched for the promotion of the Internet Payment System to the Social Insurance Services (PSC). The benefits accruing from the use of the system are multiple: electronic payment of contributions improves the productivity and efficiency of both the public and the private sector, reducing the hassle and waste of productive time.

One year later, in 2013, the National Interoperability Framework of Cyprus, called **e-Government Interoperability Framework (eGIF)**, was drafted covering all interoperability levels of the EIF. DITS is the responsible body for the management of the eGIF. Its responsibilities include:

- the design of the interoperability strategy of Cyprus;
- the formulation, maintenance and update of the eGIF;
- the planning and execution of dissemination and awareness activities;
- the monitoring of the adoption, etc.

Also, the **Digital Strategy**⁷ for the period of 2012-2020 set up a plan for the development of an information society in Cyprus and the uptake of ICT. The strategy was divided into 21 measures, each of them with their particular set of actions towards a single general goal: to overcome the crisis and promote the economic growth increasing the competitiveness of the private sector and modernisation of the public sector. Within the strategy, some actions related directly or indirectly to base registries can be identified, such as:

- the revision of the information systems strategy;

¹ http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/DITS/DITS.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument

² http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/DMLindex_en/DMLindex_en?opendocument

³ <http://www.kepa.gov.cy/egov/>

⁴ <https://efiling.drcor.mcit.gov.cy/>

⁵ <https://taxisnet.mof.gov.cy/>

⁶ <http://rtd.mcw.gov.cy/>

⁷ [http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/all/0BACA0B7B7848D2CC22579B500299BFA/\\$file/Digital%20Strategy%20for%20Cyprus-Executive%20summary.pdf?openelement](http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/all/0BACA0B7B7848D2CC22579B500299BFA/$file/Digital%20Strategy%20for%20Cyprus-Executive%20summary.pdf?openelement)

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- the development of a central government data warehouse;
 - the expansion of the Point of Single Contact in correspondence to the Services Directive⁸;
 - the full operation of the e-filing system for online registration of companies;
 - the provision of access to citizens to their personal data and,
 - the publication of public sector information.

The most recent initiative in this context is the **e-Government Strategy** (2014-2020). It covers the technical, operational and organisational aspects regarding the provision of electronic services to citizens and businesses scoping all ministries, departments and services of the Cyprus Government. Its main objective is the facilitation of cross-border collaboration at European level and the alignment with the EU policies and directives.

Another initiative under the Digital Strategy which is worth mentioning is the **Cyprus Broadband Plan (2016-2020)**⁹; the main objectives of the plan are promoting a stable regulatory framework, ensuring the roll-out and take-up of broadband for all (at increasing speeds and decreasing prices) and connect the whole Cyprus with high and ultra-high speed networks, so that all undertakings, public institutions and individuals have access to information.

Finally, from the legislative perspective, the **Action Plan for the Improvement of the Regulatory Framework**¹⁰ (2015) lists measures which promote the reduction of administrative burdens and the simplification of procedures, better law-making, analysis of the impact of legislative proposals and improvement of the regulatory framework for businesses.

⁸[http://www.businessincyprus.gov.cy/mcit/psc/psc.nsf/0/876095598167FEE8C22576AB002F18F6/\\$file/Services%20Directive%20%E2%80%93%20Doing%20Business%20made%20Easier%20.pdf](http://www.businessincyprus.gov.cy/mcit/psc/psc.nsf/0/876095598167FEE8C22576AB002F18F6/$file/Services%20Directive%20%E2%80%93%20Doing%20Business%20made%20Easier%20.pdf)

⁹[http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/All/10849A48077172ADC2257FBE00248B9D/\\$file/Cyprus_Broadband_Plan.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/All/10849A48077172ADC2257FBE00248B9D/$file/Cyprus_Broadband_Plan.pdf?OpenElement)

¹⁰ https://issuu.com/presidency-reform-cyprus/docs/sxedio_drasis_ke_pinakes_gia_veltio?e=23693381/33573909

Legal Interoperability

In Cyprus, the services of most of the base registries are defined through legislations. These also list the authorities responsible for them.

Examples of legal provisions for base registries are:

- The Civil Registry in Cyprus is stated in the **Civil Registry Law**¹¹, which defines it as “the registry where the personal data of all residents of Cyprus shall be collected and maintained”. The main events, in this case, are birth, marriage and death. The law states, among other information, the reference data to be entered in the registry, which persons should be registered, the documents maintained in the registry, methods of registry maintenance, additions of data in the registry, etc. The documents maintained in the registry are the original birth and death registration forms or copies of the originals, as prescribed in Section 39 of the Law.
- The Business Registry is given legal existence in the **Companies Law**¹². A legal provision of the Law defines "company" as a company formed and registered under this Law. The Law covers different aspects such as the effect of registration, registry of members, general provisions related to registration, registration offices, documents to be converted to electronic forms on the application, certified copies of documents in electronic forms, fees, etc.
- For the Vehicles Registry, the **Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Law**¹³ (1972) does not provide a definition regarding what exactly the registry means and, as in the case of the Business Registry, the Law covers a variety of aspects among which the vehicle registration, the inspection for registration and the issuing and renewal of driving licenses and circulation fees.
- The Land Registry is mainly described under the **Immovable¹⁴ Law**¹⁵. Article 51 states that in each district land office a separate Land Registry will be kept for each province, municipality and community. Under the current legislation in Cyprus, only interested parties have access to the land registries. Article 39 provides more information regarding registration formalities, such as general registration process, fees, how to determine the size of the registered land, registration certificate, etc. The general idea of the Land Law in Cyprus is that every right that acts on the immovable property is registered and can be tracked down in the registries of the Lands and Surveys Department kept in the District Land Offices (one for each of the five Districts).

In Cyprus, there is no specific legislation supporting the implementation of the “**Once-Only**” principle. However, the **Action Plan for the Improvement of the Regulatory Framework**¹⁶ states that the same information should not be kept in more than one system and it should be reused by different governmental bodies, provided that they ensure the protection of data and privacy. The owner of the data (responsible government agency) will have the responsibility to keep the information up to date. Cyprus continues making

¹¹ http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2002_1_141/full.html

http://eudo-citizenship.eu/NationalIDB/docs/CYP%20Civil%20Registry%20Law%20No%20141_I_2002_ENGLISH.pdf

¹² [http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/all/E1EAEB38A6DB4505C2257A70002A0BB9/\\$file/The%20Companies%20Law,%20Cap%20113.pdf?openelement](http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/all/E1EAEB38A6DB4505C2257A70002A0BB9/$file/The%20Companies%20Law,%20Cap%20113.pdf?openelement)

¹³ http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/1972_1_86/full.html

¹⁴ A term that relates to land and buildings, trees and plantations, rivers, wells, and all rights relating to land and buildings

¹⁵ http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/0_224/full.html

¹⁶ https://issuu.com/presidency-reform-cyprus/docs/sxedio_drasis_ke_pinakes_gia_veltio?e=23693381/33573909

efforts to apply the once-only principle, reduce the administrative burdens through digital means by default and through the different e-Government initiatives and strategies.

On the other hand, the legislation on access and availability of public data is based on the European PSI Directive which was incorporated into a national law via the **Re-use of Public Sector Information Act 2015** (Act 205(I)/2015)¹⁷. This simultaneously abolished previous relevant laws and decrees. This Directive lays down the right of access and reuse of public sector information. The operation of the **open data portal**¹⁸ as a data repository is part of the effort to make public sector information available and exploitable without legal or technical constraints. The portal provides relevant metadata along with information regarding charging and licenses and is currently hosting over 1000 datasets.

There is currently no specific eGovernment legislation in Cyprus, however some articles of the constitution and some laws deal with data protection and privacy, electronic signatures as well as eCommerce and eCommunication.

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/implementation-psi-directive-cyprus>

¹⁸ http://www.data.gov.cy/mof/papd/dataportal/dataportal.nsf/index_gr/index_gr?opendocument

Organisational Interoperability

The following table gathers the main base registries in Cyprus, the public administration bodies to which they belong and the master data type/s they handle:

Base Registry	Authority	Master Data
Civil Registry ¹⁹	Ministry of Interior	PERSONAL DATA (NATURAL AND LEGAL PERSONS)
Vehicle Registry	Ministry of Transport, Communications and Work	VEHICLES
Business Registry	Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver	BUSINESS
Land Registry	Ministry of Interior	IMMOVABLE PROPERTY, LAND INFORMATION
Tax Registry	Ministry of Economics	TAX

The **Civil Registry** in Cyprus is under the responsibility of the Interior Ministry, with data gathered locally.

The **Vehicle Registry** is **decentralised**: the **district offices** together with the Road Transport Department are responsible for the registration of vehicles.

The **Business Registry** is under the responsibility of the Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver, which belong to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Cyprus. The responsibilities of the Department include: keeping records of commercial activities about companies (public and private), trade names, bankruptcies and liquidations. Online access to the registry is free for basic company information. The registrar recently implemented a procedure concerning the electronic filing of documents of registered companies.

The Department of Lands and Surveys, also known as the **Land Registry**, is the main authority dealing with the registration of property in Cyprus. The Cypriot Land Registry falls under the regulations of the Ministry of Interior. Currently, the Land Registry has five local offices throughout the country. There is no public access to the Land Registry and Land Information System. Only interested parties can request information on the property. The fees paid to obtain a search certificate from the Department of Lands and Surveys vary depending on the information requested.

No overarching body nor structure governing or coordinating base registries at organisational level has been identified in Cyprus.

¹⁹ http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/crmd/crmd.nsf/page02_en/page02_en?OpenDocument

Semantic Interoperability

In the area of e-Government, information interoperability has to face a recurrent issue. The absence of electronic services in several bodies of the public sector results in the lack of standardisation and adherence to common definitions. Even when services are made electronic, usually the data, documents and forms are transferred to an electronic format as such, resulting into non-interoperable artefacts.

To tackle this, the eGIF states²⁰ that “Public administrations, when working to establish (European) public services, should develop interfaces to authentic sources and align them at semantic and technical level”. This means that semantic interoperability is defined as the setting of a common language when exchanging data. To achieve this, it is necessary to have in place: a development approach on semantic models, semantic models custodians, data schemas and ontologies, and semantic-based definition languages. The eGIF provides recommendations to achieve that. Some examples of these recommendations are:

- It is recommended that government organisations investigate if a global semantic model exists in their business area of interest and, if yes, whether it meets their specific needs. If it exists, the government agencies should create their semantic model regardless of whether it is used internally or not. In both cases, the semantic models should be published.
- A government organisation should be in charge of the design, development and maintenance of the global semantic model. This organisation shall act as the semantic custodian.
- Government organisations should use XML-based data schemas for the representation of data. If core data components are defined and standardised by the Cyprus government, government organisations should reuse them.
- Ontologies may be used for the representation of data.
- Government organisations should use standardised definition languages for the representation of data.

A practical example where semantic models have been developed is **The Government Data Warehouse**²¹ project completed in 2015. This central repository of data enables easy access to accurate, consistent and integrated government data for better and faster decision-making. This database holds inter-related information that is structured for queries and analytics from all government information systems. It provides a consolidated view of civil service data, optimised for reporting and analysis.

²⁰ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/nifo/analytical/evidence/14410/2/19/146571/alignment>

²¹ <http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/dits/dits.nsf/All/28B215EAA612C056C225785A0035A7EF>

Technical Interoperability

The medium-term project known as the **Government Secure Gateway**²² project is considered one of the most important infrastructure projects for the successful implementation of the e-Government policy. The project is under the process of quality review.

This Gateway will comply with the vision for a "Joined-up Government" constituting the central channel for all electronic transactions between citizens, businesses and public institutions. It is foreseen to be a highly secure environment, a resilient "always on" service with the capacity to handle high volumes of transactions and data.

From a functionality point of view, it will include unified registration and authentication services ensuring security for users' activities with a single set of credentials using any application, any device, anytime, anywhere.

The main technical characteristics of this solution are the following:

- common user identity management/authentication and authorisation services;
- single sign-on credentials (supported across all government e-services, national, regional and local);
- a common messaging facility;
- online payments, and
- an integration tier (offering reliable delivery of standards-based data/information between systems and applications).

It is assumed that base registries will play an important role within the interconnection to this secure middleware platform and that Cyprus will take a step further in the implementation of the "Once-Only" principle.

²²<http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/DITS/dits.nsf/All/7DEFAE951CBAA6E9C22578180034E0CF?OpenDocument>

Cross-border Interoperability

Cyprus is a member of EUCARIS²³ and pending to be a member of EULIS²⁴.

The Department of Electronic Communications (DEC) has the responsibility for the European Space Policy, including the program Galileo/EGNOS and the program GMES/Copernicus, and the relations of the Republic of Cyprus with the European Space Agency (ESA).

²³ <https://www.eucaris.net/countries/>

²⁴ <http://eulis.eu/>

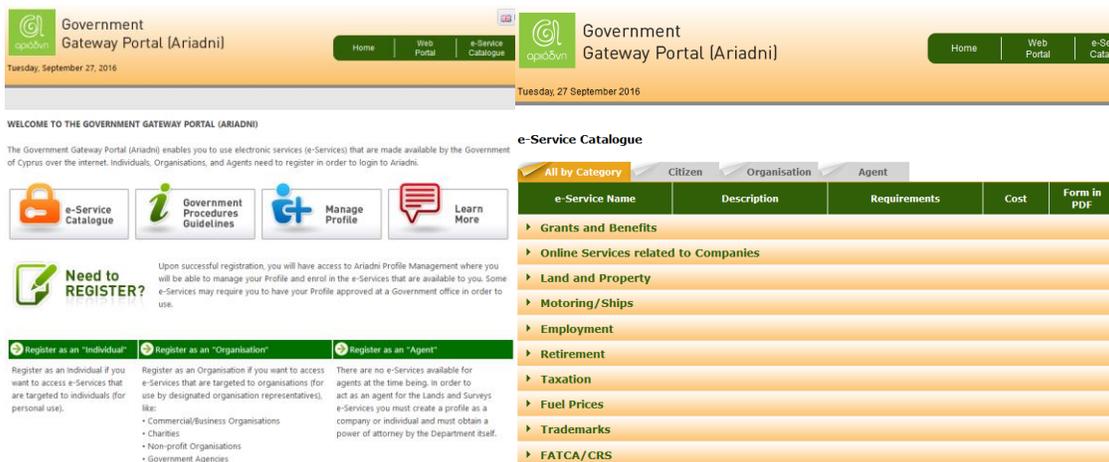
E-Government Public Services making use of Base Registries data

In Cyprus citizens and business have the option to access electronic services online via different portals.

The national **e-Government portal**²⁵ acts as an institutional website through which the public can access various government information and services via a single point of entry, based on the life-event cycle. As shown in the picture on the right, the services in this portal are classified first by the types of users: **citizen, residents abroad, business** and **government**, and secondly by themes of interest (or life events) depending on the selected user. The portal is available both in Greek and English.



The second main platform providing access to electronic services in Cyprus is the **Government Gateway Portal (Ariadni)**²⁶, which is the website used to register for online government services. It is a key facilitator of the government's strategy enabling communication and transactions with the Cyprus government from a **Single Point of Contact**. The system makes this possible by retrieving the needed information from the interconnected back-end systems. As the eGovernment portal, Ariadni can be visualized in Greek or English.



The following Government e-Services are available online through Ariadni (classified by body)²⁷:

- **Department of Civil Registry and Migration**

²⁵ <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy> and <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/gwp.getCategory?OpenForm&access=0&SectionId=citizen&CategoryId=Government%20Websites&SelectionId=Offices&print=0&lang=en>

²⁶ <https://cge.cyprus.gov.cy/re/public/>

²⁷ <https://eservices.cyprus.gov.cy/EN/Pages/FAQ.aspx>

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- Expiration of I.D. card
 - Expiration of passport
 - Reminder to register in Electoral list
 - Where do I vote
 - **Ministry of Health (SMS Notifications)**
 - Blood donation campaign
 - **Department of Lands and Surveys (DLS)**
 - Copy of Certificate of Registration
 - Search for Property Certificate
 - Issue Cadastral Plan
 - **Department of Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver**
 - Company Name Approval
 - Application for Certified Copies
 - Search for Company Information
 - **Social Insurance Services**
 - Contribution record for all contributions years
 - Contribution record for a specific year
 - Certificate of benefit payment
 - Pension calculation
 - **Grants and Benefits Service**
 - Child Benefit and single parent benefit
 - Special Maternity Grant to Unmarried Mothers
 - Grant to Pensioners
 - Student Grant
 - **Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism**
 - Cyprus Tourism Organization
 - Application for the establishment of a Tourist and Travel agency
 - Application for the establishment and operation of a branch office of a tourist and travel agency
 - Details of the manager of a tourist and travel agency
 - Application for a change of operator of a catering establishment
 - Application for a hotel establishment operator
 - Details of the manager of a catering/entertainment establishment
 - Details of a manager of a hotel establishment
 - Declaration form concerning the temporary provision of services for regulated professions in the Republic of Cyprus
 - The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Cyprus
 - Application for member registration
 - Application for a practising certificate for the year xx
 - Application for a practising certificate to a firm/statutory audit firm for the year xx

But also, specific base registries (through their corresponding owners) provide their own portal offering information and services to citizens:

- The official website of the Department of the **Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver**²⁸ provides information on documents and applications, fees and statistics of companies. It is also possible to find online information for a particular organisation and its status in the registry. An online search over the data of all companies is possible as well. Online access to the registry is free, as well as the basic company information.

²⁸ http://www.mcit.gov.cy/mcit/drcor/drcor.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument

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- The **Civil Registry and Migration Department portal**²⁹ is a page that offers information on citizenship, civil marriages, issue of passport, issue of birth certificate, issue of the death certificate, change of name of a person born in Cyprus, etc.. Services cannot be accessed online.
 - **The Department of Land and Survey (DLS) portal**³⁰ divides the electronic services it offers in the following four parts: citizen portal, electronic application, interactive maps and inspire geo-portal. In 2016 a new eServices platform (DLS Portal3) was officially launched with the objective of further modernise and increase the number of the services provided to citizens and easing the access to the data sources.

Finally, an interesting initiative, partially electronic, is the **Citizen Service Centres (CSC)**, which offers approximately 70 services to the citizens. These services are provided either on the spot, such as the issuance of identity cards and driving licenses or via applications which are transmitted to the competent departments/services, such as the issuance of passports.

At these centres, DITS have installed computerised systems which are connected to the Civil Registry and the Migration System, the Road Transport System, the Lands and Survey Information System, the Social Insurance System, the Grants and Benefits System, the European Health Insurance Card System and the Medical Card System.

²⁹ http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/crmd/crmd.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument

³⁰ <http://portal.dls.moi.gov.cy/en-us/homepage>