1. e-Government Services

This chapter includes a series of frequently asked questions that can be useful for local and foreign investors. The answers to these questions are based on laws, legislations and regulations that are published and enforced by governmental and official agencies. These laws and regulations may be subject to change at any time, based on the legislative amendments that may occur.

1.1. How can I access e-Government Services?

The National e-Government Portal contains multiple services such as requesting appointments, submitting requests or inquiries and completing government procedures such as applying for building permits, paying customs fees and taxes and many other services.

To use the portal, the user must create their own account and receive an "electronic key" or "eKey" that allows a single-entry process for various e-Government services. Please note that many government services have been moved online, and this process is necessary to follow up with many of the applications and licenses discussed later in this guide.

Bahraini citizens and residents can create their own eKey through a short and easy process using their CPR number on www.ekey.bh.

The Standard eKey offers a good level of security, requiring the user to enter only the personal number and password to access a limited number of eServices.

Registering for the Advanced eKey ensures the highest level of security and allows access to all eServices including highly confidential eServices requiring the verification of the user's smart card and biometrics.

To upgrade your eKey account level from the basic to the advanced level, you can visit any of the following offices:

1) Information and eGovernment Authority in Isa Town

2) Bahrain Investors Center in the Bahrain Financial Harbor

3) Social Insurance Organization in the Diplomatic Area

Note: GCC citizens who wish to register for the electronic key must contact the National Contact Center on +973 80008001, as the process differs slightly.

1.2. What is *Sijilat* and what services does it offer?

Sijilat is the online Commercial Registration Portal run by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Here, users can make all electronic transactions related to their Commercial Registration (CR), for example:

• Transfer of ownership
• Addition of branches

- Addition of activities
- Renewal of the Commercial Registration
- Search for a Commercial Registration
- Search for a Commercial Agency
- Search for commercial activities
- The commercial registry electronic publication
- Obtain commercial records and licenses
- Membership registration and renewal for the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry

For more information, visit www.sijilat.bh.