



State Comptroller of Israel | Annual Report 71C | 2021

Israel Land Authority

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# **Aspects of Public Service at the Israel Land Authority**





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### Background

The purpose of State authorities is to serve the public and their duty is to ensure that the service that they provide is efficient, of high quality and egalitarian. The Israel Land Authority ("the ILA"), which is responsible for land management in Israel, is a State authority that interacts extensively with the public, and one of its roles is to provide the services needed by land rights-holders for the purposes of managing or exercising their rights.



### Key figures

**approximately  
98,000**

Average number of core service requests handled by the ILA annually in the years 2017–2019. Most common requests: rights certification (approximately 41%); rights transfer (about 20%) and registrations or cancellations of mortgage liabilities (approximately 10%).

**18<sup>th</sup> place  
(out of 23)**

The ILA's ranking for quality of service provided to the public in 2019, out of the 23 government bodies ranked by the Government ICT Authority's Unit for the Improvement of Government Service to the Public, following its evaluation of the quality of government service to the public.

**approximately  
163,000**

The number of public queries to the telephone service center in 2019.

**NIS 15  
million**

In the years 2017–2019 the ILA paid an average of approximately NIS 7.5 million per annum to the operator of the telephone service center and approximately NIS 7.5 million to the operators of express service centers.

**approximately  
47,500**

Average number of service operations performed by express service centers annually in the years 2017–2019: rights certifications; rights transfers and registrations or cancellations of mortgage liabilities.

**Approximately  
4% (6 out of  
164)**

Of the forms on the ILA's website are online forms enabling the public to complete processes on line.

**approximately  
9,300**


Average daily number of entries into the ILA's website in 2020.

**30%–  
46%**





Of all calls from the telephone service center to the express service centers were answered more than four days later by four out of the five operators (excluding the southern center).



## Audit actions

 From February to September 2020, the Office of the State Comptroller audited aspects of public service in the ILA. Inter alia, the following subjects were audited: the defining of a strategy and standards; online services; the telephone service center; the express service centers (including during the period of the covid-19 pandemic); the accessibility of the services; and the handling of public complaints. The audit was performed in the ILA. Supplementary examinations were performed in the Government ICT Authority<sup>1</sup>, in the headquarters of the national initiative "Digital Israel" in the Ministry of Cyber and Digital Matters, in the Government Housing Administration in the Ministry of Finance and in the Commission for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities in the Ministry of Justice.

## Key findings

-  **Service strategy** – The ILA has not yet defined a service strategy to help its service-providers understand what is expected of them during service meetings with customers, nor has it formulated a work plan for the medium and long range that explains its operating principles and defines performance timeframes. In the years 2016–2020, the Israel Land Council did not discuss the issue of service to the public.
-  **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** – The ILA has not yet formulated or published an SLA containing the government authority's commitment to conform to a defined timeframe for completing the handling of each type of service requested by its customers, encompassing all processes that it performs in all of its units, apart from four processes being performed by the express service centers. In addition, the ILA has not established a system for measuring handling times at the express service centers nor required the companies operating the express service centers to measure their own handling times using a computerized system and report their findings to it.
-  **Online forms and reducing bureaucratic paperwork** – As of the audit completion date, the ILA's website had only six forms that enable a full online process to be completed, out of 164 forms. Furthermore, the ILA's work plan does not define those services for which it plans to reduce its demands for information and documents from the public, nor define the targets for reducing the quantity of information and documents that it requires from the public.
-  **Making databases accessible** – The ILA's work plans for the years 2017–2020 did not include plans that specify tasks and targets relating to improving public accessibility

<sup>1</sup> The Government ICT Authority is a unit in the Ministry of Digital Affairs



to the databases in its possession. The ILA has published only three databases on the government database website, however, even they do not comply with the requirements specified in the ICT Authority's directives.



**The telephone service center and the express service centers** – In 2019, the telephone service center received approximately 163,000 calls. More than one third (35%) were requests for clarifications about rights certificates and rights transfers. The services that the ILA provided to the public through the telephone service center over the years are limited, and common actions are still not being executed through it, such as payment collections and the issuing of rights certificates. Face-to-face service provided at an express service center is geographically dependent: services cannot be obtained at every express service center about properties anywhere in Israel, but rather only about properties in particular regions.



**The service at the express service centers during the period of covid-19** – The level of service provided by the ILA through express service centers during the period of the covid-19 (handling of online requests) was low relative to the level of service previously provided. As a result, a large number of unhandled files accumulated at the express service centers.



**Access to service by people with disabilities** – As of the audit completion date, the ILA had not performed an examination to identify accessibility modifications necessary for services that it provides to people with disabilities, even though, pursuant to the regulations, it should have performed this examination more than six years ago. Furthermore, the level of accessibility of particular applications on the ILA's website is still not up to the standard required in the regulations. At issue are applications for several of the core services that the ILA provides online to the public: publishing tenders, tender results and locating building plans. During an accessibility audit performed by the Unit for Improving Government Service to the Public, the average grade that all audited authorities received in 2019 was 80 points, while the grade that the ILA received in the audit was 68 points.



**Public complaints** – The ILA has not examined which areas or units received a particularly high number of public complaints, nor has it analyzed the reasons for these complaints, nor drawn organization-wide conclusions, nor formulated recommendations for reducing the number of complaints.



**Personal zone** – The ILA developed a personal zone on its website enabling the public to receive information about land held by the ILA.



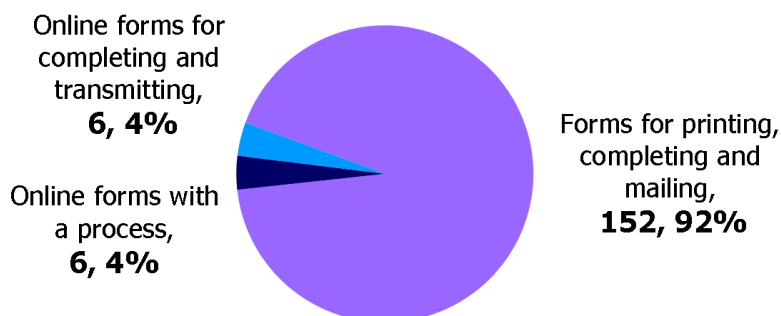
**Online applications** – The ILA has instituted full online processes for approving construction additions for condominium complexes, registering in the surveyors' registry, and granting approvals to residents to occupy new housing complexes.

## Key recommendations

- 💡 It is recommended that the Israel Land Council attend to the service being provided to the public, develop a strategy or overall policy for providing service to the public, and supervise the ILA's actions in this regard. It is also recommended that a discussion of this matter be held periodically, and at least annually.
- 💡 The ILA should take action to increase its full online services by converting standardized paper forms into forms which can be processed online and by developing additional digital applications.
- 💡 The ILA should decide for which services it will reduce the quantity of information and documents it requires from the public. It should also create interfaces for forwarding information. This will enable it to reduce the number of documents and certificates it requires from the public.
- 💡 It is recommended that the ILA's management discuss annually the telephone service center's performance, and analyze and draw conclusions in this regard. It should then act on these conclusions, and examine ways to increase the public's satisfaction with the telephone service.
- 💡 It is recommended that the ILA conduct a rapid, orderly analysis and draw conclusions in relation to the actions that it performed from the outset of the covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, if any future restrictions will have to be imposed on face-to-face service; it will already be better prepared to provide alternative service and minimize any reduction in service. It is also recommended that the ILA examine the entire set of services that it provided during the covid-19 pandemic, consider ways to monitor the level of service provided to the public, and develop additional online services to the public designed for normal times.
- 💡 The ILA should take action to provide egalitarian and readily accessible service to all of its customers, including people with disabilities.
- 💡 It is recommended that the ILA implement monitoring and control processes for complaint management, and publish its procedure for handling complaints to the public.



### Types of forms provided by the ILA to the public, August 2020



Source: ILA website, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

## Summary

Considering the numerous technological changes over the last decade that enable the development of public service tools and processes, and considering that the public expects to receive a customized response to its needs accordingly, government bodies need to change their approach to service-provision to the public, and should strive to improve existing services and develop new advanced services.

This audit found that the ILA's services to the public require development and improvement. The ILA has still not defined a service strategy and a corresponding SLA in which it undertakes to conform to the service approach that it defined for itself. The ILA has taken action to develop digital services, such as a personal zone on its website and online processes, but these actions are still limited and should be expanded and made accessible to the public. Furthermore, the ILA provides face-to-face services through express service centers, but it failed to apply adequate controls over their activities, and the services that it provides through the telephone service center are also limited. Deficiencies were also found in relation to employee training in the provision of service to people with disabilities, and in relation to the accessibility of its website. Referring to the ILA's activities during the period of the covid-19, it should be noted that the level of service it provided through the express service centers (handling of online requests) was low, relative to the level of service it provided prior to the covid-19 pandemic. The ILA should rectify the deficiencies specified in this report in order to ensure advanced, efficient service, customized to the needs of the public.