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Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-16

Director of Bureau : Director of Administration

Session No. : 3

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO004

(Question Serial No. 0213)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

The Occupy Movement that took place last year was the largest social movement in the recent years of Hong Kong and the related records will constitute a crucial part of the history of Hong Kong. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to preserve significant government records covering the periods before, during and after the Movement. In 2015-2016, has the Government Records Service reserved any resources to launch a special project to handle government records related to the Occupy Movement? If yes, what will be the specific work plan, timetable, staffing arrangement and estimated expenditure for such project? If no, what are the reasons? Will the Government take any measures to ensure that records related to the Occupy Movement will not be destroyed wilfully? If yes, what are the details of such measures? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth (Member Question No. 210)

Reply:

All government records, including those relating to the Occupy Movement, are managed in accordance with the mandatory records management requirements promulgated to all government bureaux and departments (B/Ds). Specifically, B/Ds should transfer the records to the Government Records Service (GRS) for appraisal or permanent preservation according to the respective disposal schedules. In addition, B/Ds must obtain the prior agreement of GRS before they destroy any government records. GRS' establishment has increased by 32.9% from 2011-12 to 2014-15. In 2015-16, GRS will continue with its ongoing duties of appraising and preserving historical records by deploying the overall resources earmarked for GRS in the Draft Estimates.

--End--

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO028

(Question Serial No. 2138)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding speeding up work relating to appraisal of records and accessioning of archival records, please provide the following information:

(1) the quantity of time-expired records disposed of by various Government departments and the staff establishments of the Government Records Service for handling records transferred from various departments in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 respectively; and

(2) the estimated expenditure for and plan to strengthen the staff establishment with regard to speeding up work relating to appraisal of records and accessioning of archival records in 2015-16.

Asked by: Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing (Member Question No. 33)

Reply:

Regarding the work relating to appraisal of records and accessioning of archival records of by the Government Records Service (GRS) -

(1) The total quantity of time-expired records transferred from bureaux/departments (B/Ds) and processed by GRS in linear metre (LM) in the calendar years 2012, 2013 and 2014 are 10 564 LM, 7 376 LM and 9 431 LM respectively.

The number and rank of officers responsible for the work of records appraisal and accessioning in the calendar years 2012, 2013 and 2014 are set out below –

	2012	2013	2014
Rank	No.	No.	No.
Archivist	1	1	1
Senior Assistant Archivist	3	3	5
Assistant Archivist	1	2	7
Total:	5	6	13

The above officers were supported by clerical and other supporting staff.

- (2) To speed up the work relating to appraisal of records and accessioning of archival records in 2015-16, we will deploy additional Assistant Archivists from the existing establishment to clear the backlogs. The number and rank of officers responsible for the work of records appraisal and accessioning of archival records are set out below –

Rank	No.
Archivist	1
Senior Assistant Archivist	5
Assistant Archivist	11
Total:	17

The estimated expenditure for the above officers is \$4.33 million.

We will keep the work relating to appraisal of records and accessioning of archival records and its manpower requirements under review.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO034

(Question Serial No. 1456)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

With regard to the Government's electronic records management, does the Government have guidelines for handling its internal electronic records? Is there a mechanism in place to save important electronic records, such as particular emails or electronic documents? Does the Government provide training for the staff responsible for handling electronic records in various departments? What are the manpower and expenditure involved for the above initiatives?

Does the Government know and has it compiled statistics on the number of electronic records that have been destroyed or deleted without appraisal by the Government? Does the Government have plans to improve its internal handling of electronic records? What are the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon MOK Charles Peter (Member Question No. 35)

Reply:

The Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office issued a General Circular in 2009 setting out mandatory requirements on the management of government records including both electronic records and non-electronic records for compliance by all government bureaux and departments (B/Ds). According to the Circular, if a B/D has not yet implemented an Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERKS) to manage its electronic records, subject officers should arrange to print all electronic records (including e-mail records created and received) for filing in an appropriate paper-based filing system.

To assist B/Ds to meet the challenges in implementing an ERKS, the Government Records Service (GRS) has developed a series of ERKS implementation guidelines to provide guidance for B/Ds to initiate, plan and implement an ERKS in their organisations. GRS has also developed records management standards, best practices and guidelines to support

government-wide implementation of electronic records management (ERM) and ERKS. GRS also conducts briefings and seminars for B/Ds in order to provide guidance and support for them to develop or adopt ERKS and to drive ERM in the Government. The above work is carried out by GRS as part of its ongoing duties and by deploying the overall manpower and resources earmarked for GRS in the draft Estimates.

GRS has not received any report from B/Ds that there are electronic records which have been destroyed or deleted without appraisal by the Government. Nonetheless, GRS is now working with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to conduct a study to gauge the ERM situations in B/Ds with a view to ascertaining whether there are irregularities that need to be rectified. The plan is to complete the study in the second quarter of 2015. Depending on the results of the study, GRS will provide proper guidelines and assistance to help B/Ds rectify any irregularities identified. If additional manpower and expenditure are required, they will be met by deploying the overall resources earmarked for GRS in the draft Estimates.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO050

(Question Serial No. 4857)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

According to the Programme, it is the responsibility of the Government Records Service (GRS) to identify and preserve records of archival value, valuable government publications and printed materials and provide storage and disposal services for inactive records. In this regard, please:

- (1) List the number (and linear metres) of records, publications and printed materials transferred or pending transfer by Government departments that were appraised by the GRS in the past year;
- (2) List the number (and linear metres) of records, publications and printed materials transferred by Government departments that were retained and preserved by the GRS in the past year; and
- (3) List the number (and linear metres) of records, publications and printed materials identified by Government departments that were approved for destruction by the GRS in the past year.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (Member Question No. 109)

Reply:

- (a) In respect of records, the number and linear metres (lm) appraised, transferred to the Government Records Service (GRS) for permanent preservation and approved for destruction in 2014 are as follows -

Year	Records appraised		Records transferred to GRS for permanent preservation		Records approved for destruction*	
	No. of rec. ('000)	lm	No. of rec. ('000)	lm	No. of rec. ('000)	lm
2014	1 106	9 143	46	596	92 197	89 277

**All requests for destruction of records are processed in accordance with the requirements set out in the corresponding records retention and disposal schedules (disposal schedules). The decision as to whether records were of no archival value or having potential archival value had been made a few years back when the relevant disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, GRS Director's approval would be given prior to their physical destruction. For those having potential archival value, they would be appraised again by the Public Records Office of GRS and only those confirmed to be of no archival value would be approved by GRS Director for destruction.*

The routine records, mainly of programme nature, of nine departments took up 94% of the number of the records (74% of lm) in this column. They include the large number of arrival and departure cards from the Immigration Department, computer printouts of tax-related systems from the Inland Revenue Department, various types of trade-related documents and cargo manifests from the Census and Statistics Department, the Trade and Industry Department and the Customs and Excise Department, public files of companies registered under Companies Ordinance from the Companies Registry, revenue-related administrative records such as copies of counterfoils of receipts issued, tickets and permits from the Marine Department, request forms for laboratory tests and records relating to application for cremation permit from the Department of Health and various general and departmental forms from the Hong Kong Police Force.

- (b) As for publications and printed materials, GRS' Central Preservation Library for Government Publications (CPL) selects and preserves government publications and printed material with permanent value. A copy of new publication/printed material will be forwarded by bureaux and departments (B/Ds) to CPL for selection. CPL is not responsible for granting approval for destruction of B/Ds' library items but will select suitable library items for preservation.

The numbers of publications and printed materials received for selection and that preserved by CPL in 2014 are 6 857 and 818 respectively. We do not keep statistics in "linear metre" for selected items.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO059

(Question Serial No. 5209)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

With regard to the handling of records of policy bureaux and departments by the Government Records Service (GRS) in 2014-15, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

- a) Please provide a breakdown by policy bureaux and departments on the number of government records handled, preserved and destroyed by the GRS in 2014-15.
- b) Please provide GRS's backlog of records in each of the past three years. In 2015-16, will the GRS introduce new initiatives to speed up the progress of clearing the backlog of records? If so, what are the specific plan and timetable of and estimated expenditure on such initiatives?
- c) Based on its existing resources and manpower, how long will it take for the GRS to clear the backlog of records?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth (Member Question No. 613)

Reply:

- (a) The breakdown by policy bureaux and departments (B/Ds) on the number of government records handled, preserved and approved for destruction by GRS in 2014 are tabulated below –

B/D	Number of records		
	Appraised	Transferred to GRS for permanent preservation	Approved for destruction#
Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department	103	75	4 340
Architectural Services Department	2 128	8 213	9 879
Audit Commission	1 225	342	883
Auxiliary Medical Service	21	21	1 280
Buildings Department	4	0	779 897
Census and Statistics Department	0	0	5 545 074
Central Policy Unit	35	34	251
Chief Executive's Office (including Executive Council Secretariat)	390	83	532
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (including Efficiency Unit)	48	24	16 525
Civil Aid Service	0	0	5
Civil Aviation Department	94	20	74
Civil Engineering and Development Department	15 508	234	18 243
Civil Service Bureau	548	350	70 773

B/D	Number of records		
	Appraised	Transferred to GRS for permanent preservation	Approved for destruction#
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (including ITC and OGCIO)	2 841	2 080	2 566
Companies Registry	0	25	5 420 473
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau	64	61	2 133
Correctional Services Department	519	2	51 325
Customs and Excise Department	186	59	2 640 727
Department of Health	881	8	1 529 282
Department of Justice	26 555	0	56 006
Development Bureau	77	12	863
Drainage Services Department	916	19	9 323
Education Bureau	3 283	69	70 079
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	404	0	255 469
Environment Bureau / Environmental Protection Department	0	0	16 764

B/D	Number of records		
	Appraised	Transferred to GRS for permanent preservation	Approved for destruction#
Financial Secretary's Office (including Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit)	81	23	194
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau	4 180	738	4 419
Fire Services Department	3 599	0	77 747
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	16 395	669	237 300
Food and Health Bureau	8	0	898
Government Flying Service	0	0	354
Government Laboratory	0	0	20 233
Government Logistics Department	2 168	0	40 809
Government Property Agency	46	10	172
Highways Department	11 556	9	53 417
Home Affairs Bureau	357	29	1 827
Home Affairs Department	11 948	296	22 082
Hong Kong Monetary Authority	89	89	0

B/D	Number of records		
	Appraised	Transferred to GRS for permanent preservation	Approved for destruction#
Hong Kong Observatory	2	1	1
Hong Kong Police Force	22 079	1 347	1 399 253
Immigration Department	474 715	25	39 189 873
Independent Commission Against Corruption	613	52	561
Information Services Department	2 211	2 309	750
Inland Revenue Department	317 005	8	24 370 906
Intellectual Property Department	7 039	0	11 418
Invest Hong Kong	744	16	728
Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service	44	40	4
Judiciary	23	19 960	11 166
Labour and Welfare Bureau	511	8	503
Labour Department	658	205	880 559
Land Registry	998	0	1 420

B/D	Number of records		
	Appraised	Transferred to GRS for permanent preservation	Approved for destruction#
Lands Department	1 807	2	489 004
Legal Aid Department	106 023	0	136 265
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	1 974	52	334 662
Marine Department	519	52	2 143 624
Office of the Communications Authority	66	1 652	2 947
Official Receiver's Office	5 666	0	11 950
Planning Department	1 000	302	12 201
Post Office	31	350	1 613
Public Service Commission	28	2	586
Radio Television Hong Kong	0	526	752
Rating and Valuation Department	34	1	21 849
Registration and Electoral Office	510	0	323 621
Security Bureau	251	1	23 580
Social Welfare Department	8 067	4 416	421 592

B/D	Number of records		
	Appraised	Transferred to GRS for permanent preservation	Approved for destruction#
Student Financial Assistance Agency	226	1	368 375
Trade and Industry Department	449	26	4 051 765
Transport and Housing Bureau (Housing Branch)/ Housing Department	45 307	730	383 222
Transport and Housing Bureau (Transport Branch)	204	1	636
Transport Department	70	3	630 047
Treasury	381	33	2 976
Water Supplies Department	56	0	6 823
Grand Total	1 105 568	45 715	92 197 450

All requests for destruction of records are processed in accordance with the requirements set out in the corresponding records retention and disposal schedules (disposal schedules). The decision as to whether records were of no archival value or having potential archival value had been made a few years back when the relevant disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, GRS Director's approval would be given prior to their physical destruction. For those having potential archival value, they would be appraised again by the Public Records Office of GRS and only those confirmed to be of no archival value would be approved by GRS Director for destruction.

The routine records, mainly of programme nature, of nine departments took up 94% of the number of the records (74% of lm) in this column. They include the large number of arrival and departure cards from the Immigration Department, computer printouts of tax-related systems from the Inland Revenue Department, various types of trade-related documents and cargo manifests from the Census and Statistics Department, the Trade and Industry Department and the Customs and Excise Department, public files of companies registered under Companies Ordinance from

the Companies Registry, revenue-related administrative records such as copies of counterfoils of receipts issued, tickets and permits from the Marine Department, request forms for laboratory tests and records relating to application for cremation permit from the Department of Health and various general and departmental forms from the Hong Kong Police Force.

- (b) The backlog for records appraisal for the past three years (i.e. 2012, 2013 and 2014) is tabulated below -

Year	No. of records
2012	143 595
2013	120 857
2014	37 751

Additional resources have been earmarked since 2012-13 for GRS to clear the backlog of records appraisal. In 2015-16, GRS will continue with its ongoing efforts in appraising and preserving historical records by deploying the existing resources earmarked for GRS in the Draft Estimates.

- (c) We plan to clear the backlog for records appraisal by 2015.

--End--

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO061

(Question Serial No. 5744)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Does the Government Records Service (GRS) expect that it will be able to clear the backlog of records of the previous few years in 2015-16? If not, will the Government consider further increasing the number of professional staff in the GRS in 2015-16 or the following financial year? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth (Member Question No. 231)

Reply:

We plan to clear the backlog for records appraisal by 2015. Additional resources have been earmarked since 2012-13 for the Government Records Service (GRS) to clear the backlog. In 2015-16, GRS will continue with its ongoing efforts in appraising and preserving historical records by deploying the existing resources earmarked for GRS in the Draft Estimates.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**CSO077****(Question Serial No. 3811)**

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

1. What are the expenditure and contents of the publicity programmes to promote the services of the Government Records Service (GRS) among the public in 2015-16?

2. Does the GRS have any plans to procure archival records relating to Hong Kong from different places in 2015-16? Please provide information on the expenditure involved and the relevant details. Will the GRS also implement any programmes to assist local researchers to obtain information available for access from the records offices of different places with a view to facilitating researches on Hong Kong's documentary heritage?

3. According to the replies given in 2014-15 (Reply Serial Nos: CSO025 and S CSO03), the GRS will procure 227 archival records from the National Archives of the United Kingdom. What is the progress of the procurement? When are the records expected to be made available for public access?

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (Member Question No. 48)

Reply:

1. The expenditure and details of the publicity and educational programmes to be implemented by GRS in 2015-16 are set out below -

Year	Publicity and educational programmes	Expenditure (\$ million)
2015-16	Government Records Service (GRS) plans to - - organise at least 25 group visits to GRS; - conduct a series of educational workshops to help teachers and students to use the archival holdings kept in GRS; - organise a series of thematic film shows; - launch a thematic exhibition together with an on-line Reference Resources Pages; - organise roving exhibitions in Tamar Central Government Offices	1.58 (estimated)

	and Hong Kong Central Library; - participate in a cultural and historical project with another institution; - enrich the contents of the Educational Resource Portal, revamp several GRS web pages to attract more people to view the digitised holdings and information; - digitise popular and frequently-accessed items; and - continue to broadcast an Announcement for Public Interest to promote the services provided by GRS and public appreciation of Hong Kong's documentary heritage.	
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2. In 2015-16, GRS will continue to identify newly released archival records relating to Hong Kong from other archives and acquire copies of such records in order to enrich Public Records Office (PRO)'s holdings as appropriate and to facilitate the work of local researchers. An amount of \$150,000 has been earmarked in the estimates for the purpose.

3. In 2014-15, 179 digitised records relating to Hong Kong were acquired from the National Archives of the UK (TNA). They are mainly from eight record series. Details are as follows -

	Series title	Covering years
(a)	Prime Minister's Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1974-1979	1977-1979
(b)	PREM 19: Records of the Prime Minister's Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1979-1997	1979-1983
(c)	Colonial Office and predecessors: Confidential General and Confidential Original Correspondence	1946-1951
(d)	Colonial Office and Commonwealth Office: Defence Department and successors: Original Correspondence	1952-1959
(e)	Colonial Office and Commonwealth Office: Far Eastern Department and successors: Registered Files (FED Series)	1954-1965
(f)	Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Far Eastern Department: Registered Files (F and FE Series)	1971-1980
(g)	Commonwealth Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Hong Kong Departments: Registered Files, Hong Kong, British Honduras, British Indian Ocean Territories and the Seychelles (HW and HK Series)	1967-1980
(h)	Foreign and Commonwealth Office and predecessors: Nationality and Treaty Departments: Registered Files (NN, NT, TY and GN Series)	1976-1977

The above-mentioned records were received by PRO in February 2015. After completing quality checking and records description and arrangement, they will be made available for public inspection in April 2015.

PRO continues to follow up with TNA on the reproduction of the remaining 48 items relating to the UK Cabinet Office.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-CSO01

(Question Serial No. S0017)

Head: (142) Government Secretariat: Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration (Ms Kitty CHOI)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

(1) What are the 4 Government departments which have fully implemented the “electronic records keeping system”? What is the implementation timetable for departments that have not yet implemented the system?

(2) What are the contents of the internal guidelines for the “electronic records keeping system”? Please provide the relevant information.

(3) Regarding the joint study currently conducted by the Government Records Service and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to evaluate the implementation of electronic records management by bureaux/departments, which is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2015, will the Government disclose the consultancy report? If so, when will it do so?

Asked by: Hon MOK Charles Peter (Member Question No.)

Reply:

The four Government bureaux/departments (B/Ds) which have already implemented an electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS) are the Efficiency Unit, the Communications and Technology Branch of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Government Records Service (GRS) and the Rating and Valuation Department.

The E-Government Steering Committee chaired by the Financial Secretary has reviewed the capacity to implement a wider rollout of ERKS in the Government. In the next stage of ERKS implementation, a maximum of six B/Ds of a larger scale and with more complex recordkeeping requirements will be recruited. This phased development is to ensure that implementation issues are comprehensively addressed and a more certain evaluation of costs and benefits can be made before full extension of ERKS across the Government.

To assist B/Ds in initiating, planning, implementing, managing and maintaining an ERKS, GRS has developed a series of ERKS implementation guidelines as appended below to provide guidance to B/Ds:

- (i) Guidelines on Management of Electronic Mails
- (ii) Disposal of Original Records (for records that have been digitised and stored in a digital form)
- (iii) Functional Requirements of an Electronic Recordkeeping System
- (iv) Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
- (v) Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - Implementation Guidelines
- (vi) Manual on Evaluation of an Electronic Recordkeeping System (Exposure draft)
- (vii) A Handbook on Preservation of Electronic Records
- (viii) Guidelines on Mapping out Implementation of an Electronic Recordkeeping System in the Context of Developing Organisational Electronic Information Management Strategies
- (ix) A Handbook on Records Management Practices and Guidelines for an Electronic Recordkeeping System
- (x) Guidelines on Implementation of an Electronic Recordkeeping System: Key Considerations and Preparation Work Required

The study to gauge the electronic records management situations in B/Ds is being conducted internally by GRS and OGCIO. The summary findings of this study will be made available after the study has been completed.

- End -