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Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2019-20

Director of Bureau : Director of Administration

Session No. : 3

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO010

(Question Serial No. 2913)

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 Programme (2) Government Records Service, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1) Please set out in tabular form for each of the past 5 years (i) the number of applications for deferral of transfer received by the Government Records Service, (ii) the number of approvals, and (iii) the number of records involved in the applications, sorted by (iv) the applying departments.

2014

(iv) Applying Department	(i) Number of Applications	(ii) Number of Approvals	(iii) Number of Records involved in the Applications
e.g. The Hong Kong Police Force			

2015

(iv) Applying Department	(i) Number of Applications	(ii) Number of Approvals	(iii) Number of Records involved in the Applications

2016

(iv) Applying Department	(i) Number of Applications	(ii) Number of Approvals	(iii) Number of Records involved in the Applications

2017

(iv) Applying Department	(i) Number of Applications	(ii) Number of Approvals	(iii) Number of Records involved in the Applications

2018

(iv) Applying Department	(i) Number of Applications	(ii) Number of Approvals	(iii) Number of Records involved in the Applications

2) Please set out for the past 3 years (i) the names and subjects of the records involved in applications for deferral of transfer, (ii) the departments requesting deferral of transfer, (iii) the duration of deferral requested, (iv) the reasons for requesting deferral, and (v) the final approval status.

(i) Name and Subject of the Record	(ii) Department Requesting Deferral of Transfer	(iii) Duration of Deferral Requested	(iv) Reasons for Requesting Deferral	(v) Final Approval Status

3) Please set out for the past 3 years, among the records whose deferral of transfer was rejected, (i) the number of records eventually transferred to the Public Records Office (PRO) for preservation, (ii) the number of lost records, and (iii) the number of records destroyed without authorisation.

Name and Subject of the Record for which Deferral of Transfer was Rejected	(i) Number of Records Eventually Transferred to PRO for preservation	(ii) Number of Lost Records	(iii) Number of Records Destroyed without Authorisation

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

1) Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds) are required to transfer time-expired records having archival value or potential archival value to the Government Records Service (GRS) for permanent retention or appraisal according to the General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules developed by GRS and record disposal schedules approved by GRS. Before March 2014, if there were valid reasons to defer the transfer of the relevant records by more than 2 years, B/Ds should set them out in writing for agreement by a directorate officer in the B/D concerned. However, starting from March 2014, the Government has tightened the above requirements. Applications for deferral of transfer of records must be agreed in writing by a directorate officer in the B/D concerned at the level of deputy secretary/deputy head of department and GRS should be consulted in advance.

As applications for deferral of transfer of records were handled internally by B/Ds and needed not be submitted to GRS before the requirements were tightened in March 2014, GRS does not have relevant information before this date. From March 2014 to

the end of 2018, GRS received a total of 108 applications for deferral of transfer of records. Apart from 2 applications which are still being processed, only 11 out of the 106 applications (completed cases) involving 361 records were approved based on sufficient grounds. For example, if a record contains information concerning unresolved matters that may have financial or legal implications, it may constitute a reasonable ground for deferral of transfer. Information on the applications for deferral of transfer received by GRS in the past 5 years are set out in the following table:

Year	Applying Department	Cases of Deferral of Transfer		Records Involved	
		Number of Applications	Number of Approvals	Number of Applications	Number of Approvals
2014 (from March)	Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau	1	-	8	-
	Government Laboratory	2	-	4 575	-
	Home Affairs Department	2	2	2	2
	Housing Department	1	-	4	-
	Highways Department	1	-	113	-
	Transport Department	1	-	54	-
2015	Home Affairs Department	3	-	260	-
	Housing Department	18	5	3 644	284
	Hong Kong Police Force	1	-	11	-
	Lands Department	1	-	306	-
	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	35	-	195	-
	Rating and Valuation Department	1	-	357	-
	Security Bureau	4	4	75	75
	Transport Department	2	-	21	-
2016	Architectural Services Department	1	-	1 150	-
	Civil Engineering and Development Department	1	-	46	-
	Department of Justice	1	-	8	-
	Education Bureau	1	-	1	-
	Home Affairs Department	1	-	30	-
	Housing Department	6	-	812	-
	Hong Kong Police Force	1	-	1	-
	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	5	-	66	-
	Security Bureau	1	-	11	-
	Transport Department	4	-	74	-
2017	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	7	-	86	-
2018	Housing Department	3	-	68	-
	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	1	-	3	-
	Rating and Valuation Department	2	(See note)	971	-
Total		108	11	12 952	361

Note: Due to the relatively large number of records involved in the 2 applications, the GRS is still appraising the records to determine whether they have archival value, for the purpose of considering the cases.

2 and 3)

There were 35 applications for deferral of transfer in the past 3 years (i.e. from 2016 to 2018). So far, none of them have been given approval for deferral of transfer.

Among the 35 applications in the past 3 years, 2 applications still have records being appraised to determine whether they have archival value, while the other 33 applications were not given approval for deferral of transfer. Of these applications, 10 were withdrawn by the departments concerned after considering GRS' explanations; their reasons included the following: the records concerned were not time-expired records (i.e. their retention periods had yet to expire); or work was still underway; or incorrect applications were submitted as a result of the applicants' misunderstanding about the mechanism of deferral of transfer. In another 15 applications, the records of the B/Ds concerned were appraised by the Public Records Office (PRO) as having no archival value; their transfer to the PRO for permanent preservation was therefore not required. Details about these 25 applications are not given here in view of the fact that they, in nature, no longer involve deferral of transfer of archival records.

As regards the remaining 8 applications for which deferral of transfer was not approved, the details are set out in the following table:

Name and Subject of the Record for which Deferral of Transfer Was Not Approved	Bureau/Department Requesting Deferral of Transfer	(i) Number of Records Eventually Transferred to the PRO for Preservation	(ii) Number of Lost Records	(iii) Number of Records Destroyed without Authorisation
Programme Records (Records relating to planning)	Housing Department (2 applications)	The applications involved a total of 96 records, 59 of which were appraised as having archival value and transferred after discussion between GRS and the Department.	0	0
Administrative Records (Records relating to human resources)	Leisure and Cultural Services Department (2 applications)	The applications involved a total of 10 records, 9 of which were appraised as having archival value and transferred after discussion between GRS and the Department.	0	0
Programme Records (Policy records)	Security Bureau (1 application)	The application involved a total of 11 records, all of which were appraised as having archival value and transferred after discussion between GRS and the Bureau.	0	0
Programme Records (Records relating to public transport)	Transport Department (3 applications)	The applications involved a total of 73 records, 42 of which were appraised as having archival value and were transferred after discussion between GRS and the Department.	0	0
Total	8 applications	121 records	0	0

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO011

(Question Serial No. 2914)

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 Programme (2) Government Records Service, please inform this Committee of the following:

1) Please set out in tabular form the (i) numbers of cases of records lost, (ii) numbers of records lost, (iii) names and contents of records lost, (iv) numbers of staff involved and (v) disciplinary actions and administrative measures taken, specifying whether they are (including but not limited to) advice, counselling or disciplinary actions, of individual departments in the past 5 years.

Year

Department concerned	(i) Number of cases of records lost	(ii) Number of records lost	(iii) Name and contents of records lost	(iv) Number of staff involved	(v) Disciplinary action and administrative measure taken

2) Please set out in tabular form the (i) numbers of cases of records destroyed without authorisation, (ii) numbers of records destroyed without authorisation, (iii) names and contents of records destroyed without authorisation, (iv) numbers of staff involved and (v) disciplinary actions and administrative measures taken, specifying whether they are (including but not limited to) advice, counselling or disciplinary actions, of individual departments in the past 5 years.

Year

Department concerned	(i) Number of cases of records destroyed without authorisation	(ii) Number of records destroyed without authorisation	(iii) Name and contents of records destroyed without authorisation	(iv) Number of staff involved	(v) Disciplinary action and administrative measure taken

3) Please set out in tabular form the details of cases where the Government Records Service (GRS) deemed it necessary to take disciplinary or administrative actions, including the (i) date of incident, (ii) contents of the case, (iii) departments concerned, (iv) recommendations of GRS, (v) responses from departments and (vi) final decisions and follow-ups in the past 5 years.

(i) Date of the incident	(ii) Contents of the case	(iii) Department concerned	(iv) Recommendation of GRS	(v) Response from department	(vi) Final decision and follow-up

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

- 1) In the past 5 years (2014 to 2018), the Government Records Service (GRS) received and finished processing 130 reports concerning the loss of records in bureaux/departments (B/Ds). A breakdown of such reports is provided in the following table -

Year	B/Ds concerned	(i) Number of cases of records lost	(ii) Number of records lost	(iii) Name and contents of records lost	(iv) Number of staff involved (number of cases)	(v) Disciplinary action and administrative measure taken
2014	Civil Aid Service, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Education Bureau, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, Fire Services Department, Highways Department, Home Affairs Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Housing Department, Office of the Communications Authority and Social Welfare Department	25	880	Mainly include forms, general administrative and programme files and documents, inventory lists, notebooks, etc.	21 (12) 0 (13) (See Note (1))	Minor Offences Reports, verbal warnings, advice or tightening the monitoring and requirements on the outsourced service contractor
2015	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Civil Aviation Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Department of Health, Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Home Affairs Department, Hong Kong Observatory, Hong Kong Police Force, Immigration Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Security Bureau	25	1 351	Mainly include forms, arrival/departure cards for visitors, general programme files and documents, etc.	20 (13) 0 (12) (See Note (1))	Minor Offences Reports, verbal warnings, written advice, or advice

Year	B/Ds concerned	(i) Number of cases of records lost	(ii) Number of records lost	(iii) Name and contents of records lost	(iv) Number of staff involved (number of cases)	(v) Disciplinary action and administrative measure taken
2016	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Buildings Department, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Home Affairs Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Housing Department, Labour Department and Social Welfare Department	27	232	Mainly include forms, general administrative and programme files, penalty tickets, journey records, etc.	24 (17) 0 (10) (See Note (1))	Minor Offences Reports, disciplinary counselling, verbal warnings, warnings, written advice, advice or reminder
2017	Buildings Department, Civil Aviation Department, Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Housing Department, ICAC, Labour Department, Legal Aid Department and Social Welfare Department	29	95 and CCTV records (See Note (2))	Mainly include forms, general administrative and programme files and documents, penalty tickets, vouchers for stores, etc.	32 (15) 0 (14) (See Note (1))	Minor Offences Reports, verbal warning, warning, advice, briefings or reminders
2018	Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Highways Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Housing Department, Labour Department, Social Welfare Department, Transport Department, Water Supplies Department and Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency	24	65	Mainly include general administrative and programme files, detained person property receipts, photos, vehicle log books, etc.	16 (12) 0 (12) (See Note (1))	Minor Offences Reports, verbal warnings, advice, guidance, interview or reminders

Note (1): Staff who should be held accountable for the cases could not be identified by the B/Ds concerned after investigation. Hence, no disciplinary action or administrative measure was taken against any of the staff. Nonetheless, to prevent recurrence of similar incidents and to heighten staff awareness of good records management, appropriate improvement measures were introduced by the B/Ds and staff were reminded to carry out good records management practices. The measures included, for example, seminars on records management, instructions or reminders to staff undertaking the relevant work and periodic circulation of departmental policies and rules for records management.

Note (2): The CCTV records could not be retrieved due to hardware failure.

- 2) In the past 5 years (2014 to 2018), GRS received and finished processing 17 reports concerning the unauthorised destruction of records in B/Ds. A breakdown of such reports is provided in the following table –

Year	B/Ds concerned	(i) Number of cases of records destroyed without authorisation	(ii) Number of records destroyed without authorisation	(iii) Name and contents of records destroyed without authorisation	(iv) Number of staff involved (number of cases)	(v) Disciplinary action and administrative measure taken
2014	Fire Services Department and Water Supplies Department	3	695	General programme files and staff appraisals	4 (3)	Written warning, disciplinary counselling or briefings
2015	Hong Kong Observatory	1	988	Accounting records and documents related to supplies	0 (1) (See Note (3))	Counselling or advice to all staff of units concerned
2016	Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Highways Department and Hong Kong Police Force	4	1 369	General administrative and programme files and miscellaneous investigation reports	9 (4)	Verbal warning, counselling or advice
2017	Buildings Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Labour Department and Social Welfare Department	7	2 566	Mainly include staff appraisal files, investigation reports, intake records, etc.	11 (6) 0 (1) (See Note (3))	Minor Offences Report, written warning, verbal warning, counselling, advice, reminder or tightening the monitoring and requirements on the outsourced service contractor

Year	B/Ds concerned	(i) Number of cases of records destroyed without authorisation	(ii) Number of records destroyed without authorisation	(iii) Name and contents of records destroyed without authorisation	(iv) Number of staff involved (number of cases)	(v) Disciplinary action and administrative measure taken
2018	Buildings Department, and Hong Kong Police Force	2	32	General programme files and attachments	3 (2)	Verbal warnings or guidance

Note (3): Staff who should be held accountable for the cases could not be identified by the B/Ds concerned after investigation. Hence, no disciplinary action or administrative measure was taken against any of the staff. Nonetheless, to prevent recurrence of similar incidents and to heighten staff awareness of good records management, appropriate improvement measures were introduced by the B/Ds and staff were reminded to carry out good records management practices. The measures included, for example, seminars on records management, guidance, advice or reminders to staff undertaking the relevant work and periodic circulation of departmental policies and rules for records management.

- 3) In accordance with the mandatory records management requirements, upon receiving a report concerning the loss or unauthorised destruction of records, the Departmental Records Manager (DRM) of the B/D concerned should ascertain the facts and identify the circumstances leading to the loss/unauthorised destruction, consider whether it is necessary to reconstruct the records, take measures to prevent recurrence of similar incidents, and consider whether disciplinary actions or other administrative measures are necessary. The DRM will report the above findings and actions taken to GRS within 3 months.

If non-compliance with the mandatory records management requirements and/or dereliction of records management duties by government officers is found through the investigation, the B/D concerned will take disciplinary actions or other administrative measures commensurate with the circumstances and severity of the non-compliance pursuant to the internal disciplinary mechanism or relevant regimes. With regard to the cases of loss/unauthorised destruction of records in the past 5 years (2014 to 2018), GRS has examined the disciplinary actions or other administrative measures taken by the B/Ds and accepted their final dispositions.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO012

(Question Serial No. 2921)

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:

Currently, if members of the public are not satisfied with the decisions on their applications for access to closed records, they may write to the Director of Administration asking for an appeal against the decision. Please inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) Please set out in tabular form the details of the appeals in respect of applications for access to records received by the Government in the past 5 years, including (i) the name and content of the records to which access was requested; (ii) the covering period of the records; (iii) the departments involved; (iv) the final decisions of the Administration Wing; and (v) the reasons given if the appeals were dismissed.

Year

(i) Name and content of the records to which access was requested	(ii) Covering period of the records	(iii) Departments involved	(iv) Final decisions of the Administration Wing	(v) Reasons given if the appeals were dismissed

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

In the past 5 years, there has been no appeals from any member of the public against any decision on the application for access to closed records.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO013

(Question Serial No. 2922)

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:

Currently, records which are over 30 years old may be withheld from public access temporarily upon review by policy bureaux/departments. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) Please set out in tabular form a list of records which are over 30 years old and have not been transferred to the Government Records Service, including: (i) the file name of the records not yet transferred; (ii) the covering period of the records; (iii) the departments involved; (iv) the number of records (numbers and linear metres); (v) the number of years elapsed after they were due to be transferred; and (vi) the number of reviews already conducted.

(i) File name of the records not yet transferred	(ii) Covering period of the records	(iii) Departments involved	(iv) Number of records (numbers and linear metres)	(v) Number of years elapsed after they were due to be transferred	(vi) Number of reviews already conducted

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

In general, archival records which have been in existence for not less than 30 years or the contents of which have at any time been published can be made available for public inspection. Classified archival records containing sensitive information are treated or vetted on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a longer closure period is required. Every year, the Government Records Service requests all bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to review classified archival records approaching the end of the 30-year closure period so that these records can be made available for public inspection upon the expiry of the 30-year closure period. After B/Ds' reviews, there are a total of 5 004 archival records that have not yet been opened to the public because they contain information relating to defence and security, external affairs, personal privacy, commercial secrets, legal proceedings, etc. If a longer closure period is considered necessary for an individual archival record upon B/Ds' review, the B/D concerned is required to conduct a further review of the record at least once every 5 years, until the record is made open to the public.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO014

(Question Serial No. 2923)

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 digitisation work of the Public Records Office, please inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) the number of records already digitised in each of the past 5 years in a tabular form, including (i) number of records and (ii) file name, broken down by department:

Year	(i) No. of records	(ii) File name
(Department)		

- 2) the number of accesses to records already digitised in each of the past 5 years in a tabular form, including (i) number of people making access and (ii) number of records accessed:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of people making access					
No. of records accessed					

- 3) the (i) manpower establishment responsible for and (ii) list of equipment used in handling record digitisation in each of the past 5 years in a tabular form:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Manpower					
Equipment					

4) whether the Government has any plan to upload records already digitised onto a website for public access for free? If yes, what is the timetable? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

1) The Government Records Service (GRS) has developed a plan since 2001 for digitising its holdings based on criteria commonly adopted by overseas archives/libraries, e.g. physical condition of the items; users' demand or frequency of use; copyright restriction and personal data consideration, etc. The numbers and types of records digitised over the past 5 years are as follows:

Year	(i) No. of records	(ii) File types
2014	1 435 items (125 493 images in total)	Land memorials and general correspondence
2015	7 562 items (691 858 images in total)	Land memorials, Executive Council (ExCo) papers, Finance Committee (FC) papers, probates jurisdiction, programme records of policy bureaux/departments
2016	4 477 items (228 312 images in total)	Land memorials, CO 129 (records of Colonial Office), ExCo papers, plans and programme records of departments
2017	6 570 items (163 764 images in total)	Land memorials, CO 129, ExCo papers, plans, programme records of departments, slides relating to Announcements of Public Interests, photo collections and Government publications
2018	1 800 items (159 544 images in total)	Land memorials, CO 129, ExCo papers, plans, programme records of departments, maps and plans, posters, photo collections and Government publications

The above records, transferred to the GRS from various bureaux/departments at different times, have been assigned Record ID for record and public access purposes. Nevertheless, no classification by transferring department has been made.

2) After digitising its holdings, the GRS will gradually make available the digitised copies for public access. Since users are not required to register for access to digitised records, we are unable to provide the number of records accessed and number of people making access.

3) Digitisation of archival holdings is a complex process which involves a number of different steps, as well as efforts of staff from various offices of the GRS, including staff in different grades working in the Public Records Office, Preservation Service Office, etc. As this is part of their ongoing work, the GRS does not have a separate breakdown for the manpower establishment responsible for such duties.

The list of equipment used for digitisation is set out below:

Year of Purchase	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Equipment	1. Epson Expression 10000XL Scanner	--	1. Image Access Large Format Color Scanner WideTEK 48 2. Zeutschel OS 14000 A0 Scanner	1. Zeutschel OS 15000 Scanner 2. InoTec SCAMAX 403CD Scanner	--

4) Subject to the principles of protecting copyright and personal privacy, we have been uploading the digitised records to the GRS website for public access and free download. The browsing rates of the GRS website over the past 5 years are as follows:

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1 033 155	983 781	1 357 866	5 875 154	13 756 107

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**CSO015****(Question Serial No. 2935)**

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 appraisal of the records transferred from departments, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1) Please set out in tabular form the information on the Government Records Service (GRS)'s appraisal of the records transferred from departments in each of the past 5 years, including (i) the number of records transferred from departments to GRS in the year; (ii) the number of records pending processing in the previous year; (iii) the number of records appraised in the year; (iv) the number of records pending processing by the end of the year; and (v) the number of staff responsible for appraising records in the year.

	(i) Number of records transferred from departments to the GRS in the year	(ii) Number of records pending processing in the previous year	(iii) Number of records appraised in the year	(iv) Number of records pending processing by the end of the year	(v) Number of staff responsible for appraising records in the year
(Year)					

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

The numbers of records received and appraised by the Government Records Service (GRS) in the past 5 years are as follows:

	(i) Number of records transferred from departments to GRS in the year	(ii) Number of records pending processing in the previous year	(iii) Number of records appraised in the year	(iv) Number of records pending processing by the end of the year	(v) Number of staff responsible for appraising records in the year
(Year)					
2014	220 721	211 055	340 779	82 538	1 Archivist 3 Senior Assistant Archivists 4 Assistant Archivists
2015	94 953	82 538	159 045	16 939	1 Archivist 2 Senior Assistant Archivists 4 Assistant Archivists
2016	189 183	16 939	107 186	76 798	1 Archivist 1 Senior Assistant Archivist 3 Assistant Archivists
2017	97 210	76 798	75 376	96 500	1 Archivist 1 Senior Assistant Archivist 2 Assistant Archivists
2018	147 940	96 500	133 737	110 527	1 Archivist 1 Senior Assistant Archivist 3 Assistant Archivists

Like other archival institutions, GRS conducts functional, content and contextual analyses with regard to the functions of the record and its creating organisation, the scope and contents involved in the record, etc. in the course of appraisal, so as to ascertain the archival value of the record. Generally, GRS adopts a two-stage approach in conducting appraisal of records. “Paper appraisal” is based on the examination of the file list of records pending appraisal, taking into account the administrative and disposal history of the bureau/department as well as other documentation research findings. Subject to the nature of different cases, the GRS then selects records with potential archival value for “physical appraisal”, through which the content of each document is examined in detail in order to determine the archival value.

For illustration, take the number of records pending processing by the end of 2018 as shown in the table above. Of the 110 527 records, only about 30 000 have yet to undergo paper appraisal, or are pending physical appraisal after conducting functional, content and contextual analyses. Therefore, despite the seemingly large numbers in columns (ii) and (iv), upon completion of the functional, context and contextual analyses, records of a similar nature could be quickly processed and categorized, and with their disposal action determined.

Besides, the number of records retained and disposed may be adjusted in the middle of the year due to, for example, that the record still has administrative, operational, fiscal and legal value to the department and thus the department will not dispose of the record until the retention period specified in the retention and disposal schedule is fulfilled, or that the numbers of records disposed are found to contain discrepancies during appraisal and thus require correction. Hence, the number of records pending processing by the end of the year of the year will be adjusted in the light of the above circumstances.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO016

(Question Serial No. 2936)

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 classified records, please:

1) tabulate (i) the number of classified records reviewed by the department and (ii) the number of classified records opened for public inspection, with a breakdown by department, in each of the past 5 years.

Year

	(i) Number of classified records reviewed by the department each year	(ii) Number of classified records opened for public inspection each year
(department)		
Example: Hong Kong Police Force		

2) tabulate the current (i) number of classified records that have not been open for public inspection and (ii) their names and content, with a breakdown by department.

Year

	(i) Number of classified records that have not been open for public inspection	(ii) Names and content
(department)		
Example: Hong Kong Police Force		

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

(1) In the past 5 years, the numbers of classified records opened for public inspection upon review by departments were as follows:

Name of Department	Number of classified records reviewed by departments	Number of classified records opened for public inspection
Administration Wing, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Auxiliary Medical Service, Civil Aviation Department, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Civil Service Bureau, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Customs and Excise Department, Department of Health, Development Bureau, Department of Justice, Education Bureau, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Environment Bureau, Executive Council, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Food and Health Bureau, Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, Government Logistics Department, Home Affairs Bureau, Home Affairs Department, Highways Department, Hong Kong Observatory, Hong Kong Police Force, Independent Commission Against Corruption, Immigration Department, Independent Police Complaints Council, Invest Hong Kong, Information Services Department, Innovation and Technology Bureau, Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service, Labour and Welfare Bureau, Labour Department, Land Registry, Lands Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Marine Department, Office of the Communications Authority, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Planning Department, Rating and Valuation Department, Security Bureau, Trade and Industry Department and Transport and Housing Bureau	9 216	5 829

(2) In the past 5 years, 3 387 classified records were reviewed and considered as unsuitable for public access for the time being by departments. These records mainly relate to defence and security, external affairs, privacy of individuals, commercial confidentiality and legal proceedings, etc.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO017

(Question Serial No. 2937)

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:

Currently, if departments fail to transfer time-expired records stored in the records centre to the Government Records Service (GRS) for appraisal as scheduled, they will receive reminders issued by the GRS. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1) Please set out in tabular form the information about the reminders issued by the GRS in each of the past 5 years, including (i) the number of reminders issued each year; (ii) the departments involved; (iii) the quantity of records originally requested to be transferred to the GRS for physical appraisal; (iv) the name and content of such records; (v) the quantity of records finally transferred by the departments; and (vi) the name and content of such records.

	(i) Number of reminders issued each year	(ii) Departments involved	(iii) Quantity of records originally requested to be transferred to the GRS for physical appraisal	(iv) Name and content of such records	(v) Quantity of records finally transferred by the department	(vi) Name and content of such records
Year		(Department A)				
		(Department B)				

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

The Records Centres (RCs) of the Government Records Service (GRS) provide centralised intermediate storage service for inactive records of various bureaux and departments (B/Ds). The records stored temporarily in RCs remain the property of the original B/Ds.

RCs started using the newly developed web-based computer system to support their daily operations from March 2017. As RCs have not maintained statistics for various reminders issued before that time, GRS only has annual statistics for reminders issued since 2018.

Details of reminders issued by GRS to the departments that failed to transfer records due for disposal from RCs for appraisal as scheduled are as follows:

(i) Number of reminders issued	(ii) Departments Involved (Number of cases)	(iii) Quantity of records originally requested to be transferred to the GRS for physical appraisal (linear metres)	(iv) Name and content of such records	(v) Quantity of records finally transferred by the department (linear metres)	(vi) Name and content of such records
30	Housing Department (13)	495.33	Records related to projects and contracts	106.67 (see Note 1)	Records related to projects
	Invest Hong Kong (1)	41	Records related to investment promotion	(see Note 2)	
	Lands Department (1)	1.33	Records related to land registration		

Note 1: The figure in this column represents the quantity of records in column (iii) that have been transferred by the Housing Department (HD) to GRS for physical appraisal as at 20 March 2019. As for the remaining records, HD is reviewing if they are ready for disposal having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements.

Note 2: The relevant departments are reviewing if the records in column (iii) are ready for disposal having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements. Therefore, such records have not been transferred to GRS for physical appraisal up till 20 March 2019.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**CSO018****(Question Serial No. 2939)**

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:

Currently, the Government Records Service requires bureaux/departments to conduct self-assessment surveys on their records management practices. In this connection, for information of this Committee, please:

1) tabulate the details of the self-assessment surveys conducted in the past 5 years, including (i) the date of survey, (ii) department(s) involved, (iii) areas covered by the study and (iv) areas not covered by the study.

(i) Date of survey	(ii) Department(s) involved	(iii) Areas of the documents covered by the study	Areas of the documents not covered by the study

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

In the past 5 years, the Government Records Service conducted 2 records management reviews covering all bureaux/departments (B/Ds) in October 2015 and November 2018 respectively. The 2 reviews took the form of a self-assessment survey and covered the periods of 2013-15 and 2016-18 respectively. The major aim of the reviews was to assess the extent of B/Ds' compliance with the mandatory records management requirements promulgated in General Circular No. 2/2009, and B/Ds' progress in adopting the good practices in records management. Areas of review covered B/Ds' records management policies, responsibilities and training of records management personnel, establishment of recordkeeping systems, and the entire spectrum of records management issues ranging from records creation to disposal of records.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO019

(Question Serial No. 2940)

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 Government Records Service issued guidelines in 2011 to encourage public organisations to adopt good records management practices. In this connection, for information of this Committee, please:

- 1) tabulate, as at present, (i) the number of public organisations having issued guidelines, (ii) the names of public organisations having issued guidelines, (iii) the number of public organisations which adopted the guidelines and (iv) the names of public organisations which adopted the guidelines;

(i) Number of public organisations having issued guidelines	(ii) Name of public organisation having issued guidelines	(iii) Number of public organisations which adopted the guidelines	(iv) Name of public organisation which adopted the guidelines

- 2) tabulate, as at present, the information on records donations made by public organisations to the Public Records Office, including (i) the names of donor organisations, (ii) the names and content of the records concerned, (iii) the number of records and (iv) the period covered.

(i) Name of donor organisation	(ii) Name and content of records concerned	(iii) Number of records	(iv) Period covered

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)

Reply:

- 1) The Government Records Service (GRS) is responsible for formulating and implementing government records management policies and programmes, advising and supporting policy bureaux and departments (B/Ds) on issues and solutions related to records management, and providing storage and disposal services for inactive records. It is also responsible for identifying and preserving records of archival value, valuable government publications and printed materials, as well as enhancing public awareness of Hong Kong's documentary heritage and providing research and reference services. GRS's purview covers all B/Ds, including the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, but its duty does not cover monitoring records management practice in public organisations or issuing guidelines to these organisations.

Nevertheless, GRS published a booklet entitled "Good Records Management Practices" in 2011 with a view to sharing good records management practices with public organisations and encouraging their donation of records with archival value to GRS. Since 2013, GRS has also been holding annual records management seminars for these organisations, and 6 seminars have been held thus far, which were attended by over 1 500 participants from 64 public organisations in total. Besides, GRS has been providing records management briefings and advice to individual public organisations upon request.

- 2) Information on records donations made by public organisations to the Public Records Office is tabulated as follows:

(i) Name of donor organisation	(ii) Name and content of records concerned	(iii) Number of records	(iv) Period covered
Stock Exchange of Hong Kong	Microfilm concerning Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited	63 rolls	1941-1986
Hong Kong Tourist Association	Guides and publicity materials for promoting Hong Kong	6 800 nos.	1959-1992
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority	Records of results in public examinations	594 nos.	1930s-1990s
Vocational Training Council	Publications on youth skills	3 nos.	2014
Insurance Authority	Records related to the insurance industry	2 nos.	1984-2006

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO020

(Question Serial No. 2942)

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 the establishment of staff at officer rank in the Government Records Service, please use the tabular form to inform this Committee of:

1) the numbers of (i) Archivists, (ii) Curators and (iii) Executive Officers in the years below according to the organisation structure:

	1999 i ii iii	2004 i ii iii	2009 i ii iii	2014 i ii iii	2019 i ii iii
Records Management and Administration Office					
Record Systems Development Office					
Preservation Service Office					
Public Records Office					
Legislation and Planning Office					

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

Apart from 1 Principal Archivist at directorate rank (Government Records Service Director), the establishment of the Archivist, Curator and Executive Officer grades at various Offices of the Government Records Service (GRS) in the specified years is tabulated below:

Office	Grade	Establishment as at 1 April of the year				
		1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Records Management and Administration Office	Archivist	See Note 1	0	0	0	0
	Curator		0	0	0	0
	Executive Officer		7	7	10	12
Record Systems Development Office	Archivist		3	2	2	0
	Curator		0	0	0	0
	Executive Officer		2	2	5	6
Preservation Service Office	Archivist		2	3	1	0
	Curator		0	0	3	4
	Executive Officer		0	0	0	0
Public Records Office	Archivist		5	5	14	20
	Curator	0	0	0	2	
	Executive Officer	0	0	0	0	
Legislation and Planning Office ^{Note 2}	Archivist				4	
	Curator				0	
	Executive Officer				0	

Note 1: Apart from the GRS Director, the establishment of the Archivist and Executive Officer grades at GRS as at 1 April 1999 is tabulated below:

	Archivist	Executive Officer
Public Records Office	6	0
Records Management Office	3	1
Records Management Strategy Unit	3	8
Administration Office	0	2

There was no establishment of the Curator grade at GRS at that time.

Note 2: The Legislation and Planning Office was set up on 2 January 2019.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO022

(Question Serial No. 2955)

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. Please provide information on the number and rank(s) of officers of the bureaux/departments designated to perform records management work. If there is no officer designated for such work, please provide information on the number of officers and the hours of work required for the records management duties, and the other duties they have to undertake in addition.
2. Please tabulate the following information on programme and administrative records of the bureaux/departments which have been closed pending transfer to the Government Records Service ("GRS") for appraisal:
 - a. number of records
 - b. the linear metres of records
 - c. reason(s) for not yet transferring the records
3. Please tabulate the following information on records which the bureaux/departments have applied for deferred transfer:
 - a. number of records
 - b. reasons for deferred transfer of records
 - c. reasons for approval
4. Please tabulate the following information on records approved for destruction by GRS of individual bureaux/departments:
 - a. number of records
 - b. the linear metres of records
 - c. the specific contents and nature of the records
5. Do the Chief Executive's Office and government departments follow the records destruction procedures and transfer records to GRS for disposal according to the existing records management guidelines? If yes, what are the relevant details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 45)

Reply:

1. and 2.

Responsibilities for proper management of government records are shared between the Government Records Service (GRS), which is the central records management service agency of the Government, and bureaux and departments (B/Ds) that create and collect records. GRS is responsible for formulating and monitoring government records management policy and requirements, reviewing records management practices of B/Ds, preserving government archives and providing off-site records centre services. B/Ds are required to institute and implement a comprehensive records management programme in accordance with the Government's policy and requirements, taking their unique operational and records management needs into account. The programme aims to provide proper handling of government records through establishing control for the creation, organisation, maintenance and disposal of records.

Regarding the manpower deployed for records management in B/Ds, under the existing regime, the head of B/D assumes the overall responsibility of its records management, and a directorate officer is designated to oversee the matter to ensure that the records management programme of the B/D is supported by the corporate policy with allocation of appropriate priority and resources. The Departmental Secretary or an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent is appointed the Departmental Records Manager (DRM) to assist the head of B/D in the establishment and implementation of the departmental records management programme. As records management is a joint effort, all officers in a B/D should cooperate with their DRM in complying with the procedures and requirements set out in the departmental records management programme.

As regards the arrangements for the closure and transfer of records, B/Ds will initiate the systematic planning and implementation of records disposal only after the records have been kept for the right length of time, having met the purposes of their creation and in compliance with legal or statutory requirements. It is a mandatory requirement that B/Ds should dispose of time-expired records at least once every 2 years and make proper disposal arrangements concerning the custody, retention period and final disposition of records according to the relevant records retention and disposal schedules (disposal schedules).

As mentioned above, GRS and B/Ds have their respective areas of work. GRS does not have detailed information on the internal management of each B/D, such as the number, rank, hours and scope of work of the officers designated to perform records management work. Nor does GRS collect information on the operational details, such as the number and linear metres of programme and administrative records which have been closed pending transfer to GRS for appraisal, and the reason(s) why they have yet to be transferred. GRS is thus unable to provide such information.

3. In 2018, GRS received a total of 6 applications, involving 1 042 records, for deferral of transfer of records having potential archival value. The reasons for applications included that follow-up actions were required for the works projects concerned; and the records concerned would serve as reference materials for formulating future policies and guidelines, or enhancing relevant work plans. Among the 6 applications for deferral of transfer, however, 3 were withdrawn by the applying departments after

deliberation with GRS, while the records of 1 application were appraised as having no archival value, and transfer of such records to GRS for permanent retention was unnecessary. As for the remaining 2 applications involving large number of records, the records concerned are still being appraised by GRS to determine whether they have archival value. Therefore, no applications for deferral of transfer were approved in 2018.

4. Disposal of government records is made by B/Ds having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements and the archival values of the records. All requests for destruction of records are processed in accordance with the requirements set out in the corresponding disposal schedules approved by GRS. The decision as to whether records have archival value or potential archival value had been made when the relevant disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, GRS Director's agreement would be required prior to their physical destruction. Time-expired records having archival value would be identified and transferred to GRS for permanent retention, and only those confirmed to be of no archival value would be agreed by GRS Director for destruction.

To enhance transparency on records disposal, GRS launched a central platform (http://www.grs.gov.hk/en/destruction_of_records_in_the_government.html) on its website in 2016 for each individual B/D to publish, on an annual basis, its records destruction information, including the types, quantities and contents/subject matters of the records approved for destruction. Information on records approved for destruction by B/Ds for each year will be published on the platform around April the following year. The information for the years from 2015 to 2017 is now available on the platform for public inspection.

The quantities of records approved for destruction by B/Ds in 2018 are set out below:

B/Ds	Number of Records	Linear metre
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	2 257	88.00
Architectural Services Department	8 184	654.32
Audit Commission	1 142	10.22
Auxiliary Medical Service	1 762	22.92
Buildings Department	500 166	2 665.42
Census and Statistics Department	5 365 171	1 295.67
Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office ^{Note}	403	2.02
Chief Executive's Office	8 034	12.38
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office	2 036	41.46
Civil Aid Service	27	0.60
Civil Aviation Department	103	5.94
Civil Engineering and	19 994	556.55

B/Ds	Number of Records	Linear metre
Development Department		
Civil Service Bureau	22 318	76.44
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau	971	18.47
Companies Registry	2 979 162	4 066.92
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau	193	7.20
Correctional Services Department	84 842	358.63
Customs and Excise Department	346 935	886.26
Department of Health	3 853 059	3 142.67
Department of Justice	1 483	44.94
Development Bureau	5 948	76.28
Drainage Services Department	27 094	895.64
Education Bureau	95 080	682.33
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	107 160	365.92
Environment Bureau/Environmental Protection Department	2 044 049	394.44
Financial Secretary's Office	1 466	0.52
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau	573	38.54
Fire Services Department	1 033 325	522.57
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	716 260	1 876.64
Food and Health Bureau	94	6.45
Government Flying Service	371	23.40
Government Laboratory	383	15.32
Government Logistics Department	53 973	476.23
Government Property Agency	277	12.58
Highways Department	269 903	862.65
Home Affairs Bureau	32 813	157.23
Home Affairs Department	40 708	493.85
Hong Kong Monetary Authority	16	0.73
Hong Kong Observatory	303	18.18
Hong Kong Police Force	2 246 219	6 416.64
Hongkong Post	3 991	79.82
Immigration Department	38 317 281	6 596.48

B/Ds	Number of Records	Linear metre
Independent Commission Against Corruption	35 360	410.41
Information Services Department	2 151	35.29
Inland Revenue Department	25 335 693	9 059.73
Innovation and Technology Bureau	23 796	219.21
Intellectual Property Department	482	11.08
Invest Hong Kong	1	0.03
Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service	157	1.76
Judiciary	8 033	35.08
Labour and Welfare Bureau	17 826	96.34
Labour Department	843 712	1 325.55
Land Registry	2 562 484	925.20
Lands Department	481 081	397.69
Legal Aid Department	81 296	881.61
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	2 800 957	2 394.96
Marine Department	1 721 439	273.93
Office of the Communications Authority	792	21.79
Official Receiver's Office	642	23.25
Planning Department	8 351	96.24
Public Service Commission	3	0.10
Radio Television Hong Kong	3 128	87.46
Rating and Valuation Department	65 212	273.31
Registration and Electoral Office	787 482	642.09
Secretariat, Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance	2	0.11
Security Bureau	259	2.20
Social Welfare Department	436 503	2 073.12
Trade and Industry Department	4 349 623	1 156.53
Transport and Housing Bureau (Housing)/Housing Department	97 507	2 654.81
Transport and Housing Bureau (Transport Branch)	53	2.57

B/Ds	Number of Records	Linear metre
Transport Department	784 319	2 865.01
Treasury	789 707	608.65
University Grants Committee Secretariat	8	0.67
Water Supplies Department	28 209	116.13
Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency	599 404	2148.28

Note: The “Central Policy Unit” was revamped as the “Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office” on 1 April 2018. The figures on its records approved for destruction in 2018 are incorporated into those of the “Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office”.

- All B/Ds, including the Chief Executive’s Office, are required to comply with the records management requirements and guidelines issued by GRS in disposing records. In accordance with the mandatory records management requirements, government B/Ds are required to prepare draft disposal schedules covering all their existing programme records; transfer records having archival value to GRS according to the respective disposal schedules; dispose of time-expired records at least once every 2 years, with disposal of records considered and endorsed in writing by a senior officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent; obtain the prior agreement of GRS Director before destruction of any government records; designate an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to ensure that the disposal process is properly supervised and the records disposal procedures are complied with; and no government records should be transferred outside the Government unless with the prior agreement of GRS Director. Apart from the mandatory records management requirements, GRS has also published other manuals and guidelines to help B/Ds handle matters concerning records disposal, such as the Records Management Manual and Publication No. 1 “A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal”. These guidelines, together with other manuals, guidelines and circulars drawn up by GRS, have been made available to B/Ds and the public for reference on GRS’s website:

https://www.grs.gov.hk/en/hksar_government_administrative_guidelines_on_record_management.html

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO028

(Question Serial No. 1091)

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 the Government Records Service's formulation and implementation of government records management policies and programmes, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The Government has been implementing measures to go paperless in the workplace. At present, how many government departments have finished turning their workplace paperless?
2. What are the manpower and expenditure incurred by the Government in implementing measures to go paperless in the workplace?
3. What are the relevant nature, objectives and contents of departmental records management studies and reviews?
4. What is the expenditure involved in providing 2 500 officers with training for departmental records managers and their assistants on records management in the 2019 financial year?

Asked by: Hon HO Kwan-yiu, Junius (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. and 2.

The Government has all along been encouraging bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to use information technology to enhance work efficiency, thereby providing better services for the public and reducing the use of paper. Since 2011, the Innovation and Technology Bureau has started implementing electronic information management in the Government. This included encouraging B/Ds to use the Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERKS) to reduce the use of paper when conducting their businesses, and take this opportunity to strengthen records management and enhance work efficiency. The

Government Records Service (GRS) is responsible for promoting electronic records management in the Government and providing support and assistance to B/Ds in collaboration with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Efficiency Office in adopting or developing an ERKS in order to enhance the management of electronic records.

At present, 11 B/Ds have implemented or will implement ERKS, 7 of which have ceased to adopt the “print and file” practice for filing of records. Given that the manpower involved in the implementation process of ERKS in those 7 B/Ds is deployed internally, the relevant breakdown is not available. The development expenditures and annual operational expenditures involved are set out below:

B/D	Year in which the system was implemented	Development expenditure (\$)	Annual operational expenditure (\$)
Efficiency Office	2010	9.9 million (Note 1)	2.2 million (Note 1)
GRS	2014	11.8 million	0.9 million
Drainage Services Department	2015	20 million (Note 2)	2.37 million (Note 3)
Intellectual Property Department	2016	14.9 million (Note 4)	2.7 million (Note 4)
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	2016		
Administration Wing	2016	5.5 million	1.01 million
Civil Engineering and Development Department	2017	10.9 million	3.1 million

Note:

1. It covers the Efficiency Office’s ERKS, Knowledge Management System and Collaboration System.
2. The development expenditure covers the development costs of the Drainage Services Department’s ERKS and other electronic information management systems.
3. The annual operational expenditure of the Drainage Services Department’s ERKS refers to ERKS’s annual maintenance cost, which covers the maintenance cost of its hardware and software and the support and repair cost of its application software.
4. 1 contract which covers the development and maintenance services of the ERKSs of 2 departments.

3. GRS conducts in-depth reviews of the records management work of individual B/Ds to assess their management’s awareness of, commitment to and involvement in practising good records management; evaluate B/Ds’ compliance with the mandatory records management requirements and adoption of good records management practices; and identify areas for improvement. These reviews also help GRS consolidate insights for formulating records management recommendations applicable service-wide. The reviews cover main aspects of records management, including records creation, classification, storage and disposal. During the review, GRS staff will visit the B/D concerned and examine its records management programme through, inter alia, review of the records management documentation concerned, examination of recordkeeping systems, surveys, interviews and focus group discussions. Upon completion of the

departmental records management review, the Director of Administration will convey the findings of the review and improvement recommendations to the head of the B/D concerned, who is required to submit a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations to GRS every half a year.

4. One of GRS's main responsibilities is to formulate and implement the Government's records management policies and programmes. In this connection, GRS will provide records management training for departmental records managers and their assistants. The goal for 2019 is to provide training for 2 500 officers. Such work is mainly taken up by GRS's Records Management and Administration Office. As this is part of their ongoing work, there is no separate provision for such work in 2019-20.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO040

(Question Serial No. 1599)

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 Government Records Service (GRS), headed by GRS Director who is not necessarily an expert in archival science, is responsible for the management of government records. As at the end of 2017, GRS had a total of 104 staff members, of which 16 belonged to the Archivist grade. Regarding the increasingly heavy work on records management, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Will additional resources and manpower be allocated by the Government to cope with the heavy work on records management and the related legislative work which are increasingly important?
2. At present, government records management relies merely on “administrative management”. Will any work on enacting an archives law be conducted? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
3. From 2015 to 2017, there were 90 cases of loss or unauthorised destruction of records. If a law is enacted, what actions will the Government take against persons involved in the loss or destruction of important records?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 49)

Reply:

1 and 2.

As stated by the Chief Executive in her 2018 Policy Address, the Government attaches importance to the integrity of government records and holds a positive view towards the enactment of an archives law. The Archives Law Sub-committee of the Law Reform Commission (LRC) published a consultation paper on 6 December 2018 and completed the public consultation on 5 March 2019. Upon the receipt of the report from LRC, the Government will actively follow up on the matter. At the present stage, the Government will continue to enhance its records management work,

including formulating a more comprehensive training plan for bureaux and departments, providing more professional training programmes for staff of the Government Records Service (GRS), and reviewing the implementation progress of electronic recordkeeping systems. GRS has earmarked provision in 2018-19 for the creation of 15 posts (including 7 posts in the Archivist grade) to follow up on the report submitted by LRC on the subject of archives law. GRS will review its operational needs and apply for additional resources and manpower in accordance with the established mechanism to cope with the relevant work.

3. Currently, while strengthening training of civil servants on records management, the Government also takes disciplinary actions according to the existing mechanism against civil servants who are accountable for any loss or unauthorised destruction of records. The handling of the loss or unauthorised destruction of records was also discussed by the Archives Law Sub-committee of LRC in the consultation paper released on 6 December last year. The Government will review the current arrangements as a whole when the report of LRC on archives law is published.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO042

(Question Serial No. 1711)

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. A provision of \$300,000 was earmarked by the Government for the procurement of archival records relating to Hong Kong from other places in 2018-19. What are the contents of the records? Please also give a breakdown of the expenditure on the archival records procured.
2. In recent years, the National Archives of the UK has been progressively opening records of the 1980s relating to the negotiations on the future of Hong Kong. When will the Government Records Service (GRS) procure such records? Has sufficient provision been reserved to procure the records as soon as possible?
3. The number of visitors to the Public Records Office (PRO) has been increasing in recent years. Yet the PRO only opens from Monday to Friday. To widen access to the PRO, will the GRS consider opening the PRO on Saturdays or extending the opening hours to the evening on one of the weekdays for the convenience of members of the public using its services?

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. In 2018-19, the Government Records Service (GRS) earmarked a provision of \$300,000 to procure archival records relating to Hong Kong from other places. As the National Archives of the UK (TNA) began to open a number of records on important subjects relating to Hong Kong in that year, the GRS procured 274 copies of archival records relating to Hong Kong from the TNA at a cost of about \$550,000 through internal redeployment of resources. Details of the record series are as follows:

	Record series	Years covered
(a)	CAB128: Cabinet Office	1989
(b)	PREM19: Correspondence and documents of the Prime Minister's Office	1979-1992
(c)	FCO21: Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Far Eastern Department)	1984-1989
(d)	FCO40: Commonwealth Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Hong Kong Departments)	1967-1992
(e)	CO537: Colonial Office and predecessors: Confidential General and Confidential Original Correspondence	1949
(f)	FO371: Foreign Office (Politics Department): General Correspondence from 1906 to 1966	1964
(g)	HO213: Home Office: Aliens Department: General Files and Aliens' Naturalisation and Nationality Files	1990-1991

The records procured cover many important subjects relating to Hong Kong, including the issue of the future of Hong Kong, constitutional development and reforms in Hong Kong, protection of human rights, key political figures, Sino-British relationship, political relationship between the Mainland and Hong Kong, political environment and external relations of Hong Kong, nationality and citizenship, the new airport project, etc. Among these 274 records, 123 records have been made available for public inspection at the GRS since February 2019, while the remaining 151 records are expected to be open for public inspection in the second quarter of 2019 after completion of records description and arrangement by the GRS.

2. The GRS has an established mechanism to keep track of new releases of archival records relating to Hong Kong by the TNA and other major overseas archives. For 2019-20, the GRS has earmarked a provision of \$400,000 to procure relevant archival records. In drawing up the procurement plan, the GRS will consider the collection development direction of our holdings, criteria for appraising records and existing resources. It will also collect the views of service users, in particular those of the academic and educational sectors, on acquisition of archival materials through user surveys, so as to fulfil its vision and meet the needs of the public. The GRS continues to procure records relating to important subjects such as those concerning the negotiations on the future of Hong Kong. The GRS has also been discussing with other archives such as the Second Historical Archives of China and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library of the USA on the acquisition of archival records relating to Hong Kong and will procure copies of these records from the archives concerned in 2019-20.
3. The GRS reviews the opening arrangement of the Search Room from time to time to address the public's needs for the services of the Search Room. As a trial scheme, the GRS plans to open the Search Room on Saturday mornings for the public to use and access records by appointment for a period of 6 months in 2019. After the trial, the GRS will assess the public's needs for the services, additional resources required and manpower deployment, and then further consider the opening arrangement of the Search Room. Meanwhile, the GRS will continue its efforts to digitise frequently accessed and popular archival records and to enrich its online holdings, thereby facilitating public access to archival records through its website without time and location constraints.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO043

(Question Serial No. 2354)

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:

To facilitate efficient management of government records, the Government Records Service (GRS) formulates and implements policies and programmes for records management and archives administration, and provides storage and disposal services for inactive records.

1. Has GRS developed a series of criteria for the disposal of records? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
2. Please advise on the quantity (linear metre) of records destroyed by GRS and the expenditure incurred over the past 5 years. Has provision been made in the 2019-20 Financial Year for the above-mentioned item? If yes, what are the details?
3. The estimated provision of GRS for 2019-20 will be increased by 30.8%. What are the purpose and details of the increased provision?
4. There are many views in the community that the Government should enact an archives law immediately. The Law Reform Commission is currently conducting a consultation on the enactment of archives law. Please advise whether the Government will improve records management during this window period with the following measures:
 - (a) to review afresh the existing administrative guidelines and directives issued to government departments by GRS;
 - (b) to require senior management of the Government to instruct heads of departments to attach importance to records management and take on the relevant work in accordance with the guidelines set by GRS;
 - (c) to strictly enforce disciplinary or administrative actions in case of non-compliance; and
 - (d) to examine on a regular basis the records management work of government departments, and publish their work status and types of records.

If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon MO Claudia (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

1. Records appraisal is an important process for ascertaining the archival value of government records and the Government Records Service (GRS) places much emphasis on this task. The Archivist grade officers adopt a set of appraisal guidelines based on the experience of and standards adopted by other overseas jurisdictions. Records likely to be selected for permanent retention should possess one of the following qualities:
 - (i) document or reflect the organisation, functions and activities of government agencies;
 - (ii) document the formation process, implementation and outcome of significant policies, decisions, legislation and actions of the Government;
 - (iii) document the impact of the decisions, policies and programmes of the Government upon the physical environment, community, organisations or individuals;
 - (iv) document the interaction between the public and the Government as well as between the physical environment and the Government;
 - (v) document the legal rights and obligations of individuals, groups, organisations and the Government; or
 - (vi) contain significant or unique information or aged documents that can enrich the understanding about the history, physical environment, society, culture, economy and people of Hong Kong.
2. The quantities of bureaux/departments' (B/Ds') records approved for destruction in the past 5 years are set out in the following table:

Year	Quantity in linear metre
2014	89 277
2015	61 418
2016	56 633
2017	67 955
2018	62 810

Under the current records management system, B/Ds are required to obtain the prior agreement of the GRS Director before destruction of their time-expired records. Individual B/Ds are responsible for deployment of their own resources to carry out destruction of such records in accordance with a set of mandatory procedures. Hence, GRS does not have information on the expenditure incurred by B/Ds for the destruction of their records over the past 5 years, nor the provisions made for such purpose in 2019-20.

3. The provision for GRS in 2019-20 is \$22.3 million (30.8%) higher than the revised estimate for 2018-19. This is mainly due to the filling of vacancies, as well as anticipated increase in expenditure for hire of services and provision for replacement of minor plant and equipment.
4. Regarding the enactment of archives law, it was clearly stated in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address that the Government would follow up on the matter after receiving the report from the Law Reform Commission. At the present stage, the Government will continue to enhance its records management work, including formulating a more comprehensive training plan for B/Ds, providing more professional training programmes for staff of GRS, continuing to promote electronic records management, and formulating a long-term strategy for full implementation of electronic recordkeeping systems across the Government.

In addition, GRS will continue to review periodically the existing guidelines and codes of practice issued to B/Ds. The current regime also imposes binding obligations on government servants to strictly comply with the records management requirements promulgated by the Government. Disciplinary action will be taken against a government servant in the event of non-compliance with the mandatory records management requirements and/or dereliction of records management duties. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the non-compliance, punishment ranging from verbal or written warnings, reprimand, severe reprimand, demotion, compulsory retirement to dismissal may be imposed. At the same time, GRS will continue to implement a two-pronged approach to review B/Ds' records management practices. This approach comprises self-assessment conducted by B/Ds and departmental records management reviews conducted by GRS.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO047

(Question Serial No. 1763)

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 Government Records Service is responsible for promoting electronic records management in the Government and providing support and assistance to bureaux and departments (B/Ds) in adopting or developing an electronic recordkeeping system.

To date, how many B/Ds have not yet implemented the electronic recordkeeping system, and why not? What are the respective numbers of government records managed by electronic recordkeeping system and by non-electronic system? Will the Government provide more resources and set specific goals and objectives in this respect for 2019-20? What are the estimated expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon MOK Charles Peter (LegCo internal reference no.: 72)

Reply:

The Government Records Service (GRS) is responsible for promoting electronic records management in the Government and providing support and assistance to bureaux and departments (B/Ds) in collaboration with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and Efficiency Office (EffO) in adopting or developing an electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS) in order to enhance the management of electronic records.

At present, 11 B/Ds have implemented or will implement ERKS, namely, EffO, GRS, Communications and Creative Industries Branch of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB (CCIB)), Rating and Valuation Department (RVD), Drainage Services Department (DSD), Intellectual Property Department (IPD), OGCIO, Administration Wing (AW), Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and Architectural Services Department (ArchSD). The Marine Department will implement its ERKS by phases starting from 2019-20. Other B/Ds have not yet implemented ERKS mainly because the Government wishes to further understand, via the pilot projects, the implementation experience, potential problems encountered by departments and cost-effectiveness in implementing ERKS, and whether there are sufficient IT companies

with staff having relevant skills and experience in the market in order to decide on the long-term strategy for full implementation of ERKS across the Government.

We do not maintain statistics on the number of electronic records kept by departments which have not yet implemented ERKS. For those departments which have adopted ERKS, the numbers of electronic records captured in ERKS are as follows:

B/D	Year in which the system was implemented	Number of records in the system (As at 28 February 2019)
EffO	2010	84 000
GRS	2014	691 000
CEDB(CCIB)	2014	141 000
RVD	2014	461 000
DSD	2015	421 000
IPD	2016	41 000
OGCIO	2016	159 000
AW	2016	110 000
CEDD	2017	749 000
ArchSD	2018	3 900

The Government is reviewing the implementation of ERKS and plans to formulate a long-term strategy for full implementation of ERKS across the Government in 2019-20. We do not have the estimated resources and manpower required at this stage.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**CSO065****(Question Serial No. 3767)**

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 Esther LEUNG)

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

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 112)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers and linear metres (lm) of records appraised, transferred to the Government Records Service (GRS) for permanent preservation and approved for destruction in 2018 are as follows:

Year	Records appraised		Records transferred to GRS for permanent preservation		Records approved for destruction*	
	No.	lm	No.	lm	No.	lm
2018	133 737	3 004	82 076	606	100 061	62 810

* *All requests for destruction of records are processed in accordance with the requirements set out in the corresponding records retention and disposal schedules. The decision as to whether records were of no archival value or having potential archival value had been made when the relevant disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, the approval of the GRS Director must be obtained 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 for destruction by the GRS Director.*

The routine records (mainly programme records) of 10 departments took up 90% of the number of records (56% of lm) in this column. They include arrival and departure cards from the Immigration Department; computer printouts of tax-related systems from the Inland Revenue Department; import and export cargo manifests from the Census and Statistics Department and the Trade and Industry Department; operating records and request forms for laboratory tests from health service centres under the Department of Health; public files of companies registered under the Companies Ordinance from the Companies Registry; application forms for library card and financial and accounting records from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department; land registration index cards from the Land Registry; various general and departmental forms from the Hong Kong Police Force; and revenue-related documents including counterfoils of receipts, and of tickets and permits serving as receipts from the Environmental Protection Department.

- (2) As for publications and printed materials, the Central Preservation Library for Government Publications (CPL) selects and preserves government publications and printed materials with permanent value. A copy of new publication and 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 preserved by CPL in 2018 are 1 598 and 533 respectively. We do not keep statistics in "linear metre" for selected items.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO066

(Question Serial No. 4705)

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 Esther LEUNG)

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

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 210)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers and linear metres (lm) of records appraised, transferred to the Government Records Service (GRS) for permanent preservation and approved for destruction in the past 3 years are as follows:

Year	Records appraised		Records transferred to GRS for permanent preservation		Records approved for destruction*	
	No.	lm	No.	lm	No. ('000)	lm
2016	107 186	3 384	45 318	620	102 784	56 633
2017	75 376	2 339	50 655	614	103 550	67 955
2018	133 737	3 004	82 076	606	100 061	62 810

* All requests for destruction of records are processed in accordance with the requirements set out in the corresponding records retention and disposal schedules. The decision as to whether records were of no archival value or having potential archival value had been made when the relevant disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, the approval of the GRS Director must be obtained 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 for destruction by the GRS Director.

The routine records (mainly programme records) of 8 departments took up 85% of the number of records (50% of lm) in this column from 2016 to 2018. They include arrival and departure cards from the Immigration Department; computer printouts of tax-related systems from the Inland Revenue Department; import and export cargo manifests from the Census and Statistics Department and the Trade and Industry Department; operating records of health service centres, request forms for laboratory tests and patient case files from the Department of Health; public files of companies registered under the Companies Ordinance from the Companies Registry; application forms for library card, financial and accounting records and records relating to enrolment of recreation and sports programme from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department; and various general and departmental forms from the Hong Kong Police Force.

- (2) As for publications and printed materials, the Central Preservation Library for Government Publications (CPL) selects and preserves government publications and printed materials with permanent value for retention. A copy of new publication and 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 preserved by CPL in the past 3 years are as follows:

Year	No. of items received	No. of items selected and preserved
2016	3 354	868
2017	1 422	550
2018	1 598	533

Note: We do not keep statistics in "linear metre" for the selected items.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO071

(Question Serial No. 4748)

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 Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

- (1) With the advancement of information technology as well as the implementation of the initiative of going paperless in the government, there is a change in the way civil servants communicate with one another. In addition to the increasing number of electronic copies of policy documents, communication by electronic mail (e-mail) has become an alternative conduit for government officials to exchange views on policies. In this regard, has the Government Records Service (GRS) considered how it can handle electronic records by drawing reference to the practices of overseas governments? Is there any need for keeping e-mail records exchanged among officials so that they can serve as a source of reference for the study of policies in future?
- (2) Has the Government put in place any guidelines on the handling of electronic records? Have tens of thousands of electronic records been destroyed without any guidance since the implementation of the e-Government programmes for so many years?
- (3) Will the electronic recordkeeping system to be implemented by GRS in 11 bureaux/departments cover records of electronic communications which are not in paper form?
- (4) Regarding records destruction, has GRS developed a classification system for such records with a view to finding out which departments and types of the documents were involved in loss or unauthorised destruction of records cases, so as to avoid the loss of truth in case important classified documents with archival value are lost deliberately?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 325)

Reply:

(1) & (2)

The Government Records Service (GRS) has made continuous efforts to develop standards and guidelines on the proper management of electronic records for compliance by bureaux/departments (B/Ds). In developing the guidelines, GRS has made reference to relevant guidelines and best practices of overseas jurisdictions. These guidelines include *A Handbook on Preservation of Electronic Records*, *Functional Requirements of an Electronic Recordkeeping System*, *Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*, *Guidelines on Mapping out Implementation of an Electronic Recordkeeping System in the Context of Developing Organisational Electronic Information Management Strategies*, *A Handbook on Records Management Practices and Guidelines for an Electronic Recordkeeping System* and *Guidelines for Managing Records in a Hybrid Environment* and so on. They have been uploaded to a dedicated theme page on electronic records management on the Government intranet as well as GRS Internet website to facilitate easy access by Government servants.

Besides, in respect of the handling of electronic mail (e-mail), the Administration Wing formulated the *Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail* in 2001 to help B/Ds identify, create, file and manage e-mail records. The Guideline stipulates that B/Ds are required to print-and-file e-mail records for storage and management before the full implementation of an electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS). In the light of the advancement of technology and the increasing use of electronic messages in various forms among B/Ds for official business communication, the Guideline was updated and renamed as the *Guideline on the Management of Electronic Messages* by GRS in December 2017. The new guideline serves to enhance B/Ds' awareness of the management of electronic message records (including e-mail records) and remind Government servants of the need to capture electronic message records created and received in the course of official business for proper storage and management in the departmental recordkeeping system.

In accordance with the Government's policy and requirements on records management, B/Ds are required to develop and establish a comprehensive records management programme, taking their unique business and records management needs into account, so as to ensure safe custody of all electronic and non-electronic records, prevent loss of records and facilitate investigations into incidents in relation to loss or unauthorised destruction of records. Retention and disposal of records (including electronic records) are made by B/Ds having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements and archival value of the records. All requests for destruction of records are processed in accordance with the requirements set out in the corresponding records retention and disposal schedules approved by GRS. The decision as to whether records are of archival value or having potential archival value was made when the relevant retention and disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, GRS Director's agreement is required prior to their destruction. For those having potential archival value, they will be appraised again by GRS. Time-expired records identified as having archival value will be transferred to GRS for permanent retention, and only those confirmed to be of no archival value would be agreed by GRS Director for destruction.

- (3) ERKS is a computer system designed for records management. It manages both electronic and non-electronic records in an integrated and consistent manner. It features a comprehensive range of functions, including the organisation, classification and capturing of both electronic and non-electronic records in a systematic approach; prevention against inadvertent or unauthorised alteration, deletion and retrieval of records; and effective management of the retention and disposal of records, which includes transfer of electronic records having archival value through electronic means to GRS for permanent retention and the direct destruction of electronic records with no archival value upon agreement of GRS Director. While staff of B/Ds are responsible for implementing ERKS in their respective organisations, GRS will provide assistance and support to put the system into implementation. According to the *Guideline on the Management of Electronic Messages* updated by GRS in December 2017, B/Ds are required to capture records of electronic communications which are not in paper form, such as instant electronic message records, in the departmental recordkeeping system for proper storage and management. For B/Ds that have not yet implemented ERKS, they are required to adopt the print-and-file approach for the filing of the electronic message records for storage.
- (4) The Government is committed to identifying and preserving government records having archival value so as to enhance public awareness of Hong Kong's documentary heritage. In the course of records disposal (including the destruction of records), B/Ds will first classify the records into administrative and programme records, and dispose of the time-expired records according to the disposal arrangements set out in the relevant records retention and disposal schedules. To enhance transparency on records disposal, GRS launched a central platform (http://www.grs.gov.hk/en/destruction_of_records_in_the_government.html) on its website in 2016 for each individual B/D to publish, on an annual basis, its records destruction information, including the types, quantities and contents/subject matters of the records approved for destruction. Information on records approved for destruction by B/Ds for each year will be published on the platform around April the following year. The information for the years from 2015 to 2017 is now available on the platform for public inspection.

In accordance with the mandatory requirements set out in the General Circular No. 2/2009 issued by the Government in April 2009, any loss or unauthorised destruction of records (including paper-based records, electronic records in the form of documents and those not) in B/Ds are required to be immediately reported to their respective Departmental Records Manager (DRM) with a copy of such report sent to GRS in parallel. Upon receipt of such report, the DRM is required to: (a) ascertain the facts (including information such as types, quantities and physical storage media of the records) and identify the circumstances leading to the loss or unauthorised destruction; (b) reconstruct the records where necessary; (c) take steps to prevent recurrence; (d) consider whether any disciplinary action or other administrative action is necessary; and (e) report his findings and actions taken on (a) to (d) above to GRS within 3 months. The above measures enable GRS to monitor the appropriateness of the follow-up actions taken by B/Ds in respect of investigation of cases of loss or unauthorised destruction of records, acquire the information or business nature of the records involved, and make improvement recommendations to the relevant B/Ds from the records management perspective.

B/Ds involved in loss or unauthorised destruction of records in 2018 included the Buildings Department, Customs and Excise Department, the Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Highways Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Housing Department, Labour Department, Social Welfare Department, Transport Department, Water Supplies Department, and Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency. Records involved included administrative files and documents, programme files and enclosures, programme documents, notebooks, penalty tickets, detained person property receipts, vehicle log books, a vehicle pass book, a surprise inspection book, a departmental stores return note and photos.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO076

(Question Serial No. 5772)

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 Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Currently, the public may apply to the Government Records Service Director in writing for accessing records that have been closed for less than 30 years. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

Please list in tabular form the details of the applications that the Government received in the past 5 years for accessing records under 30 years, including (i) the name and content of the record to be accessed, (ii) record reference number, (iii) years covered, (iv) departments involved, (v) original time of opening, (vi) whether access was acceded to or rejected, and (vii) the reasons for rejections of applications, if any.

Year

(i) Name and content of the record to be accessed	(ii) Record reference number	(iii) Years covered	(iv) Departments involved	(v) Original time of opening	(vi) Whether access was acceded to	(vii) Reasons for rejection (if applicable)

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 138)

Reply:

Details of the applications that the Government Records Service received in the past 5 years for accessing records under 30 years are as below:

Year	Number of applications for accessing records (Note 1)	Number of records applied for access (Note 2)	Records series	Number of successful applications	Number of rejected applications
2014	50	149	Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign, education, district development, Hong Kong movies, Chinese traditional festivals, traffic and transport, etc.	50	0
2015	41	157	district development, youth policy, Chinese traditional festivals, town planning, public transport, etc.	40	0
2016	71	197	antiquities and monuments, New Territories development, Chinese traditional festivals, education, district development, etc.	68	0
2017	83	467	antiquities and monuments, New Territories development, public library services, education, Chinese traditional festivals, etc.	82	0
2018	64	363	New Territories development, public transport, waste treatment, Chinese traditional festivals, urban renewal, etc.	52	0

Note 1:

a. In 2015, 1 case was withdrawn by the applicant.

- b. In 2016, 3 cases were withdrawn by the applicant.
- c. In 2017, 1 case was directed to use the services of bureaux/ departments.
- d. By the end of February 2019, 10 cases received in 2018 were still being processed. In addition, 1 case was withdrawn by the applicant, while 1 case was directed to use the services of bureaux/ departments.

Note 2:

As it involves an enormous number of records, it is impossible to set out the record titles and names of relevant bureaux/ departments.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO077

(Question Serial No. 5778)

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 Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

It is mentioned under Programme (2) Government Records Service that the Government Records Service (GRS) will “promote electronic records management in the Government”. In addition, the Electronic Information Management Steering Group (EIMSG) was set up in 2009 to oversee the government-wide strategies and implementation of the Electronic Information Management (EIM). In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) Please set out in tabular form for each of the past 5 years (i) the numbers of government departments that adopt the Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERKS), and (ii) names of the departments.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
(i) Number of government departments					
(ii) Name of department					

- 2) Please set out in tabular form for each of the past 5 years (i) the numbers of records filed by the departments through ERKS, categorised by electronic record formats including but not limited to (ii) e-mails, (iii) SMS messages, (iv) WhatsApp messages, (v) WeChat messages, (vi) Facebook messages and (vii) Telegram messages.

Department	Year	(i) No. of records filed	(ii) E-mails	(iii) SMS messages	(iv) WhatsApp messages	(v) WeChat messages	(vi) Facebook messages	(vii) Telegram messages

3) Please set out in tabular form for each of the past 5 years (i) the expenditures on research and development (R&D) and (ii) maintenance costs of ERKS.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
(i) Expenditure on R&D					
(ii) Maintenance cost					

4) What are the current departmental procedures for creating and filing instant message records (e.g. SMS, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook messages)? At present, is there an electronic system to handle instant message records? If yes, how many and what government departments are currently using it? What is the relevant development cost? If no, is there any plan to develop such a system?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 144)

Reply:

(1) The number and names of government departments using the Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERKS) in each of the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
(i) Number of government departments (Cumulative)	5	8	9	10	11
(ii) Name of department	Efficiency Office (EffO); Government Records Service (GRS); Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (Communications and Creative Industries Branch) (CCIB); Rating and Valuation Department (RVD); and Drainage Department (DSD)	EffO; GRS; CCIB; RVD; DSD; Intellectual Property Department (IPD); Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO); and Administration Wing (Admin Wing)	EffO; GRS; CCIB; RVD; DSD; IPD; OGCIO; Admin Wing; and Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)	EffO; GRS; CCIB; RVD; DSD; IPD; OGCIO; Admin Wing; CEDD; and Architectural Services Department (ArchSD)	EffO; GRS; CCIB; RVD; DSD; IPD; OGCIO; Admin Wing; CEDD; and Marine Department (MD)

Of the above, RVD and ArchSD have rolled out the ERKS to officers in some sections only. MD will adopt the ERKS in phases from 2019-20.

(2) GRS has made continuous efforts to develop standards and guidelines on the proper management of electronic records for compliance by bureaux/departments (B/Ds). The guidelines issued by GRS in this regard include *A Handbook on Preservation of Electronic Records*, *Functional Requirements of an Electronic Recordkeeping System*, *Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*, *Guidelines on Mapping out Implementation of an Electronic Recordkeeping System in the Context of Developing Organisational Electronic Information Management Strategies*, *A Handbook on Records Management Practices and Guidelines for an Electronic Recordkeeping System*, *Guidelines for Managing Records in a Hybrid Environment*, etc. They have been uploaded to a dedicated theme page on electronic records management on the Government intranet as well as the GRS Internet website for easy access by government officers.

Besides, in respect of the handling of electronic mail (e-mail), the Administration Wing formulated the *Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail* in 2001 to help B/Ds identify, create, file and manage e-mail records. The Guideline stipulated that B/Ds were required to print-and-file e-mail records for storage and management before the full implementation of the ERKS. In the light of the advancement of technology and the increasing use of electronic messages in various forms among B/Ds for official business communication, the Guideline was updated and renamed as the *Guideline on the Management of Electronic Messages* by GRS in December 2017. The new guideline serves to enhance B/Ds' awareness of the management of electronic message records (including e-mail records) and remind government officers of the need to capture electronic message records created and received in the course of official business for proper storage and management in the departmental recordkeeping system. For B/Ds that have not yet implemented the ERKS, they are required to adopt the print-and-file approach for filing of electronic message records.

Pursuant to the records management principles of the Government, B/Ds are required to categorise e-mail and electronic message records by content, rather than by format, and store them in the relevant files according to the departmental records classification scheme. Therefore, we are unable to tabulate the numbers of records filed through the ERKS in the past 5 years by different electronic formats.

As at 28 February 2019, the numbers of electronic records created in the ERKS by government departments that have adopted the system are set out below:

B/Ds	Year of adoption	Number of records in the system (as at 28 February 2019)
Effo	2010	84 000
GRS	2014	691 000
CCIB	2014	141 000
RVD	2014	461 000
DSD	2015	421 000
IPD	2016	41 000
OGCIO	2016	159 000
Admin Wing	2016	110 000
CEDD	2017	749 000
ArchSD	2018	3 900

(3) The expenditure on research and development (R&D) and the maintenance cost of the ERKS in each of the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
(i) Expenditure on R&D (\$m)	8.16	24	17.1	18.2	0.7 (Note 1)
(ii) Maintenance cost (\$m) (Note 2)	4.85	6.35	7.18	10.02	12.26

Notes:

1. As at 31 March 2019.
2. The ERKS of the EffO is a part of its electronic information management system. The relevant maintenance cost includes that for the ERKS, knowledge management system and collaboration system. CCIB started using the system in the cloud platform in late 2018 and is migrating records from the old system to the new one. The relevant annual maintenance cost is to be ascertained upon commissioning of the service. Besides, MD will adopt the ERKS in phases from 2019-20. Therefore, the relevant annual maintenance cost is not available at the moment.

(4) At present, instant message records (e.g. SMS, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook messages) should be handled by B/Ds in accordance with the *Guideline on the Management of Electronic Messages* updated by GRS in December 2017. Electronic message records should be captured in the departmental recordkeeping system for proper storage and management. For B/Ds that have not yet implemented the ERKS, they are required to adopt the print-and-file approach for electronic message records. As the aforementioned means is adopted by B/Ds to capture electronic message records, apart from the ERKS, the Government is currently not using and does not have plans to develop other electronic systems to handle instant message records.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSO089

(Question Serial No. 3699)

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 Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding the promotion of electronic records management in the Government and the provision of support and assistance to bureaux and departments, please provide the following information:

(1) Please list in the table below information on training and advisory services that the Government Records Service (GRS) provided to government bureaux and departments in 2018:

Year	Bureau/ Department (in alphabetical order)	Number of government records management training courses	Number of topical records management training courses	Number of staff who have taken government records management training courses	Rank distribution of staff (from high to low) who have taken government records management training courses	Number of staff who have taken government records management training courses more than once	Topic areas of training courses
2018							

(2) Please list in the table below information regarding the numbers of public requests for government records in 2018:

Year	Number of requests for government records	Number of successful requests for government records	Number of failed requests for government records	Reasons for failed requests for government records
2018				

(3) Please list in the table below information on the transfer of records to GRS for retention in 2018:

Year	Number of bureaux/departments that have transferred records for retention	Number and linear metres of records retained	Number and linear metres of records approved for destruction	Number of electronic records retained through the electronic recordkeeping system (please list by department)
2018				

(4) What are the details of the additional establishment for GRS in 2019-20?

Asked by: Hon MOK Charles Peter (LegCo internal reference no.: 73)

Reply:

(1) The information on training and advisory services that the Government Records Service (GRS) provided to government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) in 2018 is as follows-

Year	Bureau/ Department (in alphabetical order)	Number of government records management training courses	Number of topical records management courses	Number of staff who have taken government records management training courses	Rank distribution of staff (from high to low) who have taken government records management training courses	Topic areas of training courses
2018	See Remark below	80	30	4 994	Directorate Pay Scale Points 2 to 1 Master Pay Scale Points 49 to 1 or equivalent	Regular and topical training courses/ workshops/ seminars/briefings organised for departmental records managers, registry supervisors and records users cover the following topics: <u>Regular courses</u> a. records management overview b. classification and coding c. creation and collection d. filing practices e. scheduling and disposal f. management of

Year	Bureau/ Department (in alphabetical order)	Number of government records management training courses	Number of topical records management training courses	Number of staff who have taken government records management training courses	Rank distribution of staff (from high to low) who have taken government records management training courses	Topic areas of training courses
						administrative and programme records g. storage, custody, access control and tracking, and preservation h. introduction of electronic records management (ERM) and electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS) <u>Topical courses</u> a. departmental records management policy b. mandatory records management requirements and good practices c. vital records protection d. prevention of loss and unauthorised destruction of records e. archival records management f. archives law g. key concepts of ERM h. implementation of ERKS

GRS has not kept information on the number of staff who has taken the government records management training courses more than once.

Remark – B/Ds involved (in alphabetical order): Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Architectural Services Department, Audit Commission, Auxiliary Medical Service, Buildings Department, Census and Statistics Department, Central Policy Unit/Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office, Chief Executive's Office, Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, Civil Aid Service, Civil Aviation Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Civil Service Bureau, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Companies Registry, Constitutional

and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Correctional Services Department, Customs and Excise Department, Department of Health, Department of Justice, Development Bureau, Drainage Services Department, Education Bureau, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Environment Bureau and Environmental Protection Department, Financial Secretary's Office, Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Food and Health Bureau, Government Laboratory, Government Logistics Department, Government Property Agency, Highways Department, Home Affairs Bureau, Home Affairs Department, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Hong Kong Observatory, Hong Kong Police Force, Hongkong Post, Immigration Department, Independent Commission Against Corruption, Information Services Department, Inland Revenue Department, Innovation and Technology Bureau, Invest Hong Kong, Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service, Judiciary, Labour and Welfare Bureau, Labour Department, Land Registry, Lands Department, Legal Aid Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Marine Department, Office of the Communications Authority, Official Receiver's Office, Planning Department, Public Service Commission, Radio Television Hong Kong, Rating and Valuation Department, Registration and Electoral Office, Secretariat, Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance, Security Bureau, Social Welfare Department, Trade and Industry Department, Transport and Housing Bureau (Housing)/Housing Department, Transport and Housing Bureau (Transport), Transport Department, Treasury, Water Supplies Department and Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency

- (2) The information regarding the numbers of public requests for government records in 2018 is as follows-

Year	Number of requests for government records (See Note)	Number of successful requests for government records	Number of failed requests for government records	Reasons for failed requests for government records
2018	2 979	2 966	1	Access to the record concerned was refused on grounds of paragraph 2.10 of the Code on Access to Information (i.e. internal discussion and advice).

Note:

- a. As at end-February 2019, 10 cases were still being processed.
- b. In 2018, 1 case was withdrawn by the applicant and 1 case was directed to use the services of B/Ds.

- (3) Disposal of government records is made by B/Ds having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements and archival values of the records. 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) approved by GRS. The decision as to whether records have archival value or potential archival value had been made when the relevant disposal schedules were drawn up. For time-expired records having no archival value, GRS Director's agreement would be required prior to their physical destruction. For those having potential archival value, they would be appraised again by the Public Records Office of GRS. Time-expired records having archival value would be identified and transferred to GRS for permanent retention, and only those confirmed to be of no archival value would be agreed by GRS Director for destruction. The information on the transfer of records to GRS for retention and records approved for destruction in 2018 is as follows-

Year	Number of B/Ds that have transferred their records for retention	Records Retained		Records approved for destruction#		Number of electronic records retained through ERKS (please list by department)
		No.	Linear Metre (lm)	No. ('000)	Linear Metre (lm)	
2018	36	82 076	606	100 061	62 810	0*

The routine records, mainly of programme nature, of 10 departments took up 90% of the number of the records (56% of lm) in this column. They include arrival and departure cards from the Immigration Department, computer printouts of tax-related systems from the Inland Revenue Department, import and export cargo manifests from the Census and Statistics Department and the Trade and Industry Department, operating records of health service centres and request forms for laboratory tests from the Department of Health, public files of companies registered under the Companies Ordinance from the Companies Registry, application forms for library card and financial and accounting records from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, land registration index cards from the Land Registry; various general and departmental forms from the Hong Kong Police Force; and revenue-related documents including counterfoils of receipts, and of tickets and permits serving as receipts from the Environmental Protection Department.

* Since 2010, 11 B/Ds have implemented or are developing their ERKS. The electronic records in their ERKS are not yet due for transfer to GRS for retention.

- (4) There is no additional establishment for GRS in 2019-20.

- End -