Information Technology

During the year, Inland Revenue Department continued to enhance efficiency, productivity and quality of services through strategic use of advanced information technology (IT) and promotion of electronic services.

Information Systems

The Department has established comprehensive Information Systems to improve productivity, enhance efficiency and achieve manpower saving. Through the "Assess-First-Audit-Later" (AFAL) system, most tax assessments are processed automatically. Tax audit and investigation work are facilitated through the use of data mining and advanced analysis tools. The Document Management System and Workflow Management System are in place to manage documents, files and workflows, allow the officers to have concurrent access to the electronic documents through the computer network and facilitate them to handle various tasks simultaneously. During the year, the Department enhanced the Document Management System to increase its capability to support the launch of new services for issuing electronic notices to taxpayers. The scope of the Workflow Management System was also expanded to allow taxpayers to lodge objection against tax assessments and apply for holding over of provisional tax electronically. The integration of these systems greatly enhanced the quality of services and improved responsiveness to requests from the public.

IT Enabled Workplace

The Department operates in a computerised and paperless working environment with a well-developed network of over 2,700 workstations. By using the network facilities, the staff can perform on-line enquiries and updating transactions, process assessments and work tasks allocated to them by the Workflow Management System efficiently. They can also have convenient access to the Document Management System to view the images of tax returns and other documents, or to the Department's Intranet and General Enquiry Knowledge Database for quick access to information and answers for public enquiries. The network has a critical role in improving the efficiency of our day-to-day operations and the handling of general enquiries. To enhance operational efficiency and further reduce paper consumption, e-mail facilities and access to the Internet are provided to all staff of the Department.

Electronic Services

Our continuous efforts to develop more convenient and user-friendly features have increased the popularity of our e-services and boosted up the overall usage rate. In 2008-09, the number of tax returns received through e-filing has increased by 40% to over 200,000 cases. About 232,000 e-stamping transactions and 75,000 requests for supply of information on Business Register were handled in the year.

The provision of free software developed by the Department to employers for preparation and submission of annual returns in respect of employee's emoluments continued to attract more employers to use electronic means for filing returns. During 2008-09, some 49,500 employers furnished electronic returns for about 2,550,000 employees. 36,900 of these employers used the free software provided by the Department.

eTAX

During the year, the Department continued to develop eTAX at the GovHK and rolled out a wide range of personalised online services to facilitate taxpayers to handle their tax affairs in a convenient manner. eTAX users are provided with a personal message box for receiving e-correspondence from the Department, including e-Returns, e-Assessment Notices, e-Receipts for tax payments, etc. e-Alert messages are sent before the deadline for filing tax returns and tax payments to help eTAX users to comply with their tax obligations. Through the new platform, taxpayers can also review their tax position, update their personal particulars, and lodge objections against tax assessment or apply for holding over of provisional tax electronically.

Up to 31 March 2009, some 218,000 taxpayers have registered as eTAX users. Over 50% of them selected to receive notices related to tax return filing, assessment and tax payment in electronic form. Together, they saved 2.1 million sheets of A4 papers. Apart from enjoying convenient services, eTAX users may contribute to environment protection.