Information Technology

Through strategic use of advanced information technology (IT) and promotion of electronic services, the Inland Revenue Department continues to enhance its efficiency, productivity and quality of services. In 2009-10, the Department commissioned a consultant to devise strategy to upgrade its computer systems. A Departmental IT Plan has been formulated for implementation in the coming years.

Information Systems

After years of efforts, comprehensive Information Systems have been developed which help the Department to increase productivity, enhance efficiency, save manpower and improve the quality of services. With the "Assess-First-Audit-Later" (AFAL) system in place, the Department can automate most of the assessment processes and attain high efficiency in tax assessment. Tax audit and investigation works are facilitated by the use of data mining and advanced analysis tools. With extensive utilisation of the Document Management System and Workflow Management System, the management, control and monitoring of documents, files and workflows are enhanced. The Department's efficiency and accountability are therefore further

strengthened. Different staff members can have concurrent access to electronic documents through the computer network which facilitates the handling of multiple tasks simultaneously. Both the quality and efficiency of services to the public are ameliorated through the integration of these systems.

IT Enabled Workplace

The Department has a well-developed network of around 2,800 workstations which plays a critical role in our day-to-day operation. Under this computerised and paperless working environment, our staff can instantly perform online enquiries, update transactions; and process assessments and work tasks allocated to them by the Workflow Management System. They can also have 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 information and answers for public enquiries. Moreover, e-mail accounts and Internet facilities are provided to all staff of the Department to reduce paper consumption and improve efficiency.

Electronic Services

With more convenient and user-friendly features, our electronic services continue to gain popularity. In 2009-10, e-filing of tax returns has increased by 26% to over 251,000 cases. There were about 361,000 e-stamping transactions and 90,000 requests for supply of information on the Business Register.

Electronic submission of annual returns in respect of employee's emoluments is one of our popular services. During 2009-10, some 49,600 employers furnished electronic returns for 2,554,000 employees, 74% of these employers used the free software provided by the Department.

New e-filing service for profits tax returns was developed in the year. Starting from 1 April 2010, small corporations and partnerships can file profits tax returns online.

eTAX

eTAX at GovHK <www.gov.hk/etax> provides personalised online services to assist taxpayers to manage their tax affairs. Services under eTAX include:

- a personal message box for eTAX users to receive e-correspondence from the Department, such as e-Returns, e-Assessment Notices, e-Receipts for tax payments etc.;

- e-Alert messages sent before the deadline for filing tax returns and tax payments to help eTAX users comply with their tax obligations;

- functions to facilitate eTAX users to keep track of their tax position, update their personal particulars, and communicate with the Department.

As at 31 March 2010, some 286,000 taxpayers have registered as eTAX users. Apart from enjoying the convenience offered by the electronic services, they also contribute to environment protection. More than half of the eTAX users selected to receive e-correspondence from the Department in lieu of paper. In the year, eTAX brought about a saving of 4.5 million sheets of A4 paper.