Information Technology

Information Systems Strategy

Of the 12 implementation projects under the Department's second Information Systems Strategy (ISS) plan, the following 2 projects were completed during the year, namely:-

1.   Strategic Planning Support System - to provide analytical information, projections and what-if analyses for strategic planning; and

2.   Document Management System Phase I Project - to convert paper documents into digitised images and provide on-line and concurrent access to all documents in electronic form.

Thus far, 7 projects have been completed. Development work for the 2 projects below continued during the review period:-

1.   Property Stamping System Project - to provide an electronic and one stop service for stamping of property instruments; and

2.   Assess First Audit Later System Phase II Project - to provide more efficient and sophisticated selection methods for audit, investigation and tax compliance measurement.

Office Automation

The Document Management System implemented in 2003 enables our staff to have concurrent access to the images of the individual returns, property tax returns and employer's returns at their workstations and thus improves the efficiency of the day-to-day operations of the Department. The Data Entry System was also replaced during the year by a new PC-based Data Entry System with workstations capable of inputting data in Chinese. Furthermore, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in handling general enquiries, a General Enquiry Knowledge Database was built within the Department to provide staff with easy and quick access to answers for frequently asked questions.

In 2003-04, on-line enquiries and updating transactions totalled 27.8 million and 5.4 million respectively, while 18.9 million transactions were processed in batch mode.

Submission of Employer's Return

The provision of free software developed by the Department to employers for preparation and submission of annual returns in respect of employee's emoluments continue to attract more employers to use electronic means for return filing. During the year, some 39,800 employers furnished electronic returns for about 2,170,000 employees. 29,900 of these employers used the software provided by the Department.

Electronic Lodgement of Returns

To make the tax return filing process easier and simpler, the Department has improved the functionality and user-friendliness of the Internet filing service. Besides redesigning the screen flow, the Department has developed three new features, namely "Retrieval", "Save and Resume" and "Viewing and Printing", to be introduced in April 2004. The "Retrieval" function retrieves the data of an individual's tax return filed last year under the ESD Scheme for "pre-completing" his electronic tax return for the current year. The "Save and Resume" function saves the data of an individual's tax return temporarily and the individual may retrieve it later for amendment or further completion before submitting the return to the Inland Revenue Department. The "Viewing and Printing" function allows an individual to view and print his electronic tax returns that were filed through the ESD Scheme in the past 2 years.

Automated TeleTax Registration Hotline

To facilitate taxpayers to use our e-services, a new 24 hours Automated Telephone Registration Hotline service will be launched in April 2004 to allow online registration and application for an e-Tax password. The password together with the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) can be used for e-services, including filing returns, notifying change of address and making enquiries on personal tax information via the Internet or telephone any time.