

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)406

(Question Serial No. 5165)

Head: (91) Lands Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Legal Advice
Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Ms. Bernadette LINN)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 70):

In 2014-15, the Lands Department will continue to expedite the approval of legal title of former owners and preparation of compensation documents in respect of private land resumed under various infrastructure projects. In this connection, will the Administration inform this Committee:

- (1) of the average time and expenditure required for handling this task; and
- (2) whether any target, including the average time and expenditure required, has been set for expediting this task? If yes, what are the details; if no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. TIEN Pei-chun, James

Reply:

- (1) The title checking and related legal work arising from the resumption of private land is handled partly internally by the Legal Advisory and Conveyancing Office (LACO) of the Lands Department and partly through contracting out to private solicitor firms. On average, three months are required to process a case, at an average cost of around \$2,600.
- (2) To expedite the approval of legal title of former owners and preparation of compensation documents in respect of private land to be resumed for infrastructure projects, LACO will continue to contract out the title checking and related work to private solicitor firms. LACO will also seek to expand the scale of contracting-out in response to any increase in the number of resumption projects. We do not expect significant change to the average time to be taken by LACO or contracted-out solicitor firms to complete the work. The financial provision earmarked for this area of work in 2014-15, in terms of staff costs and fees for contracting out, is similar to that for 2013-14.