

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****DEVB(PL)113****(Question Serial No. 0393)**

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:

The Lands Department contracts out to private firms the processing of applications for approval of Deeds of Mutual Covenant and title checking for payment of compensation for land resumption. Will the Government advise us of the following in table form:

- (1) the amount involved in the work contracted out in the past five years;
- (2) the manpower deployed by the Department to oversee the work contracted out; and
- (3) whether any errors or omissions have been found in the work contracted out to private firms in the past five years? If yes, please provide the details of the cases and the amount involved.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (Member Question No. 37)

Reply:

- (1) The respective amounts paid to contracting-out solicitors' firms for checking of Deeds of Mutual Covenant (DMC) and checking of title of resumed lots in the past five years (2012 to 2016) are as follows:

Year	DMC Checking (\$ million)	Title Checking (\$ million)
2012	0.19	0.20
2013	0.14	1.48
2014	0.46	0.79
2015	0.42	1.26
2016	0.38	0.71

- (2) Normally, one Legal Officer and one Land Conveyancing Officer in the Legal Advisory and Conveyancing Office (LACO) of the Lands Department are the case officers for each DMC and each title checking case. Where the case has been contracted out, the concerned case officers are responsible for monitoring the work of the contracting-out solicitors' firm.
- (3) We have not detected any errors or omissions of the contracting-out solicitors' firms in contracted-out title checking cases that had led to wrong payment of resumption compensation. For contracted-out DMC cases, there were occasions of non-compliance with some of the DMC guidelines issued under LACO Circular Memorandum No. 64 in respect of which the contracting-out solicitors' firms did not raise questions, and those incidences were subsequently corrected upon further discussions with the concerned solicitors' firms. Such incidences did not involve the making of any erroneous payments.

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