

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)311

(Question Serial No. 4751)

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

Question:

Regarding “Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2019-20” under this Programme, the Government states that it will contract out to private firms the processing of applications for approval of Deeds of Mutual Covenant (DMCs), title checking and related legal work for payment of compensation for land resumption. Will the Government inform this Committee of the reasons for contracting out to private firms the processing of applications for approval of DMCs, title checking and related legal work for payment of compensation for land resumption? What will be the annual operational expenses for contracting out the above tasks in 2019-20? What is the estimated number of law firms to be engaged for performing the above tasks in 2019-20?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 329)

Reply:

To provide more flexibility in the allocation of resources to meet the high demand of work and effective relief for staff to deal with other priority tasks, the Legal Advisory and Conveyancing Office (LACO) of the Lands Department will continue to contract out two categories of legal work in 2019-20, i.e. processing applications for approval of Deeds of Mutual Covenant and conducting title checking and related legal work for payment of compensation in relation to land resumption, in view of the voluminous yet relatively routine nature of the tasks involved. A total of \$924,000 has been earmarked for these contracting-out exercises in 2019-20.

All solicitors' firms in Hong Kong will be invited, through the Law Society of Hong Kong, to express interest in providing services for the two areas of work. Solicitors' firms which have expressed interest and can fulfil the prequalification criteria prescribing the minimum requirements for firms' setup and relevant experience will be retained. As and when the

need to outsource a service arises, these firms will be invited for submission of quotation. At present, a total of four solicitors' firms are retained by LACO for provision of the contracting-out services. The list of solicitors' firms retained is reviewed periodically.

- End -