

LegCo Panel on Welfare Services

Implementation of Information Systems Strategy Phase I : Computerised Social Security System

PURPOSE

To report to Members progress on the development of the new Computerised Social Security System (CSSS) in the Social Welfare Department (SWD).

BACKGROUND

2. Members were informed on 26 November 1997 of the Director of Social Welfare's funding proposal to proceed with the implementation of the CSSS.
3. The main objective of the CSSS is to meet the Department's operational and management information needs. The new system will be able to support the processing of all the social security schemes including investigation, assessment and payments. It will help social security staff to provide more efficient service to our customers.

PROGRESS

4. On 28 November 1997, the Finance Committee of the Provisional Legislative Council approved a commitment of \$224.741 million to implement the CSSS.

Tendering and Award of Tenders

5. After an open tender exercise, the Government appointed IBM China/Hong Kong Limited on 24 October 1998 as the main project contractor to undertake programme and technical management, system analysis and design and implementation of the CSSS which is targeted to go live on 3 October 2000. Two other contractors were also appointed to provide personal computer software training and an image retrieval system.

Refurbishment of Social Security Field Units and fitting-out of a Central Casefile Depository

6. The Finance Committee approved on 7 May 1999 \$112 million for the refurbishment of Social Security Field Units and fitting-out of the Central Casefile Depository of the Social Welfare Department in support of the process re-engineering required for implementation of the CSSS.

CURRENT POSITION

Project Management

7. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the Deputy Director (Administration) of the Social Welfare Department has been set up to take ownership of the project. An Implementation Group (IG) chaired by the Assistant Director (Social Security) of the Department meets every month to closely monitor the development of the CSSS and review the deliverables before they are forwarded to the PSC for acceptance. This structure ensures that senior management's attention is drawn to any potential problem at the earliest possible stage.

The Development of CSSS

8. The CSSS development is on schedule and within budget. Development work on the CSSS started in November 1998. The application design and the system design were completed in December 1998 and June 1999 respectively. The construction of the core system was completed in November 1999. The contractors are now conducting system integration tests and at the same time constructing the data conversion sub-system as well as the management information system.

Management Information System

9. The CSSS Management Information System framework aims to replace the existing Social Security Payment System's static management and statistical reports with manageable and flexible technical architecture. It aims to provide:

- comprehensive management information on the performance of individual social security schemes and profile of individual customers;
- management information to enable the Administration to respond promptly to relevant questions from interested parties;
- relevant and timely information to facilitate policy reviews;
- information that facilitate the Administration to analyse data and project outcomes for supporting decision-making in response to changes impacting social security schemes.

Central Casefile Depository

10. The Central Casefile Depository was set up in August 1999 to receive paper records from social security service units. It has so far received 450 000 casefiles thus providing immediate relief for some of the most overcrowded field units.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Training

11. To equip SWD staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to operate the CSSS.

The following training courses have been planned and/or initiated:

- personal computer software training has been provided to staff starting from April 1999. So far, over 1 000 staff have attended various training courses.
- CSSS application training would be provided for all CSSS users starting from January 2000. About 1 700 staff would undertake different training courses of up to six days. Ample hands-on sessions will be provided.

Testing

12. User acceptance tests would be conducted starting from January 2000. The primary objective is to determine whether CSSS performs according to the Administration's requirements. Three dress rehearsals would be conducted in July/August 2000 to simulate the final switch to the CSSS by testing data conversion and on-line and batch functions of the CSSS. These would be conducted in a full-scale operation environment as if the CSSS went live to ensure that usability and system performance are in line with the user requirements. Any previously unforeseen problems or issues will thus be identified and resolved before the actual implementation of the CSSS.

Live Run

13. The CSSS will go live on 3 October 2000.

Manual Data Conversion

14. Manual data conversion will be conducted immediately after the CSSS live-run and last up to end of March 2001. Through on-line CSSS functions, SWD staff will input data essential to CSSS but not captured in the existing Social Security Payment System and therefore cannot be automatically migrated.

ADVICE SOUGHT

15. Members are requested to note the progress of the development of the CSSS.

Social Welfare Department
January 2000