
GOVERNMENT PROPERTY DIVISION

Estate Management Department

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The EMD's mission is to help the Government Property Division shape and deliver Government's immovable property agenda by providing quality property-related advice and services. EMD helps the Government achieve its policy objectives by contributing to three key outcomes:

- *Improved and more efficient property operations*
- *Sustaining Government finances*
- *Sustaining Government projects and initiatives*

PROPERTY OPERATIONS

Property records

During 2004 the EMD has managed to complete the creation of a document-based database for government property in Gozo by finalising the copying of all property deed packets existing in Gozo. In addition the EMD initiated and completed the computerisation of some 2100 leased-properties thereby enabling the provision of such services as the payment of rent at Local Councils as well as through the Internet. An additional approximate 500 property updating transactions were also carried out to reflect changes in property status and boundaries.

Property information requests

As part of its role in maintaining the property terrier the EMD provides property related information to a varied list of clients that ranges from private individuals and companies to Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Authorities. Information is typically required in connection with the possible disposal of such property and in relation to government projects and initiatives. It is calculated that during 2003 the EMD handled over 1,300 such requests.

Property plans

The preparation of property plans and drawings is an essential element in the management of government immovable property and the maintenance of a property terrier. The EMD utilises a custom-developed GIS-based Property Drawing System for the preparation of all property drawings. This system also interfaces with specific off-the-shelf computer aided design software to facilitate layout drawings. During 2004, the EMD put up a total of 642 property drawings in connection with

leases, sales and permits over government-owned property. In addition 13,000 copies of plans were provided by the GPD in relation to such matters as Parliamentary Resolutions, land registrations some

Map-scanning project

This project involves the electronic scanning of a number of map-sets that hold information regarding government's real estate interests. Each map-set involves thousands of property parcels each of which has to be captured, checked, split-up as necessary and transferred onto an electronic geographic information system (GIS) that shall be developed during 2005. The project has been contracted to MITTS Ltd and the scanning of the first map-set was commenced in December 2004. Due to funding and resource restrictions this project is planned to be implemented over a period of 2 to 3 years. The Mapscanning project is aimed at providing the protection of unique property records and the removal of process bottlenecks through the provision of simultaneous electronic access to map records.

LEMIS project

The Land & Estate Management Information System project spans across all the departments that constitute the GPD. LEMIS comprises a GIS-based system of property management that incorporates revenue management, property disposal and acquisition, and electronic document management. The adjudication of the LEMIS ITT is planned to be completed by July 2005. LEMIS is planned to be implemented in stages both because of limited resources as well as because of project complexities.

Protection of Government's title to property

Under the provisions of the Land Registration Act the first registration claimant to a property obtains a pre-emptive advantage over other pretenders. To safeguard government's rights the EMD checks every single application for property registration made with the Land Registry Department. During 2004 about 840 such applications were checked and, where applicable, the necessary cautions raised. To further secure Government's title to its real estate the EMD also undertakes the laborious process of registering Government's title via ad hoc applications to the Land Registry. During 2004 the total land area registered by EMD amounted to 1,461 tumoli.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Sale of Property

As part of its business development process the EMD continually strives for the identification of property that may be issued for sale at competitive prices. During 2004 a number of properties were referred to the Land Department for sale through tenders or redemption. Revenue from such cases totalled Lm5.3 million.

Property Leasing

EMD also sustains Government finances by processing and approving the disposal of Government-owned land and buildings via emphyteutical grants, leases and temporary permits. Typically this involves such properties as land, shops, garages, stores, mobile kiosks, filming, tables and chairs permits etc. During 2004 the EMD processed 180 cases for temporary activities on government land,

95 permits for repairs and 44 tables and chairs permits. In addition the EMD also approved another 140 properties for leasing and emphyteutical grants.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Devolution of Property to Local Councils

The EMD's contribution in this aspect is to assess devolution proposal, draw up necessary plans and preparing ad hoc conditions before referring the matter to the Land Department for finalisation of the contract of transfer. During 2004 the EMD completed a number of cases including Sir Paul Boffa Garden at Paola, the Old Railway Station at B'Kara, land at Nadur for public conveniences, land for a Civic Centre at Qala, Civic Centres at Zabbar and Naxxar, the Casino Notabile at Mdina and also land at Zebbug.

Property Expropriation Assistance for Infrastructure Projects

The EMD also handles requests made by government departments for the expropriation of private property for public purposes, mainly in connection with infrastructural projects. The EMD collects all relevant technical data, takes corrective measures as appropriate, liaisons with the sponsoring department and prepares the necessary plans for the expropriation. The EMD also provides technical assistance to the Land Department in acquisition cases taken in front of the Land Arbitration Board.

During 2004 EMD's efforts enabled the Land Department to issue 76 new cases of expropriation and also 131 confirmations of past cases. These included the acquisition of a considerable number of sites in connection with the road expansion project financed by the 5th Italian Protocol.

Restitution of Land to Private Owners

During 2004 the EMD completed all the necessary plans to enable the Land Department to release back to private owners over 20 tumoli of land that had been left unutilised following expropriation. This followed an identification exercise carried out in 2003.

Special Projects

During 2004 the EMD has continued to play an active role in special projects sponsored by central Government including the Fort Chambray Project, the reconstruction of the Ta' Qali Crafts Village, the Land for SMEs Project, and St. George's Bay Beach Project. EMD's involvement relates to the identification of land, participation in the preparation of disposal conditions and preparation of plans. All three projects are earmarked to be launched in 2005.

Land Transfer to Government-Owned Entities

Other major projects that involved the EMD during 2004 were those related to the transfer of government-owned properties to government-owned entities. These included the transfer to Enemalta of land at Xewkija for development as a distribution centre and administrative offices, land at Benghajsa for relocation of the Gas Depot at Qajjenza, and the fuel installations at Has-Saptan and Corradino including extensive underground tunnels. Other properties at Luqa and Pembroke were transferred to AirMalta and to Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd.

Facilitation of Home Ownership Schemes

As in previous years the EMD continued to sustain Government's efforts to promote home ownership by authorising the transfer to the Housing Authority of 253 properties for eventual sale to tenants.

Agricultural Land Scheme

This scheme was a corporate initiative that enabled cultivators of Government-owned agricultural land to register for the possibility of acquiring a new title to the land even where occupation was irregular. During 2004 the EMD processed the initial stages of 600 applications for ex-Church property. These were referred to the Joint Office for further processing. In addition some 300 letters and plans were issued to applicants requiring various types of clarifications but mainly related to overlaps between applicants and overlaps with existing leases. Over 250 inspections were also carried out as part of the investigative process. During 2004 a total of 100 cases were approved for leasing.

Support Services

The EMD also provides support services by providing property related information to such government bodies as the Planning Authority, the Works Division, the Department of Social Housing, the Land Registry and the Housing Authority.

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