CAYMAN ISLANDS NATIONAL ARCHIVE
PORTFOLIO OF THE CIVIL SERVICE
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Records Survey

What is a records survey?

A records survey is the process of gathering information about records created, kept or managed by our agency. It is an inventory of records series, <u>not individual files.</u> The survey aims to identify and describe <u>groups</u> of similar records, called *records series*. Examining the records provides information about why the records are created and how they are used.

A records series is a group of related records:-

- Created and maintained by one agency or person.
- In the same numerical, alphabetical, chronological or other sequence.
- Resulting from the same filing process or business activity.
- Of a similar format or informational content.
- That has some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt or use.

Records series are ways of grouping records to manage them more efficiently.

Why do a records survey?

A records survey is more than a simple list of files. It can help you gain control over existing records and develop systematic recordkeeping. Other benefits are:

- Reduction in duplication and storage requirements.
- Enables information to be shared across the agency.
- First step towards the development of a file plan and operational disposal schedule (listing how long the records are to be kept and when they are to be destroyed or transferred to CINA)
- Identifies all available storage locations and media.
- Improves active files management while identifying records vital for business continuity.

Collecting the information

The main methods of collecting the information are through:

- Research – laws, organisational charts, policies and procedures.
- Records management tools – file lists, RMS, registers or indexes.
- Interviews – with managers, program staff and support staff.
- Site visits – to physically inspect records in different locations.

Tips and tricks

1. <u>Do not</u> include duplicates, reference copies, publications or other *non-record material.*
2. Include records stored in warehouse or other offsite storage. Check RMS or contact the Archive about files in the Government Records Centre.

3. Look in boxes. Where possible, place records into file folders and move to central or shared storage areas.
4. Don't forget about electronic records! Browse the shared folders on network drives and check the hard drives of stand-alone computers.

Completing the form

Column	Description
Responsible unit	The business unit, section, team or position which creates or keeps the file, or who has the right to control access to the file.
Series Title	Records that are in the same numerical, alphabetical, chronological, or other sequence; or the result from the same accumulation, filing process or Business activity; e.g. Client case files, vendor files, Accounts payable, Board minutes etc.
Scope Note	Activity which the records document
Date Range	List years of the earliest document and the oldest document found on the file. E.g. 1986-1999. If the file is in use, and more documents are likely to be added in future, leave the date range "open". E.g. 2014-
Description of Contents	Contents of the files. For example: invoices, reports, financial statements, policy documents, correspondence etc.
Format	Medium of the records
Location	Precise details of where the file is stored. For example: File Cabinet A in Room 3, Floor 5 of the Government Administration Building. Or if stored electronically, T:\Administration\Financial Management
Active	Are the files being used or accessed on regular basis? (Yes/No)