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Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

PFA

FOR INFORMATION

Building questions: Update on the headquarters renovation project

Summary: This paper provides information on the progress of the headquarters building renovation project.

Author unit: Department of Facilities Management (FACILITIES).

Related documents: GB.309/PFA/BS/2(&Corr.); GB.309/PFA/11/1; GB.309/PV; GB.310/PFA/BS/1; GB.312/PFA/5(&Corr.).

Introduction

1. At its 309th Session (November 2010), the Governing Body approved a comprehensive plan for the renovation of the ILO headquarters building.¹ It also approved the replacement of the 16 main elevators in the building.² Progress reports on the renovation project were submitted to the Governing Body at the 310th and 312th Sessions.³ This paper provides information on the progress of the renovation project between November 2011 and February 2012.

Replacement of elevators

2. The international competitive bidding process for the replacement of the 16 main elevators in the building has been completed. Bids were received from three companies. The technical evaluation of the bids was undertaken with the assistance of an independent external expert. Based on the results of the technical evaluation and a comparison of the financial offers, the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller, on the recommendation of the Contracts Committee, decided to award the contract for an amount of 3,983,542 Swiss francs (CHF). Since the contract with the external expert cost less than the approved allocation, the overall cost of the replacement is expected to be some CHF100,000 less than foreseen.
3. In order to avoid excessive waiting times, the replacement contract stipulates that on each side of the building at least five elevators (out of eight) need to remain in service at any point in time during the works. As a result, the replacement of the elevators will only be completed by the end of 2013.

Asbestos survey

4. A comprehensive asbestos survey of the building began in August 2011. To safeguard the health and safety of both ILO staff and the employees of the contractor undertaking the survey, all necessary measures were taken in accordance with cantonal regulations.
5. By the end of 2011, the survey had covered the kitchen and cafeteria areas on floors R1 and R2, as well as all areas on floors 1 to 11 of the building. The results of the survey in these areas showed that asbestos was present in areas where this had been expected, such as in the glue between the linoleum floor tiles and the concrete floors in the lavatory areas, in the joints of the ventilation and heating ducts and in the partitions between offices. To ensure proper removal and confinement of the identified asbestos, the findings of the survey have been reflected in the detailed technical specifications of the request for proposals for the renovation of the kitchen and cafeteria areas and will also be reflected in the specifications for the refurbishment of floors 1 to 11.
6. During the period January–April 2012, the survey will cover the remaining areas of the building, including the service areas on the North end of the building and the meeting rooms on the South side of the building.

¹ GB.309/PV, para. 294. For details of the plan, see GB.309/PFA/BS/2(&Corr.).

² See GB.309/PV, para. 296, and GB.309/PFA/11/1.

³ See GB.310/PFA/BS/1 and GB.312/PFA/5(&Corr.).

7. The Office will continue to take air samples, including during the full duration of the renovation works, to ensure the current air quality remains in compliance with the stringent Swiss standards.

Kitchens

8. The international competitive bidding process for the structural repairs to the floors, the ventilation, the plumbing and the electrical installations in the kitchen areas was launched in February 2012. As indicated earlier, the consultancy firm that assisted the Office in drafting the specifications will also assist the Office in evaluating the bids received and monitoring the actual renovation works. In order to limit the inconvenience for ILO staff and visitors during the renovation to a minimum, the renovation works are planned to start immediately following the 2012 session of the International Labour Conference. The restaurant and cafeteria will remain open during the whole renovation period.

Project pilot

9. In order to obtain the best value for money, and following expert advice from the Institute of Swiss and International Construction Law at the University of Fribourg, the Office decided to organize two separate international bidding processes for the services of a “project pilot”, rather than one comprehensive one, as originally planned. The first, which was launched in November 2011, covers all preparatory activities, including the drafting of the technical specifications for the different elements of the project, while the second will cover the supervision of the works related to the refurbishment of floors 1 to 11 of the building. The first contract is now likely to be awarded in March or April 2012, some five months later than originally planned. The actual refurbishment is likely to face a similar delay but is still expected to start in the first half of 2013.

Annex

10. The renovation project includes a provision for the construction of a temporary office building (the Annex) on the ILO grounds. The process of drafting the technical specifications for the corresponding international bidding process was completed in October 2011. In November 2011, the Office shared the specifications with the host government to ensure conformity with local standards and regulations. Discussions with the host country were still ongoing at the time of writing.

Project management

11. The Project Steering Committee continued to meet on a monthly basis to discuss the different policy and practical issues related to the project. The Staff Union was invited to attend the January 2012 meeting of the Steering Committee as an observer and will be invited to future meetings whenever the agenda includes issues of immediate concern to the staff. The Project Team had its first formal meeting to discuss the replacement of the elevators and the renovation of the kitchens.

Communication

12. As part of the project communication strategy, the Office provides information on the project through its Internet and Intranet sites, which are regularly updated. The Project Team makes regular presentations at line manager meetings and plans to organize town hall-type meetings at sector and department level to ensure that all staff are duly informed and have a chance to share suggestions and concerns with the Project Team.

Relations with the host government

13. Informal discussions with the host country authorities continued at different levels concerning the “Jardin des Nations” master plan, including the rezoning of the two non-strategic plots that the ILO may wish to cede or sell to partially finance the completion phase of the renovation project (2016–18). Once the ILO, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Office at Geneva are able to withdraw their reservations concerning the originally proposed legislation for the “Jardin des Nations” master plan, the corresponding legislation and rezoning and planning measures have been adopted, and the discussions with the Swiss authorities have been concluded, the Office may formally submit a proposal for approval by the Governing Body on the development of the two plots.

Geneva, 21 February 2012