

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report

(COER) 2007

Foreword

"Land is the source of all material wealth". From that understanding Land Registration has developed, forming a quiet but vital part of the liberal revolution which, by defining rights and limiting arbitrary power, has enabled ever more people to live in peace and prosperity with their neighbours. But prosperity has brought with it luxury, waste and pollution, undermining the productive use of land and wealth. As we go about our daily business of ensuring clear record of property rights it is right that we should learn how to carry out our function in ways that avoid waste and pollution, and that help others to act well to preserve the capacity of the land to sustain our city. I am pleased to present this document that sets out how the Land Registry has been acting to improve its environmental performance and the steps we are taking with our partners to do better in the years ahead..



K.A.Salkeld
Land Registrar

1. This Report

1.1 This Report covers the Year 2007. It provides an overview of the Land Registry's responsibilities and organization, the business activities we conduct and the facilities we manage. The report sets out our environmental objectives, policy and targets. It describes the major environmental impacts of our operations and how we manage our business activities to minimise the impacts and achieve environmental objectives and targets. Our performance in

2007 with reference to key environmental indicators and measurements is stated.

2. Our Responsibilities and Organisation

2.1 The Land Registry is a trading-fund department established on 1 August 1993. The Land Registrar is the Controlling Officer and General Manager of the Land Registry Trading Fund. Under the trading fund model, the Land Registry governs its own finances, meeting its recurrent and capital expenditure with the income it earns through serving customers. It is our **vision** "to be the best in all that we do" and our **mission** to :

- ensure secure, customer friendly land registration and information services;
- develop our human resources, information technology and service environment so as to ensure improvement in service quality and value to our customers; and
- advocate reform of Hong Kong's land title registration system through introduction of title registration.

We share the same **core values** of "Integrity, Excellence, Respect and Learning" in carrying out our responsibilities.

2.2 The Land Registrar is supported by 4 operational branches, each headed by a directorate officer. They in turn supervise a workforce of some 620 professional, technical and general support staff as at the end of 2007.

3. Our Business and Activities

3.1 Our core business covers the registration and safe custody of land documents, the provision of facilities for search of land registers and records, the supply of copies of land records and the certification of copies of such records. We conduct these activities in accordance with the provisions of the Land Registration Ordinance. We also register owners' corporations with reference to the provisions of the Buildings Management Ordinance. Apart from these statutory duties, we maintain a Street Index and an NT Lot/Address Cross Reference Table for public reference.

3.2 Key business statistics for 2007 compared with 2006 are set out below. They show a substantial increase in business volumes over the year.

Activity	2007	2006	% change
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Documents lodged for registration	727,283	573,375	+26.8
Searches of land registers	5.06 million	4.30 million	+17.7
Copies of documents provided (plain & certified)	833,490	783,388	+6.4
Computer Registers maintained	2.79 million	2.76 million	+1.1
Imaged Documents held	18.02 million	17.33 million	+4.0

4. Our Facilities and Offices

4.1 Our Customer Centre in the Queensway Government Offices (QGO) provides a full range of services for land registration as well as land search and registration of owners corporations. Small search offices are maintained in the New Territories districts where customers can conduct searches of land registers and place orders for imaged documents for properties anywhere in the territory across the counter or through self-services terminals. In addition, we operate a Central Imaging Centre in Shatin for converting paper land documents into digital images for electronic storage and retrieval, a data centre in the Government's computer centre for providing IT support to the department and a staff training unit in Admiralty. In April 2007, we reduced the number of NT search offices from 7 to 5 after a review of the service which showed that many customers have switched to use online search service instead of counter search service.

5. Our Stakeholders

5.1 The families and businesses of Hong Kong depend on the availability, accuracy and integrity of the land register. It allows them to go about their lives and enterprises without worry for the security of their interests in property, their freedom to deal with the property and their ability to use it as security for loans and other economic activities. In maintaining the land register on their behalf we recognize our obligation to manage our operations in a way that uses resources most efficiently and minimizes the pressure we put on the environment.

6. Environmental Impacts of our Operations

6.1 The major impacts of our business activities and internal operations on the environment comes from our use of energy and consumption of paper. We accept paper instruments lodged by our customers for registration on a daily basis, with which we create and update our computerized land registers and convert them into imaged records. We provide facilities for

our customers to inspect original land records and provide them with copies of the land registers and imaged copies of our land records. We also maintain a public register of building owners' corporations and provide copies of such register to our customers. Arising from the above activities, we consume large volume of papers in our daily operations, which include photocopying papers and other paper products such as forms and labels. Energy is used to run IT systems and provide a comfortable office environment for staff and customers. Most of that energy is produced using fossil fuels, which give rise to carbon dioxide emissions as well as toxic pollutants.

6.2 To minimise the impact of paper consumption, we have over the last decade introduced various electronic systems and green housekeeping measures to reduce paper use (elaborated in paragraph 9: "Environmental Measures" below). There remains the need to provide our customers with land records and copies in paper form in order to meet their needs and comply with the requirements of the Land Registration Ordinance. We anticipate that the demand for some paper records will continue but there will be growing acceptance of electronic documentation. We aim to assist that process of transformation so as to reduce our demand for resources while maintaining the value and usability of our services.

6.3 To minimize energy use we use more efficient lighting and electrical equipment, encourage efficient use of equipment and raise awareness of the need for energy conservation. We aim to develop a better understanding of our use of energy, to aid planning for future energy efficiency measures and consideration of actions to reduce or offset carbon-dioxide emissions caused by our need for energy.

7. Environmental Objectives and Policy

7.1 The activities of the Land Registry are basically office-based. Our **environmental objectives** are directed towards minimizing the consumption of papers, energy, office materials and natural resources in an office setting. To achieve these, we :

- exercise the principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace in the consumption of paper and office materials;
- seek continual improvement in the efficient use of natural resources and energy;
- create a healthy, pleasant and environmental friendly working environment for our staff; and
- promote awareness of environmental protection among staff, our customers

and visitors who use our facilities.

7.2 We have formulated an **Environmental Policy** to establish the overall strategic direction for the Land Registry to achieve its environmental goal and set out the key areas for actions. The current environmental policy which is subject to regular review is as follows:



Environmental Policy

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace -We reduce our daily consumption of papers and envelopes, reuse used materials, recycle our waste papers and replace non-environmentally friendly products as far as possible;

Efficient Use of Resources and Energy -We encourage our staff to use natural resources wisely and to install energy-efficient systems in our offices as far as possible;

Compliance - We maintain a set of green housekeeping rules to reduce any adverse impact from our operations and safeguard the health and welfare of our staff. We seek to ensure compliance with such rules through a three-tier Environmental Management System (EMS);

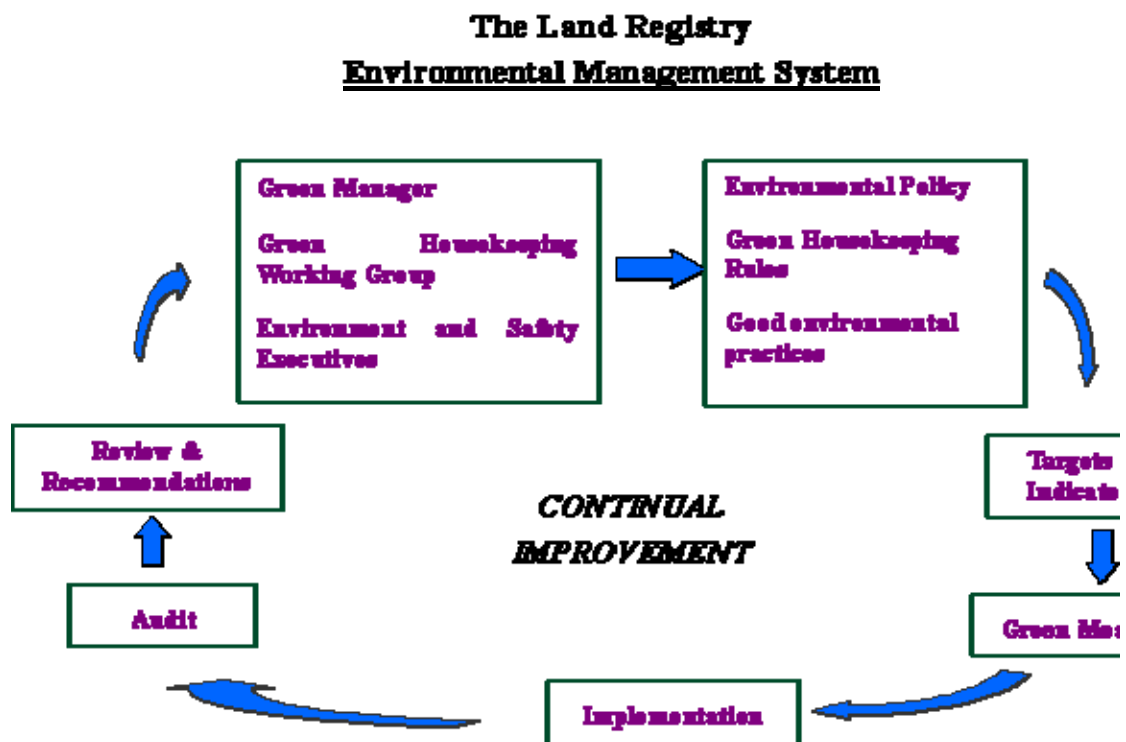
Continual Improvement - We seek continual improvement to our environmental performance through regular assessment, and by implementing new measures and practices;

Communication - We make all staff aware of their environmental responsibility through regular communication. We encourage our staff to participate in environmental activities, attend relevant workshops and seminars, and play a part in auditing the environmental performance of all our offices.

8. Environmental Management

8.1 To conduct our activities in an environmentally responsible manner, we have put in place a 3-tier Environmental Management System (EMS). Under the system, the Registry Manager serves as the Green Manager who oversees the operation of the system and

monitors the Land Registry's environmental performance. At the operational level, a Green Housekeeping Working Group led by the Departmental Secretary and various office representatives is responsible to devise and introduce green measures, manage environmental audit and set targets. In the frontline, 20 staff of different sections are appointed as Environment and Safety Executives to check compliance, implement green initiatives, encourage adoption of best practices and raise environmental awareness. The following illustrates how our EMS operates.



9. Environmental Measures

9.1 To address the key environmental impacts of our activities, we have introduced various measures over the years.

(A) Reducing paper consumption through the introduction of electronic systems

We have for years developed different computer systems which included electronic processing, storage, cataloging and search of land documents. These have significantly reduced our total paper consumption and enhanced our ability to meet customer needs. We introduced the **Direct Access System** in September 1994 to enable our customers to make remote search of land registers and records and order copies through their own computers. We also introduced the **Document Imaging System** in January 1997 to enable registered land documents to be scanned and stored on optical disks for digital storage and online

retrieval.

In February 2005, we further launched the ***Integrated Registration Information System*** (IRIS) which incorporated the above systems and provided new services over the internet. In 2007, the number of subscribers to the IRIS Online Services has increased to 665. Of the 5.06 million searches of land registers in 2007, 4.5 million or 89% were conducted through the IRIS Online Service, an increase of 3% over 2006. The orders of copies of land documents made through the Online Services have also increased in the year from 78% to 86%. In fact, any person can carry out searches of property records and obtain copies of documents in digital format or by printing on the computer through the internet. As a result, voluminous paper applications and reports for land records are saved.

(B) Reducing paper consumption through production of reports in soft copies

For the urban properties, we have transformed the traditional two-volume Street Index into compact discs since January 1999. This enables our customers to search the required data speedily and conveniently through their personal computers. In April 2007, we produced the 39th edition of Street Index which contained 580 amendments and a total of 2000 streets. Our customers purchased 221 sets of the Street Index in compact discs in 2007. The transformation of the paper-based Street Index into compact discs has saved a substantial amount of paper.

For the NT properties, we have produced an NT Lot/Address Cross Reference Table in compact discs. The first edition of NT Lot/Address CD was released in April 2000 and the 8th edition was issued in April 2007. The 8th edition of our Cross Reference Table contains 6,529 amendments and 2,934 streets/villages/places. A total of 178 sets of discs were sold to the customers in 2007. Had bulk volume copies and replacement inserts of the above street index and reference table been produced in paper form, about 1.75 million sheets of paper would have been consumed. The production of CDs for sales has achieved substantial paper saving.

We produce our annual report in compact disc for distribution. We also endeavour to convert IRIS reports from hard to soft copy. In 2007, we converted 98 IRIS reports of different types to soft copy, contributing to a saving of about 1.98 million sheets of paper consumption a year. We successfully persuaded some major report-on-title users to accept soft copy reports. We also began to use email instead of floppy diskettes in April 2007 to deliver the Memorial Day Book and Monthly Memorial Information on Mortgage data files to all subscribers. Apart from expediting the delivery of data, it also obviated the need for courier dispatch thus reducing car trips and air pollution.

(C) Economising through green housekeeping measures and wider use of the Local Area Network (LAN), Government Office Automation (GOA) and e-Leave systems

We continue to exercise the principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace in our daily operations to reduce paper consumption. Since 1997, we began using LAN for internal and external communication. We encourage our staff to make best use of the network to save paper and enhance efficiency. Over the years, we have expanded the network to cover more officers in the department including all section heads, supervisors and subject users. In mid 2005, we implemented e-Leave system to eliminate paper records. In early 2006, we launched an Accessibility Program system for all junior staff so as to facilitate wider use of GOA and e-communication among staff in the Land Registry. In 2007, we introduced digital library service for staff to manage their book borrowing activities through the GOA system. We also began to publish the staff magazine in electronic format for staff to read through the intranet.

(D) Economising the consumption of energy and other resources

We continue to minimize the use of energy and other resources in our offices. We economize by energy-efficient retrofits and management control measures, such as using T-5 florescent tubes, installing occupancy sensors for room lighting and water faucets, adding automatic switch-timers to office equipments such as water dispenser, maximizing the use of natural lighting and creating openness in designing new offices. We also achieve savings through observing our green housekeeping rules and adopting good environmental practices. These include encouraging staff to use staircases instead of the lifts, to reuse used materials and office supplies, and to switch off lights, office equipment and electrical appliances during lunch hours and when not in use. We also remind our staff to save water.

(E) Minimizing office waste and encouraging recycling

We follow our green housekeeping rules in minimizing and handling office waste. We encourage our staff to retain waste materials such as newspapers, used papers, printer cartridges and staples for recycling. We recover office waste for recycling on a regular basis. We provide on each office floor designated bins for separation of recyclable waste at source to facilitate collection.

(F) Replacing materials by green procurement

We observe the guidelines of the Government Logistics Department by procuring as far as practicable environmental friendly materials such as wood-free printing papers, reusable printer cartridges, CFC free refrigerators, electrical appliances with energy efficiency labels and various refillable stationeries. We will continue to procure environmentally preferable

office supplies, equipment and services as far as possible.

(G) Enhancing staff's awareness and participation

We continue to participate and organize activities to promote a green culture in the Land Registry. These include the participation of experience-sharing workshops on energy efficiency organized by the EMSD, the promotion of dress casual in summer months, the holding of seminars for staff on environmental protection and the arrangement of environmental activities including visits and voluntary work for staff to broaden their exposure. We display our Environmental Policy, Green Housekeeping Working Rules and Good Environmental Practices in our intranet and at prominent locations in our offices, putting across our environmental vision and encouraging compliance. In September 2007, we added a dedicated folder to our intranet giving all relevant information, departmental guidelines and useful links, etc. on environmental protection to facilitate our staff's reference.

(H) Conducting environmental audit

Under our Environmental Management System we have established since 1997 an audit mechanism to check compliance with our environmental policy and rules. We conduct regular environmental audit inspections on our offices. The results indicated full compliance of staff with our environmental policy and rules. They also reflected a high level of staff awareness and participation. Past audit recommendations have led to the introduction of a variety of green initiatives.

In 2007, we completed 3 environmental audit inspections to 4 sections in the department. The environmental audit team members are drawn from staff of different offices. This enables staff to have the opportunity to plan and conduct environmental management work, which in turn helps promote environmental education when they bring their experience back to the offices they belong.

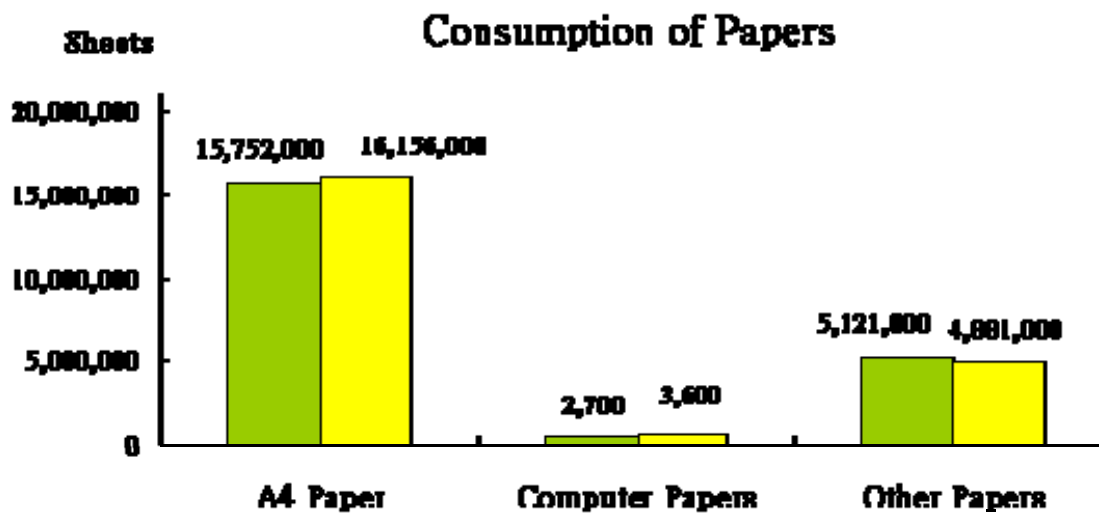
(I) Improving air quality

To help maintain good air quality, we participate in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Certification Scheme organized by Environmental Protection Department. We employ qualified contractor annually to conduct indoor air quality measurements in the offices at QGO. The offices are certified to have fully complied with the Good Class of the IAQ Objectives.

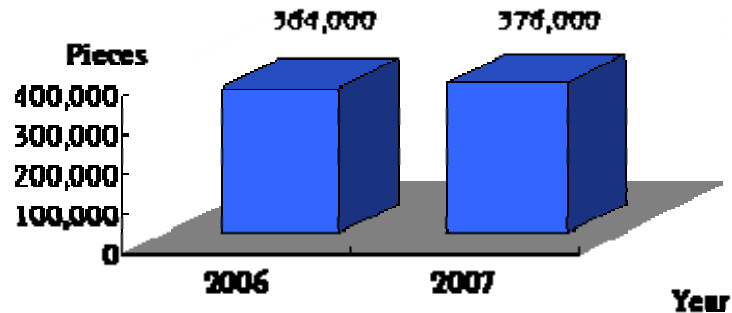
10. Environmental Performance

Paper consumption

10.1 We consumed 21.04 million sheets of paper in 2007. Compared with 20.88 million sheets of paper in 2006, there is a slight increase of 0.77%. A comparison of this consumption by paper types (i.e. A4-size papers, computer papers and other paper products) is given in the diagram below. Given that there has been a significant increase in business volume in 2007 (i.e. the number of documents lodged for registration has increased by 26.8% and copies of documents provided to customers increased by 6.4%), this 0.77% increase in paper consumption was in fact insignificant, and could only be achieved through the strong efforts throughout the Land Registry to cut paper usage. For example, we converted various IRIS reports from hard to soft copies, resulting in a saving of 1.98 million sheets of papers. As regards envelope consumption in 2007, it increased to 376,000 which is 3.2% over the preceding year. Again, this envelope consumption has reflected the strict economy of the department in view of the significant increase of the business volume in 2007.



Consumption of Envelopes



10.2 In our Environmental Report for 2006, we targeted to achieve a 3% reduction in paper consumption in 2007. Measured in absolute terms we did not meet this target. Set against the 6.4% increase in demand for issue of document copies, the increase in overall paper consumption of only 0.77% is encouraging. We will consider how to set performance targets in future that take better account of the large fluctuations in business volume that we often face.

Energy consumption

10.3 Our offices are mainly accommodated in QGO which is a joint-user building. In November 2007, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department installed separate electricity meters for our floors. Before this, the whole building only had one electricity account. In the absence of separate readings for our electricity consumption in 2007, the effectiveness of our energy saving measures in the year could only be reflected in the overall energy conservation result of the building. In 2007, the QGO achieved a 5.1 % reduction in electricity consumption, twice the saving made in 2006. This achievement, shows both the concerted efforts of the user departments in the building to save energy and the effectiveness of energy efficiency retrofits and conservation measures that we have put in place in our offices. For the Data Centre (before it was relocated at the end of December 2007) and the Central Imaging Centre in Shatin, which have separate electricity meters, their total consumption in 2007 was 548,514 kWh. Comparing with the 633,408 kWh recorded in 2006, this was a significant decrease of 13.4 % in consumption. This is mainly attributed to the efforts of staff in conserving energy and the implementation of new energy saving measures.

Office Refitting

10.4 We refurbished our offices in QGO in 2005. We adopted flexible and open design to reduce materials used in initial work and future re-organization of offices. The open design also enhanced natural lighting and ventilation flow. We used good quality but durable office

furniture. We used approved materials such as non-toxic paints that would not do harm to the environment in fitting-out works. The same environmental practices were adopted, and environmental benefits reaped when we relocated our Data Centre from Shatin in late 2007. We will continue to apply these good environmental practices when undertaking future office fitting-out works.

Resources consumption

10.5 We consumed 1,868 ball pens, which is some 10.3% more than the preceding year. This increase is attributed to the significant growth in business and the associated increase in the use of stationery to cope with the increased workload.

Minimizing travel needs

10.6 We recognize the environmental impacts of urban commuting in terms of fuel consumption and air pollutant emissions. Before 1999, our land registration system did not support cross-district land registration applications and land documents searches. Our customers were required to travel to the Land Registry in the district for which information was requested. In January 1999, we introduced the Cross District Search service in the Central Search Office in Queensway. In October 2000, we further extended the service to our New Territories customers by introducing the New Territories Cross District Search service. With the implementation of the IRIS in February 2005, our customers can conduct land searches as well as place orders for computerized land registers and imaged land documents for properties in the Customer Centre at the QGO, the NT Search Offices and through the internet. This has contributed to a significant reduction in customer trips. We hire a shuttle transport to deliver documents between our NT Search Offices and QGO everyday. With the re-organization of our NT search office services and the consequential closure of our search offices in Sai Kung and North District in April 2007, we saved about 500 transport trips a year.

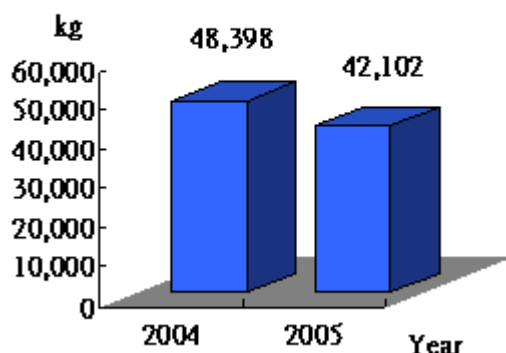
10.7 For our staff, we encourage them to commute through public transport in duty travels. We disposed of our departmental car in December 2003 in order to contribute further to a greener environment.

Reducing office waste

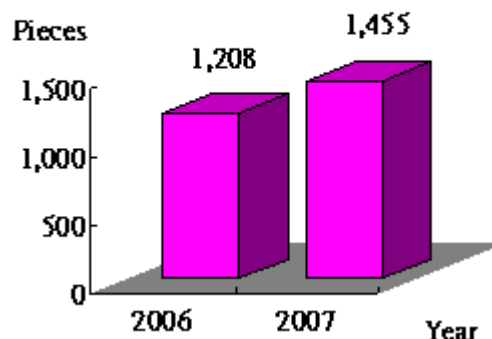
10.8 In 2007, we collected 21,864 kg. of waste paper and 1,455 printer cartridges for recycling. Comparing to 2006, the volume of waste paper collected has shown a continual decrease of 23%. This was attributed to the wider use of LAN for communication, and to staff reusing paper. Consumption of printer cartridges increased by 20.45 % due to the increased demand for printing of registration documents and land search records. The bar charts below

show the data.

Collection of Waste Paper



Printer Cartridges for recycling



11. Efforts to sustain and achieve continual improvement

11.1 In addition to the above-mentioned environmental measures, we continue to strengthen our efforts in environmental protection through the following green initiatives.

Working with partners

11.2 We are discussing with the Hong Kong Association of Banks and Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation arrangements to allow for mortgage documents to incorporate standard terms by reference to master copies that would be kept in an archive at the Land Registry, open to public search. This could reduce substantially the bulk of documents presented for registration and subsequently requiring copying. It should bring cost and environmental savings and business efficiencies to all parties. Separately, we have released an e-Memorial Form on the Land Registry website in November 2007 for use by customers. The implementation of this e-form obviates the need for customers to buy and collect pre-printed memorial forms from our office. It is also intended as a foundation for further work towards eventual electronic lodgment of deeds.

Supporting the Clean Air Charter and minimizing carbon emissions

11.3 We support the principles and spirit of the Clean Air Charter, and implement appropriate measures to achieve the objectives of conserving energy and reducing air pollution. With the completion of installation of independent electricity meters for our QGO floors in late 2007 we have begun to record data for our own energy consumption. This will give us a better benchmark for our existing energy efficiency and a frame against which to assess the benefits of future efficiency measures. The availability of hard data for our own consumption will also enable us to start studying the issue of the carbon emissions that arise

from our operations and the economic cost they represent. This will allow us to consider where would it be cost effective for us to reduce emissions by reducing use of energy or materials. We can also start to examine the question of what would it cost us to offset carbon emissions by contributing to properly audited carbon reduction programmes, pending the availability of energy generated from clean sources.

12. Environmental Targets for the Year 2008

12.1 To keep up the momentum in green management, we will :

- continue to reduce paper consumption through pursuing more paper saving measures such as further replacement of reports by soft copies, wherever practical, and promoting wider application of electronic communication and storage of records;
- secure support from the Hong Kong Association of Banks on arrangements for filing of Standard Terms Documents so as to reduce the bulk of mortgage documents and associated paper consumption;
- continue with the existing energy saving measures, monitor performance of energy efficiency based on records of actual consumption and start studying the issue of carbon emissions arising from our operations;
- continue to encourage the adoption of good environmental practices through various means including uploading useful information to the Land Registry's intranet, posting notices and updates on our Green Message Notice boards, issuing reminders and communicating our environmental performance to staff through our quarterly consumption statistics, and publication in the Staff Magazine;
- continue to conduct environmental audits in offices to look for areas for future improvement;
- continue to explore practicable green housekeeping practices in economizing the use of resource and minimizing waste; and
- continue to encourage and organize activities/trainings to promote the awareness of staff in environmental protection.

13. Information and Suggestions

13.1 We welcome any questions, comments or suggestions. Please send them to our Green Manager or Departmental Secretary by email at ds@landreg.gov.hk or by post to 28th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong. An electronic copy of this

report is posted to the Land Registry Homepage at <http://www.landreg.gov.hk>. To save paper, we do not provide hardcopy unless upon special request.

Land Registry

July 2008