

Land Registry COER 2004

Foreword

The Land Registry is a demand driven service provider. We had to respond to the substantial increase in demand for documents as the property market picked up and this was reflected in the substantial increase in paper consumption over the year. But, as everyone in the Land Registry remembers well, our major effort over the year was in preparing for the launch of a new IT system supporting new service delivery over the internet. Our expectation is that this will lead to steady reduction in the volume of material consumption in the years ahead.

I would like to commend the environmental managers for keeping up awareness of our responsibility for the efficient use of resources over this very busy period. The achievements in reduced energy consumption and reduced waste are significant. They provide encouragement that persistent attention to efficiency in design and operation will bring steady improvement in environmental performance, matching the quality and efficiency we aim at in all our activities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K.A. Salkeld'.

K.A. Salkeld
Land Registrar

1. This Report

1.1 This is the seventh Environmental Report of the Land Registrar covering the Year 2004. It provides an overview of the Land Registry's responsibilities and organization, its business and activities, the facilities it manages and the offices it occupies. The report also sets out our environmental objectives, policy and targets, the major environmental impacts of our operations, how we manage our business activities and internal operations to minimise the impacts and achieve our environmental objectives and targets, how we have performed in the Year 2004 with reference to the key environmental indicators and measurements.

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 and balances its expenditure with the income it earns through serving customers. The Registry has the flexibility to respond to the service needs of customers through capital investment projects. It is our *vision* "to be the best in all that we do" and our *mission* to:

- ensure secure, customer friendly land registration and search services;
- develop our human resources, information technology and service environment to ensure improvement to service quality and value to our customers; and
- introduce a land title registration system in Hong Kong in 2007.

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

2.2 Prior to October 2004, the Land Registry had a relatively simple organisation with the Land Registrar and two directorate officers - a Registry Manager and a Business Manager - in the leadership and senior management. These officers in turn supervised a workforce of some 500 professional, technical and general support staff.

2.3 In July 2004, following enactment of the Land Titles Ordinance, the Registry's management team has been substantially strengthened by the addition of five directorate officers and a number of non-directorate and contract staff in order to assist in the preparatory work for implementation of the Ordinance and the new Land Title Registration System in 2007. The new directorate officers include one Deputy Principal Solicitor, one Assistant Principal Solicitor, one Senior Principal Executive officer, one Principal Land Registration Officer and one Chief Systems Manager. As at the end of 2004, the Land Registry had a workforce of about 570.

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 In 2004, the Land Registry kept 2.67 million (2.61 m. in 2003) computerised land registers in its Land Registration System and 16.05 million (15.34 m. in 2003) imaged documents in its Document Imaging System. A total of 630,795 (497,141 in 2003) land documents were lodged for registration. Furthermore, 3,974,066 (3,176,935 in 2003) searches of our land registers and records had been made and we provided 652,384 (486,744 in 2003) plain or certified copies of land documents to our customers. Comparing to the figures of 2003, the present statistics reflect a significant increase in activities in the property market.

4. Our Facilities and Offices

4.1 Before the implementation of central registration and our new IT system, Integrated Registration Information System (IRIS), on 12 February 2005, we delivered our services through an urban Land Registry located in the Queensway Government Offices and eight NT Land Registries in the Islands, Sha Tin, Sai Kung, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and North districts. We also provided property or owners information to government departments through the eight NT Land Registries and the Reports-on-Titles Office in Sai Wan Ho. In addition, we operated a Imaging Centre in Shatin where we converted paper land documents into digital images for electronic storage and retrieval.

5. Our Stakeholders

5.1 We are fully aware that a business corporation or any other organisation has a social responsibility to its stakeholders apart from business accountability in order to provide the best for the people and environment now and in the future. Our stakeholders are the customers whom we serve everyday including members of the public, their agents and government departments. Our stakeholders are also the business partners and associates with whom we work closely to improve our services. This environmental report is specifically compiled for the benefit of our stakeholders.

6. Environmental Impacts of our Operations

6.1 The major impacts of our business activities and internal operations on the environment is the huge consumption of papers. To illustrate, 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 ordinary white papers, different types of computer papers and other paper products.

6.2 To minimise the impacts, we have over the last 10 years introduced various electronic systems and green housekeeping measures to reduce paper consumption (to be elaborated in paragraph 9: "Environmental Measures" below). Despite this effort, 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 the need for paper records to continue until such time when the use of computer has become the everyday life of the masses.

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, office materials, natural energy and 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.
- We seek continual improvement in the efficient use of natural resources and energy.
- We create a healthy and pleasant working environment for our staff. We promote awareness among them, our customers and visitors who use our facilities.
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7.2 To achieve our environmental objectives and targets, 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.



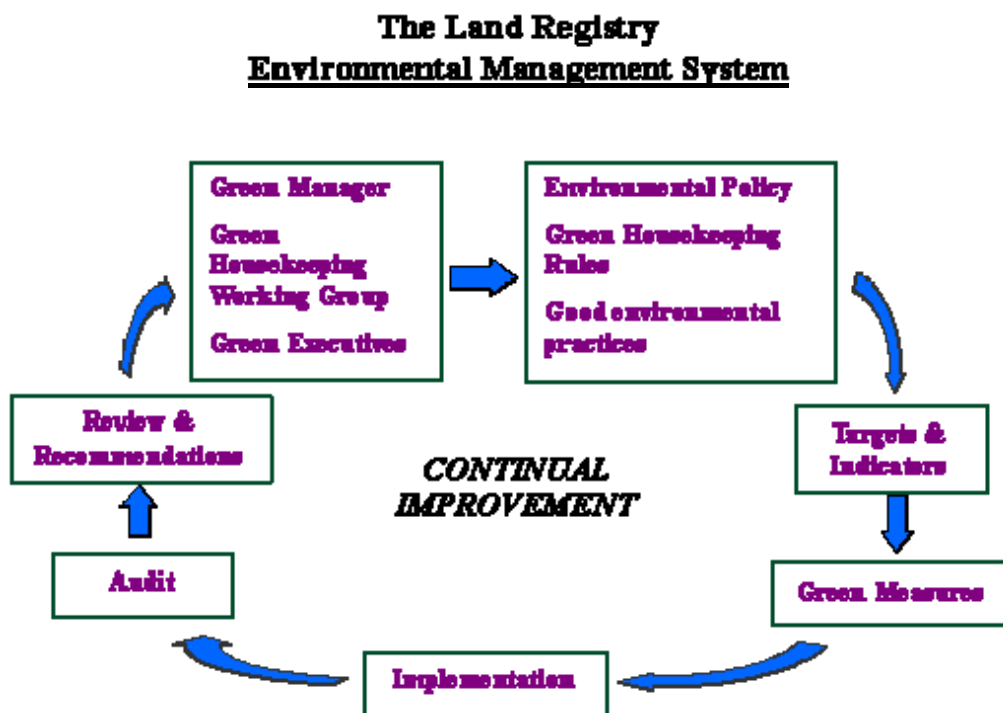
Environmental Policy

- ***Efficient Use of Resources and Energy*** - We encourage our staff to use natural resources and energy wisely. We seek to use energy/water-efficient systems in our offices as far as practicable;
- ***Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace*** - We continue our efforts to reduce paper consumption and waste generation, to reuse or recycle where possible, to properly dispose of our waste and purchase environmentally preferable products and services as far as possible;
- ***Compliance*** - We ensure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations, with this Environmental Policy and our Green Housekeeping Rules through the implementation of our Environmental Management System;
- ***Continual Improvement*** - We seek continual improvement to our environmental performance through regular assessment, audit and review, and by implementing best practices and new measures;
- ***Communication*** - We make all staff aware of their environmental responsibility and build a green corporate culture through regular internal communication. Externally, we communicate our environmental requirements to our suppliers and contractors. We also prepare regular reports on our environmental performance for our stakeholders;
- ***Staff Participation*** - We encourage our staff to actively participate in environmental activities and events. We expand their knowledge of environmental protection and ensure an active role by staff in our environmental management and auditing efforts.

7.3 We have placed our environmental policy under regular review. Our review in 2004 has concluded that the existing policy remains to be adequate and should continue to be enforced.

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. Under the system, the Registry Manager serves as the Green Manager who oversees the operation of the system and monitors the Registry's environmental performance. At the operational level, a Green Housekeeping Working Group led by the Departmental Secretary and various office representatives has been formed to devise and introduce green measures, manage environmental audit and set targets. In the frontline, 16 Environment and Safety Executives have been appointed 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

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 moved towards computerization which includes electronic processing, storage, cataloging and search of land documents. These have significantly reduced our total paper consumption, updated our systems and enhanced our capability to meet customer needs. The electronic systems introduced were -

- ***Direct Access System*** - An on-line Direct Access Service (DAS) introduced in September 1994 to enable our customers making remote search of land registers and records and order copies through their own computers. As of 31 December 2004, there were 451 subscribers to the DAS and 3,657,384 number of searches conducted through this service. In 2004, about 80 % of the searches of computerized land registers and 66 % of the orders for copies of land documents were made through DAS. As our customers make use of the DAS Remote Ordering Service to order copies of land documents, the use of paper request forms at our registries is eliminated, and **this has reduced paper consumption**. In addition, all remote orders placed by DAS users are downloaded onto computer diskettes, and **this obviates the need to generate voluminous paper reports on a daily basis**.
- ***Document Imaging System*** - We introduced a Document Imaging System (DIS) in January 1997 to enable digital storage and retrieval of land documents. Under the DIS, all newly registered land documents are scanned into the system at our Central Imaging Centre in Shatin. The electronic images are stored on optical disks for on-line retrieval. The conversion of all existing land documents into electronic images was completed in December 1998. Over 231 million pages of paper have been successfully captured into the DIS. As the need to store and make backup records of paper documents is eliminated, **our paper consumption is further reduced**.

(B) Reducing paper consumption through production of CD-ROMs to carry the Street Index and the NT Lot/Address Cross Reference Tables

For the urban properties, we have transformed the traditional two-volume Street Index into compact discs in January 1999. This enables our customers to search the required data speedily and conveniently through their personal computers. By the end of 2004, we have produced 36 editions of Street Index. The 36th edition contained 573 amendments, 8 new streets and 64 new lots/sections/subsections. Our customers had purchased 252 sets of the Street Index in compact discs in 2004. **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. In 2004, our customers had purchased 213 copies. The 5th edition of our Cross Reference Table contains 87 new streets and 1,864 new lots/sections/subsections. Had bulk volume copies and replacement inserts been produced in paper form, 4,012 reams of paper would have been consumed. **The production of CDs for sales has achieved substantial paper saving.**

(C) Economising through green housekeeping measures and wider use of the LAN and GOA 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 and subject users. We anticipate expanding the network further to cover more junior staff in the near future.

(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 replacing all T-12 florescent tubes in our offices with T-5 tubes, installing occupancy sensors for room lighting and water faucets, maximizing the use of natural lighting and creating openness in designing our new offices. We began moving into some of these new offices since late 2003 and anticipated full occupancy in late 2005.

We also achieve savings through observing our green housekeeping rules and adopting good environmental practices. These include encouraging our staff to use staircases instead of the lifts, to reuse and recycle used materials, to switch off lights, office equipment and electrical appliances when not in use. We also remind our staff to save water and reuse office supplies.

(E) Minimizing office waste and encouraging recycling

We follow our green housekeeping rules in handling office waste. We encourage our staff to retain waste materials for recycling, which include used papers and printer cartridges, and we recover office waste for recycling on a regular basis.

(F) Replacing materials by green procurement

We continue to observe the guidelines of the Government Logistics Department by procuring environmentally friendly materials as far as practicable, which include stationery refills and paper with recycled materials. We will continue to procure environmentally preferable office supplies, equipment and services as far as possible.

(G) Conducting Environmental Audit

Under our Environmental Management System we have established an audit mechanism to check compliance with our environmental policy and rules. Since 1997, a number of audit teams have been formed to inspect 16 of our offices covering some 7,800 square metres of office space and involving over 50 staff members in the audit teams and hundreds of others in related activities. The audit results indicated full compliance 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.

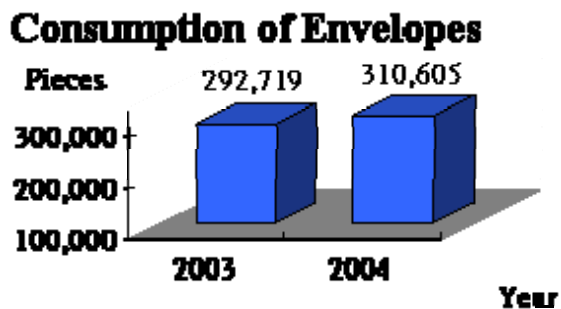
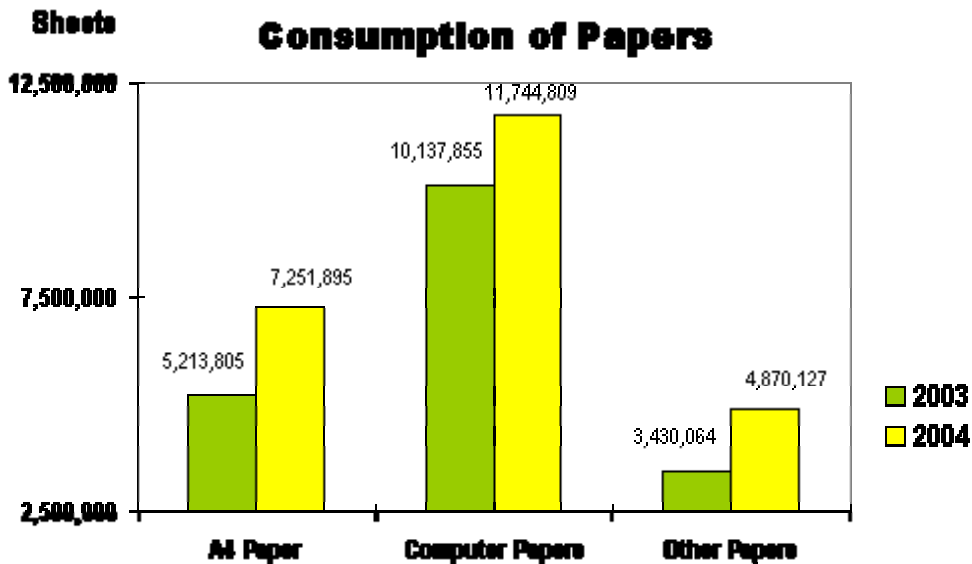
The inspection of all LR offices was completed in late 2002 with the outcome of the last inspection reviewed in early 2003. Since then, all LR offices, at HQs and outstations, underwent a series of rescheduling and refurbishment. The refurbishment programme was scheduled to finish in late 2005. Until then, environmental audit has been suspended. We expect to resume the activities when the works are completed and all staff have settled in their new offices.

10. Environmental Performance

Paper consumption

10.1 The level of paper consumption is driven in large measure by public demand for our land records. In 2004, we saw a drastic increase in paper consumption due mainly to the increased activities in the property market and the extensive testing programme for IRIS. As a result, we have consumed 23,866,831 sheets of papers in the year including A4-size paper for administrative and general purposes, different types of computer papers for conducting core business and other paper products used to support our daily operations. When comparing to the consumption level in 2003, our paper consumption in 2004 has increased by 27.1%. We have also consumed 310,605 envelopes in 2004, which is 6.1% more than the preceding year. This is due to the increased business activities since the last quarter of 2003. The bar charts below compare our paper and envelope consumption in 2003 and 2004.

10.2 In our Environmental Report for 2003, we targeted to achieve a 5% reduction in paper consumption in 2004. This target was set having regard to the downward trend in the preceding two years (-7.8% in 2001 and -8.4% in 2002) and the increasing use of our electronic services by our customers at the time. Benchmarking our performance in 2004 against the set target, we were unable to achieve the desired result owing to the unexpected revival in the property market and the exceptionally high demand on the use of paper in the course of development and testing of IRIS.



Energy consumption

10.3 In 2004, our headquarter offices in Queensway Government Offices with a total floor area of some 5,135 sq. m. consumed 1,288,125 kWh of electricity. Our Central Imaging Centre (CIC) in Shatin of some 1,380 sq. m. consumed 625,217 kWh. Comparing to the consumption level in 2003, these figures represent a decrease of 5.5% for our QGO offices and an increase of 4.3% for our CIC. This indicates that the energy efficiency retrofits and management systems installed in our QGO offices have achieved the desired result, but the CIC which houses our IRIS Data Centre, has consumed more energy than expected while IRIS was being developed and tested in the Centre.

10.4 In our 2003 Environmental Report, we targeted to achieve a reduction in energy consumption by 2% in 2004 for our HQ offices at QGO and our CIC at Shatin. This target was set in view of the substantial completion of the refurbishment works in our QGO offices and having regard to the downward trend in energy consumption at CIC (-16.76% in 2002 and -4.52% in 2003). Benchmarking our

performance in 2004 against the set target, we have exceeded that set for QGO but were unable to meet the target set for CIC for the reasons given above.

Resources consumption

10.5 We consumed 2,203 ball pens, which is some 84% more than the preceding year. This is due to the upsurge in business volume in 2004. Looking back, the consumption of ball pen has been decreasing over time, from 1,566 pieces in 2000 to 1,327 pieces in 2001 and 965 pieces in 2002. It began to pick up in 2003 with 1,201 pieces being consumed due to the revival of the property market in the last quarter of the year.

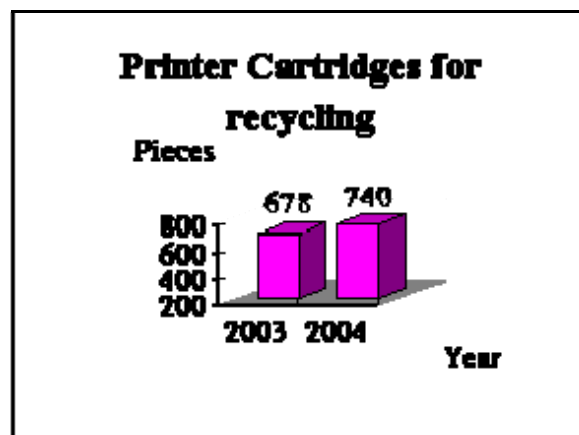
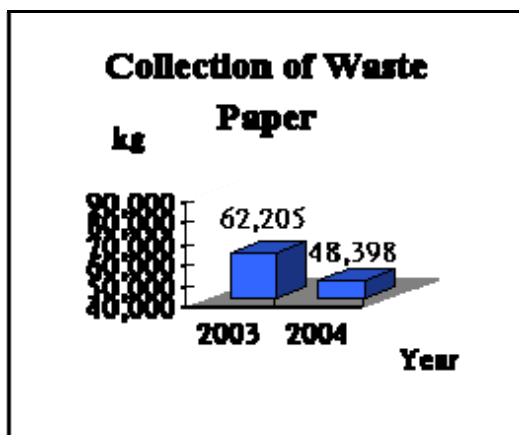
Minimizing travel needs

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. Our customers can conduct land searches as well as place orders for computerized land registers and imaged land documents for properties in any New Territories Land Registries and in the Central Search Office at the Queensway Government Offices. This has contributed to a significant reduction in customer trips.

10.7 For our staff, we continue to encourage them to commute through public transport in duty travels. We disposed of our departmental vehicle upon the retirement of the Motor Driver in December 2003 in order to contribute further to a greener environment.

Reducing office waste

10.8 In 2004, we collected 468,398 kg. of waste paper and 740 printer cartridges for recycling. Comparing to 2003, the volume of waste paper collected has decreased considerably by 22.2% due mainly to the wider use of LAN and our staff exercising the practice of reduce and reuse. The consumption of printer cartridges has increased by 9.1% and this is the result of the increases in business volume and IRIS-related activities. The bar charts below carry the data.



11. Efforts made to sustain and achieve continual improvement

Regular Review of Policy and Rules

11.1 We have reviewed our Environmental Policy, Green Housekeeping Rules and Good Environmental Practices with regard to our environmental management approach. It is our conclusion that the current policy, rules and practices remain valid and should continue to be observed. Over the years, we have issued regular reminders of compliance to our staff and will continue doing so in future.

Strategic Change Plan and IT renewal

11.2 We have developed a Strategic Change Plan to enhance the quality and scope of our services. In Phase One of the Plan, our core registration and search services will be centralized and improved. In Phase Two, a title registration system will be introduced to replace the existing deeds registration system 12 years after implementation of the Land Titles Ordinance. In support of the Plan, we have developed a new IT system (IRIS) to revamp our existing systems, viz. the Land Registration System (LRS), the Direct Access System (DAS), and the Document Imaging System (DIS). IRIS will enable on-line processing combining data entry and registration, which will replace the current batch processing system. IRIS will also streamline the registration process to a whole-of-job operation, thereby increasing productivity and simplifying administration. Apart from efficiency improvements, the new system will eliminate the need for production of property listings in paper form and reduce the amount of paper reports. It is estimated that the implementation of IRIS will achieve substantial saving in paper. At the time this report was written, central registration and IRIS have been successfully launched on 12 February 2005.

Communication and staff participation

11.3 All members of the department had to participate in and focus on the development and preparation of IRIS in 2004. Our environmental activities had scaled down as a result. We expected to renew and strengthen our environmental efforts as soon as the pressure eases in 2005. Despite the operational constraints, we managed to conduct a few activities in 2004 in order to promote an environmental culture and sustain interest within the organisation. In May 2004, we had arranged for our staff to attend an experience-sharing workshop on energy efficiency and conservation organised by the EMSD. In August 2004, we participated in a programme co-ordinated by ETWB which encouraged staff to collect used CDs for designated collection.

11.4 To sustain interests and raise awareness, we continue to display our Environmental Policy, Green Housekeeping Working Rules and Good Environmental Practices at prominent locations in our offices in the year, putting across our environmental vision and encouraging compliance.

12. Environmental Targets for the Year 2005

12.1 The environmental targets we have set for 2005 are:

- To review our Environmental Policy and Green Housekeeping Rules, make changes as necessary and ensure compliance;
- To encourage adoption of our good environmental practices through notices and updates on our Green Message Notice-boards, issuing reminders and communicating our environmental performance through our quarterly consumption statistics - an electronic database maintained on LAN;
- To reduce paper consumption by 5%. We hope to achieve this following the implementation of IRIS when there will be less activities requiring the use of papers;
- To reduce the energy consumption of our offices at QGO by 5% and of our Central Imaging Centre by 2%;
- To continue minimising waste generation and recover a higher proportion of materials for recycling;
- To review the duties of our Environment and Safety Executives and better equip them for their duties;
- To appoint new members of the Green Housekeeping Working Group, review their duties, renew and strengthen environmental efforts; and
- To resume environmental audit of our new offices.

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.