

## Publications and Press Releases

### Controlling Officer's Environmental Report

#### (COER) 2008

#### Foreword

Mankind is engaged in a race to generate energy cleanly enough and use it efficiently enough to continue to offer hope of improving conditions for the poor without destroying the fragile physical and chemical balances on which man's life on earth depends. The observations and reports of scientists here in Hong Kong and from around the world make depressing reading as to how we are faring in this race so far.

But, with understanding and persistent effort, improvement can be made. I am delighted that during the last year we have been able to establish baseline measurements for this department's energy consumption and carbon emissions. These provide a tool to improve understanding of our impact on the environment and the basis for effective planning for improvement and measurement of performance. This report sets out steps we are taking to try to ensure we make consistent improvements in the efficiency of energy use in years to come, to do our part to help keep down carbon emissions.

I am grateful for the hard work that has been put in by many staff over the year that underlies this report. I would also like to thank staff from EMSD, ArchSD and EPD for their assistance and advice over the year. Together we are picking up the pace, helping this department play a better part in our common endeavour to sustain this city.



K.A.Salkeld  
Land Registrar

#### 1. This Report

1.1 This Report covers the Year 2008. It provides an overview of the Land Registry's responsibilities and Organisation, 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 2008 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 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 630 professional, technical and general support staff as at the end of 2008.

## 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 2008 compared with 2007 are set out below. They show a slight decrease in business volumes over the year.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>% change</b>
Documents lodged for registration	712,426	727,283	-2.0%
Searches of land registers	5.05 million	5.06 million	-0.2%
Copies of documents provided (plain & certified)	837,923	833,490	+0.5%
Computer Registers maintained	2.81 million	2.79 million	+0.7%
Imaged Documents held	18.79 million	18.02 million	+4.3%

## 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 in Sai Kung for providing IT support to the department and a staff training unit in Admiralty. In May 2008, we reduced the number of NT search offices from 5 to 4 after a review of the service which showed that more and more 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 come 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;

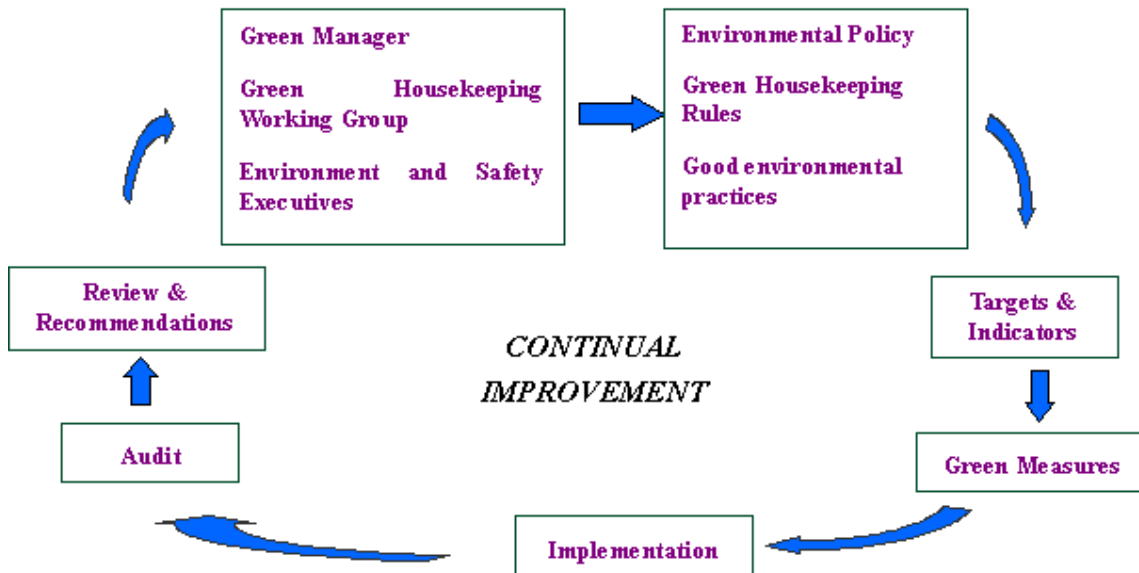
**Communication** - We make all staff aware of their environmental responsibility through regular communication. We encourage our staff to participate in environmental activities, attend relevant workshops and seminars, and play a part in auditing the environmental performance of all our offices.

## 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, 19 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.

### The Land Registry Environmental Management System



## 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. The number of subscribers to the IRIS Online Services has increased from 665 in 2007 to 723 in 2008. Of the 5.05 million searches of land registers done by customers in 2008, 4.5 million or 89% were conducted through the IRIS Online Service. This percentage is the same as that of 2007, and is the highest since the launch of IRIS in 2005. The orders of copies of land documents made through the Online Services remained steady at 82%. With IRIS, 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. In addition, it helps reduce the travel needs of customers to our offices.

### (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 2008, we produced the 40th edition of Street Index which contained 890 amendments and a total of 2008 streets. Our customers purchased 228 sets of the Street Index in compact discs in 2008. 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 9th edition was issued in April 2008. The 9th edition of our Cross Reference Table contains 3,450 amendments and 2,954 streets/villages/places. A total of 201 sets of discs were sold to the customers in 2008. Had bulk volume copies and replacement inserts of the above street index and reference table been

produced in paper form, about 1.95 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. In 2008, we further converted 3 hardcopy reports to softcopy and developed 4 new reports in softcopy. These efforts together contributed to a total saving of about 1.99 million sheets of paper consumption a year. Some major report-on-title users have also switched to accept soft copy reports. We also used email instead of floppy diskettes since 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. In 2008, we completed uploading of precedent registration-related cases, guidelines and operation manual onto our newly established Knowledge Management System. This greatly facilitated staff to retrieve information and share knowledge in a paperless mode.

***(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 Government Logistics Department's green procurement policy 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 Organise activities to promote a green culture in the Land Registry. These include the participation of experience-sharing workshops on energy efficiency Organised 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. We also maintain a dedicated folder in 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.

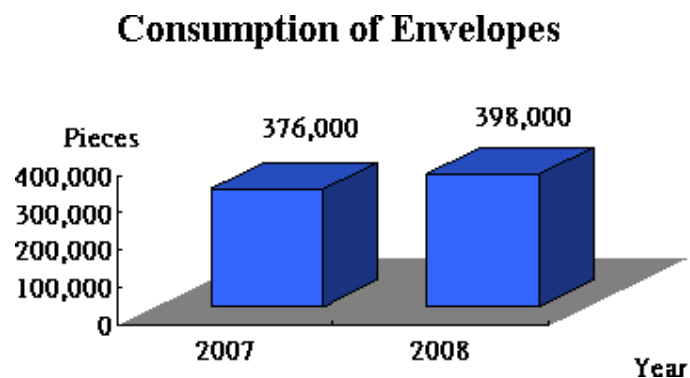
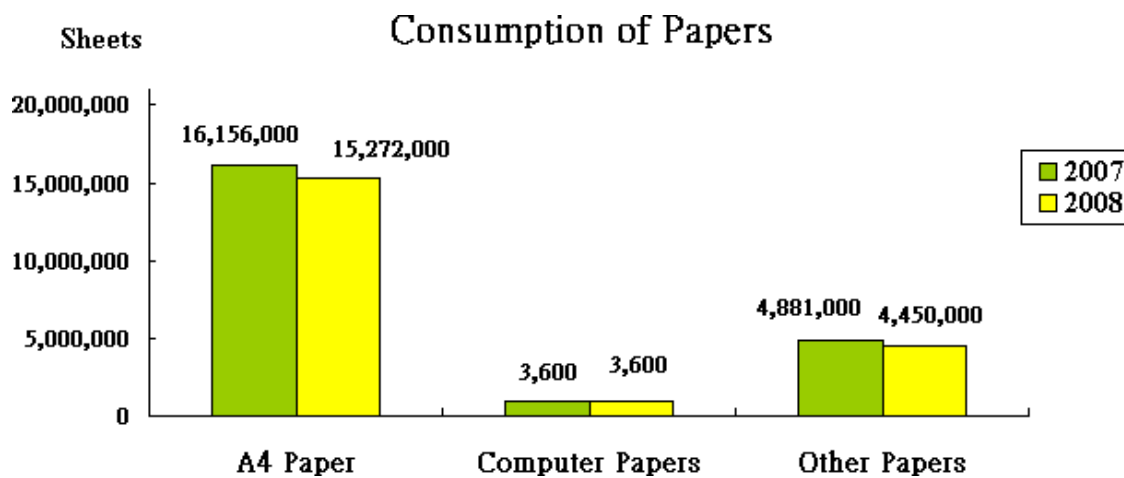
In 2008, we completed 2 environmental audit inspections to 4 sections in the department. The environmental audit team members are drawn from staff of different offices. This enables staff to have the opportunity to plan and conduct environmental management work, which in turn helps promote environmental 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 Organised 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 19.73 million sheets of paper in 2008. Compared with 21.04 million sheets of paper in 2007, there is a decrease of 6.23%. 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. As there was only a slight decrease in business volume in terms of number of documents lodged for registration in 2008, the decrease in paper consumption was largely contributed to our efforts in controlling the use of paper. As regards envelope consumption in 2008, it increased to 398,000 which is 5.85% over the preceding year. This was due to the increase of land documents imaged by CIC and the return of imaged documents to the lodging parties in 2008.

*Energy consumption*

10.2 Our offices are mainly accommodated in QGO which is a joint-user government building. Prior to 2008, QGO had only one electricity account. In the absence of separate electricity consumption readings for different user departments, the effectiveness of our energy saving measures in the year could only be reflected in the overall energy conservation result achieved by QGO. In end 2007, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department installed separate electricity meters for our floors in QGO. This enabled us to monitor our own energy consumption. In 2008, we recorded a consumption of 712,314 kWh for all our offices in QGO. We will use this data as a benchmark to monitor our future consumption. With the relocation of the Data Centre from Shatin to Sai Kung in end December 2007, the Central Imaging Centre remaining in Shatin began to

have its own electricity consumption readings. In 2008, it recorded a consumption of 126,284 kWh. This figure again will be used as a benchmark for monitoring the energy consumption of Central Imaging Centre in future.

#### **Office Refitting**

10.3 We refurbished our offices in QGO in 2005. We adopted flexible and open design to reduce materials used in initial work and future re-Organisation 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 fitting-out works for the new office of our Information Technology Management Division in Ngau Tau Kok in mid 2009.

#### **Resources consumption**

10.4 We consumed 1,787 ball pens, which is some 4.34% less than the preceding year. This decrease was partly attributed to the slight decrease in business and partly due to the wider use of e-communication and office automation.

#### **Minimizing travel needs**

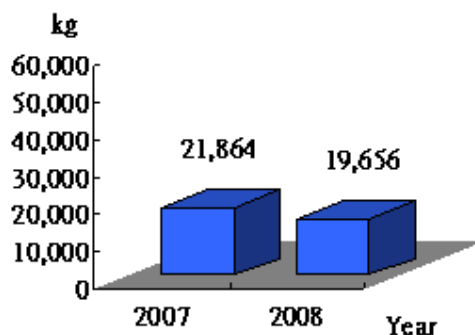
10.5 We recognize the environmental impacts of urban commuting in terms of fuel consumption and air pollutant emissions. Before 1999, our land registration system did not support cross-district land registration applications and land documents searches. Our customers were required to travel to the Land 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 every day. With the re-Organisation of our NT search office services and the consequential closure of our search offices in Sai Kung, North and Tuen Mun districts in 2007 and 2008, we saved about 750 transport trips a year.

10.6 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.

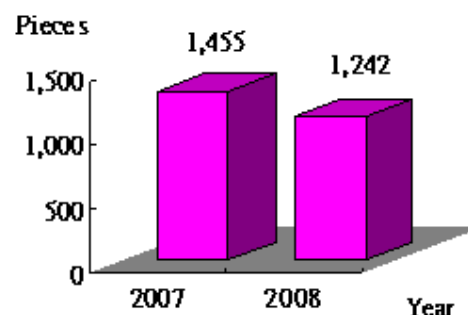
#### **Reducing office waste**

10.7 In 2008, we collected 19,656 kg. of waste paper and 1,242 printer cartridges for recycling. Comparing to 2007, the volume of waste paper collected has shown a continual decrease of 10%. This was attributed to the wider use of LAN for communication, and to staff reusing paper. Consumption of printer cartridges dropped by 14.64% due to the reduced demand for printing of registration documents and land search records issued over counters. 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 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 provision of independent electricity meters for our offices in QGO and Central Imaging Centre in Shatin, we started to have data for our own energy consumption (excluding that for the central air-conditioning system and public utilities). As mentioned in paragraph 10.2, these offices recorded a consumption of 712,314 kWh and 126,284 kWh respectively. In terms of carbon emission, they are equivalent to 591.22 tonnes and 71.98 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Taking into account the number of staff working in these two offices, the emission is about 1.13 tonnes per staff in QGO offices and 1.33 tonnes per staff in Central Imaging Centre. We will use these figures as benchmarks to monitor our electricity consumption and carbon emissions in future.

## **12. Environmental Targets for the Year 2009**

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 relevant stakeholders on arrangements for filing of Standard Terms Documents and start to draft legislative amendments for implementation 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 carbon emissions arising from our operations;
- explore ways to reduce power consumption in our offices, including the replacement of ceiling lights by task lights in some offices, the replacement of spot lights by more energy-efficient lights and the reduction of lights in areas less frequently patronized by people.
- 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, conducting surprise checks to ensure compliance, 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 Organise 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](mailto: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  
June 2009

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