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Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2009

1. This Report

1.1 This Report covers the Year 2009. It provides an overview of the Land Registry's business activities and the facilities we manage. The report sets out our environmental objectives, policy and targets. It describes the major environmental impact of our operations and how we manage our business activities to minimise the impact and achieve environmental objectives and targets. Our performance in 2009 with reference to key environmental indicators and measurements is stated.

2. Our Business Activities

2.1 Our core business covers the registration 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 under the provision of the Land Registration Ordinance. We also register owners' corporations with reference to the provisions of the Building Management Ordinance.

2.2 Key business statistics for 2009 compared with 2008 are set out below.

Activity	2009	2008	% change
Documents lodged for registration	664,142	712,426	-6.8%
Searches of land registers	5.33 million	5.05 million	+5.5%
Copies of documents provided (plain & certified)	814,808	837,923	-2.8%
Computer Registers maintained	2.83 million	2.81 million	+0.7%
Imaged Documents held	19.45 million	18.79 million	+3.5%

3. Our Staff and Facilities

3.1 We have a workforce of about 630 staff. 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. In addition, we operate a Central Imaging Centre (CIC) in Shatin for converting paper land documents into digital images for electronic storage and retrieval. We also have a data centre in the Government's computer centre in Sai Kung, an office in Kwun Tong for providing IT support to the department, a staff training unit in Admiralty and an archive centre in Shatin. In May 2009, we reduced the number of NT search offices from 4 to 3 after a review of the service which showed that more and more customers have switched to use online search services instead of counter search services.

4. Environmental Impact of our Operations

4.1 The major impact of our business activities and internal operations on the environment come from our use of energy and consumption of paper. Energy is used to run IT systems and provide a comfortable office environment for staff and customers. 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 conduct land search 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 a large volume of paper in our daily operations, which include photocopying paper and other paper products such as forms and labels. We 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. However, we anticipate that there will be growing acceptance of electronic documentation. We aim to assist this process.

5. Environmental Objectives and Policy

5.1 The activities of the Land Registry are mainly office-based. Our environmental objectives are to minimize the consumption of paper, energy, office materials and natural resources in an office setting.

5.2 Our Environmental Policy is as follows:

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace - We reduce our daily consumption of paper and envelopes, reuse used materials, recycle our waste paper 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;

Internet Search Services

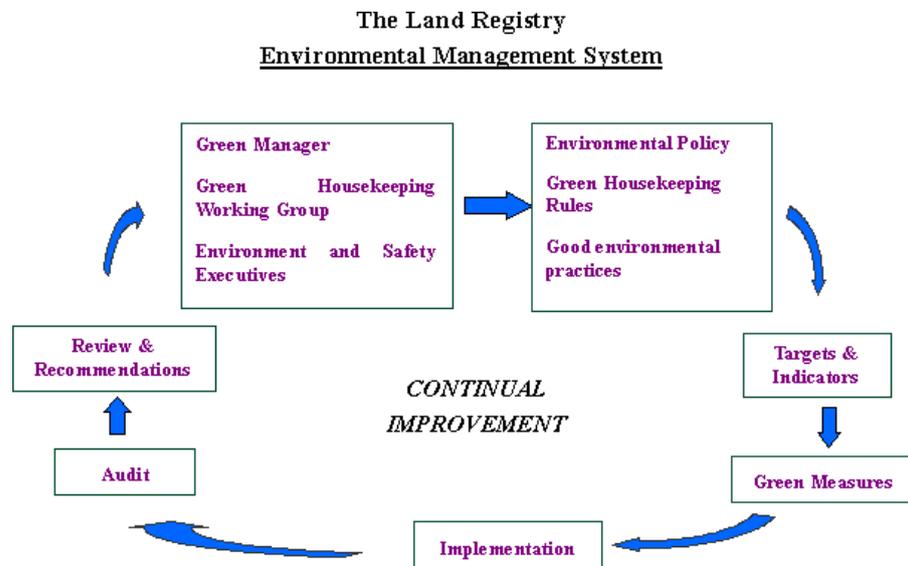


Continual Improvement - We seek continual improvement to our environmental performance through regular assessment, and by implementing new measures and practices;

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.

6. Environmental Management

6.1 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 comprising various office representatives is responsible to devise and introduce green measures, manage environmental audit and set targets. In the frontline, 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.



7. Environmental Measures

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

(A) Reducing paper consumption

(a) through the introduction of electronic systems

We have for years developed different computer systems to facilitate electronic processing, scanning, storage, cataloging and search of land documents. These have significantly reduced our total paper consumption and enhanced our ability to meet customer needs. A significant milestone was the implementation of the Integrated Registration Information System (IRIS) in 2005. It enabled our customers to make online search of land records through the Internet, and order and print copies through their own computers. 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. Since its introduction, the number of subscribers to the IRIS Online Services has increased to 791 in 2009. Of the 5.33 million searches of land registers done by customers in 2009, 4.76 million or 89.3% were conducted through the IRIS Online Services. The orders of copies of land documents made through the IRIS Online Services have also increased to 89.7% in 2009.

(b) through production of reports in soft copies

The transformation of the paper-based two-volume Street Index for the urban properties into compact discs since January 1999 enabled our customers to search the required data speedily and conveniently through their own computers. In April 2009, we produced the 41st edition of Street Index which contained 542 amendments and a total of 2013 streets. Our customers purchased 207 sets of the Street Index in compact discs in 2009. This measure saved a substantial amount of paper.

For the NT properties, we started to produce the NT Lot/Address Cross Reference Table in compact discs in 2000. The 10th edition was issued in April 2009. It contains 2,931 amendments and 2,969 streets/villages/places. A total of 196 sets of discs were sold to the customers in 2009. Had bulk volume copies and replacement inserts of the above street index and reference table been produced in paper form, about 1.89 million sheets of paper would have been consumed. The production of CDs for sales has achieved substantial paper saving.

We provide a web-version of Annual Report for online viewing. We produce our annual report in compact disc for distribution only when necessary. We have converted 101 IRIS reports of different types from hard to soft copy and developed new reports in softcopy since 2007. These efforts together contributed to a total saving of about 1.99 million sheets of paper consumption a year. Some major reports-on-title users have switched to accept soft copy reports. We have also used email instead of floppy diskettes since 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) through e-communication channels

Over the years, we have adopted and encouraged the use of various e-communication channels, such as local area network, accessibility programme system, e-leave system, digital library service system, e-staff magazine and knowledge management system to enable paperless sharing of information and internal and external communication by staff. In 2009, we introduced an e-booking system for the meeting facilities of the department. These measures have contributed

to the reduction in paper consumption and enhanced work efficiency.

(d) through working with partners

We released an e-Memorial Form on the Land Registry website in November 2007, which obviated the need for customers to buy pre-printed memorial forms for use. An enhanced version of the e-Memorial Form, with increased automation and user-friendliness, was released in July 2009. Over 40% of customers have adopted the e-Memorial Form in lieu of the conventional pre-printed form. We will continue with the efforts to enhance the e-Form and foster the usage. Separately, preparation is underway for the proposed legislative provisions for allowing mortgage documents to incorporate standard terms by reference to master copies. This could reduce the bulk of documents presented for registration and bring savings and efficiencies to all parties.

(B) Economising the consumption of energy and other resources

We support the Clean Air Charter. We minimize the use of energy 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 equipment such as water dispenser, adopting sectional lighting and maximizing the use of natural lighting 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 for inter-floor trips, switch off lights, office/computer equipment and electrical appliances when not in use and after office hours. We also remind our staff to save water.

(C) Green procurement and encouraging recycling

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 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.

(D) Enhancing staff's awareness and participation

We promote a green culture in the Land Registry. We display our environmental policy, green housekeeping rules and good environmental practices in our intranet and at prominent locations of our offices, putting across our environmental vision and encouraging compliance. We maintain a dedicated folder in our intranet giving all relevant information, departmental guidelines and useful links on environmental protection to facilitate our staff's reference. We update staff of our environmental performance and green tips through our quarterly consumption statistics and e-Staff Magazine. We also conduct surprise checks on all offices to ensure that office equipment and electrical appliances are switched off after office hours.

(E) Conducting environmental audit

Under our Environmental Management System we have established an audit mechanism to check compliance with our environmental policy and rules. We conduct regular environmental audit inspections on our offices. The results indicated 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 2009, we completed 2 environmental audit inspections to 5 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.

(F) Improving air quality

To help maintain good air quality, we continue to participate in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Certification Scheme organized by Environmental Protection Department. Our offices in QGO are certified to have fully complied with the Good Class of the IAQ Objectives.

8. Environmental Performance

Paper consumption

8.1 We consumed 22.41 million sheets of paper in 2009. Compared with 19.73 million sheets of paper in 2008, there was an increase of 2.68 million sheets of paper (i.e. 13.58%). The increase was largely attributed to the customers' increased number of counter/self-service searches for and printing of bulky imaged documents. As regards envelope consumption in 2009, it decreased to 346,000 which is 13.07% less than the preceding year. This was due to the decrease in documents lodged for registration in 2009 resulting in a decrease in use of envelopes for returning registered documents to lodging parties.

Energy consumption

8.2 In 2009, we recorded a consumption of 733,605 kWh for all our offices in QGO, representing an increase of 2.99% when compared to 2008. The increase was partly due to the installation of additional IT equipment and servers for enhancing computer services and partly due to the increase in the business volume. Our CIC in Shatin began to have independent electricity meter in February 2008. In 2009, it recorded a consumption of 92,056 kWh which showed a decrease of 14.5% when compared with the same period in 2008. The decrease was mainly due to the decrease in documents lodged for registration in 2009, which reduced the need for overtime work. The energy consumption in QGO and CIC in 2009 in terms of carbon emission is equivalent to 0.99 tonnes per staff and 1.22 tonnes per staff respectively. We will continue to monitor our consumption to strive for an economical use of energy.

Office Refitting

8.3 In 2009, we set up a new office in Kwun Tong and retro-fitted an existing office in Shatin into an archive centre. We adopted flexible and open design to reduce materials used. The open design 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. We will continue to apply these good environmental practices when carrying out fitting-out works for offices of the department.

Reducing office waste

8.4 In 2009, we collected 16,782 kg. of waste paper and 1,343 printer cartridges for recycling. Comparing to 2008, the volume of waste paper collected has shown a continual decrease of 14.62%. This was attributed to the wider use of e-communication by staff and staff reusing paper. Consumption of printer cartridges increased by 8.13% due to the increased demand for printing of registration documents and land search records by customers.

9. Environmental Targets for the Year 2010

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

continue to reduce paper consumption through adopting existing methods and pursuing new measures such as exploring the feasibility of doubled-sided printing of land documents, providing e-version of LR News and continuing with the preparation to implement filing of Standard Terms Documents so as to reduce the bulk of mortgage documents;

continue with the existing energy saving and monitoring measures, and further exploring ways to reduce power consumption such as working with the Architectural Services Department to reduce excessive lighting in office areas.

continue to encourage staff to adopt good environmental practices and organize activities/trainings to promote their environmental awareness.

continue to explore practicable green housekeeping practices in economizing the use of resource and minimizing waste; and

continue to conduct environmental audits in offices to look for areas for future improvement.

10. Information and Suggestions

10.1 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
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