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Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2011

1. This Report

1.1 This Report covers the year 2011. It provides an overview of the Land Registry's business activities and the facilities that we manage. The report sets out our environmental objective, 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 2011 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 2011 compared with 2010 are set out below.

Activity	2011	2010	% change
Documents lodged for registration	669,284	851,785	-21.4%
Searches of land registers	5.49 million	6.35 million	-13.5%
Copies of documents provided (plain & certified)	945,450	981,787	-3.7%
Computer Registers maintained	2.88 million	2.86 million	+0.7%
Imaged Documents held	20.99 million	20.28 million	+3.5%

3. Our Staff and Facilities

3.1 We have a workforce of about 600 staff. Our Customer Centre at Queensway Government Offices (QGO), Admiralty 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, a staff training unit in Admiralty and an archive centre in Shatin, while the Kwun Tong office was relocated back to our Headquarters at QGO in January 2011.

4. Environmental Impact of our Operations

4.1 The major impact of our business activities and internal operations on the environment comes 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 documents lodged by our customers for registration on a daily basis, with which we create and update our computerized land registers and convert the paper documents 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 and Building Management Ordinance. However, we anticipate that there will be growing acceptance of electronic documentation. We aim to assist this process.

5. Environmental Objective and Policy

5.1 The activities of the Land Registry are mainly office-based. Our environmental objective is 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

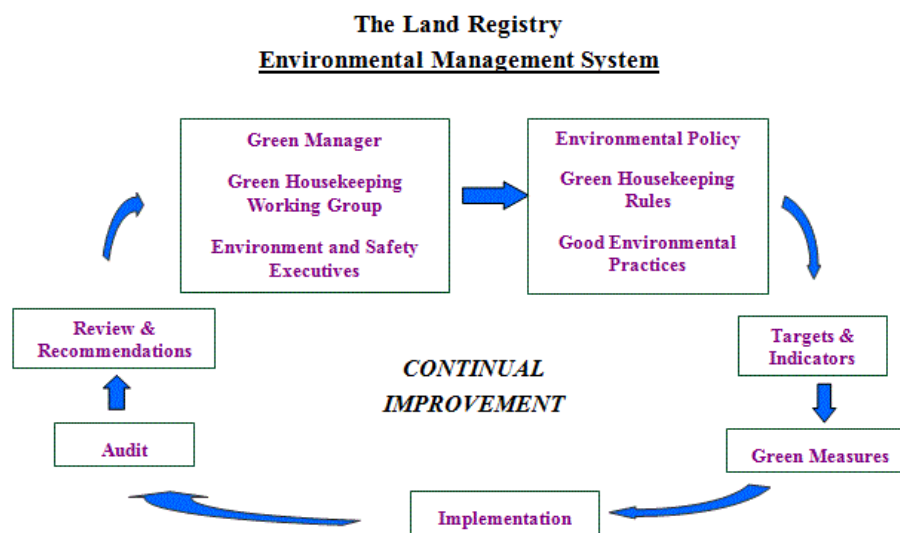


Continual Improvement - We seek continual improvement to our environmental performance through regular assessment, and by implementing new measures and practices;

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. 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 Environmental Management System 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, cataloguing 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 had increased to 954 in 2011. Of the 5.49 million searches of land registers done by customers in 2011, 4.94 million or 90% were conducted through the IRIS Online Services. The orders of copies of land documents made through the IRIS Online Services were 81.8% in average in 2011.

(b) through production of reports in soft copies

The transformation of the paper-based two-volume Street Index for the urban properties into compact disc since January 1999 enabled our customers to search the required data speedily and conveniently through their own computers. We also started to produce the NT Lot/Address Cross Reference Table (CRT) in compact disc in 2000. In June 2011, we took a step further to promote customers using our search services through paperless means by uploading the online versions of the Street Index and CRT for free browsing on our website or through the hyperlink on the IRIS Online Services. Up to the end of 2011, there were 12,370 and 13,595 visits to the Street Index and CRT respectively. These measures helped save a substantial amount of paper.

We provide a web-version of our Annual Report and e-version of Land Registry News for online viewing and downloading. We produce our Annual Report in compact disc for distribution only when necessary. Besides, we have converted 160 IRIS reports of different types from hard to soft copy and developed new reports in softcopy since 2007. These efforts have contributed to a total saving of about 2.7 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, e-booking system for the meeting facilities of the department and knowledge management system to enable paperless sharing of information and internal and external communication by staff. These measures have contributed to the reduction in paper consumption and enhanced work efficiency.

(d) through working with partners

We provide an e-Memorial Form on the Land Registry website, which obviates the need for customers to buy pre-printed memorial forms for use. Over half of the 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-Memorial 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 documents. 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 fluorescent tubes, installing occupancy sensors for room lighting and water faucets, adding automatic switch-timers to office equipment such as water dispenser and adopting sectional lighting in offices. We adopt open design in new office to reduce material used, maximize the use of natural light and enhance ventilation flow. We use good quality and durable office furniture. We use approved materials such as non-toxic paints that will not do harm to the environment in fitting-out works. 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 products such as wood-free printing papers, reusable printer cartridges, CFC free refrigerators, electrical appliances with energy efficiency labels and various refillable stationeries. In 2011, we supported the Government policy to further expand green procurement by increasing the number of purchase items containing environmental friendly features and incorporating green guidelines into our office cleansing contract that require the contractor to implement a number of green practices such as using green cleansing products, saving water and energy in their operation, etc. We continue to encourage our staff to retain waste materials such as newspapers, used papers, printer cartridges and staples for recycling and 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 continue to 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 providing 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, even after office hours, on all offices to ensure that our staff have complied with the stipulated departmental guidelines.

(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 2011, an environmental audit to our office in Shatin was conducted. The environmental audit team members were 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 at QGO have been certified to have fully complied with the Good Class of the IAQ Objectives.

8. Environmental Performance

Paper consumption

8.1 We consumed 16.71 million sheets of paper in 2011, which showed a decrease of 19.59% when compared with 2010. The decrease was due to the drop of our business volume and our continued effort in reduction of paper consumption. As regards envelope consumption in 2011, it decreased to 379,510 which was 15.26% less than the preceding year. This was mainly due to the decrease in documents lodged for registration in 2011, resulting in a decrease in use of envelopes for returning registered documents to lodging parties.

Energy consumption

8.2 In 2011, we recorded an electricity consumption of 823,909 kWh for our offices at QGO and in Shatin, representing a decrease of 5% when compared with 2010. The energy consumption in these offices in 2011 in terms of carbon emission is equivalent to 1.02 tonnes per staff, representing a decrease of 6.4% when compared with 2010. The decrease was due to the reduced need for overtime work and our continued effort in reduction of energy consumption. We will continue to monitor our consumption to strive for an economical use of energy.

Reducing office waste

8.3 In 2011, we collected 30,670 kg of waste paper and 746 printer cartridges for recycling. Comparing to 2010, the volume of waste paper collected has shown an increase of 30.26%. This was attributed to the increase in staff's awareness of applying the recycle principle of separating waste in our daily operations. Consumption of printer cartridges decreased by 47% due to the reduced demand for printing of registration documents and land search records by customers.

9. Environmental Targets for the Year 2012

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

implement doubled-sided printing of land documents in the third quarter of 2012;

continue to reduce paper consumption through adopting existing methods and pursuing new measures such as making 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 explore ways to reduce power consumption;

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 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. To save paper, we do not provide hardcopy unless upon special request.

Land Registry
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