

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 201

1. Introduction

1.1 This environmental report describes the Land Registry's environmental objective, policy and targets. It provides details on how we manage our business activities in 2012 to minimise their environmental impact.

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. After receiving paper documents lodged for registration by our customers, we create and update our computerised land registers and convert the paper documents into imaged records. We also register owners' corporations and provide related search services.

2.2 Key business statistics for 2012 compared with 2011 are set out below.

| <u>Activity</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2011</u> | <u>% change</u> |
|---|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Documents lodged for registration | 560,063 | 669,284 | -16.3% |
| Searches of land registers | 5.44 million | 5.49 million | -0.9% |
| Copies of documents provided (plain & certified) | 915,999 | 945,450 | -3.1% |
| Computer Registers maintained | 2.91 million | 2.88 million | +1.04% |
| Imaged Documents held | 21.53 million | 20.99 million | +2.6% |

3. Our Staff and Facilities

3.1 We have a workforce of about 600 staff. Most of our offices are accommodated at Queensway Government Offices, Admiralty, including Customer Centre which 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 order copies of imaged documents for properties. In addition, we operate a Central Imaging Centre 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 Wan Chai and an archive centre in Shatin.

4. Environmental Impact of our Operations

4.1 As the activities of the Land Registry are mainly office-based, the major impact of our operations on the environment comes from use of energy and consumption of paper. Energy is mainly used to run IT systems and provide a suitable office environment for staff and customers. Paper is used for photocopying, printing of computer records and production of documents such as forms and envelopes.

5. Environmental Objective and Policy

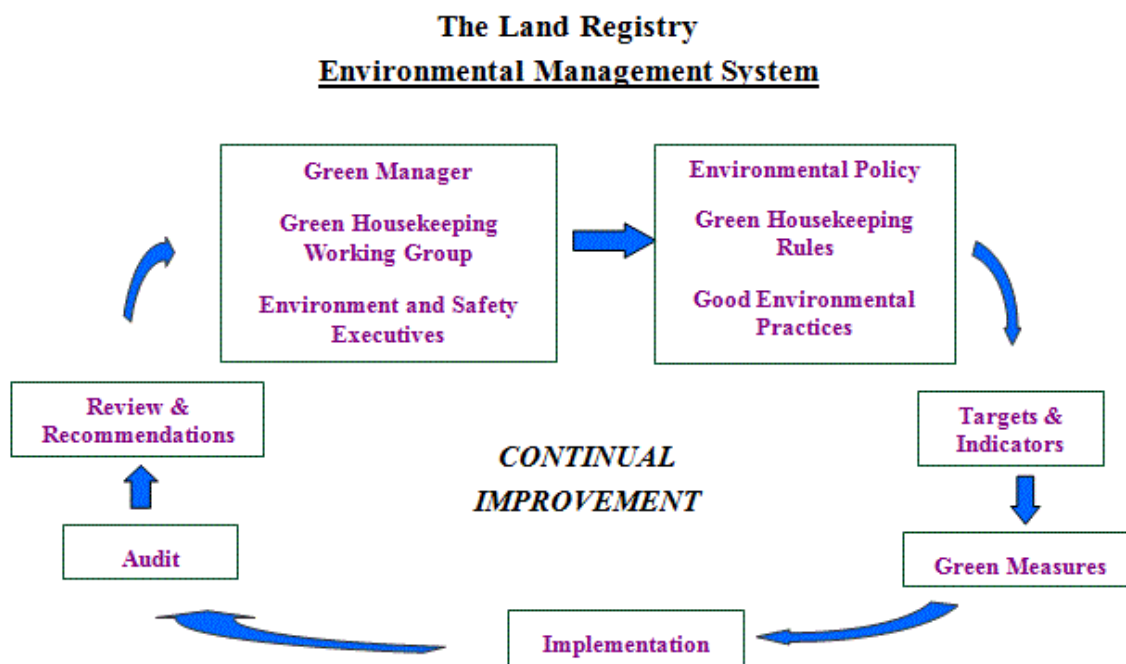
5.1 Our environmental objective is to minimize the consumption of paper, energy, office materials and natural resources. Our environmental policy is as follows:

- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace** - We reduce daily consumption of paper, reuse used materials, recycle waste paper, encourage electronic documentation and replace non-environmentally friendly products as far as possible.
- **Efficient Use of Resources and Energy** - We encourage staff to use natural resources wisely and install energy-efficient systems as far as possible.
- **Compliance** - We maintain a set of green housekeeping rules to reduce 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.
- **Continual Improvement** - We seek continual improvement to our environmental performance through regular assessments and implementation of new measures and practices.
- **Communication** - We ensure that staff are aware of their environmental responsibilities through regular communication and encourage them to participate in environmental activities and audits.

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 for devising and introducing green measures, managing environmental audit and setting targets. In the frontline, Environment and Safety Executives are appointed in various sections 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 developed 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 has enabled our customers to conduct online searches of land records through the Internet, and place orders and print copies through their own computers if necessary. As a result, voluminous paper applications and reports for land records are saved. In addition, it has helped reduce the need for customers to travel to our offices. Since its launch, the number of

subscribers to the IRIS Online Services had increased to 1,011 in 2012. Of the 5.44 million searches of land registers done by customers in 2012, 4.97 million or 91.4% were conducted through the IRIS Online Services. The orders of copies of land documents made through the IRIS Online Services were 88.0% on average in 2012.

(b) through production of reports in soft copies

The transformation of the paper-based two-volume Street Index for urban properties into compact disc in 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 the use of the Street Index and CRT through paperless means by uploading online versions of the Street Index and CRT for free browsing on our website or through the hyperlink on the IRIS Online Services. In 2012, there were 46,768 and 34,849 visits to the online versions of the Street Index and CRT respectively. These measures have helped save a substantial amount of paper.

We provide a web-version and a compact disc version of our Annual Report. We also make available the Land Registry News for online viewing and downloading. Besides, we have converted 160 IRIS reports of different types from hard to soft copy and produced 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 users of our reports-on-title service have switched to accepting soft copy reports. We have also used emails to replace 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 has also obviated the need for courier dispatch.

(c) through electronic channels

Over the years, we have adopted and encouraged the use of various electronic 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 reduction in paper consumption and enhanced work efficiency.

(d) through working with partners

We provide an e-Memorial Form on the Land Registry website for free download, which obviates the need for customers to buy pre-printed memorial forms for use. The functions and user-friendliness of the e-Memorial Form were further enhanced in 2012 to increase user appeal. 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 its 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 help reduce the bulk of documents presented for registration and bring savings and efficiency to all parties concerned.

(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 and adopting sectional lighting in offices. We adopt open office design as far as possible to reduce the use of materials, maximize the use of natural light and enhance ventilation flow. We encourage staff to use staircases instead of 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 paper, reusable printer cartridges, CFC free refrigerators, electrical appliances with energy efficiency labels and various refillable stationeries. Since 2011, we have 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 recyclable 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 for reference by staff. We update staff on our environmental performance and green tips through our quarterly consumption statistics and e-Staff Magazine. We also conduct surprise checks both within and after office hours on all offices to ensure that 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 2012, an environmental audit on our office at 18/F, Queensway Government Offices was conducted. The environmental audit team members were drawn from staff of different offices. This enabled staff to have the opportunity to plan and conduct environmental management work, which in turn helped promote environmental education when they brought their experience back to their offices.

(F) Improving air quality

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

8. Environmental Performance

Paper consumption

8.1 We consumed 14.14 million sheets of paper in 2012, which showed a decrease of 15.38% when compared with 2011. This was mainly due to our implementation of double-sided printing for search orders of land records from 27 August 2012. The consumption of envelopes decreased in 2012 to 333,471 which was 12.13% less than the preceding year. This was mainly due to the decrease in the number of documents lodged for registration in 2012, resulting in a decrease in use of envelopes for returning registered documents to lodging parties.

Energy consumption

8.2 In 2012, we recorded an electricity consumption of 787,951 kWh for our offices at Queensway Government Offices and in Shatin, representing a decrease of 4.36% when compared with 2011. The energy consumption in these offices in 2012 in terms of carbon emission was equivalent to 0.94 tonnes per staff, representing a decrease of 7.8% when compared with 2011. This was mainly due to the reduced need for overtime work and our continued effort in reduction of energy consumption.

Reducing office waste

8.3 In 2012, we collected 33,095 kg of waste paper and 1,586 printer cartridges for recycling. Comparing to 2011, the volume of waste paper collected showed an increase of 7.91%. This was mainly due to increase in staff awareness of applying the recycle principle of waste separation. Consumption of printer cartridges increased by 112.6% when compared with 2011. This was mainly due to the fact that a number of new types of printers were procured to replace old ones for the implementation of double-sided printing for search orders of land records and the printer cartridges inside these new printers were generally on half load, thus resulting in the relative increase in the number of printer cartridges in 2012.

9. Environmental Targets for the Year 2013

9.1 In 2013, we will:

- continue to reduce paper consumption through adopting existing methods and pursuing new measures;
- continue with the existing energy saving measures and further explore new measures;
- continue to encourage staff to adopt good environmental practices and organize activities/training to promote their environmental awareness;
- continue to explore practicable green housekeeping practices to reduce waste and resource consumption; and
- continue to conduct environmental audits on offices to look for areas for further improvement.

10. Comments and Suggestions

10.1 Please send comments and suggestions to our Green Manager or Departmental Secretary by email at ds@landreg.gov.hk or by post to 28/F, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong. To save paper, we have only produced this report in softcopy.

Land Registry

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